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## **Brahms' Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel, Op. 24: A Study of the Technique of Harmonic Variation**

Richard C. Grant  
*Central Washington University*

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BRAHMS' VARIATIONS AND FUGUE ON A THEME  
BY HANDEL, OP. 24: A STUDY OF THE  
TECHNIQUE OF HARMONIC VARIATION



A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Graduate Faculty  
Central Washington State College



In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts



by  
Richard C. Grant  
August, 1970

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A. Bert Christianson



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The technique of varying musical themes is the oldest and one of the most widely used methods of composition. Evidence of this technique can be found in the earliest music and its almost continuous use is apparent throughout the history of music. From its earliest appearances at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the form and its techniques have been used in all style periods and the most prominent composers have contributed to its development.

#### I. THE PROBLEM

Harmony, melody, rhythm, and tone color are the four broad and basic categories making up the elements of music. When writing in variation form, a composer may vary these elements singly or in various combinations. He may also choose to vary smaller but equally significant elements within the four larger divisions. The possibilities for variation of any given theme extend from the simplest ornamented melody to the most sophisticated free variation where the original theme is hardly discernible.

It is the purpose of this study to isolate as much

as possible a single technique, harmonic variation, and explore its techniques and uses through the study of a complete set of variations. The study is limited to harmonic concepts, procedures, and techniques used by the composer in the development of this particular set.

The composition selected for this study is Variations and Fugue on a theme by Handel, Op. 24, by Johannes Brahms. The variations of this work were selected because the composer adhered strictly to the form and the broad harmonic outlines of the theme in each variation, while he explored the possibilities of internal harmonic variation.

The analysis of a large set of variations should allow certain conclusions to be drawn concerning the methods and means of harmonic variation. Also, the study should be especially useful for the analysis of other works in theme-and-variation form and should provide a basis for the study of compositional techniques.

## II. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Sectional variations. Sectional variations or theme with variations are based on a theme subject of definite structure. The subject is usually a small binary form with a complete cadence at its conclusion. Each succeeding variation, traditionally, retains the shape and form of the subject including the final cadence.

Continuous variations. Chaconne, passacaglia, and ground bass or basso ostinato are forms of continuous variation. These forms are based on a short theme of four to eight measures. The theme can be a melody or a succession of harmonies repeated over and over without pause. The theme is often, but not always, a bass melody or scheme of harmonies with the variations provided by the other voices. It can, however, be transposed and embellished in voices other than the bass.

## CHAPTER II

### VARIATION FORMS AND TECHNIQUES

#### I. HISTORICAL SURVEY OF VARIATION FORMS AND TECHNIQUES

The development of variations and variation forms closely follow the general outline of the history of music. Since the form and its techniques have been used by the most prominent composers and in all style periods, it is logical to discuss the development of the form and its uses in relation to these composers and periods.

The history of variation form can be said to extend from the earliest musical examples to the present day. However, the development of the variation is generally considered to begin with the rise of lute and keyboard music early in the sixteenth century.

Three countries--Italy, Spain, and England--share in the development of variation form in the sixteenth century. While the use of the form is continuous in the three countries, each is prominent in a different part of the century.

Composition in variation forms began with the Italian dance variations of Spinaccino and Dalza in 1507 and 1508. These dance variations along with variations on the canzona and ricercar and the bass-dance

variations remained popular throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Just prior to mid-century, variation form became popular with the Spanish composers. Earliest examples of the form are Milan's compositions for lute. The Diferencias for lute of Narvaez, 1537, and for viola da gamba by Diego Ortiz, 1553, favored the form of the sectional variation. The contrapuntal variations of Antonio de Cabezon, written for keyboard instruments, are considered the finest Spanish compositions in sectional variation during the sixteenth century.

Although the English were using variation forms before mid-century, it was the virginalists Byrd and Bull who made the English school most prominent at the end of the sixteenth century. Their ornate works in the variation forms show a marked increase in the use of figural variation; a technique based on a given figure or motive.

These three countries developed their own techniques and forms; the Italian dance variation, the theme and variations of Spain, and the sectional and continuous variations of the English. All were sufficiently well developed in these early stages to allow speculation as to the existence of variation forms in the pre-sixteenth century eras. These forms, especially the Spanish and the English, are the forerunners of the variations of



the Baroque period.

