

*THE RHYTHM VARIATIONS*

**piano solo**

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## **Winner of the 2004 Ruth Friscoe Prize in Composition**

These twelve Variations use as their theme the harmonic progression from George Gershwin's *I Got Rhythm*—the so-called *rhythm changes*.

### **performance notes**

These Variations may be played singly, in combination, or as a complete set.

*The Changes* should be played only with three or more Variations.

Accidentals are provided in two methods. In the *Bird's Stream-of-Conscious Variation* and *The Meditative Variation* the barlines are absent so accidentals apply only to the note that they are attached. In this case, repeated notes are each given their own accidental and courtesy accidentals have been provided where it makes sense to do so. In the other Variations, with barlines present, traditional rules apply.

<b>THE CHANGES</b>	2
The "theme" for this set of variations is presented here in a simple chorale style.	
<b>HANON'S DISTRACTED VIRTUOSO VARIATION</b>	3
Practicing one's scales and technical exercises can be tedious. Here's what happens when that tedium takes over.	
<b>KRUPA'S TOCCATA VARIATION</b>	10
In the orchestra the piano will be grouped with the percussion section, supporting the claim that it is indeed a cross between a percussion and a stringed instrument. Is the piano really just a big drum?	
<b>THE WIND-UP VARIATION</b>	12
This simple movement is reminiscent of a mechanical music box.	
<b>THE STRIDE VARIATION</b>	15
The stride style, a staple of the jazz pianist, is here given an unusual off-kilter treatment.	
<b>THE LIGHT BLUE FUGGETTA VARIATION</b>	22
The first of two movements exploring a blues extension of the original form, this variation is built from several common blues motives.	
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For one hand only, this movement is composed from standard, left handed boogie-woogie patterns.	
<b>THE ILL-TEMPERED VARIATION</b>	28
Bach's music is difficult for many pianists and can be an endless source of frustration. This variation only makes things worse.	
<b>THE DARK BLUE SONG VARIATION</b>	34
This variation, the second to use the blues form, is built around the tension inherent in "blue notes."	
<b>THE MEDITATIVE VARIATION</b>	37
Derived from the minimalist style, this variation presents <i>rhythm changes</i> in its barest harmonic statement.	
<b>BIRD'S STREAM-OF-CONSCIOUSNESS VARIATION</b>	44
Charlie Parker's innovative bebop style is explored fully in this wild variation.	
<b>THE SHORTEST VARIATION</b>	51
This concise statement is short in length and articulation.	
<b>THE FUNKISH VARIATION</b>	52
Based on a jazz-funk groove, this final variation is built from a couple of motives that are recombined in several ways.	

# THE RHYTHM VARIATIONS

## THE CHANGES

David Morneau

**Stately, in a sincere manner**

4/4  
p  
p

8  
f  
mp

15  
f  
pp (sub)

21  
mp  
f  
mp

26  
f  
mp

for Constance  
**HANON'S DISTRACTED VIRTUOSO VARIATION**

Quickly, dutifully ( $\text{♩}=110\text{-}120$ )

The sheet music consists of five staves of musical notation for piano, arranged vertically. The top staff is in common time (4/4), the bottom staff is in common time (4/4). Measure numbers 1 through 10 are indicated above the staves. The music features various dynamics and performance instructions:

- Measure 1:** Dynamics: *mf*, *f*. Measures show eighth-note patterns.
- Measure 2:** Dynamics: *mf*, *f*. Measures show eighth-note patterns.
- Measure 3:** Dynamics: *mf*, *ff*. Measures show eighth-note patterns with some flats and sharps.
- Measure 6:** Dynamics: *p*, *mp*. Measures show eighth-note patterns.
- Measure 8:** Dynamics: *p*. Measures show eighth-note patterns.
- Measure 10:** Dynamics: *mf*, *p*, *mf*. Measures show eighth-note patterns.

