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The American Prize
2014 Finalist

Aesop's Fables

woodwind quintet and narrator

Rebecca Oswald
(1999)

Duration 12:00



Rebecca Oswald Music
rebeccaoswald.com

Rebecca Oswald (b. 1958) is an award winning composer and lifelong pianist. Her catalogue includes music for piano as well as other solo instruments, various chamber ensembles, string and full orchestra, art songs, all types of choral ensembles including chorus with orchestra, a clarinet concerto, and an opera. She has also written music for film and games. She holds a Bachelor of Music degree, *summa cum laude*, in music theory and composition from Westminster Choir College (1998), and a Master of Music degree in music composition from the University of Oregon School of Music (2001). For more information please visit rebeccaoswald.com or write to rebecca@rebeccaoswald.com.

Rebecca Oswald

Aesop's Fables

woodwind quintet and narrator

- I. The Ant and the Grasshopper**
(featuring the oboe as the Ant and the bassoon as the Grasshopper)
- II. The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse**
(featuring the clarinet as the Town Mouse and the flute as the Country Mouse)
- III. The Hare and the Tortoise**
(featuring the oboe as the Hare and the horn as the Tortoise)
- IV. The Wind and the Sun**
(featuring the clarinet as the Wind and the bassoon as the Sun)
- V. The Lion and the Mouse**
(featuring the horn as the Lion and the flute as the Mouse)

Program notes:

Aesop, a fabulist or writer of fables, lived in Greece in the 6th century B.C. This spirited concert work for woodwind quintet and narrator recounts five of Aesop's well-loved tales. The stories come to life through vivid music and expressive narration. Each fable has two main characters, musically represented by a particular pair of the woodwind quintet instruments; and of course, each of *Aesop's Fables* concludes with its timeless and well-known lesson.

Requests:

- (1) Please report all U.S. performances of this work to BMI (classical@bmi.com) and to me (rebecca@rebeccaoswald.com) by emailing a JPG or PDF of a program, flyer, poster, or ticket showing the title of my programmed work(s) and my name (Rebecca Oswald).
- (2) Similarly, please report all non-U.S. performances to the host country's national performance rights organization, to BMI (classical@bmi.com), and to me (rebecca@rebeccaoswald.com).

Many thanks! I hope you and your ensemble enjoy playing *Aesop's Fables*.

— Rebecca Oswald



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Notes to performers:

All trills begin on the principal note and on the beat. Auxilliary notes are indicated.

The five fables are told by both the music and the narration. The two main characters in each tale are musically represented by a unique pairing of instruments; thus, each instrument is featured twice throughout the five movements. In addition to the normal musical markings (tempos, dynamics, slurs, articulations, etc.), the instrumental parts also show character or mood markings, in *italic*, to better help the players reflect the emotional content of their various phrases.

The narration part is designed to be spoken in sync with the music, and should be delivered with vivid, dynamic vocal inflection. The narrator's part shows a two staff piano-like reduction of the instrumental score, with arrows to indicate the specific timing for the start of each phrase. And, to be heard well, the narrator should be amplified.

Aesop's Fables

woodwind quintet and narrator

Rebecca Oswald

I. The Ant and the Grasshopper

(featuring the oboe as the Ant and the bassoon as the Grasshopper)

Allegretto (♩ = 104)

The first system of the musical score includes staves for Flute, Oboe, A Clarinet, Horn, Bassoon, and Narrator. The Flute part begins with a triplet of eighth notes marked *cheerful* and *mp*. The Bassoon part begins with a triplet of eighth notes marked *mf*. The Narrator part contains the text: "On a bright summer day a Grasshopper was leaping around in a meadow, singing and chirping for joy." An upward-pointing arrow indicates the start of the narration.

The second system of the musical score includes staves for Flute, Oboe, A Clarinet, Horn, Bassoon, and Narrator. The Flute part begins with a triplet of eighth notes marked *sweet* and *p*. The Bassoon part continues with a triplet of eighth notes marked *mf*. The Oboe part has a triplet of eighth notes marked *mp*. The Bassoon part ends with a triplet of eighth notes marked *f* and *mf*.

