

1968 CARMEN VARIATIONS BY VLADIMIR HOROWITZ

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1. INTRODUCTION

I based the accompanying score for the *Carmen Variations* on a 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 (or anyone else's) previous attempts. In particular, the distribution of the notes between the hands is now very precise.

Vladimir Horowitz did not publish any of his compositions. Nearly all of the scores for his recorded compositions available on the Internet were rendered aurally, a technique which has consistently proved to be at best inadequate. The only 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's original handwritten manuscript [5], my first version [2] which was based on material from a 1928 Duo-Art piano roll recording, and the current score.

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 prevailing. In the 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.

A few observations regarding this score are given in the next section. Note that this score is virtually devoid of phrasing, although much can obviously be inferred by Horowitz's video and audio performances. Dynamic markings are another issue, and I have at least tried to capture Horowitz's interpretation and intentions with my notation. Finally, to gain further insight, the serious reader and pianist should carefully study Horowitz's ideal (and nearly perfect) 1968 Carnegie Hall performance.

2. PERFORMANCE NOTES FOR THE ACCOMPANYING SCORE

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.

Measure 1. Originally [2], and in the present score, I put the initial tempo as *Allegretto* so it would be in line with Bizet's 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 recordings of the *Carmen Variations* by Horowitz.

Measure 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 Horowitz’s released commercial audio recording.

Measure 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.

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

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

Measures 79–82. Cf. Jon Skinner’s score [5] for the 1957 version of the *Carmen Variations*, for the sake of comparison.

Measure 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.

Measure 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.

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

3. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to Arthur Thomas Talbert [6], Richard J. Simmons [4] and Dr. Wilfried H. Lingenberg [3] for many helpful discussions during the evolution of this score. In particular, Dr. Lindgenberg repeatedly proofread the score in Germany while maintaining a dialog with me for several days. Ultimately, we agreed on a few changes in notation which I have incorporated in the latest versions.

REFERENCES

- [1] V. S. Horowitz, Variations on Themes from Bizet’s Opera, “Carmen” (Televised encore from Vladimir Horowitz’s 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.
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