

# GIAN CARLO MENOTTI

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## ABOUT THE COMPOSER

### Foreword

Gian Carlo Menotti, Italian-American composer and librettist, was born in Cadegliano-Viconago, Italy, on July 7, 1911, and died in Monte Carlo, Monaco, on February 1, 2007. He studied at the Milan Conservatory and the Curtis Institute of Music, where he subsequently taught. At Curtis, Menotti studied composition with Rosario Scalerò and began a long career of writing operas, first in Italian and later in English. He also wrote his own libretti, two for American composer Samuel Barber (1910–1981), his lifelong companion. Several of Menotti’s operas were written for radio or for television. In addition, Menotti wrote ballets, choral works, cantatas, a Mass, a violin concerto, a piano concerto, a triple concerto, a song cycle, a suite for two cellos, three solo piano works, and several other unpublished works.

## ABOUT THE MUSIC

Menotti published three works for solo piano: *Poemetti per Maria Rosa: 12 Pieces for Children* (1937), piano selections based on the popular television opera *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (1951), and *Ricerca and Toccata on a Theme from “The Old Maid and the Thief”* (1953).

## Menotti’s *The Old Maid and the Thief*

Following the success of Menotti’s opera *Amelia al ballo* (*Amelia Goes to the Ball*), NBC commissioned Menotti for a radio opera. The result was Menotti’s first opera in English, *The Old Maid and the Thief*. The successful one-act opera premiered on April 22, 1939, with Alberto Erede conducting the NBC Symphony Orchestra, and was later adapted for the stage.

The opera is composed in *opera buffa* (comic opera) style with 14 discrete scenes rather than a through-composed form, a format well-suited for radio. The plot concerns Bob, a handsome beggar, who wanders one day to the doorstep of town spinster Miss Todd. Laetitia, the young maid of the house, convinces Miss Todd to talk to him. Taken by his good looks, they convince him to stay the night for rest and a meal. He captivates them with his wit and storytelling, leading them the next morning to persuade him to stay for another week. Confusion later ensues when Bob is mistaken for an escaped thief and suspicions are raised in the town. Frightened by the news but helpless to Bob’s charm and desperate to win his affections, Miss Todd steals money from her neighbors and alcohol from a local liquor store to give to Bob. After a confrontation with him, Bob reveals that he is not the thief everyone suspects him to be. As an argument unfolds between them, Miss Todd threatens to turn him over to the authorities even though he has done nothing wrong. When she goes to get the police, Laetitia convinces Bob to run away with her. They flee, but only after snatching up Miss Todd’s valuables—including her car—leaving her with nothing.

In a 1993 dissertation, Sylvia Watkins Ryan explains how Menotti derived a solo piano piece from this opera:

Twelve years after the successful radio premiere in 1939 of *The Old Maid and the Thief*, Menotti selected a bold three-measure motto theme from the opera’s third scene as the germ for his most advanced piano composition. *Ricerca and Toccata on a Theme from “The Old Maid and the Thief”* was composed in 1951 and premiered on November 1 of that same year in Town Hall by Ania Dorfmann, to whom it was dedicated.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sylvia Watkins Ryan, “The Solo Piano Music of Gian-Carlo Menotti: A Pedagogical and Performance Analysis” (DMA diss., University of Oklahoma, 1993), 103–104.

For Ania Dorfmann

# RICERCARE AND TOCCATA

On a Theme from *The Old Maid and the Thief*

## Ricercare

Gian Carlo Menotti

(1911–2007)

Andante con moto (♩ = ca. 58)

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time. It consists of four systems of music, each with a measure number in a box at the beginning of the system (4, 6, 8, and 10). The first system starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and the instruction *sempre legato*. The second system begins at measure 4. The third system begins at measure 6 and features a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The fourth system begins at measure 8 and features a forte (*f*) dynamic. The score includes various fingerings (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 1-3, 2-1-2, 3-2-1, 1-3, 1-5, 2-3-1), accents, and slurs. The piece concludes with a 5/4 time signature change at the end of the fourth system.

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26

1 3 2 3 1 2 (b) 2 4 (**f**) 5 2 2 5 1 2 1 1  
 liberamente (*leggiero*)  
 3 3 3

pedal ad lib.

5-3 2 2 2-1 1 2 1 2 1 2 3  
 (cresc.) (*f*)

4 4 2 1 2 1 (°) 4 4 4 3

27

2 1 4 3 3 1 3 5 2  
 rit. (*mf*)

30

1 4 1 5 2 3 5 3 1 3 1 2 1 3

32

4 2 4 1 5 5 1 3 2 1 1  
 (*f*)

# Toccata

Allegro e sempre a tempo (♩ = ca. 108-112)

The musical score is written for piano in G major and 4/4 time. It consists of six systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). Measure numbers 1, 5, 8, 11, 14, and 17 are indicated in boxes at the start of their respective systems. The score includes various dynamics: *f* (forte) in measure 1, *ff* (fortissimo) in measure 3, *p* (piano) in measure 4, *ff sonoro* (fortissimo sonoro) in measure 17, and *pp* (pianissimo) in measure 18. The piece features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth-note runs. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. A 'CNS' (Crescendo Non Sforzando) marking is present in measure 3. A 'LH' (Left Hand) marking is present in measure 14. The score concludes with a double bar line in measure 18.

