

PREFACE

After years of producing grade-level performances for large numbers of students, we are excited to share our work with you. Classroom teachers drove our initiative to create grade-level performances, and we responded by using well-known stories and writing our own music. At first one or two classes were interested in working with us, but once the other classes saw the productions, they wanted to be involved too. Pretty soon, we were presenting plays with entire grade levels involving over 120 students!

Whether your stage is in a gymnasium, a “cafetorium,” or an actual auditorium, *Sing a Song of Aesop* is designed so that the instruction can take place in your normal music room setting, during your regularly scheduled classes. We work closely with our grade-level classroom teachers, having them choose the narrators and leads, but you could hold auditions during your music classes and choose them yourself. We also invite parents to get involved with the scenery and costumes, which can be as simple or elaborate as you wish. Photographs and templates are included in this resource to assist you in creating the costumes and props. There are also lots of wonderful bonus features on the included CD, so be sure to check it out!

Sing a Song of Aesop is based on five traditional fables from Aesop. Aesop was a slave who lived in Greece over 2,000 years ago. Because he was a gifted storyteller, his master freed him. His timeless tales were first written down by a monk in the fourteenth century. Aesop’s fables remain fresh and meaningful today and their morals teach important lessons about life. The tales included in this musical are told through narration, main characters, and original songs. Your local and school libraries are probably filled with books of Aesop’s fables, and students will enjoy comparing different versions of the same tale!

We hope you and your students enjoy *Sing a Song of Aesop*! On with the show!

Brian Hiller
Don Dupont



PRODUCTION NOTES

There are eleven speaking roles for individual students and lines for up to thirty-seven narrators. You will need five classes (or groups). All students should sing all of the songs. Each class (or large group) is assigned to one of the fables. After the students perform a fable, the class assigned to that fable should come off the risers to perform the movements. (See “Suggestions for Adding Simple Choreography” on page 46 and the piano and vocal scores for more information.) The entire production should last about thirty minutes.

ABBREVIATIONS

DS: downstage

DSR: downstage, right

DSL: downstage, left

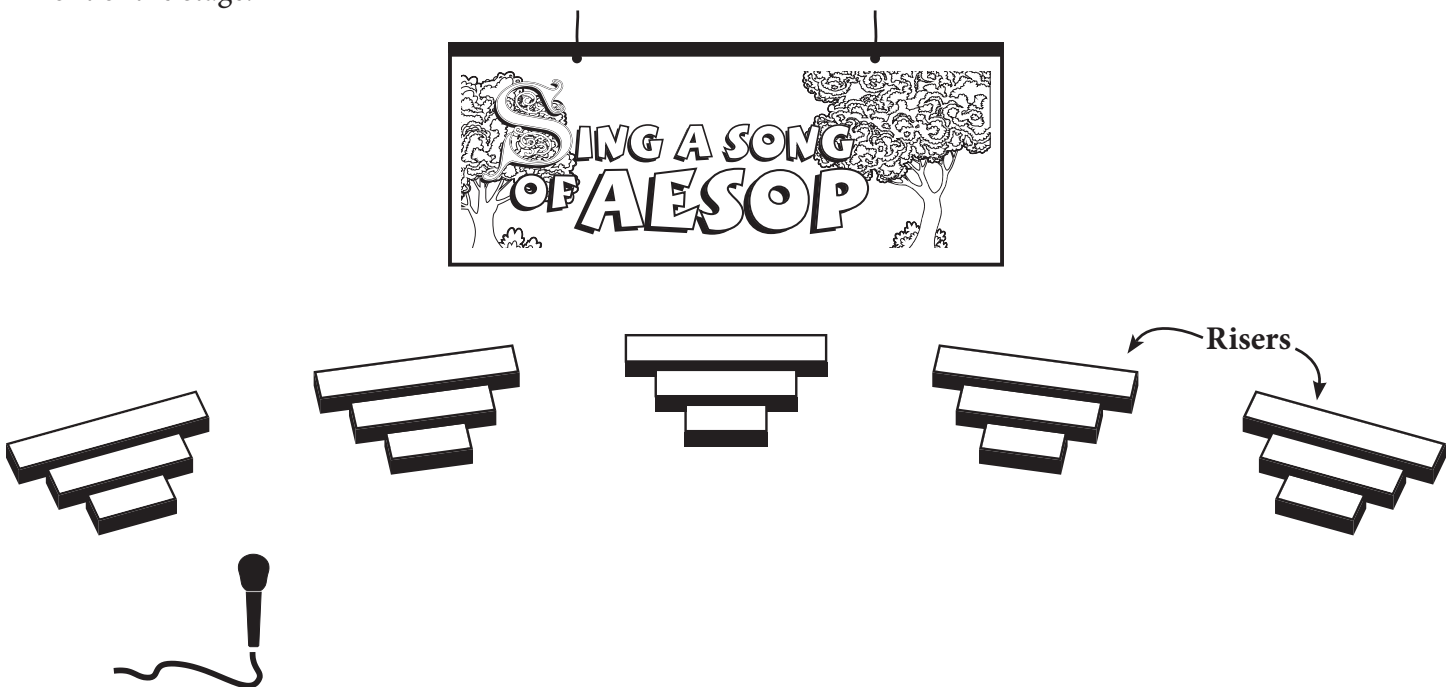
DSC: downstage, center

STAGING

Set up the stage with enough choral risers to accommodate the number of classes that will be performing. It is ideal to have five risers, each assigned to one of the fables represented by a class (or large group). We typically use one set of risers per class and arrange them in an arc. Above the risers, we suspend a banner with the words *Sing a Song of Aesop* and a drawing of some of the characters. We have included a file for you to make your own banner. If you are unable to print this in your building, take the file to your local office supply store or print shop and the staff there will be able to assist you.

