

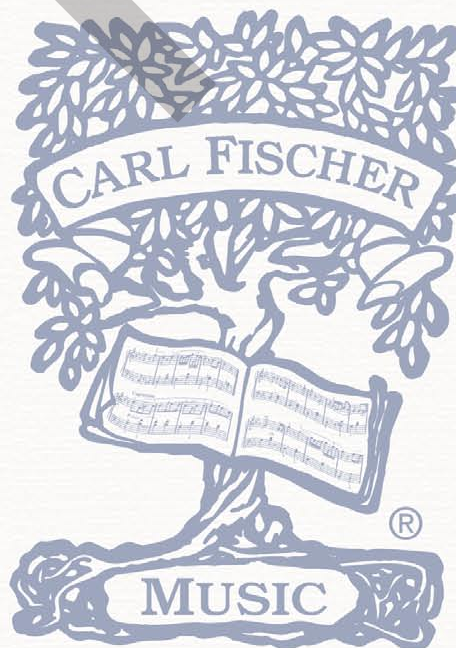
Howard Hanson

Symphonic Rhapsody,

Op. 14, for Solo Piano (1919)

Edited by Scott Watkins

Howard Hanson



Carl Fischer

Piano Music

E D I T I O N

CARL FISCHER®

Preface

Howard Harold Hanson (1896–1981) composed his largest single-movement solo piano work, *Symphonic Rhapsody*, Op. 14, during the summer, 1919, in San Jose, California, where he was Dean of the music faculty at the College of the Pacific, and professor of music theory, composition, and piano. Hanson played the work often between October 1919 and March 1920, eliciting positive reviews of his playing and of the *Rhapsody*. Though long believed to be a transcription of the orchestral version, the editor's research has revealed that the piano version is, in fact, the original version of the work, and that it was the solo piano work which Hanson himself performed most often.

Hanson wrote to College of the Pacific president Tully C. Knoles (1875–1923) on July 6, 1919 about a new piece he was working on that summer:

I am a little over halfway through a new Sonata which I started on the train and it is one of the few things that I am really conceited about! Usually the ideal is so far ahead always that it spoils the realization of what I have completed but this time I am as proud of it as a Swedish Lutheran minister is of his confirmation class. The form is, I believe, 'absolutely original'...as it is an attempt to put the emotional contents of an entire four movement Sonata into one movement of considerable length. Also I believe that the material is the strongest that I have ever written, at least it seems to express more nearly what I am trying to say.

He wrote again to President Knoles on July 27:

I am still working strenuously on that Sonata and it is coming satisfactorily but very slowly. I spent about six hours on one measure and when you do that very often it hinders progress. It is so hard for me to please myself at times! What I have done will stand, I believe.

Following a performance at the College of the Pacific on October 27, 1919, Clarence Urmey (1858–1923), music writer for the San Jose *Mercury News*, wrote that:

Dean Howard Harold Hanson, besides playing all of the accompaniments of the evening, [including the Grieg Sonata in C minor, Op. 45, with violinist Nathan Landsberger] gave on the pianoforte one of his own compositions full of surge and stress with interludes of wonderful sweetness, quite Chopinesque in quality and style. Only people able to play the rhapsodical style of composition can really appreciate the intricate harmonies of pieces of the style of last evening's composition. The most of us can but sit and wonder at the inspiration of genius [but will] recall Dean Hanson gave us a delicate tone poem that should be added to the repertoire of every advanced pianist. Spiritual beauty mingled with deft technique made the composition a gem of melodious fancy.

Marjory M. Fisher describes this same concert for *Musical America*, published November 15, 1919:

The *pièce de resistance* of the evening was the first performance of Howard Harold Hanson's *Symphonic Rhapsody*, Op. 14, played by the composer. It is the latest work of this rarely gifted man and it was given its first public performance on this occasion. Whatever Mr. Hanson says or does always compels attention. The same is true of this work; it holds the attention of the listener from beginning to end, and last night's audience would have gladly listened to this number a second time. Complete in thought, as in form, it is not surprising that it has won the hearty commendation of artists of international fame who have had the privilege of a private hearing ...