# MENOTTI

POEMETTI FOR THE PIANO

12 Pieces for Children

EDITED BY SYLVIA WATKINS RYAN



AN ALFRED MASTERWORK EDITION



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## ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Gian Carlo Menotti (1911–2007) was born in Cadegliano, Italy. He is best remembered as an opera composer and founder of three international performing arts festivals. Menotti knew by the age of six that he wanted to be a composer, and he finished his first opera by age 11. After studying at the Milan Conservatory, he came to America in 1928 to attend the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. His studies in composition with Rosario Scalero (1870–1954) and piano with Vera Resnikoff (1899–1979) provided a lasting foundation for his future career. At Curtis, Menotti began a long friendship and collaboration with fellow composer Samuel Barber (1910–1981).

Menotti achieved early success in 1937 with the New York City premiere of his comic opera *Amelia Goes to the Ball*. His opera *The Old Maid and the Thief* was commissioned by NBC and first performed on the radio in 1939. In 1953, Menotti used a theme from this work as the basis for his most advanced solo piano piece: “Ricerca and Toccata on a Theme from ‘The Old Maid and the Thief.’”

Menotti’s opera *The Medium* and its companion piece *The Telephone* had a successful run on Broadway in 1947–48, as did *The Consul* in 1950. The composer’s most popular work, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, was commissioned by NBC and televised on Christmas Eve, 1951. Since then, annual performances have kept this work alive. Menotti’s arrangement of eight intermediate-level piano pieces drawn from the opera was published in 1951.

Menotti wrote 24 mature operas, numerous concert works, a piano concerto, and several librettos. He received two Pulitzer Prizes, a Drama Critics’ Circle Award, and a Kennedy Center Honor for lifetime achievement in the arts. In 1991, Menotti was chosen as Musician of the Year by *Musical America*.

Menotti has left behind a lasting legacy of lyrical and accessible music. In a *Los Angeles Times* article he expressed his musical philosophy: “Great art must have what I call an *inevitability*...I am a neo-Platonist, I suppose. I believe there is a Platonic ideal of beauty, and artists are given a fleeting vision of that beauty. The rest is a process of remembering.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tim Page, “MUSIC & DANCE: Menotti at Twilight: The Pulitzer-winning composer and founder of Spoleto Festival U.S.A. looks back on his six-decade career and ponders the future,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 19, 1991.

# Giga

Gian Carlo Menotti  
(1911–2007)

Allegro (♩ = 132)

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in 6/8 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The tempo is marked 'Allegro' with a quarter note equal to 132 beats per minute. The first measure starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (2, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2). The left hand provides a bass line with fingerings (2, 5, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 5).

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The right hand continues the melodic line with slurs and fingerings (1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 4, 1). The left hand continues the bass line with fingerings (2, 2, 1, 1).

Musical notation for measures 9-12. The right hand has slurs and fingerings (2, 5, 1, 4, 1, 2, 1). The left hand has slurs and fingerings (2, 2, 4, 2, 5, 2). A piano (*p*) dynamic marking appears in measure 10.

Musical notation for measures 13-16. The right hand has slurs and fingerings (2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2). The left hand has slurs and fingerings (5, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2).

Musical notation for measures 17-20. The right hand has slurs and fingerings (4, 4, 1, 1). The left hand has slurs and fingerings (1, 3, 1, 5, 1, 3, 3, 5). A forte (*f*) dynamic marking appears in measure 17.

# Bells at Dawn

Gian Carlo Menotti  
(1911–2007)

Presto (♩ = 168)

(Alba Festiva)

4 *pp* *sotto voce* RH 5 3 4 5 3 1 5

7 *u. c.* 2 1 5 2

10 *p* *cresc.* 5 2 1 *t. c.* 2

13 *mf* *cresc.* 3 2 5 1 4 2 1 *f* *cresc.* 3 4 1

16 *Adagio* *ff* *cantando* 5 3 1 4 1 3 1



# The Spinner

(La Filatrice)

Gian Carlo Menotti  
(1911–2007)

Andante (♩ = 100)

*p* molto espressivo

Musical score for measures 1-3. The piece is in 3/4 time. The right hand features a melodic line with a four-measure slur over each measure, marked with a '4' above the slur. The left hand provides a bass line with a four-measure slur over each measure, marked with '1' and '3' below the notes. The dynamics are marked *p* molto espressivo.

4

Musical score for measures 4-6. The right hand continues the melodic line with a four-measure slur over each measure, marked with a '4' above the slur. The left hand continues the bass line with a four-measure slur over each measure, marked with '1', '3', '2-1', '4', and '3' below the notes. The time signature changes from 3/4 to 4/4 in measure 5 and back to 3/4 in measure 6.

7

*p* cresc.