12

[ you got it... ]

*f*

15

*ff*      *mp* (*sub*)      *mp*

[ Here's a little chord progression... ]

*f*      *pp*      *mp*      *f*

20

*mf*      *f*

4

[ hmmm...fascinating ]

23

*mp* (sub)

*p*

26

*mp*

*mf*

[ Here's that progression again, transposed... ]

28

*ff*

*mf*

[ Here's a common cliché ]

31

slowing slightly

*poco*

*mp*

*mf*

34

*mf*

*p*

*mf* (sub)

*p*

*mf*

[ that same cliché, revoiced ]

37

*p*

*mf*

*rit...*

*mp*

[ a new twist on the cliché ]

**Slower**

[ pausing to remember *THE CHANGES* ]

41

*p*

[ the cliché transformed ]

accel to Tempo I

45

*f*

*mp*

*f*

48 (8) *f* (sub) *mp* *f* (sub) *mp* ————— *mf* *f* (sub)

51 *sotto voce* *p* [Op. 10 - Nr 12] *p*

54 *sfp*

56 *mp* *sfp* ————— *f*

8

58

*mp (sub)*

60

*mf*

*sf* [Op. 111] *sf*

62

*sf* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

64

*< p*

*poco rit*

*a tempo*

67

*ff* *mp* *mf* *pp*

70

*mf*   *mp*   *mf*   *f*   *ff*

VII.

72

*mf*   *f*

*mf*   *f*

74

*mf*

*ff*   *f*   *mf*   *cresc.*

76

*ffff*

Pd.

78

*mf*

*ff*

# KRUPA'S TOCCATA VARIATION

Hard, driving ( $\text{♩}=120$ )

**1**

**f**  
use both hands, like a drummer  
*sparing use of pedal throughout*

**6**

**mp (sub)** **f**

**11**

**mp** **mp** **p** **f (sub)** **p (sub)**

**f**

**16**

**f p** **mf** **f**

**21**

**mp** **f** **pp (sub)** **mf (sub)**

25 **jubilant**

**ff**

29 **f** **mp** **p**

33 **mf** **p** **mf**

37 **pp** **mf (sub)** **pp (sub)** **mf** **f**

41 **ff** **f** **mf** **mp**

46 **p** **pp** **ppp**

(8) **15**

*THE WIND-UP VARIATION*

Light and airy ( $\text{♩} = 72$ )

7

14

20

26

Denser, as if obscured  
by a mist, but not heavy

Musical score for piano, page 30. The score consists of two staves. The top staff uses a treble clef and the bottom staff uses a bass clef. The key signature is three flats. Measure 30 starts with a dynamic *p* (sub) followed by a crescendo through *mp*, *mf*, *f*, and *ff*. The right hand has sixteenth-note patterns, while the left hand provides harmonic support. Measure 31 begins with *mf* (sub) and continues the dynamic pattern. The tempo marking *loco* appears above the staff.

Moving with purpose

Musical score for piano, page 36. The score consists of two staves. The top staff uses a treble clef and the bottom staff uses a bass clef. The key signature is three flats. Measure 36 starts with a dynamic *f*. The right hand plays eighth-note chords, and the left hand provides harmonic support.

...hesitantly... as if lost, but not alarmed

Musical score for piano, page 44. The score consists of two staves. The top staff uses a treble clef and the bottom staff uses a bass clef. The key signature is three flats. Measures 44-45 show a transition from *mf* to *mp*. The right hand plays eighth-note chords, and the left hand provides harmonic support.

Gently

Musical score for piano, page 51. The score consists of two staves. The top staff uses a treble clef and the bottom staff uses a bass clef. The key signature changes to one flat. Measures 51-52 show a transition from *mf* to *mp*. The right hand plays eighth-note chords, and the left hand provides harmonic support. The tempo marking *Ped.* appears below the staff.

moving back towards the familiar...

Musical score for piano, page 56. The score consists of two staves. The top staff uses a treble clef and the bottom staff uses a bass clef. The key signature changes to one flat. Measures 56-57 show a transition from *f* to *p*, followed by a crescendo. The right hand plays eighth-note chords, and the left hand provides harmonic support. The tempo marking *Ped.* appears below the staff.

61

*song like, not hurried*

*f*

*mf*

70

*becoming lighter...*

*mp*

*mf*

77

*as at first, Tempo I*

*mp*

*pp (sub)*

81

*cresc*

*mf*

*mp*

*p*

86

*slowing to the end,*

*as if falling asleep*

*mf*

*f*

*mp*

*p*

*for Anna*  
**THE STRIDE VARIATION**

Bursting with joyful energy, manic ( $\text{♩}=270$ )

Musical score for piano in 10/8 time. The treble clef is on the top staff, and the bass clef is on the bottom staff. The key signature changes from one flat to two sharps. Measure 1 starts with eighth-note pairs in the treble and bass staves. Measure 2 begins with a dynamic of *\* mf*. Measure 3 concludes the section.

