

Variations on a Cowboy

Song

for orchestra

Dylan Pich

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Instrumentation

Piccolo	Horn in F 1 & 3	Timpani	Violin I
Flute 1	Horn in F 2 & 4	Percussion 1	Violin II
Flute 2	B-flat Trumpet 1	Maraca, Vibraslap,	Viola
Oboe 1	B-flat Trumpet 2	Snare Drum,	Cello
Oboe 2	Flugelhorn/B-flat Trumpet 3	Xylophone, Tam-tam	Double Bass
English Horn	Trombone 1	Percussion 2	
B-flat Clarinet 1	Trombone 2	Marimba, Bass Drum,	
B-flat Clarinet 2	Bass Trombone	Guero, Maraca,	
B-flat Clarinet 3	Tuba	Vibraslap	
Bassoon 1		Percussion 3	
Bassoon 2		Castanets, Hi-Hats,	
Contrabassoon		Splash Cymbal,	
		Triangle	
		Harp	

Program Notes

This set of variations is derived from the old cowboy tune “In the Bright Mohawk Valley,” better known as “The Red River Valley.” The exact origins of this song are unknown. Each variation should take on its own unique character. The initial statement of the melody is straightforward and folksy, utilizing simple harmonies. The harp, violas, and later violins should sound as much like an acoustic guitar as possible. Variation I is much more harmonically colorful. The flugelhorn solo soars over the ensemble, later joined by trombone and horns. The melody is fragmented for Variation II, which persistently drives the piece forward, led by the xylophone and marimba. The next variation, a tango, can be performed with much capricious arrogance as the viola section’s melodic line is marked “snootily.” This can (and should) be taken to heart. A new melody is introduced here, “Wayfaring Stranger,” while the original melody is fragmented into an accompaniment. The tango is interrupted briefly by, quite frankly, a mosh. The rhythmic figures in the double bass, cello, and bass drum should be as clean and tight as possible to best emulate the feeling of the “breakdowns” common to various genres of metal music. Really aim to surprise the audience with this one. After a short return to the tango, Variation V begins with a gradually morphing, mechanical percussion ostinato overlaid by quick, overlapping woodwind lines. An unrelenting wall of sound overtakes the ensemble and pushes the piece to a close.

Performance Considerations

- Either a maraca or a metal shaker can be used (and this is indicated in the percussion parts)
- Upbow and downbow markings in the strummed viola/violin passages indicate strum direction; it is best for these players to keep their strumming hand moving in a consistent rhythm (as guitarists often do)
- The “unpitched” strumming in the violins in Variation II should sound like “chop chords” as played on a mandolin. All the strings should be lightly muted to eliminate as much pitch as possible, creating a unique rhythmic timbre
- The thickness of the overpressure shapes in Variation IV indicate the amount of pressure to be used (i.e. thicker shapes mean more pressure)

Timpani tunings:

- The timpani should be tuned to the following pitches with the lowest drum being tuned to the first note, the next lowest drum to the next, and so on



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for orchestra

Relaxed, as a Cowboy Song ♩ = 60

Piccolo

Flute 1

Flute 2

Oboe 1

Oboe 2

English Horn

Clarinet in B \flat 1

Clarinet in B \flat 2

Clarinet in B \flat 3

Bassoon 1

Bassoon 2

Contrabassoon

Relaxed, as a Cowboy Song ♩ = 60

Horn in F 1 & 3

Horn in F 2 & 4

Trumpet in B \flat 1

Trumpet in B \flat 2

Flugelhorn/Trumpet 3

Trombone 1

Trombone 2

Tuba

Timpani

Percussion 1

Percussion 2

Percussion 3

Maraca/Metal Shaker

Marimba (soft to medium yarn mallets)

Castanets

VibraSlap L.V.

Harp

roll direction ad lib

Relaxed, as a Cowboy Song ♩ = 60

only 1 player

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Double Bass

pizz. (hold like guitar, strum w/ right thumb) simile

10

Picc. *mf* *solo*

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1 *p*

Ob. 2

E. Hn. *mf*

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2

B♭ Cl. 3

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

C. Bn.

10

Hn. 1 & 3 *pp* *mp* *p* *mf* *p*

Hn. 2 & 4 *pp* *mf* *mp* *p* *mf*

B♭ Tpt. 1 *pp*

B♭ Tpt. 2

Flghn./Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1 *pp*

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Tuba

Timp. *10*

Perc. 1 *10*

Perc. 2 *10*

Perc. 3 *10*

Hp. *10*

10

Vln. I *mf* *pizz.* (hold like guitar, strum w/ right thumb) *simile*

Vln. II *mf* *pizz.* (hold like guitar, strum w/ right thumb)

Vla. *mf*

Vc.