Continued expansion of variation forms and techniques occurred during the Baroque period. The composers, while continuing to use the sixteenth century forms, created new larger forms to meet their requirements.

The continuous variation forms chaconne, passacaglia, and ground bass developed with the Baroque concept of firm bass and florid treble. In these forms, the bass or structural harmonies were the unifying forces. Used throughout the period, the beginnings of these forms can be found in the early Baroque strophic variations. These vocal forms used the same bass for each stanza while varying the melody or solo with each repetition. Other continuous forms used early in the seventeenth century are the romanesca, the ruggiero, and the passamezzo moderno. The ruggiero and passamezzo moderno were not the traditional ground bass, but merely a repeating harmonic sequence or scheme.

The traditional bass pattern of the chaconne or passacaglia was a descending series of four notes moving diatonically from tonic to dominant. This sequence was later dropped in favor of a four to eight measure harmonic pattern. The theme of the ground was either repeated unchanged, in ostinato manner, or transposed and embellished in other voices.

The variation forms permeated much of the instrumental compositions of the Baroque period. Along with the continuous variation forms--chaconne, passacaglia, and ground--the Baroque composers also explored the sectional variation forms.

The chorale partitas of Sweelinck and Scheidt were written early in the century and the form continued, with modifications, throughout the entire period. These sectional variations, based on traditional chorale or plainsong melodies, were usually written for the organ.

Two additional sectional variation forms developed by the seventeenth century composers, were the variation suite and the double. The suite contained several dance movements based on the same thematic material while the double was a sectional technique featuring immediate repetition of the theme with the addition of embellishments. The term double eventually became synonymous with theme and variations when more than one repetition was present as in Handel's well-known theme and variations in E major from the Fifth Keyboard Suite. The variation suite and the sets of doubles are excellent examples of the increasing size of variation forms.

As with other compositional techniques, the efforts of Baroque composers in variation form culminate in the works of J. S. Bach. His Goldberg Variations are still considered

to be one of the finest sets of sectional variations. They summarize the achievements of the Baroque and anticipate the variation form as found in the classical period.

Variation technique in Baroque music may take any of three basic approaches. First, the melody was repeated with very little or no change. It could, however, be transferred from voice to voice and surrounded with a different counterpoint. Secondly, the melody could be ornamented or embellished differently in each variation. The melody usually remained in the top voice and the harmonies remained unchanged. The third idea is that of a basso ostinato or ground where a short bass melody was repeated over and over as the upper voices were changed for each variation (9:302-304). In his book Baroque Music Palisca states:

Variations as a musical technique in the baroque may be defined as the restatement of a melodic or harmonic period with ornamentation or diversification of one or both of these elements and of rhythm (12:73).

Bach's Goldberg Variations were a prelude to the Classical use of the variation form. Again, most prominent composers used the form extensively both in single compositions and as movements or sections in larger works. Grout refers to the use of the form in three instances:

1. As technique within a larger formal plan.
2. As an independent composition.
3. As a movement of a symphony or sonata (9:486).

Additional techniques and styles were developed by the classical composers. Modifying the character of the theme by changes in rhythm and tempo is a device prevalent in the compositions of Mozart and Beethoven. These character variations followed Bach's example in his Goldberg set. A new form, used mainly by Haydn, consisted of two themes in different keys each varied in turn. This double variation usually was written in the following form: A, B, A<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>1</sub>, A<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, etc.

The stylistic characteristics of the Classical variation are in keeping with the Classical tradition. Mozart's variations, for example, are simple and schematic, as opposed to the heavier, more ornate, Baroque compositions. Each variation preserves the dimensions and harmonic progression of the theme while becoming increasingly ornate.

Development of variation form and techniques was continuous throughout the Classical period and it was for Beethoven, as it was for Bach, in the Baroque period, to summarize and culminate these efforts. His Diabelli Variations are considered by many to be the classic example of theme-and-variation techniques. Like Bach's Goldberg set, the Diabelli Variations summarize the achievements of the Classical period and suggest new ideas and techniques to be used by the Romantics, Schumann and Brahms.

Romantic composers also explored the variation forms and found them suitable for their use. Schubert and Mendelssohn are noted for their use of Romantic character variations. These variations place the theme in different settings, completely changing its character and mood. Schumann, on the other hand, created a new form in his Etudes Symphoniques. This new form, the free variation, is concerned with motivic development and fragmentation of the theme rather than dealing with the entire structure.