Musical score for piano in 10/8 time. The treble clef is on the top staff, and the bass clef is on the bottom staff. The key signature changes from one flat to two sharps. Measures 4-6 show continuous eighth-note patterns with various slurs and grace notes.

Musical score for piano in 10/8 time. The treble clef is on the top staff, and the bass clef is on the bottom staff. The key signature changes from one flat to two sharps. Measures 7-9 feature eighth-note patterns with dynamics *f* and *mf*.

Musical score for piano in 10/8 time. The treble clef is on the top staff, and the bass clef is on the bottom staff. The key signature changes from one flat to two sharps. Measures 10-12 show eighth-note patterns with slurs and grace notes.

Musical score for piano in 10/8 time. The treble clef is on the top staff, and the bass clef is on the bottom staff. The key signature changes from one flat to two sharps. Measures 13-15 conclude the section with eighth-note patterns.

\* In 2 (♩ ♩ + ♩ ♩)

16

19

22

25

28

31

34

37

8

Euphoric

40

44

(8)

$\frac{10}{8}$

48

51

54

57

60

(8)

63

66

69

72

75

78

81

84

87

Ecstatic

91

95

99

103

107

III

21

**THE LIGHT BLUE FUGHETTA VARIATION**

**Relaxed, lazy ( $\text{♩} = 76$ )**

5

8

11

bluesy

14

sub *mp*

*mf*

*p*

*mp*

8-----

17 (8)

20

23

Stride (don't change tempo)

27

31

34

*sub mp*

*p*

*mf*

37

*p*

40 Tempo I

*p*

*mf*

43

*f*

*mf*

46

*f*

*mf*

49

52 slowing Adagio ( $\text{♩} = 52$ )

58 accel e cresc ..... 8

(8)- loco rit e decresc ..... p

60 pp ppp pppp long hold

## THE LEFT HANDED VARIATION

Lively ( $\text{♩}=180-200$ )

right hand tacet throughout

**ff**

5

**f**

**5**

**4**

9

**ff**

**f**

**10**

**11**

**mf**

13

**3**

**3**

**5**

**4**

**f**

**3**

**3**

**4**

**4**

**mf**

17

**mp**

**ff**

**p**

22

*mp*      *p*      *pp*

26

*p*

30

*mf*

34

*ff*      *f*

37

*ff*      *fff*      *mp*      *ff*

3      3

for Erika  
**THE ILL-TEMPERED VARIATION**

Collected, under control ( $\text{♩}=110-120$ )

sempre **f**  
*sparing use of pedal throughout*

3

3

5

5

7

With a growing urgency,  
but still controlled

7

9

9

11

first suspicion that something is not right

13

15

17 don't lose it

19

increasingly frustrated until... >

...anrgy outburst!

Deep breath,

regaining composure

Finally, as at first

31

32

but not for long...

33

34

An angrier outburst!

35

36

37

38

running wildly about...

39

40

(8)

41

(8)

43

...until worn out      Slower

45

patiently      trying again

small outburst      once more...

48

50      fight past it, regaining tempo until...

...As at the beginning

slight frustration

the frustration grows into....

...a final, violent outburst

3                   3                   3

62

Oh the hell with it...storming off

64

*for Sarah*  
**THE DARK BLUE SONG VARIATION**

Slowly, with a hint of melancholy ( $\text{♩}=66$ )