9 *heavy*

↑ Along came an Ant, weighted down by a large ear of corn he was carrying to the anthill.

16 *cheerful* *sweet*

↑ "Why don't you stop and sing with me," the Grasshopper said, "instead of struggling and straining like that?"

20

heavy
mf
heavy
mp
mf < *f* *mf* < *f* *mf* < *f*
heavy
mf
heavy
mf
f < *mp*

↑ "I am gathering food for the winter," said the Ant,

24

cheerful
mf < *f* *mf* < *f* *mf* *mf* < *f* *f* *mp*
mf *f*
mf *f*
mf *f*
cheerful
f

↑ "and I suggest that you do so as well."

29 *sweet*

p *mp*

↑ “Who cares about winter?” the Grasshopper said.
“Today there is plenty to eat.”

33 *heavy*

mf *heavy* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *heavy* *mf* *heavy* *mf* *mf* *p* *ppp*

↑ But the Ant continued on
with his toil.

37

↑ Then the winter came.

41

↑ Soon the Grasshopper was dying of hunger, for he had no food.

43

Musical score for measures 43-44. The score is written for five staves. The first staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line with a slur over measures 43-44, marked *mp* and *p*. The second staff (treble clef) is empty. The third staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line with a slur over measures 43-44, marked *mp* and *p*. The fourth staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line with a slur over measures 43-44, marked *p* and *p*, with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 44. The fifth staff (bass clef) contains a melodic line with a slur over measures 43-44, marked *f* and *fp*, with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 44. The word "desperate" is written above the fifth staff in measure 44.

45

Musical score for measures 45-46. The score is written for five staves. The first staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line with a slur over measures 45-46, marked *mp* and *p*. The second staff (treble clef) is empty. The third staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line with a slur over measures 45-46, marked *mp* and *p*. The fourth staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line with a slur over measures 45-46, marked *p* and *p*, with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 46. The fifth staff (bass clef) contains a melodic line with a slur over measures 45-46, marked *f* and *fp*, with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 46.

47

↑ Yet day after day he watched the ants feasting on their summer stores of grain and corn.

49

↑ Too late the Grasshopper realized

51

sfpp *mf* *mp* *p* *f* *sub. f* *p*

↑ IT IS BEST TO PREPARE FOR TIMES OF NECESSITY.

II. The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse

(featuring the clarinet as the Town Mouse and the flute as the Country Mouse)

Allegro (♩. = 132)

Musical score for the first system, featuring Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Horn (Hn.), Bassoon (Bsn.), and Narrator (Narr.). The score is in 12/8 time and includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *mf*, and *mp*, along with the instruction *urbane*. The Flute part is mostly silent. The Oboe part begins with a *p* dynamic and a *mf* dynamic, marked *urbane*. The Clarinet part begins with a *mf* dynamic and is marked *urbane*. The Bassoon part begins with a *mf* dynamic and is marked *urbane*. The Narrator part includes the instruction: **↑** Surely you know that a Town Mouse once went to the country to visit his cousin.

Musical score for the second system, featuring Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Horn (Hn.), Bassoon (Bsn.), and Narrator (Narr.). The score is in 12/8 time and includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *mp*, and *mf*. The Flute part begins with a *p* dynamic. The Oboe part begins with a *mp* dynamic. The Clarinet part is silent. The Horn part is silent. The Bassoon part begins with a *mp* dynamic. The Narrator part is silent.

7

bucolic

mp

mf

f

bucolic

p

p

↑ This rustic cousin was rather coarse and common,

11

bucolic

mp

mf

f

bucolic

p

p

↑ but he happily welcomed his dear friend from town.

Musical score for measures 15-19. The score consists of five staves. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The third staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The fourth staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The fifth staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The time signature is 12/8. The music features various dynamics: *mf*, *mp*, *p*, and *mp*. There are also trills and triplets indicated in the third and fourth staves.

↑ Beans and rice, bread and cheese were all the Country Mouse had to share,

↑ but he offered them freely.

