

# Representing Animals through Music

*Animal sounds evoke certain feelings, much like the creative expression in performing music prompts different emotional responses. Students can use animal behaviour to recognize and compare different musical characteristics.*

## Curriculum Connection

### **Alberta Education Program of Studies: Music (1989)**

ELEMENT: **EXPRESSION (tempo, dynamics, tone colour)**

The student will understand that:

- ★ 1. The beat in music may be fast or slow (tempo).
- ★ 2. Music may be soft (p) or loud (f), dynamics.
- ★ 3. Music may express our feelings.
- ★ 4. Musical instruments have different tonal qualities.

#### SKILL: **LISTENING**

The student will be able to:

- ★ 1. Distinguish environmental sounds: school, home, weather, animals, machines.
- ★ 2. Identify and compare sounds (musical and non-musical): high–low, loud–soft, short–long, slow–fast, up–down.

#### SKILL: **MOVING**

The student will be able to:

- ★ 1. Mime animals, machines and other sounds.
- ★ 2. Move to the beat in music through walking, running, hopping, galloping and skipping, as appropriate to the psycho-motor development of the students.

## Materials

- Audio recording of *The Carnival of the Animals* by Camille Saint-Saens
- Optional: stuffed animals or pictures of animals.

## Activities

Discuss the various animals listed below (you may want to use pictures of the various animals, or have students bring in stuffed animals). What are the most obvious characteristics of each?

- Do they make loud or quiet noises?
- Do they move fast or slowly?
- Can they move around silently or do they cause a disruption?

Then ask what kind of music might be used to represent the animals. You can introduce tempo and volume, and the students might want to suggest different instruments. You may want to show pictures of a violin, glockenspiel, xylophone, flute, clarinet, double bass, piano and a cello. Have the students try to match each instrument to an animal.

Tell the class about *The Carnival of the Animals* and the composer Camille Saint-Saens (1835 - 1921). Saint-Saens was very fond of animals and wrote a book about them. One year while he was on vacation, he composed some music which he called *The Carnival of the Animals*. The various parts of the music are meant to represent the characteristics of the various animals.

Saint-Saens was born in Paris. He became famous as a composer and a very clever



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pianist. He first played the piano at a concert when he was only 8 years old, and he was still giving concerts when he was 85.

Listen to the recording of *The Carnival of the Animals*, with students instructed to listen for different animals and moods. You may want to play short excerpts for younger students and discuss each one separately.

Discuss how the music represents the different animals. Identify the mood and character of

each animal, and the musical elements used to achieve this.

Play the music again. Ask the students to identify which animal is being played.

### Assessment:

Did the students recognize which instruments were being used to represent each animal?

Could they recognize which animal was being played when hearing the music?

Animal	Instruments	Description
Lions	strings, piano	The piece starts with the lions waking up, stretching before they spring to their feet. Loud roaring sounds played on the pianos and later strings, warn us how fierce these animals are.
Chickens	violin, piano, clarinet	Sharp, shrill toned violins cluck and scratch alongside the keyboard in a strident portrayal of the farmyard, pierced only by a proud and splendid 'cockcrow' from the clarinet.
Donkeys	violin, piano	A brief but hectic chase up and down the keyboards, with violins adding to the effect.
Turtles	strings, piano	A comically slow version of the famous 'Can-Can.'
Elephants	double bass	Starts with plodding music and then another musical joke. The elephant would like to be a dancer; the music should be graceful but is a 'clumsy' dance tune (Saint-Saens borrowed this music from French composer Berlioz).
Fish	glockenspiel, piano, violin	Beginning with rippling runs and chords on the piano which conjure up a suitably aquatic scene in this musical aquarium. The melody of the violins, flute and glockenspiel suggests fish gliding gracefully through the water.
Birds	flute, strings, piano	The flute is prominent in representing the tweeting and the movement of the birds.