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FABLES: LOVE, LIFE, HEROES

by

Jeffrey Neal Woodson

**A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Master of Music
School of Music**

**Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
April 1987**

FABLES: LOVE, LIFE, HEROES

Jeffrey Neal Woodson, M.M.

Western Michigan University, 1987

"Fables" is a creative work which combines music, dance, and theater into a complete multi-media event. The musical portion of the work, the texts, and stage directions are documented in this thesis. The music was realized on electronic tape using the analog Moog synthesizer and the digital Apple IIe computer. The tape and slides used for performance are available through arrangement with the composer.

The focus of "Fables" is a story of two characters and a day in their lives. This story line is interspersed with dances which comment on and are a diversion from the dreamlike atmosphere of the main story. The overall idea of the project is that of a commentary on and an observation of modern life in a non-narrative surreal context.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is difficult to express the gratitude I feel to the many people who made this work possible. I must begin by expressing my appreciation to Derrick Evans for his work on the choreography and his many creative ideas. I also wish to thank Professor Ramon Zupko for all his assistance, support, and criticism. To my wife, I wish to express my most sincere gratitude for her continued support and patience throughout the work on this project.

Jeffrey Neal Woodson

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Fables: Love, life, heroes. [Original composition]

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EQUIPMENT LIST

1. Apple IIe Computer
2. Micro Music Inc. Music Composer
3. Micro Music Inc. Envelope Shaper
4. Micro Music Inc. Digital to Analog Converter
5. Moog 907 Fixed Filter Bank
6. 2 Moog 921A Oscillator Drivers
7. 2 Moog 921B Oscillators
8. Moog 912 Envelope Follower
9. Moog 911 Envelope Generator
10. Moog 902 Voltage Controlled Amplifier
11. Bode 6402 Dual Ring Modulator
12. Bode 6552 Frequency Shifter
13. DBX 208 Eight Channel Noise Reduction System
14. Sound Workshop Logex 8 Mixing Console
15. Sound Workshop 12808-SEQ Mixing Console
16. Otari MX 5050 Eight Track Tape Deck
17. MCI JH 110-C-8 Eight Track Tape Deck
18. 2 Scully Two Track Tape Decks
19. Sanyo RD S30 Stereo Cassette Deck
20. 8 JBL Studio Monitors

PERFORMANCE NOTE

The dances of this work were originally conceived as separate entities with the theatrical scenes added to give the dances more meaning. The dances should progressively build from number one to number five. Dance number one should contain slow, simple movements and each successive dance should build by adding more movement. Dance number five should be the climax of the work by having very rapid, complex movements.

In the musical score, the use of a bracket over a group of notes followed by a number (x2) means to play the bracketed material the number of times indicated. Due to sequences of differing lengths, the number of repeats in a given measure may differ between parts, but if read properly the proportions will work out mathematically. Conventional repeats are to be interpreted in the traditional manner.

LOVE

Scene 1

Setting

A very dimly lit room containing a round table and two chairs.
 (Begin tape. 1:45 into tape, slowly fade in slide #1 containing word LOVE for 10 seconds. 2:55 fade out slide and slowly bring up stage lights. Slowly enter Dancer 1 (John) stage right and Dancer 2 (Edna) stage left. Both sit at the table. John slowly thumbs through a newspaper. Edna, with elbows on the table, stares blankly at John. Narration on tape begins.)

simultaneously
 FEMALE: It's morning and never say a word. Life goes away in an instant milk for the cornflakes and one hundred percent orange juice from concentrate. Healthy and wind up toys to begin a day made for radio listeners brought in from the cold snow and raining red blanketed wanderers out there. Go ahead into the world with announcements and running water and the busy day ahead of you to be made clear only later. Never a word of instant life. Health brought in from rain and water running ahead of you.

MALE: Edna and John, trees, tall and cold, looking upward to the light blue sky. They drift slowly along this empty place. The morning crowds and sounds of violence roused from sleep. An order for coffee as John yawns. Untouched eyes remain asleep without illusion. Nothing ever changes. Nothing but silence welled up inside. Ten years, love complete. Trees...looking...drifting...sounding. Awake to the dream.