Musical score for measures 21-23. The score consists of five staves. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The third staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The fourth staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The fifth staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The time signature is 12/8. The music features various dynamics: *mp* and *mf*. There are also trills and triplets indicated in the third and fourth staves.

↑ The Town Mouse looked down his long nose at the simple meal before him, and said,

24

↑ “Dear cousin, I do not understand how you tolerate such plain food as this,

28

(♩. = ♩)

↑ but naturally

↑ there is nothing else to eat in the country.

33 (♩ = ♩.)

Musical score for measures 33-35. The score is in 12/8 time and consists of five staves. The first staff is a grand staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The second staff is a vocal line with lyrics. The third staff is a piano accompaniment line. The fourth staff is a bass line. The fifth staff is a bass line. Dynamics include *p*, *mp*, and *mf*. The word *urbane* is written above the vocal line. An upward-pointing arrow indicates the start of the lyrics.

urbane
p *mp*
urbane
mf
urbane
mf

↑ Come to town with me and I
will show you the good life!

36

Musical score for measures 36-38. The score is in 12/8 time and consists of four staves. The first staff is a grand staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The second staff is a vocal line with lyrics. The third staff is a piano accompaniment line. The fourth staff is a bass line. Dynamics include *p* and *mp*. An upward-pointing arrow indicates the start of the lyrics.

p *mp*
mp

↑ Soon you will wonder how you could ever
have been content in the country."

39

animated *p* *mp* *mf* *f* *mp* *mf* *f* *mf*

↑ Straightaway the two mice set out for town,

43

mp *mp* *mp*

↑ arriving at the Town Mouse's estate in the middle of the night.

46 (♩. = ♩) *mf* *sweet* *p* *mf* *sweet* *p* *sweet* *p* *urbane* *mp*

↑ “Let us dine after our travels,”
said the courteous Town Mouse,

50 *cheerful* *mp* *p* *mf* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

↑ and he led his cousin
to a spacious dining hall.

60

f
mf
f
mf
f
p
p

63 (♩ = ♪)

alarmed
mp

rough
rough

mp
mp
mp

↑ Suddenly there was growling and barking.

67

mf

blithe

mf

mf

mf

↑ “What is that sound?”
the Country Mouse asked.

↑ “It is just the dogs who live
here,” his cousin replied.

71

mf

f

f

↑ “Dogs?!” the Country Mouse exclaimed.
“That is not a pleasant song with dinner!”

75

animated

ff

ff

f

ff

f

ff

↑ Suddenly the door burst open, in ran two enormous wolfhounds, and the two mice had to scamper away to safety.

79

82 *Lento* (♩ = 80) *expressive*

f *sfp* *ff* *mp*

p

f *sfp* *ff* *mp*

p

↑ “Farewell, dear Cousin,”
the Country Mouse said.

86 *Allegro* (♩ = 132) *bucolic*

p *mp*

p

p *p* *p*

p *p* *p*

↑ “Oh, must you leave so soon?”
said the other.

↑ “Yes,” he replied,

90 *riten.*

↑ "A SIMPLE MEAL
IN PEACE

↑ IS BETTER THAN
A RICH FEAST

↑ IN FEAR."

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III. The Hare and the Tortoise

(featuring the oboe as the Hare and the horn as the Tortoise)

Vivace (♩ = 126)

Musical score for the first system, measures 1-4. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Horn (Hn.), Bassoon (Bsn.), and Narrator (Narr.). The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is Vivace with a quarter note equal to 126 beats per minute. The Flute part starts with a *p* dynamic. The Oboe part is marked *animated* and *mf*. The Clarinet part starts with a *p* dynamic. The Bassoon part starts with a *p* dynamic. The Horn part is silent. The Narrator part has an upward arrow pointing to the start of the first measure, with the text: "Once, the Hare was bragging to the other animals about how quickly he could run."

Musical score for the second system, measures 5-8. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Horn (Hn.), Bassoon (Bsn.), and Narrator (Narr.). The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#) and the time signature is 4/4. The Flute part starts with a *mp* dynamic. The Oboe part starts with a *f* dynamic. The Clarinet part starts with a *mp* dynamic. The Bassoon part starts with a *mp* dynamic. The Horn part is silent. The Narrator part has an upward arrow pointing to the start of the fifth measure, with the text: "Never have I been beaten," he said, "when I run at my top speed."

