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 roosters 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 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:

Discover online:
Listen to the Carnival of the Animals
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NM1gpA5XXME
Carnival of the Animals downloadable colouring book
Get to know the composer
http://www.classicsforkids.com/composers/bio.asp?id=46
Sea World/Busch Gardens Animal Sounds Library

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