

CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS

Educator Study and Performance Guide



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About *Carnival of the Animals*, Educator's Guide

This guide is designed to enhance your performance experience by connecting our presentation to the classroom. You will find pre and post-performance topics and questions designed to guide students on how to approach the arts to interpret it for themselves. You will also find suggested lesson plans and activities that meet the academic standards set forth by the State of Tennessee Standards. Each of these lesson plans can be modified as you see fit to accommodate students, pre-K to 5th grade.

We hope you find this guide helpful in creating a well-rounded program for you and your students and more importantly create lifelong enthusiasts of the Arts.

The Inspiration behind Nashville Ballet's *Carnival of the Animals*

Nashville Ballet's *Carnival of the Animals* was inspired by the music of French composer Camille Saint-Saens, with an original narrative written by Brian Hull of Nashville Public Library. The ballet begins with the Lion, King of the Beasts, not understanding why everyone isn't exactly like him. If he's the King he must be the best so of course all the other animals should change! A wise and patient Bird teaches the arrogant Lion to appreciate the beauty in each animal's unique qualities.

The audience follows the Lion as he journeys through this wild jungle full of whimsical characters. It's a joyous celebration when the Lion learns that we are basically all the same on the inside, but it's our differences that make life interesting.



Credits

Carnival of the Animals, Choreographer
Paul Vasterling

Carnival of the Animals, Composer
Camille Saint-Saens

Carnival of the Animals, Original Narrative
Brian Hull

Carnival of the Animals, Costume Designer
Aubrey Hyde

Tennessee Academic Standards Met By Viewing Nashville Ballet's Performance of *Carnival of the Animals*

Carnival of the Animals

Recommended for Grades K-5

English Language Arts for Grade K-5

Reading, Craft and Structure 6

Reading, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 7
Speaking and Listening, Comprehension and Collaboration 2

Social Studies – Grades K-5

Culture

Dance – Grades K-5

Respond 1
Respond 2.A
Connect 1
Perform 3.A

Music – Grades K-5

Respond 2

Theater – Grades K-5

Perform 1.A
Respond 1
Respond 2
Respond 3
Connect 1

Visual Arts – Grades K-5

Respond 1

About the Composer



Saint-Saëns photographed by Nadar

Camille Saint-Saens was born in Paris, France on October 9, 1835.

His father, a government clerk, died just three months after his birth. After her husband's death, Saint-Saens' mother Clemence, invited her aunt to live with them. Saint-Saens was introduced to the piano by his aunt who gave him his first piano lesson at the age of two. At the age of three the young Saint-Saens could read and write. It was clear early on that he was a child prodigy, composing his first piece of music at the age of four. His talents reached far beyond music; at the age of seven he learned to speak, read and write Latin!

As a young adult Saint-Saens studied Organ and Composition at the Paris Conservatory, composing his first symphony at sixteen. He earned a living teaching piano and playing the organ at various churches throughout Paris. He was also a noted scholar in many areas of study such as geology, mathematics, archaeology, botany (the study of plants) and lepidopterology (the study of butterflies and moths).

In 1875 Saint-Saens married Marie Truffot. The couple had two children, who both died in 1878, just six weeks apart. Three years later Saint-Saens and his wife separated but never divorced. After the death of his children, and later his mother, Saint-Saens lived a relatively solitary life. He traveled the world, composing music and writing books inspired by his travels. Even though most of his work during this time was published under the alias *Sannois*, his work continued to be celebrated, especially in Algeria and Egypt.

In 1886, Saint-Saens composed *Carnival of the Animals*, which he felt was a silly work and would hurt his reputation as a serious musician. Because of that, he only allowed one movement, *Le Cygne* (The Swan), to be published during his lifetime. Since his death, the entirety of *Carnival of the Animals* has become one of Saint-Saens most famous works.

Camille Saint-Saens died in Algeria on December 16, 1921 from pneumonia.

Other celebrated compositions by Camille Saint-Saens:

Africa

Piano Concerto No. 5 – *The Egyptian*

Symphony No. 3

LESSON #1: DANCE AND GENERAL MUSIC

Observations During the Performance for Nashville Ballet's *Carnival of the Animals*

Anchor Standards Met By This Activity:

Dance
Respond 1, 2.A, 3
Connect 1.A, 1.B, 2

General Music
Respond 1, 2, 3



Why is it we can all see the same work of art but walk away with different interpretations and emotions? What informs our different views on the same work of art happens long before we even see the art. It is our unique life experiences, our culture, and our history that influence and mold the way we view and interpret not only art but the world around us. Noticing the details in a work of art and being aware of the way we respond to it is what gives the work of art meaning. Answering the question, 'Why did I respond to it this way' is what gives us our own unique connection to the art.

