

ECMS Children's Concert
Wednesday, June 16, 2010
10 AM & 11:15 AM
Notes and Suggested Classroom Activities

The Edmonton Chamber Music Society's Summer Solstice Festival brings outstanding musicians from across North America to perform three concerts in June. This year's Festival offers to elementary school students, Grades 2 – 6, the opportunity to experience the intimacy and immediacy of chamber music in a special concert for children. Artists will perform two works, Saint-Saëns' *Carnival of the Animals* and Peter Schickele's *The Emperor's New Clothes*. These delightful works introduce young audiences to the sound and personality of string, wind and percussion instruments and engage them in the dynamics of musical narrative. There will be two performances of the 45 minute program.

About chamber music:

Music written for small groups (duos (2), trios (3), quartets (4), etc.). The term "chamber music" comes from the fact that it can be performed in smaller rooms or halls.

- Unlike orchestral music, there is only one person playing each part, so in a sense, the individual instruments are often having "conversations" with each other.
- With fewer musicians, audiences often hear this music in smaller concert halls and can sit closer to the musicians. Many people find chamber music to be a very intimate form of music-making. Convocation Hall seats about 400 people, so you will not need binoculars to see the musicians.
- Chamber music is most often performed without a conductor. The musicians must listen closely to each other (just as you do when having a conversation with a friend) to perform together.

Instruments of the Chamber Ensemble

In this concert, you will hear instruments from three groups of instruments:

String family: violin, viola, cello and double bass

Wind family: Clarinet, flute, piccolo (and oboe in the *Emperor's New Clothes*)

Percussion family: two pianos, xylophone, and glockenspiel

The Works:

Carnival of the Animals, composed by French composer Camille Saint-Saëns in 1886, was originally written for a chamber group composed of the above instruments. It is now often performed by full orchestra, but for this performance, you will hear it in its original form, except that the glass harmonica will be replaced by a glockenspiel.

Carnival of the Animals is a piece of 14 movements or sections that musically describe many animals (lions marching, hens and roosters, donkeys, elephants, tortoises, to name a few). Some of these depictions are humorous and others are very beautiful (the Swan). One movement depicts two pianists struggling to practice their scales.

The Emperor's New Clothes was written by composer Peter Schickele and first performed in 2002. It is a humorous adaptation of the tale by Danish author, Hans Christian Andersen. Composer Peter Schickele is probably most famous as the creator of the fictional composer, PDQ Bach, the twenty-first of Johann Sebastian Bach's twenty children! His clever humor comes through in his adaptation of this story. This work is written for violin, viola, cello, oboe and piano.

Pre-concert Activities:

To have your students learn more about *Carnival of the Animals* and the composer, more extensive information can be found at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Carnival_of_the_Animals

<http://www.geocities.com/viennaonline/bgsound/bgsound0900.html?20091>

The entire piece can be heard on the **Naxos Music Library**, which is accessible through the Edmonton Public Library (search “databases”) if you have a membership. There are also many recordings available at your local branch of the EPL.

Poetry: In 1949, the poet Ogden Nash wrote a set of poems to accompany this work.

http://www.ncusd203.org/river_woods/musicweb/rwwebsite/carnival_animals/nash_carnival.html.

Students will enjoy the humor in these poems.

Art: After listening to the music, students can use various art media to create the animals described by the music of *Carnival of the Animals*. Eric Carle’s book, *Animals Animals*, is a collection of poetry, accompanied by Carle’s distinctive artwork, which serves as a resource for poetry and art.

Literature: Have students be familiar with the original Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale, *The Emperor’s New Clothes*. They will better appreciate Mr. Schickele’s adaptation. What means does he use to “modernize” the story? What are some humorous additions? What kinds of word play does he employ?

Music: Listening to a chamber music performance or orchestral version will introduce students to the different timbres of instruments. Students can identify what instruments or combination of instruments are employed in each movement, which will give them a sense of the range of possible sounds when instruments are played alone or together.

Science: Introduce students to how sound is created in string, wind, and percussion instruments, which can tie in well with the study of sound waves.

For more information, please contact Festival Director, Dr. Patricia Tao, Associate Professor of Music, University of Alberta, at 780-492-8109 or ptao@ualberta.ca.

