

Carmen: APPENDIX 1

TEMPO AND METRONOME MARKINGS: A CONDUCTOR'S GUIDE

At the head of the Vocal Score to his Opera *Bacchus*, Massenet includes an emphatic note on Metronome markings which has some pertinence to the following table of tempo markings in *Carmen*. Enclosed in a text-box and in a large font he writes:

MÉTRONOMES

Les mouvements au métronome marqués sur la partition sont des indications initiales à peu près exactes. Le sentiment, le caractère des situations devront les modifier s'il en est besoin.

A remarquer que chaque metronome a son mouvement et qu'aucun balancier n'a son pareil.

METRONOMES

The changes in speed marked on the score are more or less exact indications of the initial tempi. The changing sentiments and character of the drama must alter these if needed.

It must be noted that every metronome has its own mechanism and no two are identical.)

Comparison between Bizet's markings on his MS score (Source A) and three subsequent sources: the printed Vocal Score (Source ChPC1) and the copied full-score used at the Opéra-Comique (Source B) precisely exemplify Massenet's observation. Essentially Bizet's MS score indicates starting tempi for movements, and sections of movements, as he conceived them, sometimes with slight changes of mind. The printed vocal score to some extent develops these, adding further changes of tempi as the movements progress, especially those with dramatic dialogue and the changes of 'sentiment' and 'caractère' pinpointed by Massenet. The two subsequent sources, which of course have no authorial intervention, sometimes follow Massenet's advice that initial tempi are the more-or-less exact starting points for sections and movements, but they sometimes quite radically change the tempi. To generalise, both the vocal score used for subsequent performances, and the 1911 recording, show two trends apart from the above-mentioned response to dramatic development. First, the ratcheting-up of the tempi of complete movements, often choruses and ensembles. Second, the general slowing of certain solos and duets, particularly those which have become memorable numbers.

There are several examples of the warming-up of tempi identified by Massenet: a natural process perhaps more applicable in Opera than in purely instrumental music. Among them are the Act I scene between Micaëla and José, particularly in the duet section at the end (from bar 149); in Carmen's 'Tra, la, la' number; the final section of the Act II scene between Carmen and José (No 16, from bar 209) and—predictably—the Finales of both Acts III and IV.

Examples of overall nudging-up of Bizet's original tempi (and those of the Vocal Score) are found in the second part of the Overture; the Habanera; the first Entr'acte; the Chanson Bohème; José's chanson when he returns from prison; the large chorus of gypsies and smugglers in Act III (No 20); Micaëla's Air in the mountains; the duo between José and Escamillo (also an example of dramatic development resulting in a natural *accelerando*) and the chorus of sellers outside the bullring which opens Act IV.

The few examples of deliberately slower tempi are found at the beginning of the first meeting between José and Micaëla; the Entr'act with the flute which precedes Act III and Escamillo's declaration of love in the penultimate Marche et Chœur (No 25, bar 235).

It need hardly be mentioned that the individual soloists for each new casting would affect chosen tempi: singers often try to increase the tempo for breath conservation. On the other hand, the limitations of the chorus at the Opéra-Comique was well known: Bizet had to conscript more competent singers, and the 1911 recording does not suggest a vast improvement. Tricky choruses such as No 12 (*Vivat, vivat le toréro*) are taken steady on the recording, although source B suggests that some conductors wanted an increase in tempi.

The metronome markings entered for the 1911 recording are calculated using the 'Tap for Beats per Minute' website <http://www.all8.com/tools/bpm.htm> accessed December 2015. In many cases the markings derived are averages over a passage with *rubato* or an *accelerando* or *decelerando*.

THE SOURCES

Full descriptions and availability (including online access to Sources A and ChPC1) are given in the Preface to the Peters Vocal Score and the Expanded Preface on the present website.

