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# Animal Fair - A Spectacular Pop-up

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Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

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In the Age of Innocence, if you were in the Scouts or Guides, or maybe a Church Youth Club of a liberal theological persuasion, you probably sang 'Animal Fair' around the campfire or on the back seat of the bus on an outing. It could last forever since it is a round. It might even crop up in a music lesson at school, when you had to sustain its insistent rhythm against other groups belting it out with equal vigour. If you would rather sing this book than read it with a child, Browne provides you with words and music on the first page. Unfortunately, you will be hard pressed to keep the beat, because any child is going to want to stop to work all the levers, lift the flaps, twirl the volvelles or gasp at the huge sneezing elephant's head which erupts out of the pages with an anxious monkey sliding down its proboscis. As with a round, however, you'll surely find yourself getting to the end ('What became of the monkey, monkey, monkey, monkey, monkey...') and being required to turn back to begin again, 'I went to the Animal Fair...' he form suits Browne very well. Movables depend upon surprise, wit, concealment and intrigue - and these have been Browne's stock-in-trade for many a picture book. He has found a paper engineer in Martin Taylor whose skills and ingenuity chime sweetly with his own. The distant fair, silhouetted on the hilltop, springs magically into colourful life at the pull of a lever. By the same process, the humans revolving on the roundabout are transformed into steeds ridden by bears, pigs and - inevitably - a gorilla. A creepy mansion in which 'the big baboon by the light of the moon was combing his auburn hair' offers numerous windows which need opening. And, of course, the monkey really does fall out of his bunk onto the elephant's trunk. No subtext for the psychoanalyst's couch in this particular Browne (I think), but certainly all the fun of the fair.

Running Order:

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