D.B.

18 Variation I, L'istesso tempo ♩ = 60

Picc. *pp*

Fl. 1 *f* *mp* *fp* *mf*

Fl. 2 *f* *mp* *fp* *mf*

Ob. 1 *f* *mp* *fp* *mf*

Ob. 2 *f* *mp* *fp* *mf*

E. Hn. *f* *mp* *fp* *mf*

B♭ Cl. 1 *f* *mp* *fp* *mf*

B♭ Cl. 2 *f* *mp* *fp* *mf*

B♭ Cl. 3 *f* *mp* *fp* *mf*

Bsn. 1 *f* *mp* *fp* *f*

Bsn. 2 *f* *mp* *fp* *f*

C. Bn. *f* *mp* *fp* *f*

18 Variation I, L'istesso tempo ♩ = 60

Hn. 1 & 3 *f* *mp* *fp* *f*

Hn. 2 & 4 *f* *mp* *fp* *f*

B♭ Tpt. 1 *f* *mp* *fp* *f*

B♭ Tpt. 2 *f* *mp* *fp* *f*

Flghn./Tpt. 3 *ff* *solo*

Tbn. 1 *f* *mp* *ff* *solo*

Tbn. 2 *f* *mp* *fp* *f*

B. Tbn. *f* *mp* *fp* *f*

Tuba *f* *mp* *fp* *f*

Timp. *ff* *mf* *f* *ff*

Perc. 1 *p* Snare Drum *ff*

Perc. 2 Bass Drum *ffz* *mf* *ffz* *ffz* *ffz* *ffz* *ffz*

Perc. 3 *p*

Hp. *p*

18 Variation I, L'istesso tempo ♩ = 60

Vln. I *pp* *f* *mp* *fp* *mf* *simile*

Vln. II *pp* *f* *mp* *fp* *mf* *simile*

Vla. *f* *mp* *fp* *f*

Vc. *f* *mp* *fp* *f*

D.B. *pp* *f* *mp* *fp* *f*

This musical score is for a section of 'Variations on a Cowboy Song', starting at measure 25. The score is arranged for a full orchestra and woodwind section. The woodwinds include Piccolo, Flutes 1 and 2, Oboes 1 and 2, English Horn, Clarinets 1, 2, and 3, Bassoons 1 and 2, and Contrabassoon. The brass section includes Horns 1 & 3, Horns 2 & 4, Trumpets 1 and 2, Flugelhorn/Trumpet 3, Trombones 1 and 2, Baritone Trombone, and Tuba. The percussion section includes Timpani, Percussion 1, 2, and 3, and Harp. The string section includes Violins 1 and 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The score features complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth-note runs in the woodwinds and strings, and various dynamic markings such as *fp*, *p*, *f*, *mf*, *ff*, and *sffz*. There are also performance instructions like *solo 1* and *solo 2* for the horns. The key signature has two flats, and the time signature is 4/4.

This page of the musical score, titled "Variations on a Cowboy Song", page 5, features a full orchestral arrangement. The score is written for a variety of instruments, including woodwinds, brass, percussion, and strings. The key signature is B-flat major, and the time signature is 4/4. The music begins at measure 29. The woodwind section, including Piccolo, Flutes 1 and 2, Oboes 1 and 2, English Horn, Clarinets 1, 2, and 3, Bassoons 1 and 2, and Contrabassoon, plays a complex, rhythmic melody with sixteenth-note patterns. The brass section, including Horns 1 & 3, Horns 2 & 4, Trumpets 1 and 2, Flugelhorn/Trumpet 3, Trombones 1 and 2, Baritone Trombone, and Tuba, provides harmonic support with sustained notes and rhythmic patterns. The percussion section, including Timpani, Percussion 1, 2, and 3, and Harp, adds texture and dynamics. The string section, including Violins I and II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass, plays a steady, rhythmic accompaniment. The score includes various performance instructions such as *cresc.* (crescendo), *ff* (fortissimo), and *rit.* (ritardando). The woodwinds and strings are marked with *ff* and *rit.* at the end of the page. The brass section is marked with *ff* and *rit.* at the end of the page. The percussion section is marked with *mf* and *ffz* (fortissimo zingando) at the end of the page. The harp is marked with *mf* and *ffz* at the end of the page. The strings are marked with *ff* and *rit.* at the end of the page. The score is a complex and detailed arrangement of a cowboy song, featuring a variety of instruments and performance techniques.

