

# The Carnival of the Animals

Musical fairy tale for small orchestra, actor and shadows



**Music** Camille Saint-Saëns

**Project, staging and direction**

*Controluce Teatro d'Ombre*

**Text** Jacopo Masini

**Original silhouettes** Cora De Maria

**With** Cora De Maria, Alberto Jona, Jenaro Meléndrez Chas,  
Claudio Dughera

**Production**

Unione Musicale di Torino onlus

*inside the project* Atelier Giovani

**Collaboration** Fondazione Teatro Ragazzi e Giovani onlus

*performance with live music*

Debut: February 2011, Vittoria Theatre of Turin with *Trio Debussy*  
and *Ensemble Atelier Giovani* of Turin

Animal kingdom has always exercised fascination and spirit of emulation on music and composers from the Renaissance to the twentieth century music. Examples are Biber, Couperin, Mussorgsky, Ravel, Debussy, Messiaen. Saint-Saëns wrote around 1886 The carnival of the animals as a sort of game, musical joke, that he never wanted to publish in life, even though Liszt, for example, was literally enchanted by the composition. Lions, elephants, onagers, chickens, swans and turtles inhabit this funny and engaging page along with men with long ears (music critics that the composer immortalized in the "cry" of the violin) and piano players (considered the lowest form of animal life) in a parade of small paintings of a strong evocative impact. The game of citations in Carnival is amazing and good-naturedly irreverent, from Rossini to Berlioz, from Offenbach to Mendelssohn, up to Saint-Saëns own music, everything is put into joke with affectionate happiness.

On this game even improbable of Saint-Saëns' piece, combining in fact poultry with pianists, the writer Jacopo Masini has drafted a text that turns into the surreal. The result is a work of playful impression for the audience, dedicated to childhood but not only, where freedom and fantasy converge, apart of moralistic or didactic patterns. A hypothetical zookeeper decides one night giving freedom to all the animals and begins to tell his adventure, so great that it is even in rhyme. A dream and a hymn to freedom and music.

Music has led the shadows, almost as proposing the visual solutions by itself. The shadow world is inspired by the imaginary of the late nineteenth century, served with a surreal smile that makes everything flying toward the heights.