

Judith Shatin

Carreño

For Singing Actress/Pianist



Program Note

Carreño (1987), scored for a singing (soprano or mezzo) actress who is also a virtuoso pianist, is a musical theatre piece based on the life of the great Venezuelan pianist Teresa Carreño (1863-1917). Commissioned and toured by pianist/singer/actress Claudia Stevens, the libretto was written by the composer, based on a variety of source materials, including Milinowski's *By the Grace of God*. The piece explores the role of music in Carreño's life and its importance as a fixed axis around which her complicated and flamboyant personal life revolved. Certain of Carreño's favorite pieces, as well as music composed by her (the *Teresita Waltz*), or dedicated to her (MacDowell's *Second Piano Concerto*), are referred to in the score. This twenty-minute composition also examines Carreño's personal life, including the disappointments and traumas of the death of two of her children at birth or in young childhood, her multiple marriages and the difficulties of motherhood, given the demands of her career and her crushing touring schedule. The piece begins with Carreño embarking on her nightly game of solitaire, before her piano practice brings her to reflect on the path of her life and her music. –JS

Stage Directions & Opening

Have a solitaire game set up on a card table. The curtain should open with Teresa seated at the table playing a game. She can return here as desired during the performance.

Carreno was a chain smoker. The performer should play with this attribute as well.

Dress should be flamboyant.

As it opens, Carreno looks up from the table at the audience and says:

I am Carreño.

When I spoke those words to Anton Rubinstein, he knew;

When Liszt and Rossini offered to teach me

When I was just a child, they understood.

But what good is it?

I am Carreño.

Famous for my trills and tremolos,

For my dazzling arpeggios.

I have travelled far,

But still miss my homeland, Venezuela.

I have played for President Lincoln,

And toured three continents.

Yet, tell me,

What is there,

Besides my nightly game of solitaire?

Ah, but I must practice for tomorrow,

Before the old memories flood me with their sorrow.

(Goes to the piano and begins to practice Chopin's *Eb-Major Nocturne*; interrupts herself before completing the first phrase)

Carreño

Lyrics and music by JUDITH SHATIN

Reflective

Soprano

(speaks) oh, these old pieces, old memories torment me -

Piano

mp *dolce*

sim.

Despondent ♩ = ca. 60
mp

breaks off

sost. ped.

Agitated ♩ = 69
mf

f

7

S al-ways re-mem-ber E-mi - li - ta ——— My poor first born child I had to a-

sf *mf* *f* *sf*

14

S ban-don her To Mis-sus Bis - choff when my hus-band E-mil

8va *mf* *mp*

8va

p

2
18

S *f* *mf*
A - ban - doned me.

sub. f *tr*

22

S *f* *ff*
It made me wild

8va *tr* *3*

27 ♩ = ca. 69

S *p* *mp*
the loss of my dar - ling, first born child

pp *tr* *sub. p* *tr* *3*

33

S *ff*
It made me

sub. ff *mf* *cres.* *6* *8va* *3* *ff*

37

S wild, wild, wild!

8va

tr

tr

p

43

S And É - mile with his se-duc-tive need of me,

mp

mf

mp

49

S and the sweet sound of his vi - o - lin

p

5

5

53

S

Who knew my father would have a clearer vision? That I would so regret my decision to marry?

3

4 **Distraught** (♩ = ca. 69)

S 59 *f* 3 That É - mile would a - ban - don me, while I was preg - nant — with our

S 61 **Anguished** 3 se - cond child! that baby died

S 66 **Frenzied** ♩ = ca. 84 It made me wild! the death —

S 71 *p* **Calm** *mp* 3 of my se - cond child. On - ly mu - sic — could con - sol me then. —

78 *mf* *3* *3* *3*

S I moved to Bos-ton and was saved by the rou-tine of prac-tic-ing pi-a-no and

mp

83

S sing - ing — I was a singer, too mi mi mi mi mi mi mi mi

mp

86

S mi mi mi mi mi mi mi mi — I debuted as Zerlina in Mozart's Don Gio- van-ni you remember how he worked his seductive charm on her.

f

90

S who knew this would be a prophecy? that I would find my own Don Juan! I sang Bat-ti

"Batti, Batti" ♩ = 60 *mp*

mp

96

S Batt - i'o sel ma - set - to la tua po - ve - ra Zer - li - na; sta - ró qui co - mea - qnel -

p

101

S li - na le tue bot - te a - spet tar.

p

106 ♩ = ca. 69

S And so I met my own Giovanni, Giovanni Tagliapietra; I called him Tag. He wooed me with his grand baritone voice.

mp

112

S and his fa - tal flam - boy - ance. who cared if our mar - riage was - n't of - fic - ial? We had our lit - tle

cresc. *sf* *mp*

117

S house in New Roch - elle. Too soon I

p

122

S knew that all would not be well, that Tag loved gam - bling,

mf *f*

126

S and had a vi - o - lent, jeal - ous streak, that he would cheat!

f

128

S He came at me with a knife! and yet when our lit - tle Lul - ce was born

p

In tempo ♩ = ca. 60

(Jumps up, but stays by the piano) *(gestures with knife plunge towards heart)* *(more calmly - sits)*

132

S

I thought all might be for - got - ten.