While most Romantic composers changed the Classical forms to fit the Romantic style or created new forms, Brahms remained true to the forms of the Classical tradition. He also used Baroque forms to express his Romantic ideas. Two of his greatest individual sets of variations, the Variations and Fugue on a theme by Handel, Op. 24 and the Variations on a theme by Haydn, Op. 56, stand as testimony to his reputation as a master of the variation.

Continued expansion of the free variation form and a return to older forms are typical of contemporary composers. Examples of chaconne and passacaglia can be found in the works of Hindemith and Frank Martin, while the variations of d'Indy and Reger are excellent examples of free variation form. This free variation dispenses with the traditionally fixed element of structure and allows for considerable freedom and flexibility.

Variations in some form have spanned the entire breadth of music history. Its growth and longevity stand as tribute to its universal appeal to composers and listeners alike. Berry summarizes the interest in variation form very well:

. . . not only is the systematic form of the theme with variations the oldest of all structural procedures in the history of instrumental music, but the principle of variation, restatement with change, is the most universal solution to the fundamental requirement for unity and variety in music (2:296).

## II. THE FORM OF SECTIONAL VARIATIONS

Throughout the development cycle of theme and variations, certain characteristics appear allowing general statements concerning the form. Of course, any of the principles may be changed in certain instances, but most sets have much in common.

The theme is generally found to be a small binary form with a length of eight to thirty-two measures, each of the two sections usually being repeated. Other forms have been used as themes but not to the same extent as the binary form. Repeated periods, one part forms, and even small ternary forms have been used as themes for variation sets, but the vast majority of themes will be found to be in binary form.

The form of the variations following a given theme

are normally structurally identical to it. Small discrepancies do appear, however. The repetition of the A and B sections, as in the theme, is indicated by the usual repeat signs; however, these repetitions may be written out to allow for additional variation. This in no way changes the basic structure of the form. The exception to this stabilized structure is found in more recent works in free variation form. This form does allow a change in the formal structure of the theme.

The concluding section of the sectional variation has several common forms. Theme and variation sets have been concluded with the final variation, with a da capo repeat of the theme, with a fugue or passacaglia, or with the addition of a short coda. Each method seems equally successful and many composers have used different concluding sections for their variation sets.

### III. THE TECHNIQUES OF VARIATION IN THE SECTIONAL VARIATION FORM

The techniques used to vary a musical theme are as wide and varied as the composers who have used the form. However, as with the general form, certain characteristic techniques are common to all periods and composers. These techniques may be discussed in general terms.

The complexity of any given variation is determined

by the balance of fixed and variable element within its structure. In some sets of variations this balance remains constant while in other sets it changes with each variation.

The fixed elements in sectional variations provide stability and unity for the set. Apel in the Harvard Dictionary of Music lists four combinations of fixed elements: (1:783)

- A. Harmonically and Melodically Fixed.
- B. Harmonically Fixed.
- C. Structurally Fixed.
- D. Entirely Free.

While Apel's four categories may change and revolve within a given set, the basic structure remains as the fixed element permeating the entire composition with the exception of type D.

The variable elements including key, mode, tonal structure, harmonic progression, tempo, melody, and texture are used separately or in combination in the variation set. Other variable elements such as figuration and ornamentation offer the composer a wide latitude in his selection of the techniques of varying a given theme.

The techniques of variation have grown steadily in use and development since the early sixteenth century. The form of sectional variations and the wide range of compositional possibilities have appealed to most composers. Through their use, the form matured within each period,



and its technical possibilities adjusted and expanded to adapt to most stylistic changes.

## CHAPTER III

### THE COMPOSER AND THE WORK TO BE ANALYZED

#### I. BRAHMS, AND HIS USE OF VARIATION FORMS

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) is one of the most important nineteenth century composers. A catalogue of his works include 122 opera and a formidable list of works without opus numbers; and they incorporate compositions of symphonic music, chamber music, large choral works, songs, piano, and organ music. Considered by Romantics as a conservative, Brahms used traditional forms of the Baroque and Classical periods as vehicles for his compositions. His discovery and subsequent use of variation forms, therefore, was inevitable.