Source A (Bizet's MS full score). Apart from the Overture which has been recopied, the Guiraud recitatives and occasional pastings in from the Vocal Score, much of this score is in Bizet's hand, using an original ink layer with many different pencil and crayon layers overlaid. Comparison of handwritings lead me to believe that the metronome markings between brackets, usually in a rather thick lead pencil, are in Bizet's hand. They mostly, but not entirely, concur with the markings on the ChPC1 as can be seen from the table, and they are never very different. In the table the inclusion of brackets has been retained in order that these marks may be distinguished from a second—presumed subsequent—layer which are more occasional

and in a thinner lead pencil. I cannot be certain, but these also look as if they are in Bizet's hand although they are often rather slapdash. These are printed in the table without the brackets, as they are in the score where they are often written above the manuscript systems.

Source ChPC1 (The first Choudens *Piano-chant*). This is the principal source for the metronome marks in the Peters score where they are printed first at each change of tempo in the score, without brackets. As has been pointed out in the main text of the Prefaces these would seem to represent the composer's wishes since there are carefully-corrected pages of the proofs for this score extant in Bizet's hand.

Source B (The conducting score used at the Opéra-Comique). This score has been foregrounded in the present edition for the reasons explained in the Expanded Preface. As examination of the table will show, certain tempos have been altered—usually increased—in this score, showing trend for a general tightening up of tempi in performances after the first run. This is also reflected in many of the tempos on the 1911 recording. Where they differ from the tempi in ChPC1, the original layers for these are printed in the Peters score after the main metronome marks and in brackets.

The 1911 recording. (Originally Pathe Opera Series, conducted by Ruhlmann) This precious source gives some interesting insights into the way the Opéra-Comique performances of *Carmen* had developed in the 35 years since its premiere. It cannot be recommended too highly as an important source document, not least because of the insight it gives into the delivery of the spoken sections. Listening to the complete opera I have no sense that the need to fit the music on to the limited space available on each side of a 78 rpm recording has in any way affected the tempos chosen. It is clear from the track changes on the remastered CD version of the original Pathe recording that the policy was sometimes to break up each of the more extended numbers rather than to speed up sections in order to fit them on to a side. The only possible exception to this I could identify was the very fast tempo taken in the recapitulation of the snatch of the Habanera at bar 40 of No. 5, however this is rather countered since the final orchestral section is taken at a tempo much slower than Bizet's indicated metronome mark. This seems to me a deliberate interpretation on the part of François Ruhlmann the incumbent conductor at the Opéra-Comique at the time the recording was made. Furthermore, extreme though it is, it is to my mind highly effective.

Abbreviations:

n/a: not applicable. Meaning that this section is not present in the source

No MM: no metronome marking

Blank boxes in the column for the 1911 recording denote free sections where a reliable tempo marking cannot be calculated.

NUMBERS, BARS AND PAGINATION AS IN PETERS VOCAL SCORE (EP7548A)

ACT I

Prélude

Bars	Source A (Bizet MS)	Choudens VS ChPC1/2	Source B (OC working copy)	1911 recording	Remarks
1–120	(♩ = 116)	♩ = 116		♩ = 120	
121–148	(♩ = 58)	♩ = 58		♩ = 62 accel to 68 at 140	

No 1 Introduction et Chœur (Sur la place ...)

1–19	♩ = 100 ♩ = 90 above score	♩ = 100		♩ = 114	
20–54	Ditto			♩ = 102	
55–92	♩ = 116, ink	♩ = 116		♩ = 118	
93–111	♩ = 116	No MM		♩ = 116	
112–119	♩ = 88	♩ = 88			
120–129	♩ = 116	♩ = 116			
130–137	♩ = 92 doubtful hand	♩ = 88		♩ = 88	
138–160	♩ = 116	♩ = 116		From 146 ♩ = 116	
160–178	♩ = 126	♩ = 126		♩ = 126	
179–end	♩ = 100	♩ = 100		Bar 178 ♩ = 95 Bar 187 ♩ = 100	

No 1^b Scène et Pantomime (Scène de l'anglais)

Bars	Source A (Bizet MS)	Choudens VS ChPC1/2	Source B (OC working copy)	1911 recording	Remarks
1–49	n/a	♩ = 120	♩ = 132	n/a	
50–67	ditto	♩ = 108		ditto	
68–end	ditto	♩ = 120	♩ = 112	ditto	