6

*mp*

11

*mf*

2

*mp*

15

*p*

*mp*

*mp*

*p*

2

Brighter, not faster

20

*pp*

*p*

*mf*

24

*mp*

29

*f*

*mf*

*mp*

*p*

becoming darker

As at first

34 8----- 1 loco

*mf*      *mp*      *p*

40 *mf*      *f*      *mf*

*mf*      *f*      *mf*

44 *mp*      *p*

*mf*      *mp*      *p*

47 *mp*      *p*      *mp*

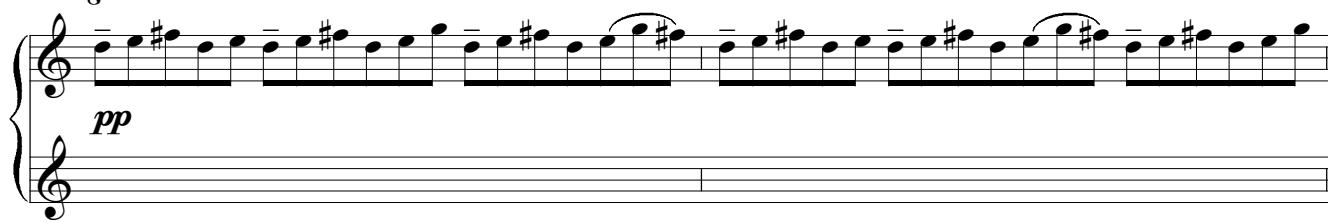
50 *p*      *pp*      *ppp*

*ppp*      *pppp*

*THE MEDITATIVE VARIATION*

Calm, like ripples in a stream ( $\text{♩}=165$ )

8



3 (8)

cresc.

5 (8)

mp

7 (8)

decresc

9 (8)

pp

11 (8)

p      pp      mp

13 (8)

pp

15 (8)

=p      mp

17 (8)

p      mp      p      =

19 (8)

pp      p      mp      =

8  
 21 loco  
*mf*  
  
 8  
 23 loco  
*mf*  
*p* (sub)      *mp* (sub)  
*p*      *mf*  
  
 8  
 25 loco  
*mf*  
*p*      *mf*  
*mp*  
  
 27  
  
 29  
*mf*  
*p*      *mf*

31

Two staves of musical notation for piano. The top staff uses a treble clef and the bottom staff uses a bass clef. Both staves have a key signature of four sharps. The music consists of a series of eighth-note chords, with the top staff showing a more complex pattern of accidentals (sharps and naturals) than the bottom staff.

33

Two staves of musical notation for piano. The top staff continues the eighth-note chord pattern from the previous section. The bottom staff begins a new melodic line with eighth-note chords. A dynamic marking 'mp' is placed above the bottom staff's first measure. Measures 33 and 34 show a transition, indicated by a bracket and the instruction 'loco'.

35

Two staves of musical notation for piano. The top staff continues the eighth-note chord pattern. The bottom staff begins a new melodic line with eighth-note chords. A dynamic marking 'mf' is placed above the bottom staff's first measure. Measures 35 and 36 show a transition, indicated by a bracket and the instruction 'loco'.

37

Two staves of musical notation for piano. The top staff continues the eighth-note chord pattern. The bottom staff begins a new melodic line with eighth-note chords. A dynamic marking 'mp' is placed above the bottom staff's first measure.

39

Two staves of musical notation for piano. The top staff continues the eighth-note chord pattern. The bottom staff begins a new melodic line with eighth-note chords. A dynamic marking 'mf' is placed above the bottom staff's first measure.

41 (8)

mp

43 (8)

mf

45 (8)

f

47 (8)

mf

49 (8)

f

51 (8)

f

53 (8)

55 (8)

ff

1 loco

57

59

61

*mf*

63

*mp*

65

*rit little by little to the end*

67

*p*

69

*pp*      *ppp*      *hold until silent*

*BIRD'S STREAM-OF-CONSCIOUSNESS VARIATION*  
from Charlie Parker's *Anthropology*

Rushing headlong, frantic ( $\text{♩} = 140$ )

The musical score consists of five staves of piano music. The first two staves are in common time, while the third, fourth, and fifth staves are in 3/4 time.

- Staff 1:** Dynamics include **f**, **p**, and **mf**. Articulation marks like  $\nearrow$  and  $\searrow$  are present.
- Staff 2:** Dynamics include **p** and **mf**. Articulation marks like  $\nearrow$  and  $\searrow$  are present. A performance instruction *loco* is indicated.
- Staff 3:** Dynamics include **p**, **f**, **p**, and **f**. Articulation marks like  $\nearrow$  and  $\searrow$  are present. The tempo is marked **suddenly slower**.
- Staff 4:** Dynamics include **sub f**, **mp**, **sub f**, and **mp**. Articulation marks like  $\nearrow$  and  $\searrow$  are present.
- Staff 5:** Dynamics include **p**, **mf**, **sub p**, **mf**, and **f**. Articulation marks like  $\nearrow$  and  $\searrow$  are present.