Critical Commentary

O = original manuscript of solo piano score (1919)

u = upper staff / = lower staff M = measure

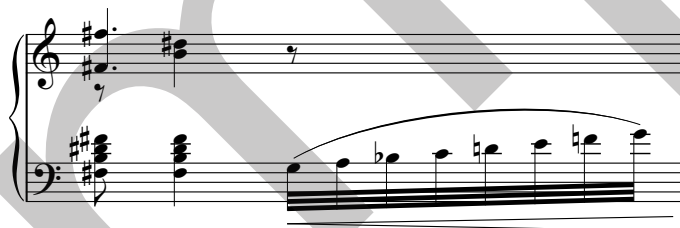
Hanson's manuscript is generally very clean. The only issues which require attention are accidentals (either missing or misplaced), and the occasional question regarding individual notes. One issue which is somewhat problematic is that of voice leading identified by the direction of certain note stems. These have been clarified where necessary. Some practices of notation which are unique to the composer (ex.: mm. 15–20, *l*) have been retained. Accidentals, even where redundant or unnecessary, have been retained in an effort to remain faithful to the composer's manuscript. Missing accidentals and rests, courtesy accidentals, etc., are added by the editor and placed in parentheses. These issues are addressed individually below. Pedaling is left to the discretion of the performer, however all pedal indications are given by the composer. There are no fingerings in the manuscript.

m. 11, *u*: the phrasing is unclear in O whether the phrase is broken here or continues. For consistency, the editor takes m. 7 and m. 8 as examples where the phrase begins on the fourth beat of the preceding measure (m. 7 leads to m. 8, m. 8 leads to m. 9, etc.).

mm. 15–20, *l*: in each measure, the first group of four sixteenths begins with a half note. These notes are stemmed upward as well as downward, and are connected by beams to the remaining sixteenths in each bar's first beats. This unusual notation is retained in the present edition.

m. 22, *l*: the ascending scale appears to occur on the fourth eighth of the measure (see eighth rest in *u*), however the scale was notated as thirty-seconds. They have been corrected to sixty-fourths for the present edition.

holograph:



m. 31: the word "largando" appears to be printed with an uppercase "L" but later (m. 51, m. 123) it is clearly printed with a lowercase "l". For consistency the lowercase is used in all instances where the word appears.

m. 47: the chord on beat 1 is probably misspelled in O with D3 as the lower note in the RH. The intended note is probably F3, which appears in the present edition.

holograph:



Symphonic Rhapsody

for Piano, Op. 14 (1919)

13

HOWARD HAROLD HANSON (1896–1981)

Edited by Scott Watkins

Allegro con brio

f

marcato

rit.

a tempo

dim.

p

8va

8va-1

p

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20 *sfz* *8va*-----
f

24 *espress.*

29 *largando*
scherzando

33 *a tempo* *cresc.* *sfz* *ff* *8va*-----
impetuoso *sfz* *Ped.*

38 *8va*----- *sfz* *incalzando* *sfz* *Ped.*

* See Critical Commentary.

43 *cresc.*

47 *sfz* *con fuoco*

51 *largando* *a tempo* *ff*

55 *8va*

59 *8va* *sfz* *mf* *rit.*

sfz *Ped.*

62 **Meno mosso Tempo II** (♩ = 84)

p *p con gravita*

rit.

65

a tempo II *mf* *affretando*

68

8va- *accel.*

71

Tempo I (♩ = 132)

8va- *ff* *f*

73

3 3

The musical score is written for piano. It begins at measure 62 with a tempo marking of 'Meno mosso Tempo II' and a quarter note equal to 84 beats. The music is in 2/4 time. The first system (measures 62-64) features a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system (measures 65-67) includes a 'rit.' (ritardando) instruction. The third system (measures 68-70) is marked 'a tempo II' and 'mf' (mezzo-forte). The fourth system (measures 71-73) includes an 'accel.' (accelerando) instruction. The score concludes with a tempo change to 'Tempo I' (♩ = 132) at measure 73, marked 'ff' (fortissimo) and 'f' (forte). The key signature has one sharp (F#). There are several slurs and accents throughout the piece. A large, faint watermark 'R' is visible across the center of the page.