No 2 Marche et Chœur des gamins

All	♩ = 116	♩ = 112		♩ = 116	
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Mélodrame

All	No MM Un peu moins vite deleted x 3	n/a		n/a	
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No 3 Chœur et Scène (Chœur des Cigarières and Carmen's entry)

1–21	(♩ = 104)	♩ = 104	♩ = 100	♩ = 104	
22–53	(♩ = 104)	♩ = 104	♩ = 96	♩ = 100	
54–71	(♩ = 60)	♩ = 60	♩ = 63	♩ = 72	
72–153	No MM	No MM	♩ = 52	♩ = 58	
154–191	n/a	n/a		n/a	
192–230	n/a	n/a		♩ = 62	
231–238	(♩ = 108)	♩ = 108	♩ = 96		
238–251	(♩ = 92)	♩ = 92		♩ = 82	
252–274	No MM	♩ = 100		♩ = 102	
275–end	No MM	No MM	♩ = 92		

No 4 Havanaise (Habanera)

All	(♩ = 72)	♩ = 72	♩ = 76	♩ = 76	
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No 5 Scène (Throwing of the flower)

1–12	(♩ = 100) ♩ = 112 deleted	♩ = 100			
13–39	(♩ = 58)	♩ = 58	♩ = 66	♩ = 78	
40–47	♩ = 84	♩ = 80		♩ = 118	
48–end	(♩ = 104)	♩ = 104		♩ = 74	

No 6 Duo (Micaëla/José)

1–35	♩ = 96 changed to (♩ = 86) pencil	♩ = 96		♩ = 80	
36–41	(♩ = 69) changed to ♩ = 80		♩ = 80	♩ = 69	
42–56	♩ = 92	♩ = 92		♩ = 112	
57–72	♩ = 92 Même mouv ^t	♩ = 88		♩ = 96	
73–82	(♩ = 100) confirmed ♩ = 100			♩ = 106	
83–105	(♩ = 88) confirmed ♩ = 88			♩ = 94	
106–120	(♩ = 69)	♩ = 69		♩ = 72	
121–123	(♩ = 80)	♩ = 80			
124–129	No MM	♩ = 88			
130–148	♩ = 92	No MM		♩ = 96	
149–end	♩ = 84	♩ = 84		♩ = 98	

No 7 Chœur (Dispute in the factory)

All	(♩ = 76)	♩ = 72	♩ = 76	♩ = 76	
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No 8 Chanson et Mélodrame (Carmen's 'Tra, la, la' scene)

1–37	(♩ = 76) ♩ = 69 deleted	♩ = 76		♩ = 76	
38–50	(♩ = 104)	♩ = 76		♩ = 138	
51–end	(♩ = 76)	♩ = 76		♩ = 76–98	

No 9 Séguedille et duo

1–103	(♩ = 160)	♩ = 160	♩ = 168	♩ = 192–200	Error in Peters Vocal Score
104–109	(♩ = 84)	♩ = 84			
110–119	(♩ = 160)	♩ = 160	♩ = 168	♩ = 205	
120–122	(♩ = 88)	♩ = 88			
123–140	(♩ = 132)	♩ = 132	♩ = 144	♩ = 184	
141–147	(♩ = 88)	♩ = 88			
148–end	(♩ = 160)	♩ = 160	♩ = 168	♩ = 188 From bar 176 molto accel	

No 10 Final

1–16	No MM	n/a	♩ = 69	n/a	
17–63	♩ = 69	♩ = 69		♩ = 69	
64–88	(♩ = 72)	♩ = 72	♩ = 76	♩ = 72	
89–end	(♩ = 92)	♩ = 92		♩ = 94	

ENTR'ACTE

All	(♩ = 96) over deleted original layer	♩ = 100		♩ = 108	
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ACT II

No 11 (Chanson bohème)