A musical score for piano featuring two staves. The top staff uses treble clef and the bottom staff uses bass clef. Measure 1 starts with a dynamic of *mp*, followed by a forte dynamic *p* with a 3 overline. Measure 2 begins with a dynamic *pp*. Measure 3 ends with a dynamic *mf*. Measures are separated by vertical dashed lines. The tempo is indicated as 8 measures per second.

A continuation of the musical score. The top staff shows a melodic line with slurs and dynamics *loco* and *f*. The bottom staff continues the harmonic foundation. Measures are indicated by vertical dashed lines.

A continuation of the musical score. The top staff features a melodic line with a dynamic *molto rit.* and a 3 overline. The bottom staff continues the harmonic foundation. Measures are indicated by vertical dashed lines.

**Tempo I**  

 A continuation of the musical score. The top staff shows a melodic line with slurs. The bottom staff continues the harmonic foundation. Measures are indicated by vertical dashed lines.

A continuation of the musical score. The top staff shows a melodic line with dynamics *f*, *mp*, and *p*. The bottom staff continues the harmonic foundation. Measures are indicated by vertical dashed lines.

*loco*

*mf*

*8*

*p*

*rit.*

*3*

Much slower, hesitantly

as if waking from a dream

*Ped.*

freely

pausing

suddenly

*Ped.*

*f*

slower, a memory

moving ahead

*mp*

Ped.

pausing

Confidently

*mf*

Ped.

(both hands)

8

1

declamatory

*f*

*ff*

pausing

*mp*

*loco*

Ped.

a barely remembered song

fading from memory

*ppp*

Ped.

looking ahead

faster, build to ...

*ff*

Firmly

Ped.

**gaining momentum**

Accompanying bass line:

*sub p*

*mp*

*accel e cresc*

*loco*

**Slower, distracted**

*mf*

*f*

*pp*

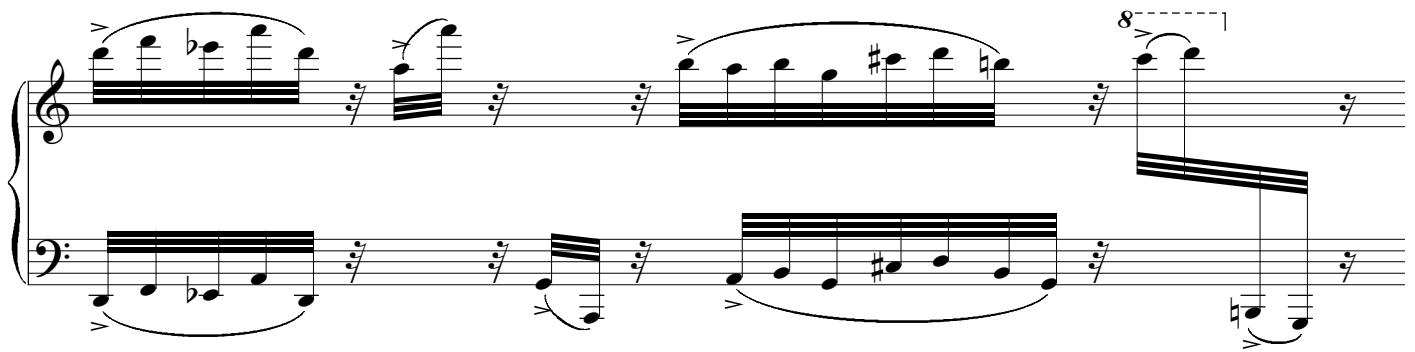
Suddenly back to Tempo I

*ff*

*v.*

*f*

*8----->*



*loco*

Musical score for piano showing four measures. The top staff uses treble clef and the bottom staff uses bass clef. Measure 5: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs; Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Measure 6: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs; Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Measure 7: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs; Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Measure 8: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs; Bass staff has eighth-note pairs.

Musical score for piano showing four measures. The top staff uses treble clef and the bottom staff uses bass clef. Measure 9: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs; Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Measure 10: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs; Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Measure 11: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs; Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Measure 12: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs; Bass staff has eighth-note pairs.

Musical score for piano showing four measures. The top staff uses treble clef and the bottom staff uses bass clef. Measure 13: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs; Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Measure 14: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs; Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Measure 15: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs; Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Measure 16: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs; Bass staff has eighth-note pairs.

Musical score for piano showing four measures. The top staff uses treble clef and the bottom staff uses bass clef. Measure 17: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs; Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Measure 18: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs; Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Measure 19: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs; Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Measure 20: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs; Bass staff has eighth-note pairs.