Depending on the dimensions of your stage, place two or three long parallel strips of floor tape (do not use masking tape; it will ruin the finish) DS about eighteen inches apart. Place short vertical pieces of tape labeled A, B, C, and so on at equal intervals on the front line. You can use a fun metallic marker to write on the tape. Do the same on the back row, but place the tape in between the pieces on the front row, creating “windows.” Assign each student a letter and a line. The students stand on their letters so the ones in the back row are not blocked by those in the front row. (See page 46 for a detailed diagram.) Have the children practice moving from their risers, to their rows and letters, and then back to their risers.

A microphone stands DSR. Narrators and actors can be with their classes or seated, in order, on chairs in front of the stage.



After the song, Class/Group 2 goes back to their riser. Narrators 17–22 go to the microphone and the Country Mouse and the City Mouse move DSC. The two shake hands.

THE CITY MOUSE AND THE COUNTRY MOUSE

NARRATOR 17: There once was a mouse who lived in the country. One day she invited her cousin, who lived in the city, for a visit.

The two mice sit on the floor as if having a picnic.

NARRATOR 18: The country mouse prepared a modest lunch: a crust of stale bread, some kernels of corn, and a small cube of cheese.

CITY MOUSE: My dear, is this all you live on?

COUNTRY MOUSE: I know—it's really pitiful, isn't it?

CITY MOUSE: Let's go to my place in the city for dinner. There you'll see what a fine life I have!

COUNTRY MOUSE: Gladly! I'd give anything to be rich like you!

Play some happy music or track 21 as the two join hands and skip around the stage to the city, located DSR.

NARRATOR 19: The two traveled back to the city, where the City Mouse lived in a grand mansion.

NARRATOR 20: Once there, the two mice crept into the dining room, where a splendid feast was laid out on the table.

CITY MOUSE: See what wonderful food there is! Please help yourself to some cakes and pastries!

COUNTRY MOUSE: What a feast we are going to have!

NARRATOR 21: But suddenly they heard a hiss ...

ALL: Hiss!

The two hug each other in fear.

NARRATOR 21: ... and a growl.

ALL: Grrrr!

They wiggle their knees in fear.

NARRATOR 21: And a large cat jumped onto the table.

BOTH: Let's get out of here!

The two mice scurry DSL.

NARRATOR 22: The two mice leaped to the floor and ran for their lives into a hole in the wall.

CITY MOUSE: Don't worry! That old cat hasn't caught me yet. And as soon as she goes away, we can finish our meal in peace. Let's just hope the dog doesn't find us!

COUNTRY MOUSE: A cat and a dog! My dear cousin, I'd rather have radishes and corn safe in my little house than have cakes and pastries here and be frightened to death!

The two lock elbows.

BOTH: The moral of the story is ...

ALL: Better to nibble corn in peace than to feast in fear!

Class/Group 3 takes their positions for the song. Narrators 17-22 go to the risers. Cast sings "Home Is Where the Heart Is."

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

Brian Hiller and Don Dupont

"Home is where the heart is," that is what they say.
Where there's love and fam'ly, you will find your way.
Home is where the heart is, home is what you know.
Where there's love and fam'ly, you can thrive and grow.

Home, sweet home.
Oh, home, sweet home!
Sing a song of home, sweet home!

Home, sweet home.
Oh, home, sweet home!
Sing a song of home, sweet home!

Do not wish for riches, do not wish for gold.
"Keep your pleasures simple," that's what we are told.
Home is where the heart is, home is all you need.
Where there's love and fam'ly, you can thrive indeed!

Home, sweet home.
Oh, home, sweet home!
Sing a song of home, sweet home!

Home, sweet home.
Oh, home, sweet home!
Sing a song of home, sweet home!





HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

Brian Hiller and Don Dupont

Movement Formation: 3 rows; front row seated, middle row kneeling, back row standing

$\text{♩} = 85$

4 *R hand out* *L hand out*

"Home is where the heart__ is," ____
Do not wish for rich - es, ____

6 *R hand crosses chest* *L hand crosses chest* *Both arms reach out*

that is what they say... Where there's love and fam - 'ly, ____
do not wish for gold... "Keep your pleas - ures sim - ple," ____

8 *Fan hands* *R hand out* *L hand out*

you will find your way... Home is where the heart__ is, ____
that's what we are told... Home is where the heart__ is, ____

10 *R hand crosses chest* *L hand crosses chest* *Both arms reach out*

home is what you know._ Where there's love and fam - 'ly,____
home is all you need._ Where there's love and fam - 'ly,____

12 *Fan hands* *Both hands cross chest* *Lean L* *Lean R* *L* *R*

you can thrive and grow._ Home, sweet home. Oh, home, sweet home!
you can thrive in - deed!_

15 *Fan hands* *Both hands cross chest* *Lean L* *R*

Sing a song of home, sweet home! Home, sweet home. Oh,
Sing a song of home, sweet home!

18 *L* *R* *Fan hands* *Both hands cross chest* *Bow head at end*

home, sweet home! Sing a song of home, sweet home!
home, sweet home!

(rit. 2nd time)