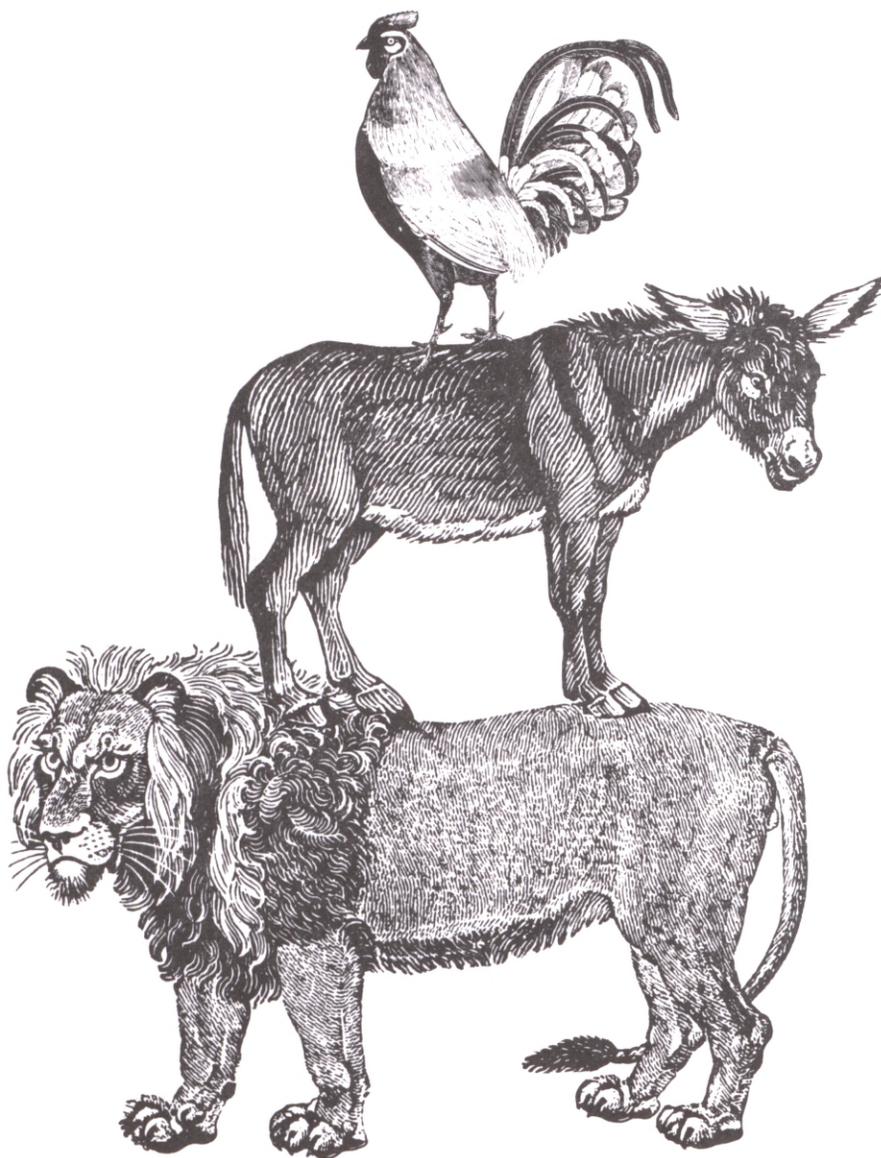


GREGG SMITH
AESOP'S FABLES

For Four-Part Chorus
of Mixed Voices
and Piano Accompaniment



G. SCHIRMER NEW YORK/LONDON

AESOP'S FABLES

1. Introduction, *No. 12130*
2. The Raven and The Fox, *No. 12131*
3. The Hares and The Frogs, *No. 12132*
4. The Ass, Lion and Cock, *No. 12133*
5. Death and The Old Man, *No. 12134*
6. The Lady With Sore Eyes, *No. 12135*
7. The Frogs and The Bull, *No. 12136*
8. The Lark in a Net, *No. 12137*
9. The Boy and His False Alarms, *No. 12138*
10. Final Chorale, *No. 12139*

Aesop's Fables was originally written for a solo vocal quartet with piano. The entire work may be performed by anywhere from 4 to 40 singers although numbers 3, 6 and 9 are more effective with a larger ensemble. If a chorus is available it is preferable to perform the complete work with the full ensemble. There are eight "Operettes" plus the "Introduction" and "Final Chorale" and the total performance time is between 50 and 60 minutes depending on the complexity of the scenery and staging. There should be as little pause as possible between movements.

Each "Operette" is a separate entity (as noted in the "Introduction") so any number of them can be performed in one evening. There are three important areas for programming:

1. As part of a larger choral program, giving the choral director opportunities for choral theater.
2. Use in educational opera workshops. Since there are over 20 solo roles as well as three ensemble works *Aesop's Fables* can adapt to almost any opera workshop situation or group makeup.
3. Children's Opera presentations.

The librettos are combinations of the 17th century texts of Sir Roger L'Estrange and my own, the latter mostly for the dialogues. There is a wide range of musical styles (tonal, atonal, polytonal, aleatoric, etc.) but tonality pre-dominates. A great deal of musical and verbal parody underlies the action, and with the exceptions of numbers 5 and 8 all of the "Operettes" are comedic (Opera Buffa style).

Staging and costuming can be absolutely minimal and still be dramatically convincing. Without scenery and no change of formal choral stage attire, one or two simple props (such as a pair of dark glasses for the "Lady with Sore Eyes") can carry the audiences' imagination into the world of theater. A good general design is to keep the chorus (unless directly involved in the action) on one side, the piano on the other, with stage center for the solo singers and the main action. Probably the singularly most useful theatrical device, especially during narrations and the singing of the morals, is the "freeze".

There are many ways of presenting these fables and it is my hope that the text and music makes each drama clear and leaves a great deal of creative possibility in the hands of the individual director and singer.

G.S.