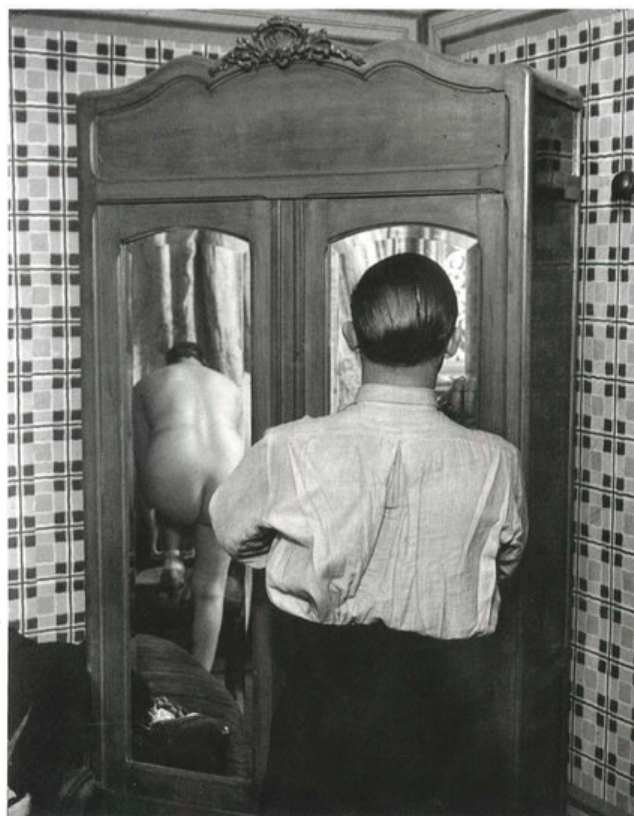


THOMAS ADÈS

Life Story *for soprano and piano Op.8a*



Tennessee Williams

FABER *ff* MUSIC



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Life Story

for soprano and piano

Op.8a

Text by

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

(1994)

FABER *ff* MUSIC



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Written for Mary Wiegold and the Composers Ensemble

Life Story Op.8 (1993), for soprano with two bass clarinets and double bass,
was first performed by Mary Wiegold and the Composers Ensemble
conducted by the composer at the West Road Concert Hall,
Cambridge University on 17 October 1993.

The version for voice and piano was made subsequently
for Sarah Leonard and Richard Rodney Bennett who gave
the first performance at the Warwick Festival on 8 July 1994.

Duration: 9 minutes

Life Story is recorded by Mary Carewe and Thomas Adès
on the EMI Debut Series 'Life Story' EMI CDZ 5 69699 2

Version for soprano with two bass clarinets and double bass
available on hire from the publishers

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LIFE STORY

After you've been to bed together for the first time,
without the advantage or disadvantage of any prior acquaintance,
the other party very often says to you,
Tell me about yourself, I want to know all about you,
what's your story? And you think maybe they really and truly do

sincerely want to know your life story, and so you light up
a cigarette and begin to tell it to them, the two of you
lying together in completely relaxed positions
like a pair of rag dolls a bored child dropped on a bed.

You tell them your story, or as much of your story
as time or a fair degree of prudence allows, and they say, Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh,
each time a little more faintly, until the oh
is just an audible breath, and then of course

there's some interruption. Slow room service comes up
with a bowl of melting ice cubes, or one of you rises to pee
and gaze at himself with mild astonishment in the bathroom mirror.
And then, the first thing you know, before you've had time
to pick up where you left off with your enthralling life story,
they're telling you their life story, exactly as they'd intended to all along,

and you're saying, Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh,
each time a little more faintly, the vowel at last becoming
no more than an audible sigh,
as the elevator, halfway down the corridor and a turn to the left,
draws one last, long, deep breath of exhaustion
and stops breathing forever. Then?

Well, one of you falls asleep
and the other one does likewise with a lighted cigarette in his mouth,
and that's how people burn to death in hotel rooms.

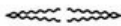
TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

From *In the Winter of Cities*

Text Copyright © 1956 Tennessee Williams



PERFORMANCE NOTES

Voice:  *cresc.* and *dim.* respectively achieved by intensification of vibrato. In considering this marking, and aspects of the vocal part in general (particularly: wide scooping glissandi swoops, displaced accentuations; and overall character) the late style of Billie Holliday is recommended as a model.

Piano: The absence of pedal indications does not imply *senza Ped.*

All grace notes *rapidissimi, quasi glissandi.*



LIFE STORY

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

THOMAS ADÈS

Vehement and exhausted ♩ = 40

The musical score is written for piano and voice. It begins with the tempo marking 'Vehement and exhausted' and a quarter note equal to 40 (♩ = 40). The piano part starts with a dynamic of *sfz* (sforzando) and gradually moves to *mf* (mezzo-forte). The voice part, for soprano, enters with a dynamic of *mf* and later *pp* (pianissimo). The score is divided into four systems. The first system covers measures 1-3. The second system covers measures 4-6. The third system covers measures 7-9. The fourth system covers measures 10-12. Dynamics range from *ppp* (pianississimo) to *ff* (fortissimo). The piece includes various musical techniques such as triplets, trills, and slurs.

