Bird Songs

Teaching Objective
Students will listen to music that imitates the sound of birds and learn about the instruments the composer chose to represent their songs, exploring the characteristics of Carnival of the Animals.

Resources

• Background information on Camille Saint-Saëns and his piece, Carnival of the Animals
• Recording of Carnival of the Animals
• Sound clips: flute, bassoon, violin, clarinet and piano. Sound clips can be found on the dsokids.com musical instruments page.
• Pictures of hens, roosters, the aviary, the swan and the cuckoo found on the Carnival of Animals Character Sheet.

Vocabulary
Aviary - A place where flying birds can be kept confined.

Pre-Assessment
Ask the students if anyone has a pet bird. Have they ever heard it sing? Have they ever seen a hen, a rooster, or a cuckoo? What sounds do these birds make? Ask the students if they have ever visited an aviary. What can be found there? Has anyone ever seen a live swan? Would a swan live in an aviary?

Teaching Sequence
1. Tell the class that in the upcoming Dallas Symphony Youth Concert they will hear musical pieces written to describe the sounds of birds. Each piece of music describes something about the bird after which it is named.
2. Camille Saint-Saëns chose the clarinet to represent the song of a cuckoo in the forest. Listen to "The Cuckoo" to hear its bird song. How many times do you hear it call? (Use tally marks to keep count).
3. Look up the clarinet on DSOKids.com to hear its sound and to learn more about its physical characteristics.
4. In the musical piece, "Hens and Roosters," also written by Saint-Saëns, other instruments were used to represent the sounds these birds make. Listen to hear the violins and the piano represent the hens. The clarinet is used as the sound of the rooster.
5. Look up the violin and piano on DSOKids.com to hear their sounds and to learn more about their physical characteristics.
6. Discuss the physical characteristics of birds, where they live, and what they do. Listen to the piece called "The Aviary." What did the composer do to paint a sound painting of the birds that live there? (Music is quick and fluttering reminiscent of the birds as they flutter and fly from tree branch to tree branch.) What instrument did Saint-Saëns used to portray these fluttering birds? (Answer: the flute).
7. Look up the flute on DSOKids.com to learn more about its sound and its physical characteristics.

8. A swan is a bird, too. Discuss how the swan is different from birds that live in an aviary. (A swan swims gracefully in the water and can often be found gliding on a lake or pond. A swan has a much longer neck than other birds.) Listen to "The Swan." What did the composer do differently in his music to paint a musical picture of this bird? (Use of slow, smooth music represents the swan as it glides on the water.) What instrument did Saint-Saëns used to portray the swan? (Answer: the cello)

9. Look up the cello on DSOKids.com to learn more about its sound and its physical characteristics.

Culminating Activity
Listen again to each excerpt describing birds. Can the students name the instruments used to describe the birds?

Evaluation
Did students listen to music that imitates the sound of birds and learn about the instruments the composer chose to represent their songs, exploring the characteristics of Carnival of the Animals?

Extension Activities
1. Have the students draw a picture of the birds portrayed in each piece of music as they listen again to these selections.
2. Have the students dramatize the type of movement that each of these birds might use while listening to the appropriate music selection.

Co-Curricular Connections/TEKS
Fine Arts- Music: 117.3 1B,3B,4B; 117.6 1.1A,B, 1.5B, 1.6A,B; 117.9 2.1A,B, 2.5C, 2.6A,B
Fine Arts- Art: 117.2 K.2A; 117.5 1.2A; 117.82.2A
Fine Arts- Theater: 117.4 1A,B,C,D, 2A,B,C,D, 3C,D, 5A,B,C,D; 117.7 1A,B,C,D, 2A,B, 3C,D, 5AB,C; 117.10 1A,B,C,D, 2A,B, 3C,D, 5A,B,C,D