

1968 CARMEN VARIATIONS BY VLADIMIR HOROWITZ

L. EDSON JEFFERY

1. PERFORMANCE NOTES FOR THE ACCOMPANYING SCORE

I based the accompanying score for the *Carmen Variations* on my frame-by-frame analysis of the video from the televised 1968 Carnegie Hall recital encore performed by Vladimir Horowitz [1]. Therefore, this score is quite accurate compared to my previous attempts. Nearly all available scores for Horowitz' works were rendered aurally by someone, a technique which has proved to be at best inadequate by comparison. The only other notable exceptions are Jon Skinner's score for the 1957 version of the *Carmen Variations*, for which he claims to have had access to Horowitz' original score [5], and my first version [2] based on material from a 1928 Duo-Art piano roll recording.

Generally, the eighth-note accompaniment pattern in the left hand (e.g., measures one through thirty-one) should be played like *sotto voce*, in contrast with other voices which are meant to be played more prominently.

Since I have had several comments and requests regarding fingering for this work, in this latest version I have edited the piece to incorporate as much of Horowitz' own fingering where it could be accurately determined or otherwise inferred. The inclusion of Horowitz' fingering is for the sake of historical completeness only. Note that for a fingering notation such as a_b , where a and b are numbers, the small line (or underline dash) indicates that the pianist is to play the note with the finger a and immediately switch to the finger b while the key remains depressed.

In the following notes, numbers in parenthesis () refer to measures in the score.

(1) Originally [2], and in the present score, I put the initial tempo as *Allegretto* so it would be in line with that given by Bizet in his original orchestral score from which is drawn the thematic material for the *Carmen Variations*. However, the *Gypsy Dance* theme is usually played somewhat faster by most orchestras, compared to the later recordings of the *Carmen Variations* by Horowitz.

(4, 7, 8) Judging by Horowitz' choice of fingering for these measures, it is my opinion that he was momentarily distracted by the brightness of the piano, since he began using the *una corda* pedal briefly at measures (5) through roughly (10). For the right hand in measure (4), one might try the fingering $\frac{3}{2}, \frac{4}{2}, \frac{3}{1}, \frac{4}{2}, \frac{3}{1}, 5$, with the pattern for (3) and (4) duplicated in measures (7) and (8), respectively, which is the fingering I use (since it is easier for me to remember).

(12) Closer examination indicates that Horowitz played the tied E-flat dotted half-note as a tied E-flat half-note followed by an E-flat quarter-note, and whether or not he intended to do so cannot be stated with absolute certainty. After much

debate I decided to notate the passage as written here. The result is consistent with his released commercial audio recording.

(23) I wrote the right-hand part in this way to simplify the notation: Horowitz ‘overlaps’ these sixteenth notes to give the effect of *legatissimo* while avoiding (or, elsewhere in the piece, minimizing) the use of the sustain pedal. Note that Horowitz uses very little sustain pedal in his performances of this version of the piece.

(61) In the last eighth-note chord in the left hand, Horowitz evidently plays only the F while omitting the A and C-natural.

(78) In the right hand, each eighth-note E and each sixteenth-note C is evidently omitted by Horowitz.

(79, 80, 81 and 82) See Jon Skinner’s score [5] for the 1957 version of the *Carmen Variations*, for the sake of comparison.

(83) In the left hand, the first chord after the octave is evidently not played by Horowitz in the televised version or the released commercial audio recording.

(86) In the right hand, Horowitz does not play the A-sharp in the fourth sixteenth-note third, that is, he only plays the F double-sharp, which facilitates subsequent positioning of the hand.

(94) In the left hand, the second and third F double-sharp notes are evidently not played by Horowitz.

Note that this score is virtually devoid of phrasing, although much can obviously be inferred by Horowitz’ video and audio performances. Dynamic markings are another issue, and I have at least tried to capture Horowitz’ interpretation and intentions with my notation. Consequently, the serious reader and pianist should carefully study Horowitz’ ideal (and nearly perfect) 1968 Carnegie Hall performance. Horowitz’ fingering may not be practical for all pianists, so I will send a copy of the score without fingering notation upon request by the reader.

2. CONCLUSION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I gratefully acknowledge helpful comments by Arthur Thomas Talbert [6], Richard J. Simmons [4] and Dr. Wilfried H. Lingenberg [3]. In particular, Dr. Lingenberg proofread the score while suggesting several changes in notation which I incorporated in the latest versions.

Vladimir Horowitz recorded the *Carmen Variations* at least twice during January and February of 1968. Between the two available commercial recordings that I know of from that period, there are numerous discrepancies, some not important and others more significant. Therefore, in creating this score, I had to decide which way to go by considering both sources but with the televised version usually taking precedence.

In Horowitz’ 1968 televised performance, there were only a few misplayed notes and which I took the liberty of correcting within the context of the material at

hand. Finally, the reader should feel free to contact me with any comments about this score.