8

p

mf *fp*

p

serious *mf*

p *fp*

↑ I hereby challenge any one of you to a race.”

↑ The Tortoise quietly spoke up: “I accept your challenge.”

13

mp

f

mp

mp

mp

↑ “What a joke!” the Hare laughed. “I could run circles around you the whole way.”

17

fp

f

fp

↑ "Do not brag until you've won,"
the Tortoise answered.

22

poco rit. *a tempo*

p *mf*

p *mf*

p *mf*

↑ "Let's just ↑ race."

↑ So they agreed
on a course

↑ and the race
began.

27

p *mp* *mp*

mf *f < ff*

p *mp*

heavy *mf* *pp*

↑ Immediately the Hare sprinted away,
over hill and dale, clean out of sight.

31

p

mf

p

mf *pp*

↑ But soon, out of scorn
for the Tortoise,

34

pp *ppp* *pppp*

tranquil

mp *p* *pp* *ppp*

p

↑ the Hare stopped and lay down to take a nap.

38

mf

↑ Now the Tortoise plodded along, and plodded along.

43

poco accel.

Musical score for measures 43-45. The score consists of five staves. The top staff is a grand staff with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The music is marked *agitated*. The first staff has dynamics *pp*, *p*, and *mp*. The second staff has a dynamic of *mp*. The third staff has a dynamic of *f*. The fourth staff has a dynamic of *mp*. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some triplets and slurs.

↑ Eventually the Hare woke from his nap and saw the Tortoise near the finish line.
But the Hare could not run fast enough to overtake him!

46

poco rit.

a tempo

Musical score for measures 46-48. The score consists of five staves. The top staff is a grand staff with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The music is marked *poco rit.* in the first two measures and *a tempo* in the third. The first staff has dynamics *mf*, *f*, and *mf*. The second staff has a dynamic of *mf*. The third staff has a dynamic of *ff*. The fourth staff has a dynamic of *mf*. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some triplets and slurs. The third measure ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

49

f *p* *f* *f* *f*

declamatory

mf *f*

↑ So the Tortoise declared: ↑ "SLOW AND STEADY WINS THE RACE."

IV. The Wind and the Sun

(featuring the clarinet as the Wind and the bassoon as the Sun)

Andante (♩ = 80)

Musical score for the first system, measures 1-5. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Horn (Hn.), Bassoon (Bsn.), and Narrator (Narr.).

- Fl.:** Starts with *mf*. Measures 2-5 are rests.
- Ob.:** Starts with *mf*. Measure 2 has a sixteenth-note run marked *blustery*. Measure 3 has a dynamic shift to *p*. Measures 4-5 are rests.
- Cl.:** Starts with *f*. Measures 1-3 have sixteenth-note runs marked *blustery*. Measure 4 has a dynamic shift to *mp*. Measure 5 is a rest.
- Hn.:** Measures 1-3 are rests. Measure 4 has a dynamic shift to *p*. Measure 5 has a dynamic shift to *calm*.
- Bsn.:** Measures 1-3 are rests. Measure 4 has a dynamic shift to *calm*. Measure 5 has a dynamic shift to *f*.
- Narr.:** Three arrows point to measures 2, 4, and 5 with the text: "The Wind", "and the Sun", and "were quarrelling".

Musical score for the second system, measures 6-10. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Horn (Hn.), Bassoon (Bsn.), and Narrator (Narr.).

- Fl.:** Measure 6 has a dynamic shift to *mf*. Measures 7-10 are rests.
- Ob.:** Measure 6 has a dynamic shift to *mf*. Measure 7 has a sixteenth-note run marked *blustery*. Measure 8 has a dynamic shift to *p*. Measures 9-10 are rests.
- Cl.:** Measures 6-8 have sixteenth-note runs marked *f*. Measure 9 has a dynamic shift to *mp*. Measure 10 is a rest.
- Hn.:** Measures 6-8 are rests. Measure 9 has a dynamic shift to *pp*. Measure 10 has a dynamic shift to *p*.
- Bsn.:** Measures 6-8 are rests. Measure 9 has a dynamic shift to *mp*. Measure 10 has a dynamic shift to *f*.
- Narr.:** One arrow points to measure 10 with the text: "over which of them was stronger."