Brahms was involved with variation forms throughout his entire career. The earliest example of his work in this form is the Variations on a theme by Robert Schumann, Op. 9, written in 1854. In the nine years to follow six additional sets were written for piano. Then there is a span of seven years until the Haydn Variations, Op. 56a/b, written in 1873. Additional sets can be found. The String Quartet in B flat major, Op. 67, 1875; the Piano Trio in C major, Op. 87, 1880; the Fourth Symphony, Op. 98, 1884 and 1885; and the Clarinet Quintet, Op. 115, 1891 are

all larger works containing movements in variation form.

Most of his variation forms are sectional variations. All of his variations for piano are sectional sets. However, he did not neglect the continuous variation forms; the finales of the Haydn Variations and the Fourth Symphony are passacaglia or ostinato variations.

Though not the largest part of Brahms' work, variation forms and techniques did occupy his talents throughout his composing career. Exploring the forms of sectional and continuous variations, he remains a direct link to the forms and composers of the past. His work in the variation forms is of such quality that no equal can be found in the Romantic period. Thus, he stands with Bach and Beethoven as a master of variation forms.

## II. IDENTIFICATION OF THE WORK TO BE ANALYZED

Variations and Fugue on a theme by Handel, Op. 24, was written in 1861 while Brahms resided in Hamm, a suburb of Hamburg, Germany. This set was composed early in the composers career and at a time when his piano works were devoted almost entirely to variation form.

Brahms composed seven sets of variations for the piano. Variations on a theme by Robert Schumann, Op. 9, 1854; Opus 21, numbers 1 and 2, 1856, Variations on an Original Theme and Variations on a Hungarian Theme

respectively; and Variations for piano duet on a theme by Schumann, Op. 23, 1861, preceded the Handel set. The two sets on Paganini themes, Op. 35, written in 1862 and 1863 followed.

The theme for the set was taken from a book by Handel called Lessons for Harpsichord. The theme is short and symmetrical and is the subject of five variations in its original form.

These variations are considered by most to be Brahms' finest set. Indeed, the composer thought enough of them to write to a friend:

Yesterday I sent Härtels some Variations and Fugue on a theme by Handel. Look out for them when they come to the light of day. Compared with my other music I consider these pieces ~~very~~ highly [sic] special, and am fond of it (14:174).

The Handel Variations are a synthesis of Romantic ideas written in a Classical form. They are one of the finest examples of sectional variations and may be ranked on a par with Bach's Goldberg set of the Baroque and Beethoven's Diabelli Variations of the Classical period. Upon hearing a performance of the Handel Variations, Wagner, who was diametrically opposed to Brahms stated:

One sees what can still be done with the old forms in the hands of one who knows how to deal with them (7:95).

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ANALYSIS OF THE VARIATIONS OF BRAHMS' VARIATION AND FUGUE ON A THEME BY HANDEL, OP. 24

#### The Theme<sup>1</sup>

The theme is a period consisting of two repeated four measure phrases. It has the general shape and outlines of a small binary form; however it must be considered a period as it fails to establish the dominant key at the end of the first phrase.

The general harmonic outlines are tonic to dominant to tonic. The first phrase ends with a half cadence and the period concludes with a perfect authentic cadence in the tonic key. The harmonic progression is simple and diatonic. There are neither unusual chords nor progressions. There is an interesting sixth-chord sequence beginning on the fourth beat of measure nine and continuing through measure ten.<sup>2</sup> Its progression is as follows: I<sub>6</sub>,

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<sup>1</sup>The analysis of the theme and each variation may be found in the appendix.

<sup>2</sup>The measures are numbered in the following manner: the first phrase includes measures one through four and its repetition, five through eight; the second phrase includes measures nine through twelve and its repetition, thirteen through sixteen. References are made to the first occurrence only unless alterations are made in the repetition.

$ii_6$ ,  $iii_6$ ,  $IV_6$ ,  $V_6$ .<sup>3</sup> Measure eleven is a short recapitulation of the first measure with identical melody and progression.

The harmonic-rhythm pattern is four chord changes per measure with the exception of the cadential measure of each phrase where there are only three changes present. The three non-cadential measures in each phrase contain identical harmonic rhythm patterns. Harmonic changes occur on the first three beats and on the second half of the fourth beat.

#### General Aspects of the Variations

B-flat major is the prevailing key for the entire set. Variations V, VI, and XIII, however, are in the tonic minor, and Variation XXI is written in the relative minor key. The meter signature is 4/4 with but two exceptions; variations XIX and XXIII have a meter signature of 12/8.