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6

mf mp f (rit. . .)

Ped. \square

Detailed description: This system contains measures 6 and 7. Measure 6 begins with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The right hand features a melodic line with a trill and a fermata, while the left hand plays a triplet accompaniment. The dynamic shifts to mezzo-piano (mp) and then forte (f) by the end of the measure. Measure 7 continues the melodic and accompanimental patterns. A 'Ped.' symbol with a square box indicates the sustain pedal is to be used.

7

agitato

pp ff

Detailed description: This system contains measure 7. The tempo marking 'agitato' is present. The dynamic starts at pianissimo (pp) and increases to fortissimo (ff). The right hand has a trill and a melodic line, while the left hand has a triplet accompaniment.

8

ppp sub. pp

Ped. \square

Detailed description: This system contains measures 8 and 9. Measure 8 starts with pianississimo (ppp) and includes a 'sub.' marking. The right hand has a melodic line with a fermata, and the left hand has a quintuplet accompaniment. Measure 9 continues with a mezzo-piano (pp) dynamic and a triplet accompaniment. A 'Ped.' symbol with a square box is present.

10

ppp pp p dim. al

Detailed description: This system contains measures 10 and 11. Measure 10 starts with pianississimo (ppp) and includes a triplet accompaniment. The dynamic shifts to piano (p) and then to a decrescendo (dim.) leading to a fortissimo (al) dynamic. Measure 11 continues with a triplet accompaniment.

11 *mp narrante*
Af - ter you've been _____ to bed _____

pp
Ped. _____ *v (in pp)*

12
to - ge - ther _____ for the first _____

ppp *pp*
Ped. _____

13 *come sopra*
_____ time, _____ with - out the ad - van - - - tage or _____

ppp *p* *mf* *pp* *quasi trem.* *pp*
Ped. _____ Ped. ad lib.

14 *mf*
dis - ad - van - tage of a - ny pri - or ac -

p *f*

15 *(quasi parlato)* *più f (non giusto)* *cresc.*
- - quain - tance, the o - ther par - ty ve - ry of - ten says.

mf *cresc.* *f*

16 *accel.* *a tempo* *f espr.*
to you, Tell me a - bout

f *ff*
Ped. Ped.

18

your - self,

Ped. Ped...

19

meno f

I want to know all

(Ped.)

20

molto *pp poco disperato*

a - bout you,

ppp p mp f Ped.

21 *mp* *pp narr.* *poco*

what's your sto - ry? (A)nd you think may - - - be they

(Ped.) Ped. Ped.

22 *5:4* *(cresc.)* *poco f*

real - ly and tru - ly do sin - - - - -

(pp) 3 Ped. Ped. Ped.

23

- cere - ly want to know your life

ppp *mp* Ped. III Ped. Ped.

24

sto - ry,

molto pp

pp *ppp*

f *mp*

25

molto cantab.

p *pp*

p *pp*

Ped.

27

(a)nd so you light up

p *pp*

ppp

pp sempre

5:4

8

snap fingers,
both hands (casually)

28

mf

a cig - (a)r - ette and be - gin to

mf *p*

Ped.

29

tell it to them,

poco f

tr

30

mp *cresc.*

the two of you ly - ing to - ge - ther in com - plete - ly

trem. dolciss. *trem.*

pp *ppp* *mf*

31

re - lax - ed po - si - tions like a pair of rag dolls a bored child - dropped on a bed.

f

sfp

32

Y - ou tell them your

ff

trem.

5

34

sto - ry, or as much of your sto - - ry as time

meno f

dim. sub. > mp

(marc.)

35 *cresc.* *f* *molto*

or a fair de - gree of pru - dence al - lows, and they say

trem. *cresc.* *f* *ff*

36 *ff*

Oh,*
(* modify vowel as and where required)

fff *trem.* [*ossia*] *(non agitato)* *(mf)*

ff e sempre poco a poco dim.

mf Ped. III al ⊕ *ff* Ped. *mf* Ped. *ff* *mf* Ped.

37 *sim.*

f *mf* *f* *mf*

(Ped. III sempre) Ped. 1/2 1/2

38 *f*
oh, _____

mp *mf*

Ped. _____ Ped. _____ Ped. _____ Ped. _____
(Ped. III sempre)

39 *p* (*diminuendo*) _____ *mf*
oh, _____

mp *p* *mf* *p* $\frac{1}{2}$ Ped. _____

40 (*dim.*) _____ *p* _____ *pp*
oh, _____ oh, _____

p *pp* *mp* *pppp* *rubato*

(Ped.) Ped. _____ (Ped. ad lib.) Ped. _____

41

each time a lit - tle more.

pp

pp

Detailed description: This system contains measures 41 and 42. The vocal line (treble clef) begins at measure 41 with a rest, then enters with the lyrics "each time a lit - tle more." The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a melodic line in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include *pp* for both parts.