34 Variation II, Driving ♩ = 138

Picc.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

E. Hn.

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2

B♭ Cl. 3

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

C. Bn.

34 Variation II, Driving ♩ = 138

Hn. 1 & 3

Hn. 2 & 4

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Flghn./Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Tuba

34

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Hp.

Xylophone (medium to hard rubber/synthetic wood mallets) solo

Marimba solo (medium to hard rubber/synthetic wood mallets)

Hi-Hats

34 Variation II, Driving ♩ = 138

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

pizz. knock on the body of the instrument w/ knuckles

pizz. knock on the body of the instrument w/ knuckles

pizz. knock on the body of the instrument w/ knuckles

40

Picc. *mf*

Fl. 1 *mf*

Fl. 2 *mf*

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

E. Hn.

B♭ Cl. 1 *mf*

B♭ Cl. 2 *p*

B♭ Cl. 3 *p*

Bsn. 1 *p*
stagger breathe w/ bsn 2

Bsn. 2 *p*
stagger breathe w/ bsn 1

C. Bn.

bell tones

f

40

Hn. 1 & 3

Hn. 2 & 4

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Ftghn./Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Tuba

40

Timp.

Perc. 1 *n*

Perc. 2 *solo*
f

Perc. 3

Hp.

40

Vln. I *f*
pizz. (hold like a guitar, lightly mute strings w/ left hand, strum w/ right thumb a la mandolin "chop" chords)
simile

Vln. II *f*
pizz. (hold like a guitar, lightly mute strings w/ left hand, strum w/ right thumb a la mandolin "chop" chords)
simile

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

48

Picc. *mf*

Fl. 1 *f* *mf* *meno f*

Fl. 2 *mf* *meno f*

Ob. 1 *bell tones, but faster* *f*

Ob. 2 *bell tones, but faster* *f*

E. Hn.

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2 *bell tones, but faster* *f*

B♭ Cl. 3 *bell tones, but faster* *f*

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

C. Bn.

48

Hn. 1 & 3

Hn. 2 & 4

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Flghn./Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Hp.

48

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

53

Picc. *f* *mf* *f*

Fl. 1 *f* *f* *mf* *f*

Fl. 2 *f* *mf* *f*

Ob. 1 *mf* *f*

Ob. 2 *mf* *f*

E. Hn.

B♭ Cl. 1 *f*

B♭ Cl. 2 *mf* *f* *mp*

B♭ Cl. 3 *mf* *f* *mp*

Bsn. 1 *f*

Bsn. 2 *f*

C. Bn.

53

Hn. 1 & 3

Hn. 2 & 4

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Flghn./Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Tuba

59 *mf*

53

Timp.

Perc. 1 *ff*

Perc. 2 *ff*

Perc. 3 L.V.

53

Hp.

53

Vln. I *mf* *ff*

Vln. II

Vla. *pizz* *mf* *f* *ff* *more raucous than before*

Vc. *pizz* *mf* *f* *ff* *more raucous than before*

D.B. *pizz* *mf* *f* *ff* *more raucous than before*

59

60 *rit.*

Picc.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

E. Hn.

B \flat Cl. 1

B \flat Cl. 2

B \flat Cl. 3

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

C. Bn.

Hn. 1 & 3

Hn. 2 & 4

B \flat Tpt. 1

B \flat Tpt. 2

Flghn./Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Hp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

mf

pp

pp

p

pizz

f

f

rit.

rit.

rit.

70 Variation III, Tango ♩ = 96

Picc.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

E. Hn.

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2

B♭ Cl. 3

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

C. Bn.

66

p

mp

p

p

70 Variation III, Tango ♩ = 96

Hn. 1 & 3

Hn. 2 & 4

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Flghn./Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Tuba

66

mp

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Hp.

