

Carnival of the Animals

Education resource guide



A production by Circa and QPAC's Out of the Box Festival

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About the company

Circa is an ensemble of circus artists dedicated to exploring and extending the limits of what circus can do. Located in Brisbane, Australia, Circa's unique vision is a step away from the spectacle of traditional circus into a more challenging and contemporary art form. Since 2006 Circa have toured to 32 countries around the world! Circa's shows feature amazing skills and breathtaking acrobatics pulled apart and re-invigorated. Appearing in Australia, as well as overseas, Circa performs to around 130,000 people each year.

Circa also runs a Training Centre with an impressive workshop program in Brisbane at our professional studio, in schools and with partners throughout Queensland and beyond. On top of our term-based and one-off training activities, Circa delivers quality workshops for children, young people and adults in a range of community contexts.

About Out of the Box

Out of the Box is a biennial festival for children 8 years and under, presented by the Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC). Out of the Box takes place across the Cultural Precinct in Brisbane, from its hub at QPAC to the State Library of Queensland, Queensland Museum and Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA). Out of the Box acknowledges and celebrates the value and importance of the arts in education and life-learning. Since the festival's inception in 1992, QPAC has provided national leadership through Out of the Box, in programming for young children, nurturing children's creativity and imagination and early childhood arts education. The festival is committed to informing and inspiring babies, children, parents, care-givers, clinicians and teachers. It is built on the simple foundation that children matter and that arts rich experiences lead to a sense of unfolding discovery in children and adults alike.

About the show

Commissioned by QPAC's Out of the Box Festival in 2014, Circa's interpretation of Saint-Saëns's Carnival of the Animals, a well-loved classical celebration of animals such as the tortoise, the elephant and the swan takes the conventions of a musical performance and spills them over the stage boundary and into the audience. Children interact with the performance through large red balloons and inflatable sharks to truly become part of the show.

Circa are well known for their highly inventive physical theatre works, combining dance, acrobatics, gymnastics and tumbling and styled with references to cabaret and the music hall. This highly inventive re-imagining of a classical music piece will stimulate children's ways of listening to music and connect that listening with their imaginations.

Children might enjoy listening to Saint-Saëns's Carnival of the Animals prior to attending the performance, to discuss how music makes us imagine things, and how composers use certain instruments to create different impressions upon us. Children will enjoy recognising the musical pieces during the show, and seeing how different art forms can work together to create an extension of those initial imaginings. (QPAC, 2014).

About Camille Saint-Saëns

Like Mozart, Camille Saint-Saëns was a child prodigy. At 2 ½ he could pick out tunes on the piano; at the age of 3 he composed his first piece; and by 7 he was giving public concerts as a pianist and organist. When he was 10, he made his public debut and offered to play any one of Beethoven's 32 sonatas from memory. He had total recall of anything he had ever read. His style of music was traditional and conservative and for the most part followed Classical traditions. His best-known works are several concertos, an organ symphony and The Carnival of the Animals. (Classics for Kids, 2015).

A Carnival review by you...

Help your students gain more from the show by focusing their attention with the following questions after seeing the show...

1. What do you think of when you hear the word circus?
2. What animals did you see in the performance?
3. What were your favorite animals? Why?
4. What was your favorite part of the performance?
5. What did the element of music add to the performance?
6. What did to the video projections add to the performance?
7. Did you have a least favourite part of the performance? Why?
8. Were there any additional aspects of the show that stood out to you? (e.g. stage, lighting, costumes, music)?
9. What surprised you about the show?

Learning outcomes (from QPAC learning resource guide)

EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK

Outcome 4: Children transfer and adapt what they have learnt from one context to another.

Outcome 5: Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts.

QUEENSLAND STUDIES AUTHORITY

Essential Learnings by the end of year 3

Dance: Fast and slow movements are used to change timing in movement phrases.

Music: Pitch and intervals are used to create melodic phrases and sequences.

HPE: Development of locomotor and non-locomotor movements and manipulative skills can improve the quality of physical performance and support participation in physical activities.

Australian Curriculum

English

Foundation year: Use comprehension strategies to understand and discuss texts listened to, viewed or read independently (ACELY1650).

Year 3: Understand that languages have different written and visual communication systems, different oral traditions and different ways of constructing meaning (ACELA1475).

Learning Resource Guide

Created and compiled by QPAC, 2014

CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS

ART FORM FOCUS: Circus, Physical Theatre and Music

KEY MESSAGE: How can music influence the way we move?

