

The Animals Court is a prose scene written by Mark Twain toward the end of his life, which went unpublished for almost 30 years after his death. It recounts the trials of six animals, and presents the verdict of the court for each case. Some of the animals are praised for their virtue, some are executed for breaking the law. The conflict that can sometimes exist between the law of Man and the law of God is Twain's central theme. In each movement, the percussion; snare, tenor and bass drums, bongos, xylophone, glockenspiel, vibraslap, tambourine and cymbal, is used to establish the animal's character of present the animal's predicament. This work was commissioned by the Arlington Belmont Chamber Chorus.