The structure and general harmonic outline of each variation closely follow those of the theme. In each variation the first phrase begins with tonic harmony and closes with a dominant chord; the second phrase begins with a dominant chord and concludes with an authentic cadence. The only exception to this general harmonic scheme are

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<sup>3</sup>Capital Roman numerals refer to major chords; the lower case numerals denote minor triads.

variations XI and XVIII which conclude with plagal cadences. Variation XV has an extra measure included in the second phrase making its total length eighteen measures. There is one elision: the final chord of variation XVI is the beginning chord of variation XVII.

With the few exceptions mentioned, the fixed elements of this set are, structure, general harmonic outlines, key mode, and meter. Restricting himself in this manner, Brahms was able to explore other variation techniques. The varied elements include melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, textural, and dynamic factors.

One of the main elements of variation Brahms explored in this set is the numerous possibilities of internal harmonic variation. The following analysis will be limited to a study of the changes in the harmonic progression and the harmonic-rhythm pattern occurring within the basically fixed structure of each variation.

### Variation I

Variation I is almost harmonically identical to the theme. In most cases even the chord inversions are the same. A single chord substitution, IV for V, is found on the fourth beat of measure three. The second phrase includes both the sixth-chord sequence and the recapitulation in measure eleven.

While the progression mirrors the theme, the harmonic-rhythm pattern shows significant changes. The chord changes remain on the beat but the complete chord is heard, with accents, on the second half of each beat. Another alteration is the rhythmic diminution of the sixth-chord sequence from four and one-half to two and one-half beats. The original harmonic rhythm is regained on the third beat of measure ten and continues at the expected rate to the cadence.

### Variation II

The harmonic progression of variation II is substantially altered from the progression found in the theme. The most conspicuous of these modifications is the use of secondary dominants and motivic devices to suggest other tonics. This variation is also the first of three to feature chromatic movement in the parts. An interesting alteration occurs in measure two where beats one and two are an exact repetition of beats three and four of the previous measure. Measures one through three and measure eleven contain allusions to C minor or E-flat major, through their dominants, and the dominant of F major is found in measure twelve. An interesting three note motive is used over the sixth-chord sequence in measures nine and ten. The second note of each group suggests the



leading tone of the chord being heard. A third change in the progression is the suggestion of a modal change from major to minor. These changes are prepared using the major chord on the beat, followed immediately by its minor alteration on the afterbeat. These changes are treated almost as passing harmonies until measure nine where a minor tonic is used without the preparation previously found. The sixth-chord sequence is unaltered and a tonic pedal is found in the final two measures.

The harmonic-rhythm pattern is altered more in the first phrase than in the second. The addition of the minor alterations and the insertion of some of the secondary dominants vary the number of chord changes present in each measure. The second phrase returns to the expected number of changes in each measure.

### Variation III

The harmonic progression of variation III begins as does the theme with measures one and two being identical even to the inversion used. An allusion to the key of E-flat major begins on the second beat of measure three and continues for four beats. The second phrase begins in the tonic minor with tonic six-four and a flat-III chord used in measure nine. Measure ten continues in the minor mode with the sixth-chord sequence abandoned for

a minor subdominant, an augmented sixth chord, and dominant harmony. E-flat major is again referred to in measures eleven and twelve with a return to the tonic for only the final two beats.

The harmonic-rhythm pattern is similar to that found in the theme. Even though the full chords are presented on the afterbeat, the appoggiaturas and slurs keep the harmonic emphasis on the beat. The number of chord changes established in the theme are present in each measure.

#### Variation IV

The harmonic progression of this variation is drastically different from the theme. Numerous chord substitutions and a wide use of secondary dominants are present. The following keys are referred to through their dominants: D minor, iii; F major, V; G minor, vi; D-flat major, flat III; and E-flat minor, iv. Also, the repetition of beats three and four of measure one on the first two beats of measure two is used. Tonic minor is found in both measures nine and ten including a reference to the relative major D-flat. Measure eleven contains the expected recapitulation, though not as complete as others, as only the first two beats are the same as in measure one.

This alteration of the harmonic progression is caused by a doubling of the harmonic-rhythm pattern. The theme's pattern is four chord changes per measure, but in this variation eight changes are present in most measures. An accented anacrusis is used on the last quarter of most beats, thus providing emphasis to the end of the afterbeat.