66

p

mf (soft beater - minimal attack)

mf

pp

f

Tam-tam L.V.

S.D. snares off

Castanets

70 Variation III, Tango ♩ = 96

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

66

mf

mf

mf

pizz

pizz

74

Picc.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

E. Hn.

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2

B♭ Cl. 3

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

C. Bn.

Hn. 1 & 3

Hn. 2 & 4

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Flghn./Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Hp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

mf

p

mf

p

mf

p

mf

p

mf

f

arco

f smoothly

pizz.

Picc. *mf*

Fl. 1 *mf* *f*

Fl. 2

Ob. 1 *mf*

Ob. 2

E. Hn. *mf*

B♭ Cl. 1 *mf* *mf*

B♭ Cl. 2 *mf*

B♭ Cl. 3 *mf*

Bsn. 1 *mf*

Bsn. 2 *mf*

C. Bn. *mf*

Hn. 1 & 3

Hn. 2 & 4

B♭ Tpt. 1 *mf* (Harmon mute - no stem) *p*

B♭ Tpt. 2 *mf* (Harmon mute - w/ stem) *p*

Flghn./Tpt. 3 *mf* (Harmon mute - w/ stem) *p*

Tbn. 1 *mp* (straight mute)

Tbn. 2 *mp* (straight mute)

B. Tbn. *mp*

Tuba *mf*

Timp. *mf*

Perc. 1 *f* *p* *f*

Perc. 2 *B.D.*

Perc. 3 *f*

Hp. *mf* *f* *mf*

Vln. I *mp* *f*

Vln. II *mp* *f*

Vla. *mf* *f*

Vc. *mf* *f*

D.B. *f*

91 Variation IV, Subito Heavy Metal ♩ = 132

Picc. *f*

Fl. 1 *f*

Fl. 2 *f*

Ob. 1

Ob. 2 *f*

E. Hn.

B♭ Cl. 1 *f* growl or flutter tongue

B♭ Cl. 2 *f* growl or flutter tongue

B♭ Cl. 3 *f* growl or flutter tongue

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

C. Bn.

91 Variation IV, Subito Heavy Metal ♩ = 132

Hn. 1 & 3 *mf* a2

Hn. 2 & 4 *mf* a2

B♭ Tpt. 1 *mf* Open *f*

B♭ Tpt. 2 *mf* Open *f*

Flghn./Tpt. 3 *mf*

Tbn. 1 *ff* Open *ff* growl solo (NASTY)

Tbn. 2 *ff* Open

B. Tbn. *ff*

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1 *ffz* snares on

Perc. 2 *ff* as clean and articulate as possible

Perc. 3 *ff* Splash Cymbal

Hp.

Variation IV, Subito Heavy Metal ♩ = 132

91

Vln. I *ff* overpressure Div.

Vln. II *ff* overpressure Div.

Vla. *ff* overpressure

Vc. *ff* overpressure a2

D.B. *ff*

95 Variation III (Revenge of), Tango ♩ = 96

Picc. *p*

Fl. 1 *p*

Fl. 2 *p*

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

E. Hn.

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2

B♭ Cl. 3

Bsn. 1 *solo* *f*

Bsn. 2 *solo* *f*

C. Bn.

95 Variation III (Revenge of), Tango ♩ = 96

Hn. 1 & 3 *solo* *f* *p* *mf* *p*

Hn. 2 & 4 *solo* *f* *p*

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Flghn./Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Tuba *f* *mf*

Timp.

Perc. 1 *sfz* *sfz*

Perc. 2 *Maraca/Metal Shaker* *mf*

Perc. 3 *choke* *Castanets* *mf*

Hp. *p*

95 Variation III (Revenge of), Tango ♩ = 96

Vln. I *p* *a2* *n*

Vln. II *p* *n* *a2*

Vla. *n*

Vc. *arco* *mf*

D.B. *pizz.* *mf*

107 Variation V, Mechanical ♩ = 138

Picc. *mf*

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

E. Hn.

B♭ Cl. 1 *p*

B♭ Cl. 2

B♭ Cl. 3

Bsn. 1 *f*

Bsn. 2

C. Bn.

107 Variation V, Mechanical ♩ = 138

Hn. 1 & 3

Hn. 2 & 4

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Flghn./Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1 *f* *pp* *mf* *snares off* *snares on*

Perc. 2 *f* *pp* *mf* *VibraSlap L.V.*

Perc. 3 *f* *pp* *f* *solo*

Hp.