FEMALE: Do you want more coffee John? John? Did you hear me John?

(Lights go down slowly as heartbeat on tape fades out. Edna and John leave the stage. Lights come up immediately upon start of Dance 1.)

Dance 1

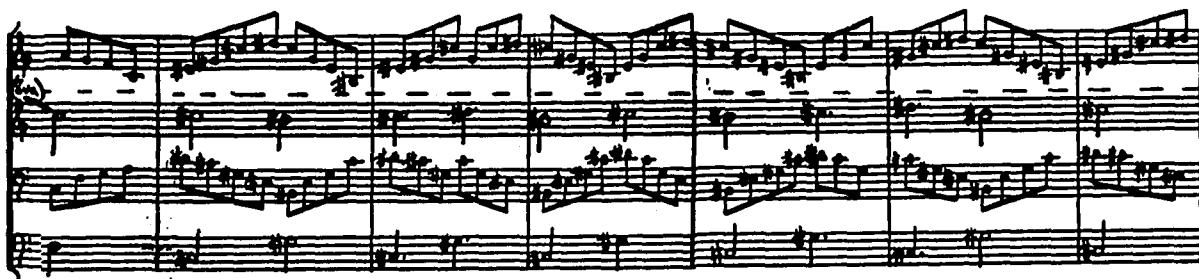


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Handwritten musical score for a piano piece, page 6. The score is written on five systems of three staves each. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a time signature of 4/4. The music features complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and various rests. The first system begins with a measure in parentheses, indicating a first ending. The notation is dense and detailed, with many accidentals and dynamic markings.

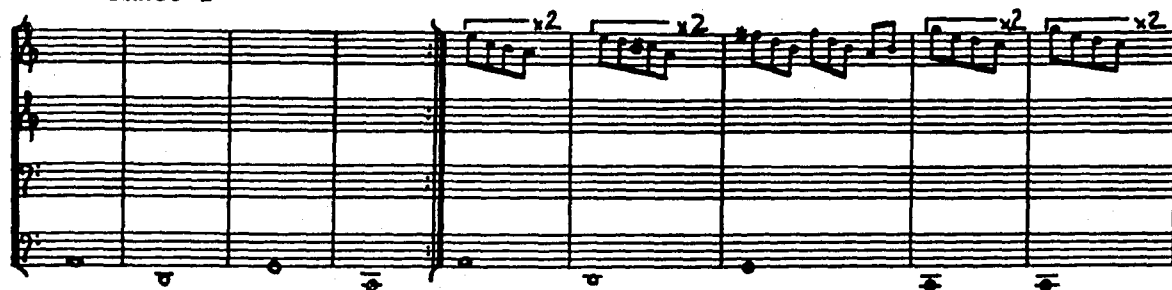




(Short pause with dancers frozen in position. Lights immediately down.
Slowly fade in slide #2 (LIFE) for approximately 10 seconds. Fade out
slide. Lights up immediately for Dance 2.)

LIFE

Dance 2









(Fade lights out. Place easy chair to the front and to the right of the table.)

Scene 2

Setting

Dim confined light shining directly over table and easy chair respectively. (As sound on tape begins, slowly fade in dim light over table and easy chair. Narration on tape begins.)

MALE: Setting down to work. Meeting, running, manipulating figures from nine to five. Something to live on quietly at the desk. Gambling on supermarket floors in front of dress shops. It's a gesture of defiance just getting through the hours. Typewriters clatter; they all watch as the boss goes through handing out medals efficiently and directly. Reading letters aloud...filing them away. Figures...typewriters...medals. The day had begun badly. Tall and cold...drifting along. In the silence.

(Upon the completion of the narration on tape, a group of dancers clad in business suits and hats, each carrying a briefcase, slowly walk across the stage from stage right to stage left. The walking should be very slow and graceful and should be so slow that the lights fade out before the dancers reach stage left. Fade lights out as tape sounds fade. Bring lights up upon start of Dance 3.)