1-67	(♩ = 100)	♩ = 100	Bar 49: ♩ = 116	♩ = 120	
68-107	(♩ = 108)	♩ = 108	♩ = 116	♩ = 120 Bar 89: ♩ = 136	
108-147	(♩ = 126)	♩ = 126	♩ = 126	♩ = 146-150	
148-167	(♩ = 138) deleted unknown hand. Top of page: "Toujours 152".	♩ = 138	♩ = 160	♩ = 160	
168-end	(♩ = 152)	♩ = 152	♩ = 160		

No 12 Chœur et Ensemble (Vivat, vivat le toréro)

Chœur: All	(♩ = 120)	♩ = 120	♩ = 126	♩ = 108	
Ensemble: All	No MM	No MM	♩ = 116	♩ = 112	

No 13 Couplets (Escamillo)

All	(♩ = 108)	♩ = 108		♩ = 110	
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No 13^b Sortie d'Escamillo

All	(♩ = 108)	♩ = 108		♩ = 110	
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No 14 Quintette

1–117	(♩. = 152)	♩. = 152	♩. = 144	♩. = 152	
118–207	No MM	No MM	♩. = 84	♩. = 80	
208–259	(♩ = 132)	♩ = 132		♩ = 120	
260–end	No MM	♩. = 152		♩. = 152	Error in Peters Vocal Score

No 15 Chanson (Don José's return from prison)

All	Source A has pasted page from ChPC1	♩ = 100		♩ = 106	
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No 16 Duo (Carmen, José)

1–12	(♩ = 104)	♩ = 104			
13–70	♩ = 112	♩ = 108		♩ = 116 By bar 38: ♩ = 126	
71–75	(♩ = 152)	♩ = 152			
76–99	A tempo: no MM	A tempo: no MM		♩ = 104 Bar 83: ♩ = 118	
100–102	(♩ = 72)	♩ = 72			
103–116	♩ = 96	♩ = 88		♩ = 88	
117–132	(♩ = 152)	♩ = 152	♩ = 100	♩ = 100	
133–150	(♩ = 116)	♩ = 116	♩ = 112	♩ = 118	
151–158	(♩ = 63)	♩ = 63	♩ = 69	♩ = 72	
159–191	(♩ = 69)	♩ = 69		♩ = 69	
192–208	♩ = 80	♩ = 76		♩ = 80	
209–252	(♩ = 80) ♩ = 84 Bar 245 ♩ = 88	♩ = 80		♩ = 104	
253–260	(♩ = 88)	♩ = 88		♩ = 120	
261–274	(♩ = 92)	♩ = 92		♩ = 124	
275–306	(♩ = 80)	♩ = 80		♩ = 112	
307–322	(♩ = 69)	♩ = 69		♩ = 72	
323–336	(♩ = 116)	♩ = 116		♩ = 136	
337–340	(♩ = 100)	♩ = 100		♩ = 120	
341–end	(♩ = 132)	♩ = 132		♩ = 126	

No 17 Final

1-24	(♩ = 112)	♩ = 112		♩ = 112	
25-39	(♩ = 76)	♩ = 76	♩ = 88	♩ = 88	
40-48	(♩ = 92)	♩ = 92	♩ = 100	♩ = 112	
49-66	No MM	♩ = 100		♩ = 110	
67-end	(♩ = 104)	♩ = 104	♩ = 108	♩ = 112	

ENTR'ACTE

All	(♩ = 88) ♩ = 104 ink, deleted	♩ = 88	♩ = 104, ink ♩ = 88 pencil addition	♩ = 70	
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ACT III

No 18 Introduction : Sextuor et Chœur

1-4	No MM	No MM			
5-end	(♩ = 96)	♩ = 96		♩ = 98	

No 19 Trio (Carmen, Frasquita, Mercèdes)

1-78	(♩ = 112) ♩ = 116 deleted	♩ = 112	♩ = 116	♩ = 112	
79-110	(♩. = 88) ♩ = 96	♩. = 88	♩. = 96	♩. = 88	
111-117	(♩ = 108)	♩ = 108		♩ = 110	
118-123	No MM	No MM	♩ = 112		
124-169	No MM	♩ = 112		♩ = 108	
170-191	(♩. = 84)	♩. = 84		♩ = 84	
192-229	(♩ = 66) Bar 210: ♩ = 86	♩ = 66		♩ = 66	
230-end	(♩ = 112)	♩ = 112		♩ = 112	

