

# The Tinbergen Variations

for carillon

*Composed by Mathieu Daniël Polak*



Dies Natalis, November 8, 2019  
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Comment on The Tinbergen Variations by prof. dr. Rutger Engels  
President of the Erasmus University Rotterdam

*“Very special! Nice!!”*

# Introduction

## Reason

At the initiative of Diana Hoek-Penders, I was commissioned by the Erasmus University to compose and perform a composition for carillon. The premiere took place during the Dies Natalis of the University, Friday, November 8, 2019.

The composition falls within the Tinbergen Year. The economist and physicist Jan Tinbergen (1903-1994) was a professor at the Erasmus University and was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1969.

His name 'Tinbergen' immediately evoked an association with Goldberg with me. The Goldberg Variations by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) is one of my favorite pieces. That is why I decided to study about this piece and fantasize about how a connection with a new piece to be composed, could be made.

## Goldberg Variations (Bach), Chaconne (Händel) & The Tinbergen Variations (Polak)

The title page of the Goldberg Variations calls the composition 'Aria with thirty changes.' After the theme and thirty changes, the piece concludes with the repetition of the theme. The entire composition therefore consists of 32 parts.

In music, 'change' means something different than 'variations.' When I think of change, I think of gradual changes in sound as we hear it in the music of, for example, Philip Glass or other minimalist composers. The term Variations is a typical classical phenomenon in which the melody is more or less perceptible throughout the entire piece.

The bass line of the initial measures of the Goldberg Variations is identical in terms of chord choice to the ostinato bass of the Chaconne with 62 variations by Georg Friedrich Händel (1685-1759). The chords of the opening measures of both pieces are: G – D/F# – A7/E – D – G/B – Am/C – D – G. In the Tinbergen Variations I spread out the chords of these eight measures over eighteen bars. In bars 19 to 42 of the Tinbergen Variations, the bass line is largely repeated yet the melody appears in the alto line. The pieces by Bach and Händel are written in 3/4 time whereas the Tinbergen Variations is written in the irregular 5/8 time. Bars 43 to 66 of the Tinbergen Variations show references to the melody and harmony. Just like with the Goldberg Variations, The Tinbergen Variations ends with resuming the main theme.

## The Tinbergen Variations, Erasmus March & Bells change the World

Professor Jean Paelinck composed a carillon piece for the Erasmus University named The Erasmus March. This cheerful piece was published in 1990.

In 2008, commissioned by the Institute of Social Studies, I composed a piece named Bells change the World. In this piece one could hear the melody of the student song Gaudeamus Igitur. Together with the Tinbergen Variations, a Triptych occurs.

I hope, from now on, every year this triptych will be performed at the Dies Natalis, the opening of the academic year and during the Eureka week of the Erasmus University.

## Attention

The Erasmus Magazine published an article and video about the Tinbergen Variations at their website: <https://www.erasmusmagazine.nl/en/2019/11/08/heres-the-sneak-peek-of-the-tinbergen-variations-new-composition-for-the-dies/>

# The Tinbergen Variations

2019

Comodo (♩ = c. 100)

Mathieu Daniël Polak

Carillon

2+3

*mf*

6

rit. . . . .

*a tempo*

*mf*

13

with two forks

1324

two forks

1324

*f*

*p*

rit. .

*f*

*p*

19

*a tempo*

*mf*

24

rit. . . . .

*a tempo*

*mf*

29

Musical score for measures 29-33. The piece is in G major. Measure 29 features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Measure 30 continues the melodic line. Measure 31 has a dynamic marking of *f* and features a chordal texture. Measure 32 continues the melodic line. Measure 33 has a dynamic marking of *p* and features a chordal texture.

34

Musical score for measures 34-38. Measure 34 has a dynamic marking of *f* and features a chordal texture. Measure 35 continues the melodic line. Measure 36 continues the melodic line. Measure 37 continues the melodic line. Measure 38 has a dynamic marking of *p* and features a chordal texture.

39

Musical score for measures 39-42. Measure 39 has a dynamic marking of *mp* and features a melodic line with accents. Measure 40 continues the melodic line. Measure 41 has a dynamic marking of *mp* and features a melodic line with accents. Measure 42 has a dynamic marking of *mp* and features a melodic line with accents. A *rit.* marking is present above the staff.

Poco sostenuto (♩ = c. 92)

43

Musical score for measures 43-46. Measure 43 has a dynamic marking of *p* and features a melodic line. Measure 44 continues the melodic line. Measure 45 continues the melodic line. Measure 46 continues the melodic line.

47

Musical score for measures 47-50. Measure 47 has a dynamic marking of *mf* and features a melodic line. Measure 48 continues the melodic line. Measure 49 continues the melodic line. Measure 50 continues the melodic line.

51

*p* *mf* *p* *mf*

55

*f* *f*

58

*mp* *cresc.*

62

*f* *p*

65

*f* *rit.*

Moderato (♩ = 100)

67 *mf*

72

78 *rit.* . . . . .

83 *a tempo*

*f* *p*

89

*mf* *f* *p*

95

*f* *p* *mf* rit.

Amabile (♩ = 54)

99

*p* 132435

104

104

109

*p* >

Rapido (♩ = c. 160)

114

*p* cresc.



*rit.* - - - - -

118

**Tempo primo** (♩ = c. 100)

123

128

133

139