# Table of Contents

Letter from the Staff of the Negaunee Music Institute .................................................. 1

Program Information ........................................................................................................... 2

Activity 1: Who is My Character? ..................................................................................... 3

Activity 2: Describing Music and Animals ........................................................................ 4

Activity 3: Music and Poetry ............................................................................................. 5

Composer History ............................................................................................................. 7

Additional Resources ......................................................................................................... 8

Acknowledgments ............................................................................................................... 9

Parent’s Guide Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Dear Parents,

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra is pleased to introduce you to the new Family Matinee Concert Parent’s Guide. These materials were created based on feedback from patrons who told us, through surveys and focus groups, what resources they would most like to have available to them to prepare their child(ren) for the Family Matinee Concerts. Ultimately, we learned that preparing for your trip to Symphony Center can be very rewarding!

On the following pages you will find listening opportunities and activities to share with the child(ren) you are bringing to the upcoming concert at Symphony Center. There are several ways you can use these materials either before or after the concert: you can listen to the music and discuss what you hear based on the concert description; you can listen to the music and do one or more of the activities outlined in this packet; or, if time is limited, you can just listen to the music during the days leading up to the concert. No matter how you use these materials, we hope that they will help to build excitement about the concert and provide new ways for you to explore this music.

Finally, we hope that you will provide feedback about these materials by completing a short survey. It is our plan to continually refine these resources by taking your input into consideration.

We look forward to seeing you soon at Symphony Center!

Sincerely,

Staff of the Negaunee Music Institute
at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra
ABOUT THE CONCERT:
Music has the unique ability to depict characters and images using musical elements, including tempo, dynamics and expression. Each of the 2014/15 CSO Family Matinees focuses on one of the unique things that composers often portray in music.

On Saturday, March 21, Members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, conductor Vladimir Kulenovic, pianists Kimberly Han and Brenda Huang and student poets from the Poetry Center of Chicago’s Hands on Stanzas program will conjure a zoo full of characters in Carnival of the Animals. Imagine an elephant lumbering across the savanna, a school of fish swimming with the current or an elegant swan in flight—and much more!

The program:
- **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** Overture to The Marriage of Figaro
- **Igor Stravinsky** Dance of the Firebird from The Firebird Suite (1919 version)
- **Béla Bartók** Excerpts from Romanian Folk Dances
- **Camille Saint-Saëns** The Carnival of the Animals

The conversations on the following pages will prepare your child(ren) for a fun and rewarding visit to Symphony Center through listening and play.
ACTIVITY 1 Who is My Character?
In this activity, your child will learn how elements in music can create a character and tell a story.

FEATURED REPERTOIRE
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart *Overture to The Marriage of Figaro*
- Igor Stravinsky *Dance of the Firebird from The Firebird Suite*
- Béla Bartók *Excerpts from Romanian Folk Dances*
- Camille Saint-Saëns *The Aviary from The Carnival of the Animals*

Part I. Romanian Folk Dances

1. Using the Spotify link above, play **Movement No. 5** of *Romanian Folk Dances*, the Romanian Polka. Have your child close his or her eyes while he or she listens and ask him or her to imagine a mini-movie while it plays.

2. Have your child share his or her mini-movie with you. What was happening? Who was in the movie? What were they doing? Tell your child that what he or she just listened to is a folk dance from Romania.

3. Listen to the movement again, and this time, tell them to imagine someone dancing to the music.

Part II. The Firebird

1. Tell your child that the next piece is called Dance of the Firebird. Show them the following picture. Play **Dance of the Firebird** and ask him or her what they think the character of the firebird is feeling (e.g., scared, frightened, suspenseful), and have them describe what in the music told them that. Was it because of the fast or slow tempo, the smooth or choppy expression, or loud or soft dynamics?

2. Tell your child that **Dance of the Firebird** is from a ballet by Igor Stravinsky and, in this part of the ballet, the firebird has been captured by Prince Ivan and is trying to get away.

3. Play the music again and discuss what you imagine is happening in the music and how it portrays the firebird’s desire to escape.
Part III. The Marriage of Figaro

1. Play the Overture to The Marriage of Figaro and have your child imagine a character for the music.

2. Have your child write about his or her imagined character: who they are, what they are feeling and what they are doing.

ACTIVITY 2 Describing Music and Animals

In this activity, you and your child will explore how movement and music can represent a character.

FEATURED REPERTOIRE

Camille Saint-Saëns The Carnival of the Animals
- Hens and Roosters
- The Elephant
- The Swan

1. Using the Spotify links above, play the three movements from The Carnival of the Animals—without giving away the name of the animal—and ask your child to move silently to the music, creating movements that represent what they are hearing. They should look like how the music sounds. Guide them to represent the fast or slow tempo, loud or soft dynamics, and smooth or choppy and heavy or light expression in the music. Be creative!

