



The Guide to Musical Theatre

CASSATIONS

BY MALCOLM WILLIAMSON



This unique series of small-scale operas is designed as a simple and direct method of teaching children of all ages the mechanics of opera.

Each cassation combines a simple story (not involving soloists) with tuneful melodies in a variety of key and time signatures. The less musically gifted in the group should be concerned with the creation of improvised sound-effects, lighting, scenery, costumes and props, highlighting the production of opera and reinforcing the idea of total participation. In fact, the only audience should be the director/teacher who co-ordinates the various elements and provides either a piano or single-line melodic instrumental accompaniment. For the more ambitious projects, instrumental and percussion parts or full orchestral materials are available as indicated below.

The composer has provided the skeleton of an infinitely variable entertainment which may be used as a single-afternoon or term's project. Notes are included with many suggestions for making rehearsals interesting and enjoyable.

Printed Editions. Vocal Scores, Voice Parts, Melodic and Percussion Instrument Parts (where applicable) Full Scores and Orchestral Parts (where applicable).. available on hire only.

GENESIS - As God creates the world in six days, each new manifestation is colourfully depicted by the two halves of the world.

Instrumentation: piano or orchestra

Duration: 20 minutes

THE GLITTER GANG - The Europeans betray the trust and friendliness of the Australians and are killed by the Outlaws in their search for gold.

Instrumentation: piano or orchestra

Duration: 11 minutes

KNIGHTS IN SHINING ARMOUR - Robbers open the Knights' treasure chest only to uncover the Seven Deadly Sins. Even though they repent when the Knights return, the Robbers are not deterred and decide secretly to have another go when the coast is clear.

Instrumentation: piano

Duration: 7 minutes

THE MOONRAKERS - Between the moonlit hours of 2 and 3 am, smugglers haul their contraband from the ship into the village pond and fool the King's Revenue Men.

Instrumentation: piano or orchestra

Duration: 7 minutes

THE SNOW WOLF - Despite warnings from the drivers and stokers to beware of the wolves, the children cannot resist creeping out of the train to play in the snow. The lonely wolves want to make friends, so whilst the empty train starts up again and leaves, the children and wolves make a snow wolf together.

Instrumentation: piano

Duration: 7 minutes

THE STONE WALL - The warring English and Scots build a wall to separate their nations, but the invasion of the Vikings forces them to unite and throw stones from the wall at their common invader.

Instrumentation: piano or orchestra

Duration: 6 minutes

THE TERRAIN OF THE KINGS * - The Bulls, Horses and Birds agree to share the beautiful land of the French Camargue. Man tries to take over the land, but is beaten off by the combined defences of the animals.

Instrumentation: piano or orchestra

Duration: 20 minutes

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THE WINTER STAR - The star guides children, adults, shepherds and animals and the Courts of the Kings of the Earth in a joyous celebration of the Nativity.

Instrumentation: piano, melodic and percussion instruments or orchestra

Duration: 20 minutes

A Note about Cassations:

Cassation is a minor musical genre related to the serenade and divertimento. In the mid-to-late 18th century, cassations commonly comprised loosely assembled sets of short movements intended for outdoor performance by orchestral or chamber ensembles. The genre was popular in southern German-speaking lands. Other synonymous titles used by German-speaking composers and cataloguers included Cassatio, Cassatione and Kassation.[1] An equivalent Italian term was Cassazione. The genre is occasionally alluded to in the titles of some twentieth-century compositions.