ABOUT THE SHOW:

Internationally acclaimed circus company, Circa, famed for their inventiveness, precision, and creativity, bring the joy of the animal kingdom to the Lyric Theatre stage in this physical theatre extravaganza. A blend of circus, multimedia and music, *Carnival of the Animals* is a magical reinvention of the classic music by French composer, Camille Saint-Saëns. Depicting creatures from land, sea and sky, Circa's performers take children and their adults on a safari through the lives of the tortoise, the elephant, the kangaroo, the swan, the life aquatic and many other beasts. It's an exuberant celebration of life on earth and the power of our bodies to express who we really are.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

Exposure to various art forms is a wonderful opportunity to further extend imagination and creativity in children. Using a dance framework that includes creating, making and appreciating, the following activities encourage the development of imaginative problem solving, analysis and critical thinking through dance play.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Stimulate the imagination with music

Listen to the *Carnival of the Animals*.

- Discuss the basic elements of time and dynamics in relation to both the animals' movements and their particular musical movement.
- Ask the children to describe how the music makes them feel and the type of movement the music inspires.

Explore the animals within

Use your body as an instrument. "How many different animal noises can you make?"

- Discuss the particular musical instruments used in *The Carnival of the Animals*. For example, violin, xylophone, flute, and piano.
- Play examples of these individual instruments and allow children to move freely to the music.
- As a group: Divide into two groups and ask one group to dance for the other. Discuss what the children heard and saw and how it made them feel as audience members and performers.
- Encourage children to think about the way animals move and add sounds to the movement.
- Move around the room making the loud, slow, heavy footfall of an elephant, the clip-clop of a horse's hooves, or the staccato scritch-scratch of a rooster's claws in the dirt.
- Now turn your attention to the unique sound each animal makes.
- Make the noise, taking care to consider volume and tonal qualities.
- Allow the call of each animal to affect your movements. Move with the same force and quality as the deep roar of a lion or the speed and quality of a rooster's crow or a kangaroo's soft tut-tut sound.



Create a Carnival

- Gather a selection of images, illustrations or toy animals from the carnival.
- Discuss the shape and size of each animal and how this might inform the way in which each animal moves.
- Explore the speed in which different animals move.
- Dart around the space like a fish, get down low and move slowly and continuously like a tortoise, bounce like a kangaroo – quickly at first and more slowly, reaching higher into the air.
- Consider similarities between animals.
- Move like the swinging tail of an elephant, lion or mule or the twitching, percussive movements of the jackass or kangaroo's ears.
- Consider and enact the movements of the swan – calm, gliding movements on the surface of the water and fast and furious movements of the feet below the water.
- Explore motivations for different types of movement.
- Encourage children to move in curved pathways like fish in the ocean or birds on water; roll and tumble like lion cubs playing; stop suddenly and stay very still and quiet like a mob of kangaroos listening for a predator.
- With groups: Assign children into groups and give each group an animal. The children move around the space as any animal of their choosing. When the name of an animal is called out, everyone freezes except the children belonging to that animal group. These children continue to move around the space as that animal incorporating the natural movements of the animal, its many sounds and the way those sounds might be interpreted.

Escape to the Circus

- For this activity you will need a hula hoop.
- Brainstorm, verbally and physically, different ways to move the hula hoop – push, roll, throw, spin.
- Draw children's attention to how they are manipulating the hula hoop. Can they use different body parts to move the hula hoop through space?

- Play with twirling the hula hoop around a body part. Invite children to twirl the hoop around their waist.
- Ask children to explore twirling the hula hoop around different body parts – arm, ankle, knee.
- Investigate different approaches to keeping the hula hoop moving. How long can they keep their hula hoop twirling?

OTHER LEARNING RESOURCES

Explore books about animals:

Base, Graeme (1986) *Animalia*, Penguin Books Australia

Base, Graeme (2004) *Jungle Drums*, Penguin Books Australia

Chapman, Lynne (2004) *When You're Not Looking*, Gullane Children's Books

Discover online:

Listen to the Carnival of the Animals

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NM1gpA5XXME>

Carnival of the Animals downloadable colouring book

<http://musicmattersblog.com/2007/07/04/saint-saens-carnival-of-the-animals-coloring-book-and-other-resources/>

Get to know the composer

<http://www.classicsforkids.com/composers/bio.asp?id=46>

Sea World/Busch Gardens Animal Sounds Library

<http://seaworld.org/en/animal-info/animal-sounds/>

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Queensland University of Technology, Creative Industries, Dance



