

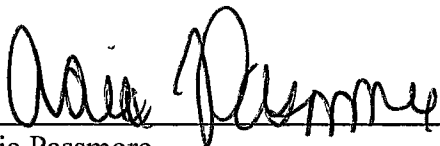
Theme and Variations on Winnie the Pooh

Senior Project

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
The Esther G. Maynor Honors College
University of North Carolina at Pembroke

By

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Music
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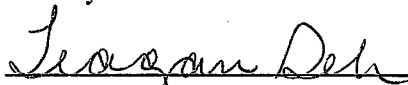
Date



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Abstract

This project presents an arrangement of the theme-song from the television show, “Winnie the Pooh” into a set of theme and variations. Though it dates back to the early music period, theme and variation sets were popular throughout all musical time periods. The theme is based on melody popular to the public, while the variation is a reorganization of the theme. The composer can include musical or stylistic elements to characterize each variation. This theme and variation arrangement will include the theme-song, transcribed by ear, and a set of three variations, each arranged in a particular stylistic form. The variations will feature major and minor modes, rhythmic variety, chordal elements, and the like. The finished product is a theme (the transcription), and three stylistically different variations.

Theme and Variations on Winnie the Pooh

My senior project for the Esther G. Maynor Honors College is an arrangement of the theme-song from Winnie the Pooh into a set of theme and variations. My faculty mentor for this project is Dr. Jonathan Maisonpierre.

The theme and variation set is a musical style which dates back to the Early Music Period. The theme is based on a popular melody well known to the public while each variation is a little arrangement of the theme¹. Some well-known theme and variation sets include Beethoven's Seven Variations on God Save the Queen and Mozart's 12 Variations in C Major ("Twinkle Twinkle Little Star"). While the theme would be familiar to the listener, each variation presents a challenge to decipher the melody. The theme and variation allowed the composer to include several musical elements into a small form. Particularly in the Classical Period, the theme included the melody with longer rhythmic values while the variations contained different textures; faster, slower, or constant tempo; and the use of different registers.

I chose to do this project because of my interest in the theme and variation set. While in Theory IV, our class had a project which required us to compose a theme and variation set from a folksong. I chose "Three Blind Mice." This project challenged me to transcribe my own theme by ear for piano, and explore different techniques to apply to each variation. For this project, I chose the theme-song from Winnie the Pooh, not only because it is a favorite of mine, but also because the chord progression and melody is easy to transcribe and arrange. This project is the theme, transcribed by ear, with three variations each containing different stylistic practices.

¹ Cathy Albergo and Reid Alexander, *Piano Repertoire Guide: Intermediate and Advanced Literature*, (Stipes Publishing L.L.C: 2011).

To begin my project, I first found a decent recording of the song on YouTube from which to transcribe. I then wrote down the music in the key of C Major and arranged it in a comfortable way for piano, I familiarized myself with playing it so that I could begin my variations.

Variation I features a contemporary jazz mode. The key has modulated to C minor, and features chords such as a D fully diminished seventh chord, and an A minor seventh chord with an added major 6. The following section of the variation switches back to C Major and takes on a quick, light, character, with a fast moving bass. The C minor section then returns and continues until the return of the theme, which adopts the quick, light character with the fast bass until the end.

Variation II was an attempt at a Baroque-styled character, although, the finished product most closely resembles the Early Classical style. This variation changes time to 6/8, a compound duple meter. I originally composed it in 3/4, but found it easier to read and write the rhythms in 6/8. My inspiration for this variation comes from a Bach Prelude in C minor and a Two Part Invention in E Major. This variation also features a mordent at the end, an ornamentation common in Baroque music.

Variation III, adopts an impressionistic style. My inspiration from this comes from Debussy's "Reflets dans l'eau" (Reflections in the Water), from the first book of his Images. In this variation, I include rich extended chords, mainly ninth chords, and also a two-against three rhythm, with eighth notes in the right hand played on top of quarter note triplets in the left hand. From here, I transition into an ending for the entire piece.