107 Variation V, Mechanical ♩ = 138

Vln. I *mf*

Vln. II *pizz* *mf*

Vla. *p* *pizz* *mf*

Vc. *pizz*

D.B.

109

Picc.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

E. Hn.

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2

B♭ Cl. 3

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

C. Bn.

109

Hn. 1 & 3

Hn. 2 & 4

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Flghn./Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Tuba

109

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Hp.

B.D.

Triangle L.V. always

109

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

arco

p

This musical score is for a large orchestral ensemble, including woodwinds, brass, percussion, and strings. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system covering measures 117 to 122 and the second system covering measures 123 to 128. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or F minor), and the time signature is 4/4. The score features a variety of musical textures and dynamics, with woodwinds and strings providing the primary melodic and harmonic support, while brass and percussion add rhythmic interest and power. The woodwind section includes Piccolo, Flutes 1 and 2, Oboes 1 and 2, English Horn, Bass Clarinets 1, 2, and 3, Bassoons 1 and 2, and Contrabassoon. The brass section includes Horns 1 & 3, Horns 2 & 4, Trumpets 1 and 2, Flugelhorn/Trumpet 3, Trombones 1 and 2, Baritone Trombone, and Tuba. The percussion section includes Timpani, three different Percussion 1 parts, two Percussion 2 parts, and three Percussion 3 parts. The string section includes Violins I and II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The score is marked with various dynamics such as *mf*, *f*, *p*, *pp*, and *arco*. The woodwinds and strings play complex rhythmic patterns, often involving triplets and sixteenth notes. The brass section provides a steady, rhythmic accompaniment, with the tuba and timpani playing a prominent role in the lower register. The overall mood is one of intense, rhythmic energy, characteristic of a cowboy song.

124

Picc.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

E. Hn.

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2

B♭ Cl. 3

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

C. Bn.

mp

124

Hn. 1 & 3

Hn. 2 & 4

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Flghn./Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Tuba

mp

124

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

mp

124

Hp.

mp

124

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

mp

mp

mp

mp

mp

133

Picc. *mf* *f*

Fl. 1 *mf* *f*

Fl. 2 *f*

Ob. 1 *mf* *f*

Ob. 2 *mf* *f*

E. Hn. *mf* *f*

B♭ Cl. 1 *mf* *f*

B♭ Cl. 2 *f*

B♭ Cl. 3 *f*

Bsn. 1 *mf* *f*

Bsn. 2 *mf* *f*

C. Bn. *mf* *f*

133

Hn. 1 & 3 *mf* *f*

Hn. 2 & 4 *mf* *f*

B♭ Tpt. 1 *mf* *f*

B♭ Tpt. 2 *mf* *f*

Ftghn./Tpt. 3 *mf* *f*

Tbn. 1 *mf* *f*

Tbn. 2 *mf* *f*

B. Tbn. *mf* *f*

Tuba *mf* *f*

Timp. *mf* *f*

Perc. 1 *f*

Perc. 2 *f*

Perc. 3 *f*

Hp. *f*

133

Vln. I *mf* *f*

Vln. II *mf* *f*

Vla. *mf* *f*

Vc. *mf* *f*

D.B. *mf* *f*

141 Gently $\text{♩} = 48$ *rit.* 145

The score is organized into several systems, each starting at measure 136. The first system (measures 136-145) includes Piccolo, Flute 1 & 2, Oboe 1 & 2, English Horn, Bass Clarinet 1 & 2, Bass Clarinet 3, Bassoon 1 & 2, Contrabass, Horns (1 & 3, 2 & 4), Trumpets (1 & 2), Flugelhorn/Trombone 3, Trombone 1 & 2, Bass Trombone, and Tuba. The second system (measures 141-145) includes Trumpet 3, Trombone 3, and Tuba. The third system (measures 136-145) includes Timpani, Percussion 1 & 2 & 3, and Harp. The fourth system (measures 136-145) includes Violin I & II, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass. The score includes various dynamics such as *sf*, *mp*, and *p*, and performance directions like "Gently", "rit.", and "solo".