

2010 SUMMER SOLSTICE FESTIVAL

The Emperor's New Clothes

By Peter Schickele

and

Carnival of the Animals

By Camille Saint-Saëns

Wednesday, June 16, 2010

Convocation Hall

Presented by

The Edmonton Chamber Music Society



The Emperor's New Clothes (2002)

By Peter Schickele

Narrated by Bill Dimmer

1. Fanfare
2. The Emperor's March
3. Oatmeal
4. The Emperor's March with Oatmeal
5. Magic Mirror
6. The Royal Tailors
7. At the Royal Palace
8. Making the Invisible Clothes
9. Parading the New Outfit
10. Running Home
11. Back to the Magic Mirror
12. Finale

Musicians

Lidia Khaner, oboe
Jasmine Lin, violin
Sharon Wei, viola
Marina Hoover, cello
Patricia Tao, piano

The Carnival of the Animals (1886)

By Camille Saint-Saëns

Camille Saint-Saëns' *Carnival of the Animals* is a suite of 14 movements that describe various animals, usually by imitating the sound made by the animal or characterizing the way it moves. This humorous work, composed in 1886, was written for two solo pianos, flute/piccolo, clarinet, xylophone, glass harmonica (usually replaced these days by glockenspiel), and strings (violin, viola, cello double bass). *Carnival* is often performed by two pianos and orchestra, but today, you will hear it in the original chamber music version.

The work is in fourteen movements:

I. Introduction and Royal March of the Lion: This movement is a regal and grand march, featuring fast, running scales in the pianos that mimic the lion's roar.

II. Hens and Roosters: This humorous movement imitates the scratching, clucking noise of hens. The pianos play figures followed by trills that sound much like crowing roosters.

III. Wild Donkeys: The great running speed of these beasts (they can run up to 70km/hr!) is evoked by the feverishly fast scales in the two pianos.

IV. Tortoises: Saint-Saëns makes clever use of parody (which is a way of mocking or making fun of something) to suggest the sluggish movement of these creatures by quoting the famous French can-can melody of another composer, Jacques Offenbach. Normally performed at a very fast tempo, the tune here is played painfully slowly by low-register strings.

V. The Elephant: This is another of Saint-Saëns' jokes; he quotes music of Mendelssohn and Berlioz that is originally written for high, lighter-toned instruments. In this piece, he gives this material to the double bass to create a lumbering and clumsy waltz.

VI. Kangaroo: The two pianos play music that suggests the hopping of the kangaroos.

VII. The Aquarium: One of the most beautifully colouristic of the movements, Saint-Saëns creates a picture of peacefully swimming fish, evoked by slow, languorous music, which is coloured by the delicate sounds of the glockenspiel.

VIII. Personages with Long Ears: Was Saint-Saëns mocking the music critics of the day, with their "long ears" (the real donkeys)? You'll hear the hee-haw of the donkeys in this movement.

IX. The Cuckoo in the Depths of the Forest: Quiet chords in the piano paint a picture of the forest with the cuckooing clarinet.

X. The Aviary: The high strings create the noise that is reminiscent of the background noise of the jungle, while the flute depicts the birds. The pianos, with pings and trills, provide other birds in the background.

XI. Pianists: Although not often thought of as animals, Saint-Saëns includes pianists in this menagerie, good-naturedly mocking them and the hours they spend practicing exercises.

XII. Fossils: Saint-Saëns mimics his own composition, the *Danse macabre*, which uses the xylophone to evoke the image of skeletons and the sound of their bones clacking together to the beat. He also mixes in numerous overly familiar melodies (at least to the French, at that time), including three French nursery rhymes ("J'ai du bon tabac," "Ah vous dirais-je maman," and "Au clair de la lune"), and a snippet of the aria "Una voce poco fa"

from Rossini's opera *The Barber of Seville* into this movement. Saint-Saëns evidently felt these melodies were so famous that they had become museum fossils.

XIII. The Swan: The beautiful melody in the cello depicts the swan gliding over the water and the piano's rippling figures suggest the motion of the water.

XIV. Finale: This movement is a lively and happy ending to the work, which includes music from the menagerie you just heard (listen for the lion, fossils, wild donkeys, hens and roosters, kangaroos, cuckoos, and pianists!). The "Personages with Long Ears" make their appearance just before the end.

Musicians

Jacques Després, piano
Melvin Chen, piano
Shelley Younge, flute/piccolo
Julianne Scott, clarinet
Jonathan Crow, violin
Scott St. John, violin
Sharon Wei, viola
Marina Hoover, cello
Janice Quinn, double bass
Brian Jones, xylophone, glockenspiel

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