2. Explain that the composer was trying to convey different animals in the music. Discuss how animals can move quickly or slowly, how they can be little or big, how they can move in a smooth or choppy way and how they can be heavy or light.

3. Listen to the movements again and ask your child to guess which animals they think Saint-Saëns may have been describing based on the movements he or she chose and what he or she is hearing.

4. Reveal the animals that Saint-Saëns actually intended to communicate in each movement and discuss why the composer made the choices that he made for this music.
ACTIVITY 3  Music and Poetry
In this activity, you and your child will explore how elements in both music and poetry can depict animals.

FEATURED REPERTOIRE
Camille Saint-Saëns  The Carnival of the Animals
- Royal March of the Lion
- The Elephant
- Kangaroos
- Aquarium
- The Swan

1. Read the following two Ogden Nash poems to your child and play the corresponding movements from The Carnival of the Animals:

   **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 kangaroomingues.

   **The Swan**
   The swan can swim while sitting down,
   For pure conceit he takes the crown,
   He looks in the mirror over and over,
   And claims to have never heard of Pavlova.
2. Discuss the animals' character traits that are described in these poems and connect them to the traits found in the music. Play the movements again as needed, focusing on the musical elements of tempo, dynamics or expression.

3. Play each of the following movements, which are also from The Carnival of the Animals. Tell your child the name of each movement before playing it:
   - Royal March of the Lion
   - The Elephant
   - Aquarium

   After listening to each movement, talk about the character traits of the animals and how those traits are represented in the music. For example, how does the music sound like a lion?

4. Have your child pick an animal from the list below and guide them to write a poem based on the character traits you’ve discussed:
   - Lion
   - Elephant
   - Fish in an aquarium

   As time allows, have your child write additional poems using another animal as their inspiration.
CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS  Composer History

**WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART** was born on January 27, 1756, in Salzburg, Austria, where his father was a violinist and composer. Mozart was a child prodigy, composing his first piece of music at age five. Mozart continued to write music until his death in 1791 at the young age of 35.

Mozart composed many works in his short life, including symphonies, chamber music, concertos and operas. *The Marriage of Figaro*, composed by Mozart in 1786, is a comic opera in four acts and to this day remains one of the most-performed operas worldwide. The overture—a prelude or instrumental introduction—is also well-known and is often played independently as a concert piece.

**IGOR STRAVINSKY** was born on June 17, 1882, in St. Petersburg, Russia. He began piano lessons as a young boy, also studying music theory and composition. He continued to study music as he grew older, balancing these lessons with his study of law. Stravinsky had a large output of compositions, including choral music, orchestral music, operas and ballets, including one of his most well-known works, *The Firebird*.

He composed *The Firebird* while working for Sergei Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes Company, which was based in Paris. The ballet is considered to be Stravinsky’s breakthrough composition, as he was relatively unknown at the time of its premiere (1910). It tells the tale of Prince Ivan’s search for the most beautiful bird in the world: The Firebird!

**BÉLA BARTÓK** was born on March 25, 1881, in Nagyszentmiklós, Hungary, Austria-Hungary. He started to play piano at an early age and was first taught by his mother—he later continued his studies at the Budapest Academy of Music. Bartók was known for his strong interest in folk music and with Zoltán Kodály, another Hungarian composer, Bartók traveled throughout Hungary and other neighboring countries recording thousands of folk songs.

Bartók used the folk music he recorded in his own compositions, paying tribute to the rich culture and history that he discovered in his journeys. You can hear the very strong, rhythmic patterns and unique sounds in his work, including the *Romanian Folk Dances*, a suite of six short pieces, based on seven Romanian folk tunes that were originally played on fiddle.

**CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS** was also a child prodigy. Born on October 9, 1835, in Paris, France, Saint-Saëns wrote hundreds of compositions, including symphonic poems, symphonies, chamber music and much more!

*The Carnival of the Animals*, composed in 1886, is a suite of fourteen movements, each depicting a different animal—including a lion, an elephant, tortoises, a swan and kangaroos. In 1949, Ogden Nash wrote a set of humorous verses to accompany each movement. The suite has been featured in popular media; the movement “The Aquarium” serves as inspiration to the main theme in Disney’s *Beauty and the Beast*, and “Finale” is featured in Fantasia 2000. The music for Fantasia 2000 was recorded by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra!
Additional resources about Carnival of the Animals

CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS BOOKS

Carnival of the Animals
Written by Jack Prelutsky, illustrated by Mary GrandPre, and published by Knopf Books for Young Readers

Carnival of the Animals
Written by John Lithgow, illustrated by Boris Kulikov, and published by Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

Firebird
Written by Misty Copeland, illustrated by Christopher Myers, published by Putnam Juvenile

The Tale of the Firebird
Written by Gennady Spirin, published by Philomel

VIDEOS

Ballet Fantastique—”The Dying Swan”

Kirov Ballet—”Dance of the Firebird”
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