42

— faint - ly, un - til the oh — is just — an au - di - ble breath,

mp *pp* (*quasi bisb.*)

ppp

Detailed description: This system contains measures 42 and 43. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "— faint - ly, un - til the oh — is just — an au - di - ble breath,". The piano accompaniment includes a triplet in the right hand and a melodic line in the left hand. Dynamics include *mp*, *pp* (*quasi bisb.*), and *ppp*.

43

molto cantabile

ppp *pp*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 43 and 44. The piano accompaniment is the primary focus, featuring a melodic line in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include *ppp* and *pp*. The tempo/mood marking is *molto cantabile*.

45

ppp *pp* *pppp*

Ped. _____

Detailed description: This system contains measures 45 and 46. The piano accompaniment features a melodic line in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include *ppp*, *pp*, and *pppp*. A pedal point is indicated by a dashed line labeled "Ped." starting at measure 45 and continuing through measure 46.

47

con slancio

p

and then of course there's some in - ter - rup - tion.

ppp

p

sim.

Ped. _____

49

Slow _____

room ser - vice comes up with a bowl.

ppp

p

sim.

Ped. _____

50

pp poco fantastico

mp (sim.)

of melt - ing ice - cubes, or one of you ris - es to pee (a)nd gaze at him - self with mild.

pp > *ppp*

ppp

Ped. \wedge →

(Ped. →)

52

pp

a - sto - nish - ment in the bath - room mir - ror.

loco

(ppp sempre)

poco ff sub.

(Ped.) → → (Ped.)

53

mf

(A)nd then, the first thing

niente

mf

pp

Ped.

54

you know, be - fore you've had time to pick up where you left off

ppp

p

f

(Ped.) Ped.

56 *f* *cresc.* *(rit. ad lib. poch.)*

with your en - - thrall - - ing life sto - - ry,

f *p* *f* *ff*

Ped.

58 *(a tempo)* *poco ff*

they're tell - ing you their

mf *f* *p* *f*

Ped. III (con Ped.)

59 *f*

life sto - - ry ex -

ff *ff*

60

- act - ly as they'd in - tend - ed to all a - long, _____

f

61

(a)nd you're _____

poco ff

ff *p*

Ped. _____

62

cresc. molto *quasi tutta forza*

say - - ing Oh,*

(* modify vowel as and where required)

ad lib.

f (*trem. p sempre*) *f*

cresc. *fff* *gliss.* *fff* *gliss.* *f* *mf*

(m.d.)

Ped. III al \oplus *dim. poco a poco*

64

(Ped III sempre)

65

(diminuendo)

66

mf oh, *più f* oh, *dolente* *mp molto espr.* oh,

(ad lib.)

(dim.) - - - poco *f* sub. diminuendo - - - (\curvearrowright) *mp*

68

oh, -

pp

p

pp

pp

sempre dim.
(Ped. III sempre)

70

pp narrante

each time a lit - tle more faint - ly, the vowel at last -

pp

71

(quasi bisb.)

— be - com - ing no more than an au - di - ble sigh,

ppp

p

72 *pp* *(sinister)* *ppp*

as the e - le - va - tor, half-way down the cor - ri - dor and a turn to

pp

73 *p espr.* *ppp* *mp* *dim.*

the left, draws one last, long, deep breath of ex - haus - tion,

ppp *mp* *dim.*

Ped. $\frac{1}{2}$

74 *pp* *(quasi parl.)* *mf narrante, non espr.*

(a)nd stops breath - ing for e - ver. Then? Well, one of you falls a - sleep and the

pp *(quasi parl.)* *mf*

(Ped.) *mf*

76 *pp* *marcatiss.*

o-ther one_ does like-wise with_ a light-ed ci-gar-ette_ in his mouth, (a)nd that's how_

mp *pp* *pochiss.*

Ped.---

78

pp *loco* *p sub.* *ppp*

(Ped.)

79 *ppp e dim. (sempre marcatissimo)*

peo - ple burn_ to death in ho - tel rooms.

marcatiss. al fine

mf sub. *mp* *mp* *pp* *p* *ppp*

THOMAS ADÈS

The Lover in Winter (1989)
four songs for countertenor and piano

Five Eliot Landscapes Op. 1 (1990)
for soprano and piano

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for chamber ensemble of 15 players

O thou who didst with pitfall and with gin Op. 3a (1990)
anthem for male voices

Gefriolsae Me Op. 3b (1990)
anthem for male voices

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for clarinet, violin, cello and piano

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for mixed chorus, harp, prepared piano, organ and percussion

Darknesse Visible (1992)
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Under Hamelin Hill Op. 6 (1992)
for chamber organ (1-3 players)

Still Sorrowing Op. 7 (1993)
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Life Story Op. 8 (1993)
for soprano and two bass clarinets and double bass,
or soprano and piano

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