Dance 3







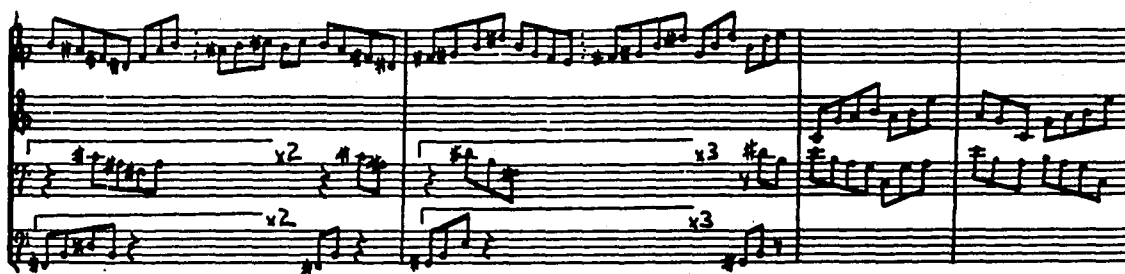


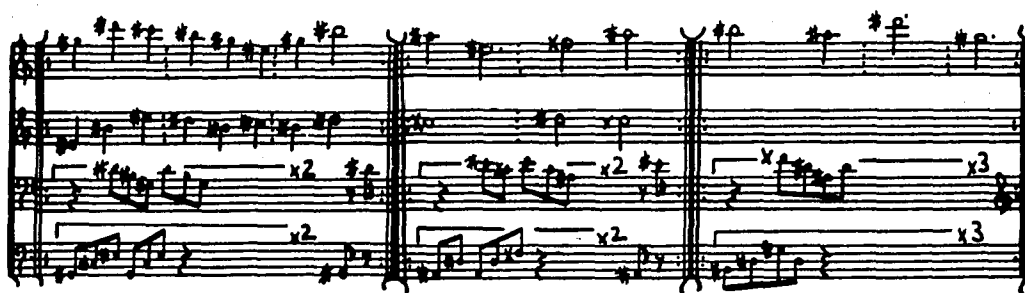
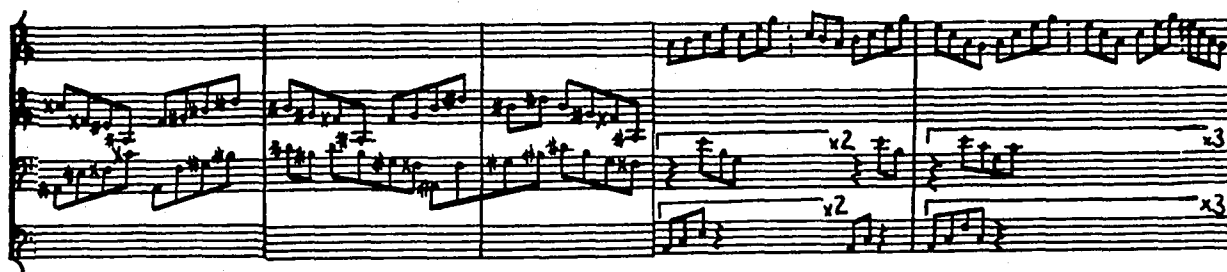


(Fade lights out. Slowly fade in slide #3 (HEROES) for approximately 10 seconds and then fade slide out. Bring lights up upon start of Dance 4. During Dance 4, one dancer should ride in on a bicycle or tricycle from stage left.)