The questions below are to help you interpret *Carnival of the Animals* for yourself. Keep these questions tucked away in your mind as you watch the performance and try to remain aware of how you feel as you watch. You may not have an answer for every question but notice what elements of the performance stand out to you and then answer the question, why?

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

What do the costumes look like (color, fit, texture, etc)?

How do the dancers use their bodies to tell the story and portray emotion?

How does their movement reflect the music, the character, the mood, or all three?

How do the dancers use the performance space?

How do they use all of the stage or just a portion?

What levels do the dancers use? (low to the ground, standing in middle level, or jumping up high)

Are the dancers always visible?

Is there a set (backdrop, props, lighting)?

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

What do you hear? (music, narrator, sounds, instruments)

How does the music help tell the story?

How does the music enhance the dancer's movements (increased emotion, etc.)?

HOW DOES THE PERFORMANCE MAKE YOU FEEL?

Does the music make you feel anything?
How? Why?

How did the dancers make you feel?

How do the colors of the costume and set make you feel?

Are you sad or happy with the way the performance ends?

LESSON #2: SPEECH AND LISTENING, DANCE

Post-Performance Reflection and Discussion topics

This activity can be a written assignment or a class discussion.

**Anchor Standards
Met By This Activity:**

Speech and Listening
Comprehension and Collaboration 1
Connection 1.B, 2

Dance
Connection 1.A

Directions to teacher: Separate the board into three columns. Write “Notice” at the top of the first column, “Wonder” at the top of the second column, and “Think” at the top of the third column. Ask students the following questions. Write their responses to the following questions in the corresponding section.

WHAT DID YOU...

...NOTICE?	...WONDER?	...THINK?
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What did you notice (see, hear, feel) during the performance?

What did the performance make you wonder (if you could speak to the dancers/choreographer/musicians what would you ask them)?

What did the performance make you think (what did you learn, understand better, get confused by)?

LESSON #3: WRITING

Write a Review

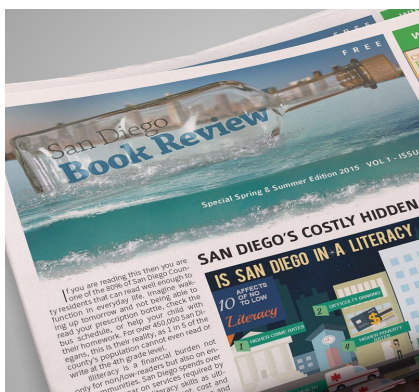
**Anchor Standards
Met By This Activity:**

Writing
Text Types and Protocol 1, 2

Directions to teacher: Have students write a review of the performance. Provide samples of reviews for popular books or movies appropriate for their age. Like a critic from a newspaper, their job is to review the performance for the public. Students must tell their audience the basic story, how they felt about the choreography, costumes, and music. Remind them they need to identify the theater and the title of the performance.

The review should:

- Contain an effective and relevant introduction.
- Utilize a variety of appropriate linking words and phrases.
- Demonstrate consistent command of grade level conventions of standard written English.
- Use evidence from the performance.
- Thoroughly and accurately explain and elaborate on the evidence provided, demonstrating a clear, insightful understanding of the topic, task, and stimuli.



LESSON #4: READING, HISTORY

Create Your Own *Carnival of Animals*

**Anchor Standards
Met By This Activity:**

Foundational Literacy
Vocabulary Acquisition 7

Reading
Reading - Key Ideas and Details 1-6
Reading - Integration of Knowledge and
Ideas 1-7

Directions to Teacher: Have students retell the story of *Carnival of the Animals*. Check to see if they can recall the animal's appearances in the correct order. Have students choose one of the animals and create a mask of that animal. Once the masks are completed, discuss how dancers convey their feelings without talking or making sounds. Have each child put on their mask and, without making any sounds, act out their animal. Once each child has performed on their own, have all of the children line up parade and march around the room being their animals.

ANIMALS SEEN IN *CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS*:

Lion
Kangaroo
Birds
Angel Fish
Seagull
Donkey
Hen
Cuckoo
Rooster
Humans
Mustangs
Skeletons
Tortoise
Swan
Elephant

SUPPLIES:

Card stock paper
Popsicle sticks
Glue
Construction Paper
Paint
Tissue paper
Yarn
Cotton balls
Buttons

LESSON #5: SOCIAL STUDIES, ART

Who Wears Masks and Why?

