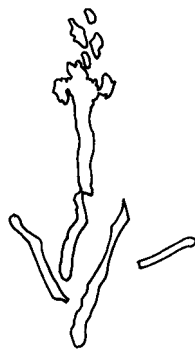


VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY O'CAROLAN

For two guitars



Theo Radić



Syukhtun Editions

PREFACE

Turlough O'Carolan (Toirdhealbhach Ó Cearbhalláin) was born in 1670 near Nobber, County Meath, Ireland, and died March 25, 1738 at the home of his patron Mrs. MacDermott Roe in Alderford, County Roscommon. He was one of the last Irish harper/composers and a significant number of his works survive in single line melody. His fame was not due to his skill with the harp, but to his gift for composition and verse. O'Carolan was not highly regarded as a performer. His gift was in musical composition and poetry. His practice was to compose the tune first and then write the words. This was opposite of the traditional Irish practice. At first, he was not considered a great musician. The ancient bards were supposed to have started their training when they were still young children and O'Carolan didn't start until he was eighteen.

O'Carolan's father was either a farmer or a blacksmith. He moved his family to Ballyfarnon when O'Carolan was fourteen to take employment with the MacDermott Roe family. Mrs. MacDermott befriended the boy and gave him an education. Around the age of eighteen O'Carolan was blinded by smallpox. He had shown talent for poetry and may have been taught, even before his illness, by a harper named MacDermott Roe. O'Carolan studied for three years at the end of which Mrs. MacDermott Roe gave him a harp, a horse and some money to begin his career as an itinerant harper. For forty-five years O'Carolan traveled throughout Ireland composing tunes for his patrons. He made his living by traveling from manor to manor, from castle to castle, entertaining the households and the friends of some of the most famous and wealthy people of Ireland at the time. Often, as a special favor, he would write a tune in honor of the man of the house, or his wife or daughter. He called these tunes "planxties". He was very successful and people would often delay weddings and funerals until he could be present to play the appropriate tune. His first patron, George Reynolds, suggested that O'Carolan try composing. With this encouragement O'Carolan began composing, and thereafter regularly composed tunes for his patrons, usually on his journeys throughout Ireland. In 1738 Carolan returned to the home of Mrs. MacDermott Roe because of illness. A few days later he asked for a drink and recited these lines to his first patron:

*Mary Fitzgerald, dear heart,
Love of my breast and my friend,
Alas that I am parting from you,
O lady who succored me at every stage.*

His final composition was to the butler, Flinn, who brought him his last drink. O'Carolan's funeral was widely attended and, in fitting tribute to the bard, the wake lasted four days.

The tradition of harpers in Ireland bridged classical and folk music and was the primary accompaniment for the oral tradition. O'Carolan created a unique style by not only combining the two art forms but by adding influences of contemporary composers like Vivaldi and Corelli. He greatly admired Geminiani, whom he probably met in Dublin. O'Carolan's melodies survive only as single line melodies, with no clue as to how he accompanied or harmonized them.

When O'Carolan was a very young man, before his blindness, he met and fell in love with a young woman named Bridget Cruise. Bridget was part of a noble family and O'Carolan's family

was of skilled laborers, so marriage was out of the question. Throughout a very successful life, he never forgot Bridget and wrote three planxties in her honor. Many years later, near the end of his life, when he was on his way to a religious retreat in County Donegal, he was helping people out of the boat by taking their hands. He happened to touch a woman's hand and instantly recognized that it was Bridget's.

The planxty "Fanny Power" was named after Frances "Fanny" Power, a girl from a kind family who were his patrons for a period in his life. (William Butler Yeats was to write a song of the same name.) One of his most famous melodies, O'Carolan composed and then sang these lines as he played the harp:

PLANXTY FANNY POWER (MRS. TRENCH)

I wish to speak of a gracious young lady,
A loveable lady of beauty and reputation,
Who lives in the town near the bay of Loch Riabhach.
I'm thankful that I had the chance to meet her.

She's lively, airy – a cultured fine maiden,
The love of all Ireland and a nice cultured pearl.
O drink up now and don't be slack!
To Fanny, the daughter of David.

She is the swan at the edge of the bay,
Crowds of men are dying for her love.
She's nice gentle Fanny of locks and braids,
Who often gets the prize for beauty.

May I not leave this world, if I may be so bold,
Unless I can first cheerfully dance at your wedding feast.
I challenge the one who would ever ask a dowry for you,
O Pearl-Child of white hands.

These variations for two guitars take the harp as model, and meander into different keys and styles, from baroque to jazz, from consonance to dissonance back to consonance. I composed them after greatly enjoying playing El McMeen's fine arrangement of "Fanny Power" for solo guitar.

Theo Radić
Stockholm, Sweden
November 23, 2007

Source: <http://www.contemplator.com/carolan/carlnbio.html>

Cover: This is the only known contemporary portrait of O'Carolan, painted by Francis Bindon (c.1690-1765). He was a gentleman amateur painter, born in county Clare and best known for his portraits of Jonathan Swift, who was a friend of O'Carolan. *Courtesy of the National Gallery of Ireland*

VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY O'CAROLAN*

For two guitars

Theo Radić

Andante Grazioso ♩ = 67

Guitar 1

Guitar 2

mf

⑥ = D

mf

4

8

12

16

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* Fanny Power

VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY O'CAROLAN

The musical score is written for piano in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of five systems of two staves each. The first system includes the instruction 'To Coda' in the left hand. Measure numbers 20, 24, 28, 32, and 36 are placed at the beginning of their respective measures in the right hand. The score features a variety of musical notations including eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as accents (>) and slurs. The piece concludes with a final cadence in the right hand at measure 36.

VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY O'CAROLAN

This musical score is for a piano piece titled "Variations on a Theme by O'Carolan". It is written for piano (p) and consists of five systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings. The first system (measures 1-40) features a melody in the treble staff and a bass line in the bass staff, with a forte (f) dynamic marking. The second system (measures 41-44) shows a change in dynamics to piano (p) and mezzo-piano (mp). The third system (measures 45-48) continues the development of the theme. The fourth system (measures 49-52) includes a triplet of eighth notes in the treble staff. The fifth system (measures 53-56) concludes the piece with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic marking and a key signature change to one flat (Bb) at the end.

40

f

p *mp*

44

48

52

3

56

mf

VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY O'CAROLAN

This musical score is for a piano piece titled 'Variations on a Theme by O'Carolan'. It is written for piano in G minor, 4/4 time. The score is divided into five systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system starts at measure 60 and ends at measure 63. The second system starts at measure 64 and ends at measure 67. The third system starts at measure 68 and ends at measure 71. The fourth system starts at measure 72 and ends at measure 75. The fifth system starts at measure 76 and ends at measure 79. The piece concludes with a final chord in the bass staff. Dynamics include *f* (forte) at measure 76 and *mf* (mezzo-forte) at measure 77. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb).

VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY O'CAROLAN

This musical score is for a piano piece titled 'Variations on a Theme by O'Carolan'. It is written for two staves, treble and bass clef, in the key of D major (indicated by two sharps). The piece is divided into five systems, each containing two staves. The first system starts at measure 76 and ends at measure 83. The second system starts at measure 84 and ends at measure 91. The third system starts at measure 92 and ends at measure 99. The fourth system starts at measure 100 and ends at measure 107. The fifth system starts at measure 108 and ends at measure 115. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The dynamics *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte) are used. The piece features a variety of time signatures, including 5/8, 4/4, 6/8, and 2/4. The notation includes many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes, suggesting a fast and intricate piece. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.

80

84

88

92

96

mp

mf

VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY O'CAROLAN

The musical score is written for piano and features six systems of staves. The first five systems each consist of a grand staff (treble and bass clef). The sixth system is a single grand staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and rests. Dynamic markings include *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *mf* with a Coda symbol. Measure numbers 100, 104, 108, 112, and 116 are indicated. The instruction *D.S. al Coda* appears at the end of the fifth system. The score concludes with a Coda symbol and the word *Coda*.

VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY O'CAROLAN

This musical score is for a piece titled "Variations on a Theme by O'Carolan". It is written for a piano and features a single melodic line in the right hand and a complex, multi-voiced accompaniment in the left hand. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 120, 124, 128, 132, and 136 marked at the beginning of their respective systems. The notation includes various musical symbols such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, triplets, and rests. A trill is indicated above measure 120. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The tempo and dynamics are marked as *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *meno mosso* (less motion).

120 *tr*

124

128

132

136

mp *meno mosso*

VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY O'CAROLAN

Measures 140-143. The music is in B-flat major (two flats). The right hand features a melody with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. Measure 140 is marked with the number 140.

Measures 144-147. The key signature changes to B major (two sharps). The right hand has a more active melody with sixteenth notes. The left hand continues with a steady accompaniment. Measure 144 is marked with the number 144.

Measures 148-151. The key signature changes to D major (two sharps). The right hand features a melody with eighth notes and some triplet-like patterns. The left hand has a consistent accompaniment. Measure 148 is marked with the number 148.

Measures 152-155. The key signature changes to E major (three sharps). The right hand has a melody with eighth notes. The left hand has a steady accompaniment. The tempo marking *a tempo* appears in measure 153. Measure 152 is marked with the number 152.

Measures 156-159. The key signature changes to F major (one sharp). The right hand features a melody with eighth notes and a triplet in measure 157. The left hand has a steady accompaniment. Measure 156 is marked with the number 156.

VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY O'CAROLAN*

For two guitars

Guitar 1

Theo Radić

Andante Grazioso ♩ = 67

mf

To Coda

$\frac{1}{2}V$

VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY O'CAROLAN (guitar 1)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80

f *gliss.* *p* *gliss.* *arm.* XIII XII 1 2 3

mp *gliss.* 3

arm. 48 52 56 60 64 68 72 76 80

mf *gliss.* *f* *mf*

VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY O'CAROLAN (guitar 1)

84

88

92

96

100

104

108

112

D.S. al Coda ⊕ Coda

mf

Musical score for "The Swan" by Camille Saint-Saëns. The score is written for a single melodic line, likely for a flute or violin. It consists of ten staves of music, each containing various musical notations including notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/8. The score includes several measures of music, with measure numbers 116, 120, 124, 128, 132, 136, 140, 144, 148, 152, and 156 indicated. The tempo marking "meno mosso" is present. The score is a single melodic line, likely for a flute or violin.

VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY O'CAROLAN*

For two guitars

Guitar 2

Theo Radić

Andante Grazioso ♩ = 67

⑥ = D

mf

4

8

12

16

To Coda

20

24

28

32

36

40

f

p

44 III

48 II

mp

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* Fanny Power

VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY O'CAROLAN (guitar 2)

52

56

60

64

68

72

76

80

84

88

92

96

100

mf

IV.....

III.....

i p i m i p

VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY O'CAROLAN (guitar 2)

⑥

104

108

112

I----- D.S. al Coda Coda

116

120

124

128

132

136

140

144

II-----

148

152

156

⑤-----

mf

mp

meno mosso

a tempo