Carnival of the Animals

(music from the original suite)

- I** Introduction et marche royale du lion (Introduction and Royal March of the Lion)
- II** Poules et coqs (Hens and Roosters)
- III** Hémiones (animaux véloces) (Wild Asses: Swift Animals)
- IV** Tortues (Tortoises)
- V** L'éléphant (The Elephant)
- VI** Kangourous (Kangaroos)
- VII** Aquarium
- VIII** Personnages à longues oreilles (Personages with Long Ears)
- IX** Le coucou au fond des bois (The Cuckoo in the Depths of the Woods)
- X** Volière (Aviary)
- XI** Pianistes (Pianists)
- XII** Fossiles (Fossils)
- XIII** Le cygne (The Swan)
- XIV** Final (Finale)



The creatives

Circa Director, Yaron Lifschitz is a graduate of the University of New South Wales, University of Queensland and National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA) where he was the youngest director ever accepted into its prestigious graduate director's course. Since graduating, Yaron has directed over 60 productions including large-scale events, opera, theatre, physical theatre and circus. His work has been seen in thirty-one countries, across six continents by over 500 000 people.

With Circa, Yaron has created works such as *by the light of stars that are no longer...*, *CIRCA*, *Wunderkammer*, *How Like an Angel*, *"S"*, *Beyond*, *Opus* and *Carnival of the Animals*. His recent works have been reviewed as being "stunning", "exquisite" and "the standard to which all other circuses can aspire".

Yaron lives in Brisbane with his son, Oscar. His passion is creating works of philosophical and poetic depth from the traditional languages of circus.

Video Designer, Michaela French is an artist working with light, projection and time-based media. Colour, light and movement are fundamental to her work which ranges from projected image environments to narrative film, from live performance to drawing and print. Her work incorporates moving image, animation, compositing and projection as well as traditional techniques of painting, printmaking, illustration and graphic design.

Michaela has a particular interest in the points of intersection between the visual arts and other disciplines, and as such has spent much of her career working collaboratively in the areas of live performance, dance, planetaria and spatial design. Her work has been exhibited both nationally and internationally.

Sound/Designer Composer, Quentin Grant composes music for theatre, concert stage and film. His work includes music for plays such as *The Tragical Life of Cheeseboy*, and *When the Rain Stops Falling*; many works for orchestra that have been played in Germany, Canada, and by the leading Australian orchestras; and soundtracks for films and documentaries broadcast on the ABC and SBS. *Carnival of the Animals* is the first production he has had the pleasure of working on with Circa.

Costume Designer, Libby McDonnell is a versatile artist working as a designer, performer and a choreographer throughout Australia and abroad who specialises in costuming for contemporary physical performance. Libby is a Creative Associate with Circa, and Co Directed Ballet Theatre of Queensland's 2013 production *Peter Pan*. Libby is also a resident choreographer with Blue Roo Theatre Company, a company specializing in making performance with adults who experience disability.

Technical Director/Lighting Designer, Jason Organ graduated from Queensland University of Technology in 1988. He has worked as a technician, rigger, lighting designer and production manager. During this time he has lit all manner of productions from pantomimes and product launches to ballet, festivals, military tattoos, circus and live television; contemporary dance and circus being his favourites.

Jason first worked with Yaron in 2001 on *Sonata for Ten Hands*. He subsequently lit *Regarding the Joy of Others*, *Man in a Room Juggling*, *Anyway I'm Not Alone*, *Figaro Variations*, *Tango*, *Power* and *Wunderkammer*. Since January 2010 he has been working exclusively with Circa, lighting and production managing their international tours.

Acrobats For a full list of bios of the acrobats in *Carnival of the Animals* visit www.circa.org.au/ensemble

Acknowledgments

Created by Yaron Lifschitz with the Circa Ensemble
A production by Circa and QPAC's Out of the Box Festival

Director Yaron Lifschitz

Technical Director/Lighting Designer Jason Organ

Video Design Michaela French

Sound Designer/ Composer Quincy Grant

Set Design Yaron Lifschitz, Jason Organ, Libby McDonnell and Michaela French

Director of International Partnerships Jennifer Cook

Costume Design Libby McDonnell

Costume Creation Team Janie Grant, Susan Gibson, Trang Vo, Chris Healy,
Selene Cochrane, Karen Blinco, Sarah White, Maria Wong & Kate Jefferay



CIRCA



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