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Move at Home: Carnival of the Animals

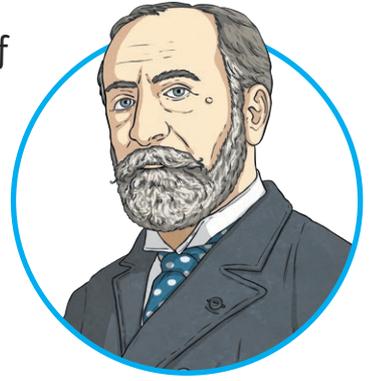
The Carnival of the Animals is a piece of music by a French composer named Camille Saint-Saëns. It was composed in 1886. The piece of music is known as a suite.

In music, a suite is a collection of short musical pieces that are played in order, one after the other. The Carnival of the Animals has 14 movements, or pieces of music, that are played one after the other.

11 of the movements each represent a different animal or group of animals. These are:

a swan, fish, hens and roosters, wild donkeys, jungle birds, an elephant, a lion, kangaroos, tortoises, a cuckoo and fossils.

Listen to the music [here](#), or search for it on your Internet browser. The listening times suggested are correct for the linked version of the music. Listen to the music and try the activities!



Listen to the Carnival of the Animals from 3:20 to 3:54.

This part of the Carnival of the Animals represents wild donkeys, which can run very quickly.

Dynamics can refer to the speed of movements in a dance, the energy used in a dance or the way the movements flow in a dance.

Some words that describe different dynamics are:

- hurried, speedy, lazy or slow;
- strong, heavy, light, explosive or powerful;
- smooth, jagged, flowing or staccato.

Dynamics add interest to a dance and also help to tell a story or create a mood.

Improvise three or four movements to represent the wild donkeys, thinking carefully about the dynamics you use.



Listen to the Carnival of the Animals from 6:23 to 7:36. It represents the elephant.



Can you improvise some movements inspired by this piece of music?

Improvise means to perform without rehearsing. When dancers improvise, they try different movements to see what works well.

You need to experiment with different movements that you think work well with the music. Your actions should also represent the way an elephant moves.

You might want to think about how an elephant walks, how it moves its trunk, how heavy it is and how it eats.

Listen to the section of music that represents the lion, from 0:52 to 2:22.

Can you hear the low scales that represent the lion's roar?

The piece of music has a proud, regal sound that reflects the fact that the lion is often known as the 'King of the Jungle'.

The quieter, gentler parts of the music could represent the way lions prowl or pad on their paws.

What sort of dynamics do you think we may use when performing a dance inspired by the lion?

Think about speed, energy and movements.

Improvise five movements inspired by the lion music from the Carnival of the Animals. Listen carefully to the different parts of the music to time your actions accurately.



Listen to the Carnival of the Animals from 7:46 to 8:38. Kangaroos are represented in this section.



The tempo of a piece of music is the speed at which it is played by the musicians. Music can have a fast tempo, a slow tempo or somewhere in-between.

There are fast parts of this section and much slower parts.

The faster parts might represent the kangaroos hopping or jumping quickly. The slower parts could represent times when the kangaroos are doing slower, gentler actions, like stretching up tall, rolling or digging.

Can you improvise some actions for the kangaroo section of the Carnival of the Animals?

Think carefully about the tempo of the music and the dynamics you will use.

Camille Saint-Saëns composed the section from 8:46 to 11:06 to represent fish and other creatures that can be found under the sea or in an aquarium.



The music has a swaying rhythm that reflects the way the creatures sway in the current of the water.

Every now and then there are scales of notes that get lower and lower. This could suggest moving deeper through the water to discover larger creatures.

The deeper notes could also suggest larger, more dangerous creatures, like sharks.

There is a trilling of the piano that has a lightness and a gentleness that echoes the way the smaller creatures swim.

Improvise a series actions for this piece of music. Try linking each of them together with a turn, jump or balance.

The finale of the Carnival of the Animals is the last section in the whole piece, from 21:20 to 23:12.

The finale contains elements from each of the other sections so all the featured animals are present here.

Listen to the finale now. It is harder to identify the individual animals as they are all included together. See if you can identify any patterns in the music that could represent the different animals.

Can you use the skills you have practised to develop a dance to the finale of the Carnival of the Animals?