135

S

But she too died at on - ly three

f *mp*

138

S

can you imagine what so many babies
this loss meant to me? so many losses

(Grieving) *A tempo* *mf*

Tag and I went on, though

143

S

the crowds thronged to hear us.

sub. f

145 *mf*

S But in America we were listed with the circus. music was just another vaudeville act.

mp

147

S *cresc.*

RH

148

S (Resigned)

I could not bear it! In-deed not! But I was pregnant again, and Teresita was born.

f

151 "Mi Teresita" ♩ = ca. 80

S (*Wistfully*) *mf*

Oh, my Teresita For whom I composed this waltz, And later Giovanni, our son, I'll-fated children

pp

157

S

p

162

S

mp

166

S

La La La La La La La La La La

170

S

La La La La But there were triumphs still -

174 *(Proudly)*

S

The President of Venezuela invited me home Ah, the great reception, the grand success of my concert tour -

178 $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 110$

S

the Mendelsohn concert

Mendelsohn - Concerto in G Minor

182

185

188

S

Lively *f*

And the thrill of running a season
at the opera house in Caracas

I conducted, sang and played

the critics raved

mf

sim.

192

S

mf

But Tag, with the poison of his jealousy, humiliated me with other women in my homeland. our troupe unravelled and disbanded

196

S

f

(Stands)

Was it a conspiracy?
I only knew how Tag had failed me.
I only knew a deep sadness.
What was left in the Americas
After this fiasco in Caracas?

I did premiere the Piano Concerto
of my friend and pupil, Edward MacDowell.
Its themes stay in my fingers -

(returns to the piano and plays)

199

S

largamente *ff*

MacDowell Concerto in d - excerpt

Red. *

Red.

202

203

205

206

209

Leg.

8va

sf

fff

(volta)

8va

A tempo

poco rit.

212

stringendo

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 69$

214

(Turns to audience)

mf

S There is music for the spirit, so I left it all be - hind, Tag, A -

not just empty virtuosity.

I yearned for more, and knew

I had to go to Germany.

mp

218

cresc.

S me-ri-ca On to Ber-lin now, for my true de-but, the ex - cite - ment was in-tense, the

mf

222

S Grieg con-cer-to im-mense and ex - pan-sive

8va

f

sf

225

The Symphonic Etudes of Schumann

f

S

And the critics' response -

S

228

Brun-hi-de they called me

the Val-küre

Ho - yo - to

Ho yo ———

231

S

I triumphed in my recital too,
The next hurdle in my Berlin debut.
Remember "La Campanella" of Liszt?

It became my signature.

8va sempre

235

237

239

241

S

mf

3

All the

mf

mp

243

S

glo-ry and suc-cess

But my child - ren,

p

3

248

S

Was I a mother to them? Ah, Ter-e-si - ta my daugh-ter, — What a tra - gic waste

mp

mf

mp

252

S

you too could have been great But you threw away your talent, even after the success of your early concerts, You were com-pared to me

f

p

255

S

was it too much? And I had to res-cue you — from your sor - did ad-ven - tures

f

258

S

And Gi - o - van - ni, my son, a sing-er like his fa - ther, I feel I

mf

p

Reflective

262

S failed you. Per - haps I lived too much in my mu - sic

mp

266

S That was all I knew

p

I suppose in my loneliness in Berlin,
It's no surprise I was taken with d'Albert.
At first I hated him, my rival,
But later I called him "Liebchen."
Who cared if he was younger
And the gossip mongers spoke of us.
Here was a great pianist and composer;
His playing was heroic.
What passion we shared;
Our marriage brought two daughters:
Eugenia and Hertha.
And we inspired each other
In our grand villa in Coswig.

Sonorous

f

270

S Here, at last, was love But of - ten my tem - per flared; He was de - mand - ing and

f

Abruptly ♩ = ca. 69

273

S jeal - ous Too brief it was this hap - pi - ness; too soon he cast his eye

mp

278

S

else - where. I turned to com - po - si - tion and to so - li - taire,

p

283

S

to end - less con - cert tours. In the end, the

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 60$ *mp*

mp

287

S

cir - cle is com - plete. I am se - rene a - gain like the child I

292

S

was. Ar - turo, Tag's brother, At first, my manager, and someone I could trust; came to us;

mp

297 *rit.* *mf*

S He became the husband At last, a companion to me. And ev' - ry night, I

He became the husband of my later years. At last, a companion to me. And ev' - ry night, I

301

S play my game of so - li - taire con - tent that mu - sic is what's there.

play my game of so - li - taire con - tent that mu - sic is what's there.

306 *p* *mf* *mp* *mf*

S Who can speak to me now but you, mu - sic? You are all I know and

Who can speak to me now but you, mu - sic? You are all I know and

Joyous ♩ = 69

311 *f* *mf*

S need; And when I re-mem-ber this, a - gain I tri-umph, a - gain, I am in the

need; And when I re-mem-ber this, a - gain I tri-umph, a - gain, I am in the

316 *cresc.* **f** *mf* *cresc.* **f**

S o - pera house in Ca - ra - cas, A - gain I sing, con-duct and play,

tr *tr* *tr* *tr* *tr* *tr*

f *mf* *cresc.* **f**

320

S A - gain I am the im - pre - sar - i - o

tr *8va* *8va* *8va*

322

S A - gain, I say (Cadenza)

tr *tr* *tr* *tr* *8va*

cresc. sempre 3 3 3

And. sempre

325

326

S (Proudly)

I am Carreño

fff