11

subdued

mp

p

mf

pp

mp

p

mf

clever

↑ All at once they saw a traveler approaching.

16

p

mf

p

clever

p

mf

p

mf

p

sfp

sfp

↑ The Sun said, "Here is a way to settle our dispute. Whichever of us can make that traveler remove his coat

↑ shall be considered the stronger.

poco rit. *a tempo*

23

↑ You first.”

↑ The Sun hid himself behind a cloud,

26

↑ while the Wind blew with all his might upon the traveler.

↑ But with each gust he blew,

↑ the traveler wrapped his coat around himself even more tightly.

↑ Finally,

↑ the Wind gave up

↑ in despair.

36

light
mf
mf *p*
f

↑ So the Sun came out, ↑ beaming in radiant splendor upon the traveler, ↑ who was soon so hot

42

poco rit.
p *pp*
pp *pp*
pp *pp*

↑ that he removed his coat. ↑ KINDNESS IS MORE EFFECTIVE THAN SEVERITY.

V. The Lion and the Mouse

(featuring the horn as the Lion and the flute as the Mouse)

Espressivo (♩ = ca. 100) *cheerful*

Fl. *mf*

Ob.

Cl.

Hn. *smooth*
mp *f* *mp*

Bsn. *smooth*
mp

Narr. ↑ One time a Lion was sleeping

5

Fl. *mf*

Hn. *smooth*
mp *f* *mp* *mf* *alert*

Bsn. *smooth*
mp *f*

Narr. ↑ when a Mouse began skipping about on top of him.

9 **Più mosso** (♩ = 120)

↑ Sure enough,
the Lion awoke!

↑ He caught the little Mouse
in his giant paw

↑ and opened his enormous
mouth to eat him alive.

↑ “Forgive me, your Majesty,” cried the little Mouse,
“If you would pardon me this once, I shall always remember it.”

18

mf *mp* *mf*

mp

mp

mp

mp

↑ And who knows?
Maybe I can return the favor someday."

22

mp

p

p

jolly

f

jolly

p

f

↑ The Lion roared with laughter to think that the
little Mouse would ever be able to help him!

27

↑ And he opened his paw ↑ and set the Mouse free.

Meno mosso (♩ = 112)

31

↑ Some time later, ↑ the Lion was captured by hunters

37

↑ who wanted to sell him
to the circus.

↑ They tied him to a tree and went to find a cart
on which to carry him.

Con moto (♩ = 120)
animated

↑ About then the little Mouse
was passing by,

47

più f *ff*

mf

mf

strong

mf

fp

↑ and he saw the Lion's sad predicament.

↑ So the Mouse scampered up and quickly chewed through the ropes binding the King of Beasts.

52

f *f* *f*

mp

mp

no mute *mf* *f* *ff*

mf *f* *ff*

↑ The Lion was free!

55

p

p

p

fp

p

↑ “What did I tell you?”
the little Mouse said.

↑ “A LITTLE FRIEND
CAN BE A GREAT FRIEND.”

58

Allegramente
happy

f

ff

happy

f

happy

f

happy

ff

happy

f

62

Musical score for measures 62-64. The score consists of five staves. The first staff has dynamics *mf* and *p*. The second staff has dynamics *mp* and *pp*. The third staff has dynamics *mp* and *pp*. The fourth staff has dynamics *p* and *ff*. The fifth staff has dynamics *mp* and *f*. The music features various rhythmic patterns and articulations.

65

Musical score for measures 65-67. The score consists of five staves. The first staff has dynamics *fp* and *ff*. The second staff has dynamics *mf* and *ff*. The third staff has dynamics *mf* and *ff*. The fourth staff has dynamics *f*. The fifth staff has dynamics *ff*. The music features various rhythmic patterns and articulations.

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