

Excerpts from narration to Saint-Saens' *Carnival of the Animals*

By Hilan Warshaw

Premiered by the American Youth Symphony (Los Angeles), with Marni Nixon narrating

The Dinosaur

I'm just a dead old dinosaur.
You'll never see me prance or roar.
I've been around, you may have known,
Since Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone,
Since Coca-Cola caused addiction
And L. Ron Hubbard wrote science fiction,
Since "P.C." was just a computer,
Und *Ahh*-nold was just a commuter,
And candidates ran with a dream,
And George Bush ran a baseball team.

You take the museum elevator
To the highest floor,
Happy to ignore
The floor that came before.
If there's a person who prefers
An offering that's classic,
The way the world works nowadays,
He's practically Jurassic.
Have you read any Ibsen,
Mel Gibson?
Parlez-vous francais,
Beyonce?
You stand around and look at me,
A piece of Natural History,
Exhibited reluctantly;
Then off you go to see what's new.
I can't look back, it's very true.
But who will one day look at *you*?

The Swan

I saw you first upon this lake,
In customary silence.
Time was, the promise on your face

Led me to an untravelled place.
That place was yours alone,
Yours alone.

But then you sailed away, and I
Was powerless—the inlet's curve
Felt like your touch—the laughing surf
Rushed up and spoke of you.
The mind can't tell you're absent,
You are everywhere in view.

I've gone to an embankment,
No swan to call my own.
That place is mine alone,
Mine alone.