### Variation V

Variation V is the first variation written in the minor mode. The harmonic progression is changed to accommodate this as well as related keys. The two-beat repetition pattern previously used only between measure one, beats three and four, and measure two, beats one and two, is expanded in this variation to include measure three where beats one and two are repeated on beats three and four. Measures three and four refer to D-flat, the relative major key. The D-flat major chord replaces the tonic each of the three times it is used. The second phrase uses a progression similar to that of the theme. However, the dominant chords in measure nine are minor triads suggesting the progression I, iv, I, iv, in the key of F minor. Measure eleven recapitulates the beginning of the theme. The flat-II<sub>6</sub> chord is used in measure nine and twelve, adding Neapolitan color to the second phrase.

The harmonic-rhythm pattern is altered. The expected number of chords are present in each measure, but the accent pattern is changed. Sometimes the chord changes occur on the last half of the second beat as well as the last half of the fourth. These changes are usually accented altering the harmonic-rhythm pattern.

### Variation VI

Variation VI is also written in B-flat minor. The harmonic progression is altered by the contrapuntal texture of the variation. The first phrase is a strict canon at the octave. The second phrase begins as a canon by inversion but it reverses itself in measure eleven. Although characterized by broad general harmonies, there is a feeling of movement from tonic to dominant in B-flat minor and then in D-flat major. This movement is produced by the contrapuntal texture. The two-beat repetition pattern of measure one and two has been altered to include the second, third and fourth beats of measure one, which are then repeated on the first, second and third beats of measure two. Tonic harmony prevails in measures one and two. Measure three and the first half of four are entirely in D-flat major, but there is a return to B-flat minor at the end of the phrase. Beginning as expected with dominant harmony, the second phrase abandons the sixth-chord

sequence and moves through tonic to secondary dominants of iv, E-flat minor, and flat-vii, A-flat minor, concluding with a perfect authentic cadence in B-flat minor. The recapitulation often found in measure eleven is present. It is, however, in an inverted form, the tenor and bass exchanging places with the soprano and alto.

The harmonic-rhythm pattern is also altered by the contrapuntal texture of the variation. The first phrase is limited to a single chord per measure except for the passing harmonies produced by the counterpoint, and the cadential measure where there are three changes presented. The second phrase has three basic changes in each measure except the final one where seven changes occur.

### Variation VII

Variation VII returns to the major mode, and with this return is also a return to a progression harmonically similar to the theme. Measure one and the first three beats of measure two have identical chords, but with altered inversions. The most noticeable of these changes is the I chord in root position replacing  $I_{6/4}$  on the first beat of measure two. The first three and one-half beats of measure one are repeated on similar beats in measure two, replacing the two-beat pattern previously found. Beginning on the fourth beat of measure two is a definite

shift from B-flat major to D minor as measure three and most of measure four are an exact transposition of measure one and two a third higher. This change continues until the second beat of measure four where the tonic returns through V of V and V. The second phrase also begins in a manner similar to the theme. The sixth-chord sequence is replaced with an allusion to E-flat major through its secondary dominant.

The harmonic-rhythm pattern of this variation also has some similarities with the theme. The first phrase has the proper number of chord changes present in each measure including accent marks over the change on the last half of the fourth beat. There are, however, passing chords and subtle harmonic changes to be found in the rapid sixteenth note figures. For example, the third beat of the first measure moves I, V, I, V, providing a basic feeling of tonic harmony. The second phrase abandons the theme's harmonic-rhythm pattern in the final three measures where a varied number of changes are present.

### Variation VIII

The harmonic progression of the first phrase of Variation VIII is altered only slightly from that of the theme. Two chord substitutions, IV for V on beat four of measure three, and V for I on beat one of measure four,

are the only major changes. The addition of passing chords  $vii^{\circ}$  and  $vi$  in measures two and four, and two minor insertions  $V$  for  $I_{6/4}$ , and  $vii^{\circ}$  for  $V$ , are other harmonic changes found in the first phrase. The entire first phrase is underscored by a tonic pedal point. The pedal point is continued into the second phrase with two measures each of  $F$  and  $B$ -flat. The second phrase begins in the tonic minor and chord substitutions relating to this key are used. The flat- $VI$  replaces  $V$  on the third beat of measure nine, and the sixth-chord sequence is replaced with an allusion to the relative major on beats two and three. The original progression returns for the first three beats of measure eleven to provide the recapitulation of measure one, and then immediately alludes to the subdominant key through its dominant returning again to the tonic at the conclusion of the phrase.

