

Nashville Ballet

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CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS

Educators' Performance Guide

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Art	Pages 2, 3, 6
Dance	Pages 2, 7
Geography	Page 3
Geometry	Page 7
History	Page 2
Math	Page 7
Music	Pages 2, 7
Physical Education	Page 7
Reading	Pages 3, 4
Science	Pages 6, 7
Social Studies	Pages 3, 6
Theatre	Pages 2, 7
Vocabulary	Page 6
Writing	Pages 3, 4, 6

Animals Seen In *Carnival of the Animals*

This list will be used for many of the lessons and activities.

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

The Composer and His Work

--Music, History

Camille Saint-Saëns was a gifted French musician who lived from 1835-1921. In 1886 he completed *The Carnival of the Animals* and it was first performed on March 9th of that year. Saint-Saëns felt that *Carnival of the Animals* was a frivolous work and would hurt his reputation as a serious musician. Because of that he prevented complete performances of it and only allowed one movement, *Le Cygne (The Swan)*, to be published in his lifetime. Since his death *Carnival of the Animals* has become one of Saint-Saëns most famous works.

Learn more about the life and times of Camille Saint-Saëns and his contemporaries. Who are these other people? Do you recognize any of their names? Listen to the music of Camille Saint-Saëns and his contemporaries and discuss their similarities and differences.

Carnival of the Animals Masks

--Art, Theatre, Dance

SUPPLIES:

Paper plates
Popsicle sticks
Construction paper
Paint
Tissue paper
Yarn
Cotton balls
Buttons

With your students make a list of the animals in the ballet. Have each student choose one of the animals and make a paper plate 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, all of the children become a circus parade and march around the room being their animals.

An alternative to this game without the masks is to give each child an index card with an animal or character written on it. They will act this out in front of the class. (Depending on your age group this can be done with or without sound.) The class then attempts to guess what each child is portraying.

Writing about Different Cultures

--Writing, Reading, Geography, Social Studies, Art

After watching *Carnival of the Animals* discuss the different cultures and countries seen in the ballet. (Asian, France, Native American, Australia, Caribbean, Mexico) Help students understand the uniqueness of each culture and country as you discuss the different types of dress, food and parts of the world.

The research project is conducted as class research (whole group) and each skill can be introduced and practiced with direct instructions.

RESEARCH STEPS

Choose a topic

Write and group questions

Collect information

Evaluate information

Organize information

Communicate information

Write a rough draft

Revise and edit (peer interaction proof-reading)

Write final report

Share the Information

Once these steps have been discussed have students select a culture that they would like to learn more about. Arrange for students to visit the library to select non-fiction books and other resource materials.

Once their research is completed, students can begin writing their paper.

With new knowledge about their culture gained through researching, your students are now ready to become illustrators for their paper. While doing the illustrations, the geography themes of location, place and region and should be reviewed so students can apply these themes.

To develop communications skills, have students share their reports and illustrations with the class.

Carnival of the Animals Poetry by Ogden Nash

--Reading, Writing

Ogden Nash was an American poet famous for writing funny verse. He wrote poems to accompany each of the movements in *Carnival of the Animals*. The poems are often read to accompany a symphony performance of the work. Read the following examples of Nash's work and write your own humorous poem about what you saw at the show.

The Lion

The lion is the king of beasts,
And husband of the lioness.
Gazelles and things on which he feasts
Address him as your highness.
There are those that admire that roar of his,
In the African jungles and velds,
But, I think that wherever the lion is,
I'd rather be somewhere else.

The Elephant

Elephants are useful friends,
Equipped with handles at both ends.
They have a wrinkled moth proof hide,
Their teeth are upside down, outside,
If you think the elephant preposterous,
You've probably never seen a rhinosterous.

The Tortoise

Come crown my brow with leaves of myrtle,
I know the tortoise is a turtle,
Come carve my name in stone immortal,
I know the turtoise is a tortle.
I know to my profound despair,
I bet on one to beat a hare,
I also know I'm now a pauper,
Because of its totley, turtley, torper.

Kangaroos

The kangaroo can jump incredible,
He has to jump because he is edible,
I could not eat a kangaroo,
But many fine Australians do,
Those with cookbooks as well as boomerangs,
Prefer him in tasty kangaroomeringues.