**Anchor Standards
Met By This Activity:**

Visual Art
Perform 1, 2, 3



Lesson Guidelines: In our performance of *Carnival of the Animals* some of the dancers wore masks to help identify the animal they were portraying. Masks have been worn since the very early times of human existence. Many cultures wear masks for celebrations like hunting and other rituals specific to their culture. As a class, discuss cultures that use masks. In groups, have students investigate masks of their assigned culture to answer the questions who, where, why and how these cultures use masks. What materials do these cultures use to create their mask? Students may need to bring in materials from home to decorate their mask. Each group will present their masks and their research to the class.

SUPPLIES:

- Card stock paper
- Popsicle sticks
- Glue
- Construction Paper
- Paint
- Tissue paper
- Yarn
- Cotton balls

LESSON #6: SCIENCE, ART

The Ecosystem of *Carnival of the Animals*

**Anchor Standards
Met By This Activity:**

Science
Life Sciences 2 - Ecosystems

Lesson Guidelines: Our *Carnival of the Animals* was set in the jungle. In our ballet, the Seagull helped the Lion learn that all creatures big and small play a major part in the survival of the jungle. This is important not just for “jungles” but for all ecosystems. What is an ecosystem? What is the climate and vegetation of a “jungle”? Would the animals in our ballet be found in the same ecosystem? In groups, discuss the animal’s relationship to their ecosystem. What other plants or insects are needed to complete the ecosystem? As a group create a chart showing where each animal fits in the ecosystem. Make sure your chart has a set, or backdrop, to show the location of the animals.

LESSON #7: WRITING, SPEAKING, AND LISTENING

What is a Narrative?

**Anchor Standards
Met By This Activity:**

Reading

Integration and Knowledge of Ideas 7

Speaking and Listening

Presentation and Knowledge of Ideas
4 & 5

Writing

Text Types and Protocols 3

Lesson Guidelines: Composer, Camille Saint-Saens enjoyed traveling the world. His travels influenced his music and inspired him to compose his most famous work, *Carnival of the Animals*. Each section of music is appropriately titled to reflect the energy and essence of a specific animal, but the music was not written to tell a particular story. With the help of a writer, we were able to create a narrative to tie the different pieces of music together to creating a story. After the story was created, the choreography (the dance steps) was added to tell the story through movement.

Review with students the animals depicted in Camille Saint-Saens *Carnival of the Animals*. Have them select three to four animals to create their very own narrative. Have students draw a picture to accompany their new story. Then student's can present their picture and read their new narrative aloud to the class.

LESSON #7: WRITING, READING, SPEAKING, AND LISTENING

Art Inspires Art

**Anchor Standards
Met By This Activity:**

Speaking and Listening

Presentation and Knowledge of Ideas 4

Writing

Production and Distribution of Writing 4

Lesson Guidelines: Odgen Nash was an American poet known for writing funny verse. He wrote poems to accompany each of the movements in *Carnival of the Animals*. His poetry is often recited during live performances of the music.

Read Odgen Nash's poem *Carnival of the Animals*. Study the word choice, phrases and overall structure of Nash's poem. Analyze how specific word choice shape meaning and tone. Analyze the structure of the verses including how specific sentences, paragraphs and larger portions of the text relate to each other and the whole. Have students create their own funny verse about their favorite, or not so favorite, animal to share with the class. Students will then identify and explain their structure choice and why to the class.

*Suggestion: Play the music of *Carnival of the Animals*. After each movement read the verse that accompanies each movement.

LESSON #8: MUSIC

Romantic or Not

**Anchor Standards
Met By This Activity:**

General Music
Respond 1 & 3



Lesson Guidelines: At the time of Camille Saint-Saens musical career, European artists were moving away from what was known as the Classical Era towards a new style of expression known as the Romantic Era. This new era, which lasted from the late 18th century into the early 19th century, influenced the musicians, artist and writers of this time to express intense emotion, feelings and intuition in their works.

Saint-Saens was often criticized for not conforming to the Romantic style of music. As a class, identify the principles of romantic music. Apply these principles to Saint-Saens' *Carnival of the Animals*. Research other romantic artist of this era. Listen to samples of their music. Identify the instruments being used. Compare and contrast how their music sounds similar or different from Saint-Saens.

LESSON #9: MUSIC

Pin the Tail on the Movement

**Anchor Standards
Met By This Activity:**

General Music
Respond 1 & 3

Lesson Guidelines: On the board, list the animals depicted in the music of *Carnival of the Animals* on the board. Play each animal's movement (section of music) for the class. After each movement, give students time to jot down which animal they think the music depicts and identify parts in the music to support their choice.

Teachers may include a music word bank to assist students as they identify and describe what they are hearing.