Musical score page 1. The top system shows two staves. The treble staff has a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and grace notes. The bass staff has sustained notes with grace notes. A fermata is placed over the bass staff's notes.

Musical score page 2. The top system shows two staves. The treble staff has eighth-note patterns with grace notes. The bass staff has sustained notes with grace notes. A fermata is placed over the bass staff's notes.

Musical score page 3. The top system shows two staves. The treble staff has eighth-note patterns with grace notes. The bass staff has sustained notes with grace notes. A fermata is placed over the bass staff's notes.

Musical score page 4. The top system shows two staves. The treble staff has eighth-note patterns with grace notes. The bass staff has sustained notes with grace notes. Measure 1 ends with a fermata over the bass staff. Measures 2 and 3 show eighth-note patterns with grace notes. Measure 4 ends with a fermata over the bass staff.

Musical score page 5. The top system shows two staves. The treble staff has eighth-note patterns with grace notes. The bass staff has sustained notes with grace notes. Measure 1 starts with a dynamic *p*. Measure 2 starts with a dynamic *ff*. Measures 3 and 4 show eighth-note patterns with grace notes.

*THE SHORTEST VARIATION*

Sharp, pointed (♩.=110)

8

5

loco

mp f mp f mp f =

9

mp f p mf pp mf ff mf pp

13

mp ff p loco mf p f

16

mp ff mp fff

*THE FUNKISH VARIATION*

In a laid back groove ( $\text{♩}=90$ )

The sheet music consists of five staves of musical notation for piano, arranged in two systems separated by a repeat sign. The first staff begins with a dynamic of *mp*. The second staff starts at measure 4. The third staff starts at measure 6. The fourth staff starts at measure 8. The fifth staff begins at measure 10, with dynamics of *mf*, *f*, and *v*.

**Measure 1:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. The piano part features eighth-note chords in the right hand and eighth-note patterns in the left hand. The bass part is mostly silent.

**Measure 2:** The bass part begins with eighth-note patterns.

**Measure 3:** The bass part continues with eighth-note patterns.

**Measure 4:** The bass part continues with eighth-note patterns.

**Measure 5:** The bass part continues with eighth-note patterns.

**Measure 6:** The bass part continues with eighth-note patterns.

**Measure 7:** The bass part continues with eighth-note patterns.

**Measure 8:** The bass part continues with eighth-note patterns.

**Measure 9:** The bass part continues with eighth-note patterns.

**Measure 10:** The bass part begins with eighth-note patterns.

8

12

*mf*

(8)

14

*mf*

*mp* = *p* = *pp* *f* (sub)

16

*mf* *f*

18

3 7 9

*f*

19

*ff* = *f*

21

23

*mf*

*f*

25

*mf*

*mp*

8

3

(8)

27

*mf*

*f*

6

6

29

30

31

32

33

34

Slower

p

accel to...

Up-tempo boogie ( $\text{♩} = 100+$ )

35

mf

f

36

38

40

42

44

46

48

8

*f*

(8)

50

6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

52 8 loco

*mp*

6 6 6 6 6 6

54

*mf* 6 6 6

*f*

56

*mp*

3 4 3 4

*f*

58

*mp*

6 6 6 6 6

*mf* 6 6 6 6

60

*f* 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

*ff* 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

brightly

62 Freely (much slower)

*p*

*mf*

66

*p* (sub)

*accel...*

68

6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

*mf* 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

*rit...* 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

70 
  
 73 
  
 75 
  
 77 
  
 79

81

*mf*

*ff*

82

*f*

*ff*

83

*mp*

*mf<sub>(sub)</sub>*

*f*

*mp*

*f*

85

*mp*

*f*

*8.*

87

*loco*

89 
  
*mf* *f*  
*mf*   
*mp*   
*mf* *f*  
*mf* *f* *mp*

95 
  
*mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mp*   
*mf* *f* *ff*

Up-tempo boogie ( $\text{♩} = 100+$ )

99

100

8

101

*f*

*ff*

loco

102

Tempo I (subito)

103

*fff*

*ff*

104

105

*f*

*mf*

106

106

6      3  
6      3  
*mf*

*mp*      6      3  
*f*

6

8  
*ff*

(8) loco

110 (8) loco