The harmonic rhythm is varied in each phrase. The first phrase basically retains four chord changes per measure with the exception of the passing harmonies included in measures two and four. There is, however, a change in the accent pattern with beats two and four emphasized harmonically in both phrases. Phrase two replaces the expected four chord changes with five, again emphasizing beats two and four.

A compositional technique used in this variation

affects both the harmonic progression and harmonic rhythm. Measures one and two of the first phrase are repeated in measures three and four with the soprano and alto parts inverted. This technique is expanded in the second phrase to encompass all four measures. The repetition is written out with the upper parts inverted.

### Variation IX

Variation IX is the second variation whose character is determined by the chromatic movement of its moving voices. Only the theme's basic harmonic outlines are present in this variation. There is tonic harmony at the beginning, dominant harmony at the end of the first phrase and at the beginning of phrase two, and tonic harmony at the end. Between these points, however, the progression is radically different. The basic progression is presented in measures one and two. Each succeeding two measure group contains the identical progression with a different tonal center. Measures one and two have a tonal center of B-flat major, measures three and four have identical melodic and harmonic content, with the addition of a third upper voice, and a tonal center of D major. Measures nine-ten and eleven-twelve have tonal centers of F major and B-flat major respectively. The repetition of the second phrase is written out with the first two measures written one-half



step higher than measures nine-ten, in F-sharp major. Measures eleven-twelve and fifteen-sixteen are identical with measures one-two except they are written an octave higher. Each two measure group is written above its tonic pedal. The progression of the two measure motive is similar to that of the first two measures of the theme. Substitutions on beat three of measure one,  $V_7$  of IV for I, and  $II_7$  and its chromatic alteration, flat- $II_7$ , for V on beat two of measure two are the main harmonic changes in the progression.

The compositional device mentioned above also affects the harmonic-rhythm pattern. The pattern is two measures long and is repeated in each succeeding two measures. There are four chord changes per measure each occurring on the beat. The anacrusis to each two measure group occurs on the last part of the fourth beat.

### Variation X

The harmonic progression in the first phrase of Variation X is, with two substitutions, the same as that of the theme. Both substitutions occur in measure three where IV and iv replace  $vii^0$  and V on beats two and four. The most noticeable alteration is the mixing of modes between B-flat major and minor. Each measure of the first phrase contains references to both modes. The

second phrase remains in B-flat minor throughout ending with an ambiguous B-flat chord with no third. As in the first phrase, the progression resembles that of the theme. Measure ten is the exception in phrase two. Abandoning the sixth-chord sequence, the root of flat-VI, G-flat, is emphasized. One additional change occurs in measure twelve where  $I_{6/4}$  replaces the  $ii$  chord.

The harmonic-rhythm pattern is steady at four chord changes per measure, one on each beat.

### Variation XI

The first phrase of variation XI is divided into two measure groups, identical in content, with the second a third above the first. Thus, the harmonic progression is altered to accommodate this repetition. A substitution occurs in measure two,  $iv$  for  $V$ , this allows the repetition of the last two beats of measure one on the first two beats of measure two. This progression is then repeated in the key of D minor in measures three and four, substituting for the progression of the theme. The second phrase is also radically altered harmonically. Beginning in measure nine with dominant to tonic harmony, the theme's progression is abandoned on beat four. The sixth-chord sequence is replaced by a sequence of secondary dominants with the following progression:  $V_7$  of IV to IV,  $V_7$  of V to V, and

second phrase remains in B-flat minor throughout ending with an ambiguous B-flat chord with no third. As in the first phrase, the progression resembles that of the theme. Measure ten is the exception in phrase two. Abandoning the sixth-chord sequence, the root of flat-VI, G-flat, is emphasized. One additional change occurs in measure twelve where  $I_{6/4}$  replaces the  $ii$  chord.

The harmonic-rhythm pattern is steady at four chord changes per measure, one on each beat.