The Aquarium

Some fish are minnows,
Some are whales,
People like dimples,
Fish like scales,
Some fish are slim,
And some are round,
They don't get cold,
They don't get drowned,
But every fishwife
Fears for her fish,
What we call mermaids
They call merfish.

Birds

Puccini was Latin, and Wagner Teutonic,
And birds are incurable philharmonic,
Suburban yards and rural vistas
Are filled with avian Andrew Sisters.
The skylark sings a roundelay,
The crow sings "The Road to Mandalay,"
The nightingale sings a lullaby,
And the sea gull sings a gullaby.
That's what shepherds listened to in Arcadia
Before somebody invented the radia.

Fossils

At midnight in the museum hall,
The fossils gathered for a ball,
There were no drums or saxophones,
But just the clatter of their bones,
Rolling, rattling carefree circus,
Of mammoth polkas and mazurkas,
Pterodactyls and brontosaurus
Sang ghostly prehistoric choruses,
Amid the mastodonic wassail
I caught the eye of one small fossil,
"Cheer up sad world," he said and winked,
"It's kind of fun to be extinct."

The Swan

The swan can swim while sitting down,
For pure conceit he takes the crown,
He looks in the mirror over and oeva,
And claims to have never heard of Pavlova.

Acrostic Poems

--Writing, Vocabulary

An acrostic poem uses the letters in a topic word to begin each line. All lines of the poem should relate to or describe the topic word.

Ex. An acrostic poem about the sun.

Shines brightly
Up in the sky
Nice and warm on my skin

Create an acrostic poem using Nashville Ballet's performance as your theme. Write the word vertically on your paper and put lines together to describe your theme. (Examples of words you might use are: lion, elephant, cuckoo, tortoise, kangaroos, dancers.) Repeat with the other words.

B _____
A _____
L _____
L _____
E _____
T _____

Where Do I Live? What Do I Eat?

--Science, Social Studies

Have your students identify the creatures in the ballet. Then discuss the fundamental necessities of all creatures--food, water, shelter. Finally research what different food and shelter each of these creatures needs so that your students can answer the following questions.

1. What type of food does each creature eat? (Don't forget the humans!)
2. What different types of shelter are required by each of these creatures?
3. In what areas of the world are all of these creatures found?

Origami Birds

--Art, Social Studies, Vocabulary

Origami birds were created for Nashville Ballet's *Carnival of the Animals*. Origami is an ancient Japanese art of paper folding. Using only a small number of different folds, intricate designs such as cranes, frogs and flowers are formed.

To create the birds used in *Carnival of the Animals*, use the directions found here—www.origami-club.com/en/animal/gull/gull/index/htm.

What Kind of Animal Are You?

--Physical Education, Science, Dance

After seeing Nashville Ballet's *Carnival of the Animals* talk to your students about the different types of movements animals make. Pass out flash cards with a different animal on each card. To music, the students can act out the movements of the animal. When the music stops the students swap cards with each other, and continue with the activity when the music starts again.

Throughout the activity, ask the students questions about what types of movements their animal makes—slow, fast, big, small, soft, heavy, flowing, rough, etc.

Making Shapes

--Math, Geometry, Dance, Physical Education

Talk to your students about different shapes (circles, squares, etc). Explain to them that dancers create shapes with their bodies as they dance. They also make shapes around their dance space.

Have your students stand and individually make shapes with their bodies as you call them out. Then divide the students into groups of 4. You will again call out different shapes but now each group must find a way to make that shape using each group member. Finally call out shapes as the whole class works as one to create the appropriate shapes.

Topics for Discussion after the Performance

--Music, Theatre, Dance

1. What feeling did each piece of music used in the ballet give you? Did you feel that the music fit the story you were being told?
2. What do you remember most clearly from the production you saw and why?
3. How is seeing a show "live" different from seeing one on TV or in the movies? How do you behave differently in each situation and why?
4. What kind of talents and skills do you think are needed to create a production like the one you saw?
5. Did you recognize any of the music you heard today? Look for other places where music from *Carnival of the Animals* is used. (Try Disney's *Fantasia 2000* and watch for the Flamingos or listen carefully to the music in the trailer of the 2006 version of the film *Charlotte's Web*.)
6. Did you understand what was happening in each movement even when there was no speaking? Why? How did the music create a mood for each scene? How did the dancers interpret each movement of music?