

THE MOTIONS FOR JOHN LAD



Solo viola with piano

by Evan Ziporyn

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@6-8 minutes

solo viola with piano accompaniment

NOTES & PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS BY THE COMPOSER

The first 90 measures (out of 111) are unaccompanied, with no markings other than an approximate metronome speed (76 bpm) and indications as to whether to regard that speed with relative freedom (“Free”) or strictness (“Strict”). Beyond that, all other choices – dynamics, bowings, timbre, expressivity in general – are left to the performer. The 16 bars with piano (mm. 91-107) are more specific in these regards. The interpretative elements of the last four bars are again left to the solo performer.

The Motions for John Lad was originally *The Motions* for John Lad. John performed it on numerous occasions in the 1990s, usually during sets by groups we played in together, mainly Evan & The All-stars or the Michael Gordon Philharmonic. John’s devotion to tai chi imbued his viola playing along with every other aspect of his life: he was grounded and radiant, whether he was ‘doing the form,’ teaching philosophy at Barnard, playing chamber music, watching pro photo or martial arts videos, dancing tango, rooting against the Yankees, or navigating us through the wilds of newly post-Iron Curtain Eastern Europe. In tai chi and in life, he taught me what it really meant to ‘go through the motions.’

The Motions was really FOR him, his sound, his being. I never gave it to any other players, and when he passed away suddenly in 2007 I figured that was that. In early 2018 one of his former students contacted me about it, and that sparked me to put it out in the world, for whatever that’s worth. I’ve changed the title and made a few other extremely minor revisions.

The only major change is the piano part itself, which starts at m. 91. In the original version this material (more or less) was played by whatever forces happened to be on hand: the rest of the band, or, for solo performances, John’s own multitrack recording. If you prefer to perform with John’s recording, or to make your own version of that material, please let me know and/or feel free.

for John Lad
The Motions

Evan Ziporyn

Free (♩ = 76)

