

Arnold Lobel's FABLES as Cinematic Musical Videos

Here to follow is a prospectus concerning Arnold Lobel's FABLES as rendered musically and visually, to be brought to their Audience through the Audience's phones, tablets, PCs, home cinema screens and perhaps eventually through the cinema.

Arnold Lobel's FABLES is a Masterpiece. There is a rich resonance about the text and in the images. The HarperCollins book is masterfully and beautifully realized. But despite its Caldecott Award, FABLES has never resonated in the world as widely as some of Mr. Lobel's other works.

I think this is because the FABLES need to be taken a step farther to a fuller realization in time - as musical videos.

What would Arnold Lobel's FABLES be like as musical videos? For a provocative hint we can watch the three demos of *The Crocodile in the Bedroom*, *The Frogs at the Rainbow's End* and *The Bad Kangaroo* that we already have in hand.

<https://www.danbilich.com/fables>

password: secretFABLES

These demos do provide a strong hint. I really like them. I am entertained. But there is a lot more to explore, and not just because there are seventeen more FABLES not yet demonstrated.

- First of all, and to dispense with the question, the demos only go half the way there.

- When fully realized, the FABLES music will always have Actors singing the Animal voices and will always be appropriately orchestrated. "The Crocodile in the Bedroom" has singing actors and an orchestration (by Robert Elhai), "The Frogs at the Rainbow's End" does not (the composer plays piano and sings all the voices). These FABLES are meant to be Orchestrated and realized with different Actors singing the Animals.

- Likewise, the illustrations in all three demos were drafted by the Composer. The Composer knows the FABLES very well, well enough to have a relatively sure hand when it comes to knowing what needs to be shown on a screen for the FABLES story to be carried effectively. Thus, effective story boards.

- The Composer is a novice illustrator. Perhaps this can be treated as a feature rather than a problem. However, there are many people in this world who are very skilled at putting images onto a screen.

- Perhaps the solution is for the Composer, as novice illustrator, to realize all of the FABLES as well as he can in the manner that these demos have been realized, essentially creating story boards, and then find a visual collaborator to reimagine these story boards in a style worthy of being coupled to the music?

- These demos can continue using the Composer's drawings, or, if the right visual collaborator is found, the Composer will simply continue to create story boards to be interpreted or superseded by the eventual visual collaborator.

- **Concerning the Music**, an ultimate realization might make use of a well-known actor (in a perfect world someone of the stature and range of a Mandy Patinkin comes to mind) to sing the Narrator throughout all the FABLES, with other singing Actors singing the various Animal voices.

- For now, a first approach would be to finish demos of all the FABLES with the composer continuing to sing all of the narration. Actors can be hired to sing the Animals, as they did on the "Crocodile" demo.

- Orchestrator Robert Elhai has consulted with the Composer concerning the FABLES since early on in the project. We hear Bob's orchestration on the demo of "The Crocodile in the Bedroom". The sounds we hear were realized in Bob's computer playing virtual instruments. They sound great, but would likely sound even better if they were recordings of real instruments played by real humans all together in a real space accompanying the singing Animals in real time. This, in of itself, would be an exciting musical experience.

- For now, virtual instruments are fine for demos. They enable us to road test the arrangements, keep what works and fix that which needs fixing.

There Are At Least Two Levels To This FABLES Production Project

As I now see things, there is much good to come from creating demos of all twenty FABLES, setting the stage for a later, more comprehensive production.

- These first level demos can serve several purposes:

- First of all, they serve to show people what we're doing, and enable the public to give us valuable feedback on what works or doesn't work.
- They might lead to interest from potentially game-changing collaborators or investors.
- They allow us an arena to try things. Let's face it, musical FABLES videos are not an established genre. We are, to some extent, inventing the wheel here. There's a saying, "Try something, then you'll have something to change". These demos are a place for us to try something.
- Though the essence of the FABLES music is already composed and notated for piano and vocal, there is still musical work to be done on Arrangements. In these first level demos we can work out the arrangements, try stuff, reject stuff, embrace other stuff. The demos will serve as a laboratory.
- The same thing goes for the visual dimension of the project. The demos are an arena in which to try stuff.
- It is possible that the demo project, taken as a whole, will prove to be very entertaining just as it is.

