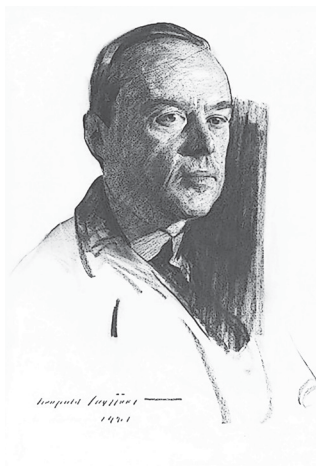


## john alden carpenter



John Alden Carpenter (1876–1951) was born in the suburbs of Chicago to a well-to-do family. His natural ability allowed him to study composition at Harvard, with additional private studies in Rome and in Chicago. His native Chicago is the city where he settled and found his permanent

home until death. His primary composition teachers included John Knowles Paine, Edward Elgar, and Bernhard Ziehn. Ultimately, Carpenter found a secure living as vice president of the family business, thus entering the ranks of American composers like Philip Glass and Charles Ives who worked non-musical jobs while composing on the side.

Carpenter wrote in a variety of genres, spanning from the earlier piano works found in this volume to larger orchestral pieces like ballets and symphonies. As can be observed from his birth and death years, Carpenter lived in interesting times; born in the bleeding heart of Romanticism, Carpenter's coming of age aligns more closely with the music of Impressionism, while he also lived to see the dissonant experimentalism before and after the World Wars. As a result, his music contains a diversity of influences. Readers of the music in this volume can expect to find atmospheric textures, extended tertian harmonies, and a prominent jazz influence that may remind listeners of Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, and Igor Stravinsky.

Although Carpenter has not enjoyed the same level of fame as other Americans of his era like Aaron Copland, George Gershwin, and Charles Ives, his high-quality piano music calls out for greater attention.

## practice & performance

### Diversion I

#### *Lento, Key of B Minor*

Carpenter's *Diversions* were composed in 1923. The dreamy first movement of this set is reminiscent of the simpler pieces of Debussy and has the great benefit of making the instrument sound good with ease. This piece is an apt starting point for the study of reading three staves at once, balancing diverse textures, and hemiola. Both the greatest challenge and reward of this movement lies in variety of sound. Following an eight-measure introduction, the main theme in m. 9 features a melody with long rhythms and an accompaniment with quicker rhythms. Students should take care to play the top notes of the RH with weight and intensity (supported by the composer's marking *espressivo*) while maintaining a floating left arm to play the accompaniment rather soft. Long pedals and the light touch of a floating arm go together well, whereas such light key pressure without pedal would lack sufficient core to the sound. The pianist should not back away from the semitone clash in m. 17, as the harmony's beauty lies in this unapologetic dissonance. The RH figure of m. 20 should be grouped as a series of falling 4ths rather than ascending 3rds, as the interval of the fourth is an essential musical idea for this movement (witness the accompaniment mm. 9–28, for example).



Balancing the texture mm. 25–36 provides a teachable moment in alternating between arm weight and finger attacks; the dotted half notes re-attacked every two measures sound best played with a slow, yet heavy drop of the arm, while all other notes in those two measures are to be played with finger weight alone. Measures 25–40 provide teachers an excellent opportunity to teach about hemiola. The metric dissonance of this passage contributes to the piece's

# Diversions

## I.

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**Lento** (♩. = 50)

*p*

1 LH sotto

**Poco più con moto** (♩. = 60)

*espr.*

*rall.*

*legato*

7

15

22

# II.

Allegretto con moto (♩ = 144)

Measures 1-3 of the piece. The music is in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked 'Allegretto con moto' with a quarter note equal to 144 beats per minute. The first measure starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The bass line features a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure, followed by a pair of eighth notes in the second measure.

Measures 4-7. Measure 4 is marked with a boxed '4'. The right hand (RH) has a slur over measures 4 and 5. The bass line has a triplet of eighth notes in measure 4, followed by a quarter note in measure 5, and another triplet of eighth notes in measure 6. A fermata is placed over the final note of measure 7.

Measures 8-11. Measure 8 is marked with a boxed '8'. The right hand (RH) has a slur over measures 8 and 9. The bass line has a quarter note in measure 8, followed by a half note in measure 9, and a quarter note in measure 10. A fermata is placed over the final note of measure 11.

Measures 12-15. Measure 12 is marked with a boxed '12'. The right hand (RH) has a slur over measures 12 and 13. The bass line has a quarter note in measure 12, followed by a half note in measure 13, and a quarter note in measure 14. A first ending bracket (1.) spans measures 14 and 15. The music concludes with a fermata over the final note of measure 15. The word 'rall.' is written below the final measure.

### III.

**Animato** **Più lento**  
*espr.*

*ff* *f* *p*

**6** *poco più animato*

5 3 1  
3-5

**11**

4 1 3 1 5 1 4 1

**17** *sim.*

5 2 5 2 *sim.*

# IV.

Moderato (♩ = 96)

2 3 4

*f*

2 1 1 4

*p leggiero*

5

3

1-3

8

3 2 1 2 1

3 5 3 2

1 3

1 2 1

2 1 2 3 2 1

11

2 3 4 1

2-3

2

4 3 2 1 4

14

2

3 5 3 2

1 3 2 1

*f*

## V.

Adagio (♩ = 80)

Musical score for measures 1-4. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 3/4 time. Right hand (RH) starts with *mf*, playing eighth notes. Left hand (LH) starts with *f*, playing chords. A bracket under the first two measures is labeled *mf*.

Musical score for measures 5-8. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 3/4 time. Right hand (RH) starts with *p delicato*, playing eighth notes. Right hand 2 (RH<sub>2</sub>) starts with a whole note. A bracket under the first two measures is labeled *simile*.

Musical score for measures 9-12. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 3/4 time. Right hand (RH) starts with a whole note. Right hand (RH) continues with eighth notes. A bracket under the first two measures is labeled *simile*.

Musical score for measures 13-16. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 3/4 time. Right hand (RH) starts with *poco accel.*, playing eighth notes. Right hand (RH) continues with triplets. A bracket under the first two measures is labeled *simile*. A bracket under the last two measures is labeled *rall.*

# Tango Américaine

John Alden Carpenter

Moderato (♩ = 76)

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in 2/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The tempo is Moderato (♩ = 76). The dynamic marking is *mf*. The notation is in bass clef. A dashed line labeled *8va* is positioned below the bottom staff.

Musical notation for measures 5-8. Measure 5 is marked with a box containing the number 5. Fingerings are indicated above the notes in measures 7 and 8:  $\begin{matrix} 3 \\ 2 \\ 1 \end{matrix}$ ,  $\begin{matrix} 4 \\ 2 \\ 1 \end{matrix}$ , and  $\begin{matrix} 5 \\ 2 \\ 1 \end{matrix}$ . A dashed line is positioned below the bottom staff.

Musical notation for measures 9-13. Measure 9 is marked with a box containing the number 9. Fingerings are indicated above the notes in measures 10, 11, and 12:  $\begin{matrix} 4 \\ 2 \\ 1 \end{matrix}$ ,  $\begin{matrix} 5 \\ 2 \\ 1 \end{matrix}$ , and  $\begin{matrix} 5 \\ 2 \\ 1 \end{matrix}$ . Triplet markings (3) are present in measures 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13.

Musical notation for measures 14-17. Measure 14 is marked with a box containing the number 14. A triplet marking (3) is present in measure 17.