REFERENCES

- [1] V. S. Horowitz, Variations on Themes from Bizet's Opera, "Carmen" (Televised encore from Vladimir Horowitz' 1968 Carnegie Hall Recital), CBS, 1968.
- [2] L. E. Jeffery, Carmen Variations, by Vladimir Horowitz (1968 version), Various previous scores for piano solo, 1978, 2000, 2008, 2009, 2010.
- [3] W. H. Lingenberg, Personal communications, 2009, 2010.
- [4] R. J. Simmons, Personal communications, 2009, 2010.
- [5] J. Skinner, Carmen Variations, by Vladimir Horowitz (1957 version), Score for piano solo, Year of rendering unknown.
- [6] A. T. Talbert, Personal communications, 1978.
E-mail address: `ed.jeffery@yahoo.com`

VARIATIONS ON A THEME FROM BIZET'S OPERA "CARMEN"
(1968 VERSION)*

Allegretto

Vladimir Horowitz

mp

5

9

13

17

mp

dim.

m. g.

p

m. g.

8

* Arranged by L. Edson Jeffery and dedicated to Arthur Thomas Talbert. Notation for fingering is as played by Vladimir Horowitz.

21

25

28 *poco rit.* **a tempo**

32 *poco rit.* **a tempo** *sf* *mp*

36 *sf* *mp* *cresc.* *f* *mf* *dim.*

40 **Allargando** *mp* *smorz.* **a tempo** *p*

43 *mp*

45

47 *smorz.*

50 *p* *m. d.* *mp*

53

53

mp

54

mp

55

53-55: Musical score for measures 53-55. The piece is in G major (one sharp). Measure 53 starts with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The right hand features a complex melodic line with many accidentals and fingerings (1-5, 2-4, 3-5). The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. Measure 54 continues the melodic development. Measure 55 concludes the system with a repeat sign and a fermata over the final chord.

56

56

cresc.

f mf

57

58

56-58: Musical score for measures 56-58. Measure 56 begins with a crescendo (*cresc.*) and a forte (*f*) dynamic. The right hand has a very active melodic line with many trills and rapid sixteenth-note passages. The left hand has a more rhythmic accompaniment. Measure 57 continues the intensity. Measure 58 ends with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and a fermata.

59

59

60

59-60: Musical score for measures 59-60. Measure 59 features a continuous stream of sixteenth-note triplets in the right hand. The left hand has a steady accompaniment of chords. Measure 60 continues the triplet pattern and concludes with a fermata.

61

61

fff dim.

p

62

63

61-63: Musical score for measures 61-63. Measure 61 continues the triplet pattern. Measure 62 starts with a fortissimo (*fff*) dynamic that then diminishes (*dim.*). Measure 63 begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features a melodic line with a fermata at the end.

64

64

sf mp

65

66

64-66: Musical score for measures 64-66. Measure 64 starts with a sforzando (*sf*) dynamic. The right hand has a melodic line with many accidentals and fingerings. The left hand has a rhythmic accompaniment. Measure 65 continues the melodic development. Measure 66 concludes the system with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and a fermata.

67

sf mp

70

mp *riten.* **a tempo** *p* *molto rit.* *mp legato*

74

a tempo *mp* *cresc.*

77

sempre cresc. *f*

80

pesante **Allargando** **a tempo** *ff* *cresc.* *fff* *mf*

116 *mp* *poco cresc.* *dim.* 8-----1

120 *p* *dolce mf* *dim.* rit. 8-----1

124 *pp* *p* *veloce* 8-----1

126 *mp* *veloce*

128 *ff* **Tempo I**

132

Musical score for measures 132-136. The piece is in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The right hand features a complex, rhythmic pattern with many beamed eighth and sixteenth notes, often in triplets. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment with eighth notes and chords. Measure 132 includes fingering numbers 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 in the right hand and 1, 2, 4 in the left hand.

137

Musical score for measures 137-141. The right hand continues with intricate rhythmic patterns, including some sixteenth-note runs. The left hand maintains a consistent accompaniment. The texture is dense and rhythmic.

142

poco stringendo

f cresc. *ff*

Musical score for measures 142-146. The tempo is marked *poco stringendo*. The dynamics increase from *f cresc.* to *ff*. The right hand has a complex pattern with fingering numbers 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. A dashed line with an '8' indicates an 8-measure phrase. The left hand has a steady accompaniment with some rests.

147

cresc. *mf*

Musical score for measures 147-151. The tempo is *cresc.* and the dynamic is *mf*. The right hand has a more melodic line with some chords, while the left hand continues with a steady accompaniment. The texture is less dense than the previous section.

152

sempre cresc. *ff* *ritenuto*

Musical score for measures 152-156. The tempo is *sempre cresc.* and the dynamic is *ff*. The piece concludes with a *ritenuto* section. The right hand has a complex pattern with fingering numbers 8 and 7. The left hand has a steady accompaniment. The piece ends with a final chord in both hands.