To accomplish incorporating different stylistic practices into each variation, a knowledge of these different styles is needed. This did not prove to be a significant issue because of my background in performing and studying different musical time periods. The easiest variations to complete were the first and third variations, largely because their styles are more closely associated with the time in which the original theme-song was written. The chord progression and melody could be easily adapted to fit jazz and impressionistic characters. The most difficult variation to compose was the second variation. Because this theme-song is so contemporary, it was difficult to develop a Baroque sound. I thought to try putting several voices in the right hand while keeping a simple chordal accompaniment in the left hand. However, this option sounded more Classical than Baroque. Upon finding the two pieces which I listed as my inspiration, I decided to keep the same melody while having an ostinato in the left hand, an ostinato being a repeated musical figure. This ostinato and the rhythms that I use at the end of the phrases are indicative of the Prelude and Invention that I drew from.

One other problem I encountered was how to organize the form of my variations. The theme is close to the original version, and I wanted to keep my variations following the same form. It was difficult to compose in a way that would be easy for me to perform, and that would not be repetitive. I had most trouble with this in the last two variations. In the second variation, I composed a certain section that was too hard for me to play, and in the third variation, the same section seemed like a repeat of the previous section. Therefore, I decided to cut out the section, and proceed immediately to the return of the “A” section.

In conclusion, this project was an enjoyable journey. I feel that I was very successful in bringing to light another aspect of music besides performance and teaching. This project was a rewarding experience; I refreshed my skills on transcribing music by ear, I allowed myself to be creative, and I had the opportunity to present my work at the PURC Symposium and the Senior Project Symposium. I feel that my project was a success, and I am interested in completing a similar project in the future.

Theme and Variations on Winnie the Pooh

Asia Passmore

Theme

mp *mf*

Andante (♩ = ♩)

rit. *p*

Moderato (♩ = c. 108)

Moderato (♩ = c. 108)

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27

Musical notation for measures 27-31. Treble clef has a melody of eighth and quarter notes. Bass clef has a steady accompaniment of chords and eighth notes.

32 *accel.*

p

Musical notation for measures 32-36. Treble clef has a melody with some rests. Bass clef has a steady accompaniment. Dynamics include 'p' and 'accel.'

37

p *mf*

Musical notation for measures 37-41. Treble clef has a melody with some rests. Bass clef has a steady accompaniment. Dynamics include 'p' and 'mf'

42

cresc.

Musical notation for measures 42-46. Treble clef has a melody with some rests. Bass clef has a steady accompaniment. Dynamics include 'cresc.'

47

Variation I
Swing! $\text{♪} = \text{♪}^3 \text{♪}$

p *mf*

Musical notation for measures 47-51. Treble clef has a melody with a triplet. Bass clef has a steady accompaniment. Dynamics include 'p' and 'mf'. A key signature change to B-flat major is indicated.

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3

52

56

Straight, quick and light

60

64

Swing! ♩ = $\overset{\frown}{\underset{\frown}{\text{♩}}}$

68

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73

77

81

86

91

Straight

Theme and Variations on Winnie the Pooh

5

95

cresc. *f* *p*

100

Variation II

mf

104

108

p *legato*

114

mf

6

Theme and Variations on Winnie the Pooh

119

p

123

mp

127

cresc.

131

cresc. *mf* *dim.* *p*

135

Variation III

mp

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. *

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140

p

145

150

mp

Lea Lea Lea Lea *

156

161

8^{vb}

8

Theme and Variations on Winnie the Pooh

The musical score is written for piano and consists of two staves. The piece begins at measure 166. The right hand starts with a melodic line: a quarter rest, followed by quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. The left hand provides accompaniment with chords and single notes. The first measure of the left hand has a dynamic marking of *pp*. The second measure contains a chord with a fermata and an asterisk, with the word *Ped.* written below. The third measure has a quarter rest in the left hand, followed by a chord with a fermata and an asterisk, also with *Ped.* below. The fourth measure has a quarter rest in the left hand, followed by a chord with a fermata and an asterisk, with *Ped.* below. The fifth measure has a quarter rest in the left hand, followed by a chord with a fermata and an asterisk, with *Ped.* below. The sixth measure has a quarter rest in the left hand, followed by a chord with a fermata and an asterisk, with *Ped.* below. The seventh measure has a quarter rest in the left hand, followed by a chord with a fermata and an asterisk, with *Ped.* below. The eighth measure has a quarter rest in the left hand, followed by a chord with a fermata and an asterisk, with *Ped.* below. The piece concludes with a final chord in the right hand, marked with a fermata and an asterisk.

Bibliography

Albergo, Cathy. 2011. *Piano Repertoire Guide: Intermediate and Advanced Literature*.
Champaign: Stipes Publishing, L.L.C.