No 20 Morceau d'Ensemble (Carmen, Frasquita, Mercèdes, Smugglers)

All	(♩ = 108)	♩ = 108	♩ = 116	♩ = 116	
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No 21 Air (Micaëla)

1-24	(♩. = 44)	♩. = 44		♩. = 48	
25-44	(♩ = 96)	♩ = 96		♩ = 96	
45-end	1°Tempo. No MM	1°Tempo. No MM		♩. = 48	

No 22 Duo (José and Escamillo)

1–24	(♩ = 112)	♩ = 112		♩ = 118	
25–39	(♩ = 96)	♩ = 96	♩ = 100	♩ = 112	
40–58	(♩ = 112)	♩ = 112		♩ = 118	
59–90	(♩ = 126)	♩ = 126		♩ = 134	
91–120	♩ = 138	No MM		♩ = 140	
121–126	n/a	♩ = 80	♩ = 96	n/a	
127–end	n/a	♩ = 126		n/a	

No 23 Final

1–16	(♩ = 92)	♩ = 92			
17–20	(♩ = 108)	♩ = 108		♩ = 108	
21–32	(♩ = 92) ♩ = 108 deleted	♩ = 92	♩ = 108	♩ = 92	
33–40	(♩ = 80)	♩ = 80		♩ = 88	
41–51	(♩ = 92)	No MM		♩ = 94	
52–68	(♩ = 120)	♩ = 120	♩ = 115	♩ = 116	
69–91	(♩ = 88)	♩ = 88		♩ = 94	
92–97	(♩ = 112)	No MM		♩ = 98	
98–108	(♩ = 84)	♩ = 84	♩ = 92	♩ = 98	
109–116	(♩ = 120)	♩ = 120	♩ = 116	♩ = 120	
117–127	♩ = 84	♩ = 84		♩ = 90	
128–131	(♩ = 120)	♩ = 120			
132–138	(♩ = 88) Bar 134: ♩ = 104	♩ = 88		♩ = 92	

139–141	(♩ = 104)	♩ = 104			
142–143	No MM	♩ = 116			
144–145	No MM	♩ = 76			
146–151	(♩ = 96) ♩ = 112	♩ = 96	♩ = 112	♩ = 88	
152–end	(♩ = 108)	♩ = 108		♩ = 108	

ENTR'ACTE

All	(♩. = 80)	♩. = 80		♩. = 82	
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Act IV

No 24 Chœur (Marchands)

All	(♩ = 168)	♩ = 168	♩ = 160	♩ = 174	
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No 25 Marche et Chœur (Cuadrilla)

1–234	(♩ = 116)	♩ = 116		♩ = 116	
235–258	(♩ = 104)	♩ = 104		♩ = 76	
259–end	'mouv ^t de marche' deleted (♩ = 100)	♩ = 100		♩ = 100	

No 26 Duo et Chœur Final

7–43	(♩ = 96) Bar 33: 1° Tempo	♩ = 96		♩ = 88 Bar 33: ♩ = 106	
44–51	(♩ = 112)	♩ = 112		♩ = 120	
52–79	(♩ = 96)	♩ = 96		♩ = 112	
80–109	(♩ = 108)	♩ = 108		♩ = 112	
110–129	(♩ = 116)	♩ = 116		♩ = 122	
130–146	(♩ = 138)	♩ = 138		♩ = 174	
147–149	(♩ = 84)	♩ = 84			
150–161	♩ = 116 large writing on score	♩ = 116		♩ = 116	
162–169	(♩ = 84)	♩ = 84		♩ = 72	
170–179	(♩ = 104)	♩ = 104		♩ = 88	
180–188	(♩ = 126)	♩ = 126		♩ = 116	
189–200	(♩ = 104) blue crayon	♩ = 104		♩ = 116	
201–end	(♩ = 76)	♩ = 76		♩ = 76	

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