Variations on a Medieval Tune

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(b. 1943)

The eight variations that constitute this piece are bound by the right-hand melody of the theme, which occurs in each in ornamented, but recognizable form. There is an additional reference to the tempo changes in mm. 6 and 12 of the theme in virtually all of the variations. It is these two factors that should be projected in a performance of the piece to allow the listener to follow the composer’s reference to the theme and its use as a structural block for all that follows. The composer describes the reference to the dream at the head of the score as “...one I had while writing the piece. It was a dream just before waking, and as I came to full consciousness I could feel the image—and the ability to speak to the birds—dissolving just out of reach. I hope the music has captured some of the mystery of that experience.”

Dream: She got up from her bed, and in a forgotten language spoke to all the birds in the garden of an ancient monastery.

Theme

\( \frac{\text{\textit{thrust}} = \text{ca. 112}}{1} \)

\[ \text{hold back in tempo} \]

\( \frac{\text{\textit{thrust}}}{3} \)

\[ \text{hold back in tempo} \]

\( \frac{1}{5} \)

"Dedicated to my godson Hayden Wubbenhorst on the occasion of his baptism."
Variation 1

A bit slower, \( \frac{3}{1} = \text{ca. 100} \)

\[
\begin{align*}
18 & & 22 \\
\text{Ped. sempre} & & \text{Ped. sempre}
\end{align*}
\]

Variation 2

\( \frac{3}{1} = \text{ca. 112} \)

\[
\begin{align*}
30 & & 34 \\
\end{align*}
\]
Variation 3

Faster, $\cdot j = \text{ca. 140}$
hold back

Masters of Our Day
Variation 4

\[
J. = \text{ca. 76}
\]

[2nd time: \text{\textit{p}} \text{cresc.}]

Variation 5

\[
J = \text{ca. 115}
\]
holding back

in tempo

holding back

slower, and slowing ... a lot
Variation 6

Slowly, \( \frac{1}{4} = \text{ca. 56} \)

\( \text{holding back} \)

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Variation 7

Fairly quickly, $J = \text{ca. 140}$

Ped. sempre

115

[suddenly hold back]

Ped.

118

[2. suddenly hold back and slowing] suddenly in tempo

Ped.

120

sudden hold back . . . . . . slowing

(Ped.)

Variation 8

$J = \text{ca. 76}$

(Ped. sempre)
in tempo

8va

a bit slower
don’t be in a hurry!

in tempo

slowing

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