Musical score for measures 7-9. The right hand features a melodic line with a four-measure slur over each measure, marked with '3' and '1' above the notes. The left hand continues the bass line with a four-measure slur over each measure, marked with '1' and '3' below the notes. The dynamics are marked *p* cresc. The time signature changes from 3/4 to 4/4 in measure 8 and remains 4/4 in measure 9.

10

Musical score for measures 10-12. The right hand features a melodic line with a four-measure slur over each measure, marked with '3' and '1' above the notes. The left hand continues the bass line with a four-measure slur over each measure, marked with '1', '2', '3', '5', '3', and '2' below the notes. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 in measure 12.

# The Bagpipers

(I Zampognari)

Gian Carlo Menotti  
(1911–2007)

Allegretto (♩ = 76)

1 3 2 4 1 2

*mf*

1 5

4 3

2 5

3 1 3 2 3 1 2

1 2 4 1 2

*p*

# The Brook

(Il Ruscello)

Gian Carlo Menotti

(1911–2007)

Allegro con grazia (♩. = 88)

The musical score is written for piano and bass. It begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a time signature of 12/8. The tempo is marked 'Allegro con grazia' with a quarter note equal to 88 beats per minute. The score is divided into five systems, each starting with a measure number in a box (3, 5, 7, 9). The piano part features intricate fingerings and dynamic markings such as *p*, *f*, and *mf*. The bass part provides a steady accompaniment with simple fingerings. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the fifth system.

# The Shepherd

(*Il Pastore*)

Gian Carlo Menotti  
(1911–2007)

Andante mosso (♩ = 100)

Measures 1-4 of the piece. The right hand has a melodic line with fingerings 4, 1, 2, 4, 1, 4. The left hand has a harmonic accompaniment with fingerings 5, 2, 1, 1, 2, 5.

Measures 5-8 of the piece. The right hand has a melodic line with fingerings 4, 1, 2. The left hand has a harmonic accompaniment with fingerings 5, 1, 1, 2, 4.

Measures 9-12 of the piece. The right hand has a melodic line with fingerings 4, 1, 5. The left hand has a harmonic accompaniment with fingerings 1, 3, 5, 1, 3, 5.

# Nocturne

(Notturmo)

Gian Carlo Menotti

(1911–2007)

Larghetto (♩ = 54)

The musical score is presented in four systems, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Larghetto' with a quarter note equal to 54 beats per minute. The dynamics range from piano (*p*) to fortissimo (*f*).

**System 1 (Measures 1-4):** The piece begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand features a melodic line with fingerings 4, 1, and 4. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with fingerings 2/5, 1/2, 1/4, 2/5, 2/5, and 1/4.

**System 2 (Measures 5-8):** The music continues with a piano-piano (*pp*) dynamic. The right hand has fingerings 3, 5/2, and 4. The left hand accompaniment includes fingerings 2/5, 1/2, 1/4, 1/2, 2/4, 5/2, and 1/4.

**System 3 (Measures 9-13):** The dynamics remain piano-piano (*pp*). The right hand uses fingerings 3, 1, 2, 4, 3, 1, and 5. The left hand accompaniment features fingerings 2/5, 1/2, 2/5, 1/5, 1/2/5, 2/5, 1/4, and 5.

**System 4 (Measures 14-17):** The dynamics increase to mezzo-forte (*mf*) and fortissimo (*f*). The right hand has fingerings 2, 1, 4-5, 1, 3, 2, 1, 4-5, 1, and 3. The left hand accompaniment includes fingerings 1/3, 2/5, 1, 1/4, and 2/5.

# The Stranger's Dance

(Danza dello Straniero)

Gian Carlo Menotti  
(1911–2007)

Allegro ma non troppo (♩ = 120)

2

5 3 1

4 2 1

5 3 1

5 3 1

5 3 1

4 2 1

4 2 1

4 2 1

4 2 1

5 3 1

4 2 1

5 3 1

4 2 1

4 2 1

5 3 1

4 2 1

5 3 1

5 2 1

4 2 1

5 3 1

5 2 1

4 2 1

5 3 1

5 2 1

4 2 1

4 2 1

4 2 1

4 2 1

2

5

3

1

4

1

2

1

4

5

1

3

2

1

4

*f*

*p*

*cresc.*

# Winter Wind

(Vento Invernale)

Andante mosso (♩ = 76)  
*marcato il canto*

Gian Carlo Menotti  
 (1911–2007)

*p*

*cresc.*

1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

RH 5

RH 5

LH 1

LH 1

RH 3

RH 4

# The Manger

(Il Presepio)

Gian Carlo Menotti  
(1911–2007)

Larghetto (♩ = 66)

The musical score is written for piano and is in 4/4 time. It features a tempo of *Larghetto* with a quarter note equal to 66 beats per minute. The key signature is one sharp (F#), indicating A major. The score is divided into three systems. The first system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The second system starts at measure 4, and the third system starts at measure 7. The music consists of chords and arpeggiated figures in both hands, with various fingerings indicated by numbers 1-5. The piece ends with a final chord in the bass staff.



# War Song

(Canzone Guerresca)

Gian Carlo Menotti  
(1911–2007)

Allegro energico (♩ = 138)

*f pesante*

7

13

19