



# The Carnival of the Animals : Poems inspired by Saint-Saens' music

Books Reviewed:

[Carnival of the Animals, The: Poems inspired by Saint-Saens' music](#) [1]

Issue:

[157](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Helen Taylor](#) [3]

New to Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

This beautifully produced book with accompanying CD was the idea of the Poems on the Underground team ? Gerard Benson, Judith Chernaik and Cicely Herbert who also read the poems; and the idea is inspired. They asked 13 contemporary poets to write a poem for each animal in Saint Saens' musical Carnival and the brilliant Satoshi Kitamura is the illustrator. Not only that, but the Apollo Chamber Players provide a fresh and immediate performance of the music interspersed with readings of the poems. The multi-layered collaboration is exuberant. Poets such as James Berry, Adrian Mitchell, Wendy Cope and Gillian Clarke match the pace and rhythm of language and image to the music, which although written in 1886 is still witty, lyrical and irresistible. Kitamura's familiar bold inky style, lively images and humour stretch and deepen the characters in the music and in the poetry. From illustrating Charles Causley's exquisite swan ?It is a music of the eye. The swan/ Assumes the heavy garment of the stream?? to Gerard Benson's Fossils who become dinosaur skeletons playing clarinets and cellos, his imagination brings text image and sound together to create a carnival for the senses. The book can be enjoyed alone as can the CD; but together the music, poetry and illustrations work in beautiful harmony to allow a deeper contemplation and enjoyment of all three elements. Stunning.

Running Order:

52

---

**Source URL (retrieved on Dec '19):** <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/157/childrens-books/reviews/the-carnival-of-the-animals-poems-inspired-by-saint-saens-music>

**Links:**

[1] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/carnival-of-the-animals-the-poems-inspired-by-saint-saens-music>

[2] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/157>

[3] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/helen-taylor>