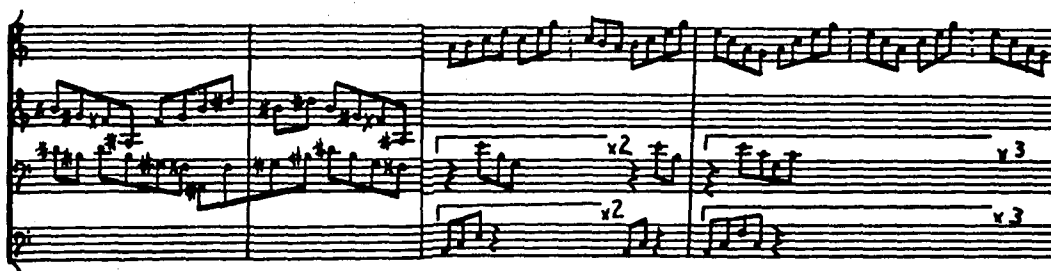
HEROES

Dance 4











Handwritten musical score for guitar, page 26. The score consists of five systems, each with four staves. The notation includes various fretting and picking notations, such as $x2$, $x3$, $x4$, and $x34$, indicating specific fret positions and picking patterns. The music is written in a complex, multi-measure format, with some measures containing multiple notes and rests. The first system has a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second system has a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The third system has a key signature of one sharp (F#). The fourth system has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and includes a $8va$ marking. The fifth system has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and includes a $(8m)$ marking. The notation is dense and complex, with many notes and rests, and some measures containing multiple notes and rests.



Scene 3

Setting

Table, chairs, and easy chair as before. Bicycle/tricycle stage left. (Lights fade up. Enter Edna and John and stand behind chairs at table and do deep knee bends, toe touches, and other stretching exercises briefly. After the stretching is finished, Edna and John simultaneously sit at the table placing elbows on the table and staring at each other blankly. During the narration on tape, a third dancer should enter stage left and sit on the floor at the bicycle/tricycle and begin spinning the front wheel while staring at it in fascination.)

MALE: Life was dangerous putting away money. They walked back silently through one block after another. Night... quick footsteps on the floor. Seated at opposite ends of the table with the uncertain arms of the last sunlight coming down around them.

FEMALE: John, will you have a drink?

MALE: She reaches for her knitting remembering emotions.

FEMALE: John, were we happy?

MALE: The cigarette is finished. The fairy tale drifts away. The clean comfortable kitchen looks out over the trees. The dark, cold trees.

(As the wind and chime sounds fade, the fifth dance begins abruptly.

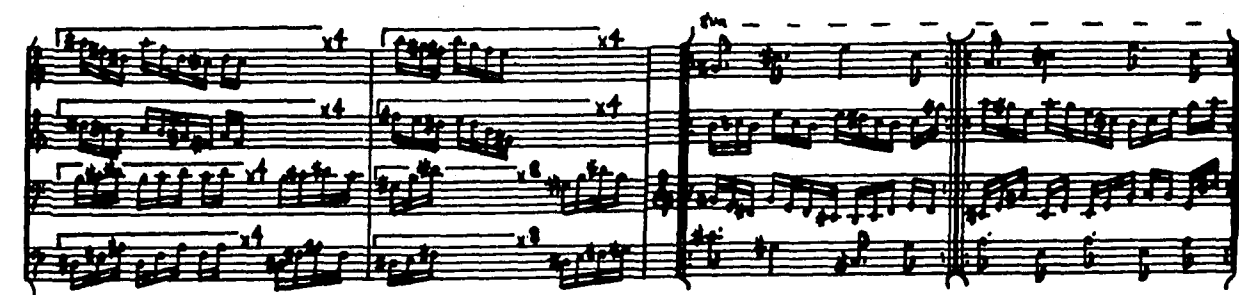
Dancers begin to invade the stage and dance. Edna and John join in.)

Dance 5





This page contains five systems of musical notation, each consisting of three staves. The notation is highly complex, featuring numerous accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals) and rhythmic markings (such as 'x4' and 'x3') above the notes. The first system shows a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals. The second system continues with similar patterns, including some triplets. The third system features more dense rhythmic patterns with many beamed notes. The fourth system shows a continuation of these complex patterns, with some measures containing multiple accidentals. The fifth system concludes the page with similar complex notation, including some measures with multiple accidentals and rhythmic markings.





(Dancers freeze in position at end of music. Lights fade out with voices on tape.)