- Then comes the second level, when all of this work can be realized at the highest possible level.

- What happens at this point – after the demos are completed - will depend a lot upon what kind of budget can be arranged and what creative talent can be attracted to the project.

- This will likely be a function of the size of the Audience and level of resonance the demo project achieves.
- I personally believe there will be a substantial world-wide Audience for these musical FABLES.
- The FABLES are delightful, fresh and creative.
- I, who should not say so, will dare to say the music is very strong.
- The Stories and Morals will resonate in every culture.
- Because the FABLES are musical and sung in English, language need not be a huge barrier. English is already a second language to many people around the world. Families who want their children to learn English might find the FABLES to be an entertaining way to occupy their children while learning English.

- The FABLES will be “consumed” in many different settings.

- The most obvious setting (for someone of my generation) is at home on the home tv screen, especially when there is a need to entertain or otherwise occupy children – in this case with something that is arguably good for them.
- For years I’ve entertained an image of a mom or dad driving a vehicle with kids in the back seat. FABLES could help a lot with this. Because they are “bite size”, they could either be left to run in order or be chosen “a la carte” by either the parent or children.
- People of all ages will stream FABLES on their various devices – phones, tablets, laptops, etc. – accessing them through the auspices of streaming services such as Spotify, YouTube, and so on.
- Artificial Intelligence is real and upon us. There will likely be totally new and delightfully immersive distribution and consumption technologies coming to us any day now.

- If these Audio/Video and/or Theatrical FABLES find the extensive resonance I believe they might indeed find, then it is possible to aspire to an eventual cinematic realization of the FABLES. I have composed approximately 80 minutes of FABLES music – 20 FABLES times (on average) about 4 minutes per FABLE. 80 minutes would be a good duration for a FABLES feature film. However, as noted in my FABLES Theatrical Prospectus, there is no through-line Story to the FABLES as a whole. This lack of over-arching story mitigates against a feature film, unless a meta-story such as the one I've suggested for the theatrical FABLES (where the Audience witnesses and participates in the Actors and Musicians and Production Team's efforts to create the audio/visual FABLES) can be incorporated into the FABLES cinematic realization.

Perhaps the best cinematic realization of the FABLES will consist of a very well filmed and edited version of a FABLES theatrical presentation, incorporating the meta-story I have outlined elsewhere.

(- First of all, there are 20 discreet FABLES, each with its own Title, Body and Moral.

- Though there are many resonances between the various FABLES, there is no single story thru-line that extends between and across the FABLES. What happens to the Crocodile in the first FABLE is not connected by story to what happens to the Mouse in the last FABLE.
- Therefore, the overall arch of the show is not about a single story embodied within the FABLES. There are twenty discrete stories.
- However, it will be possible to present an implicit and fun meta-story involving the Actors and Musicians and other theatre pros working together to cleverly use the materials at hand to build and rebuild the sets and tableaus necessary to the FABLES.
- This intensely theatrical meta-story will impart a unity to the show, making a virtue of the theatrical challenges presented by the diverse FABLES.

- When we are inside a FABLE we are totally consumed with the realization of that FABLE.

- Between FABLES there is room to play with this self-consciously theatrical meta-story.)

I hope this document helps stimulate conversation concerning what could happen with these wonderful musical FABLES.

Let me close by again acknowledging the author and illustrator Arnold Lobel's brilliant work creating the FABLES.

Likewise HarperCollins' brilliant physical realization of the FABLES book.

Thank You and Best Regards to All,

Dan Bilich

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