### Variation XI

The first phrase of variation XI is divided into two measure groups, identical in content, with the second a third above the first. Thus, the harmonic progression is altered to accommodate this repetition. A substitution occurs in measure two,  $iv$  for  $V$ , this allows the repetition of the last two beats of measure one on the first two beats of measure two. This progression is then repeated in the key of D minor in measures three and four, substituting for the progression of the theme. The second phrase is also radically altered harmonically. Beginning in measure nine with dominant to tonic harmony, the theme's progression is abandoned on beat four. The sixth-chord sequence is replaced by a sequence of secondary dominants with the following progression:  $V_7$  of IV to IV,  $V_7$  of V to V, and

V<sub>7</sub> of vi to vi. The vi chord at the end of the sequence is a substitute for I on the first beat of measure eleven. The third and fourth beat of measure eleven and the first two beats of measure twelve contain an allusion to E-flat major, with its dominant present twice. The phrase concludes with a plagal cadence, one of only two variations to do so.

The theme's harmonic rhythm remains intact with four chord changes in the noncadential measures, but it is altered to allow all the changes to occur on the beat. The two measure repetition in the first phrase does affect the number of changes in the fourth measure where four chord changes replace the expected three.

### Variation XII

For the most part, the harmonic progression of variation XII is the same as that of the theme. The shifting of mode from major to minor and back is one of the devices of harmonic variation used. Also used are numerous appoggiaturas, enriching the harmony, and a large number of chromatic alterations, employed in shifts of mode, secondary dominant suggestions, and altered non-chordal tones. The first phrase begins in B-flat major with the minor mode suggested in the last half of measure three and in measure four. Chord substitutions begin in measure

three where  $i1_7$  replaces  $vii^{\circ}$  on beat two and  $V_7$  of IV and IV are used instead of V on the fourth beat.  $V_7$  replaces I on beat two of measure four and its incomplete dominant ninth is interjected on the preceding half beat. The phrase ends with the expected half cadence. The second phrase has fewer substitutions than the first and no insertions. Measures nine and ten are identical with the theme except they are in the minor mode. The sixth-chord sequence is presented entirely in minor, with the flat-II<sub>6</sub> replacing  $i1_6^{\circ}$  on the first beat of measure ten. Measure eleven contains the only alteration of the second phrase as  $V_7$  of IV is used in place of I on beat three. The major mode returns in measure eleven and the phrase ends with a perfect authentic cadence in the major mode.

The harmonic-rhythm pattern is also very closely related to the theme. Measures one and two are identical with the theme including the chord change on the last half of the fourth beat. Measures three and four both contain additional chords. The harmonic-rhythm pattern of the second phrase is identical to the theme.

### Variation XIII

Variation XIII is written in the tonic minor key. The progression is identical with that of the theme through the third beat of measure two. Beginning with the fourth

beat of measure two and continuing through the first beat of measure four, the relative-major key of D-flat is used. The tonic key returns with a half cadence at the conclusion of the first phrase. The second phrase begins, as does the first, with the same harmony as the theme. However, the sixth-chord sequence is replaced by another movement to D-flat major. This key is used until the final measure where tonic is again heard.

The harmonic-rhythm pattern remains unchanged with four chord changes per measure, but the rhythmic figure used in the left hand gives emphasis to each afterbeat.

#### Variation XIV

Variation XIV returns to the major mode. The first phrase is written in two measure groups, the second repeated a third higher than the first. This shift of a third occasions the shift of tone center from B-flat major to D minor in measures three and four. The harmonic progression is similar to that of the theme through the first seven beats. The repetition of these two measures in D minor is altered slightly with iv replacing V on the second beat of each measure. The harmonic progression of the second phrase is the same as the theme's except for a single substitution, vi for iv at the end of measure eleven. Also in measure eleven is the recapitulation of measure one.

The harmonic-rhythm pattern closely follows the theme's. The only alteration occurs in measure four where the pattern had to be changed to accommodate the two measure repetition. Accent marks are used to emphasize the last half of the fourth beat in many measures. The harmonic rhythm of the second phrase is unaltered and mirrors the harmonic rhythm of the theme exactly.

#### Variation XV

The harmonic progression found in this variation is very different from the progression of the theme. This progression is characterized by broad general harmonies with embellishing passing chords between the chord changes. Measures three and four are a modified repetition of the first two. This repetition is mostly a third above the original; however, there is no new tonal center involved. The progression is affected as similar chords are found in each two measure group. There are some similarities between this progression and the theme's; the chord changes are similar to those of the same location in the theme. There is a chord substitution in measure three: I is used in place of V on beat four. The second phrase also departs from the theme's progression. Again broad general harmonies occur, but in this phrase the chords and their location are unrelated to the theme. There is an allusion to D-flat

major in measure ten and the incomplete dominant ninth replaces  $V_7$  early in the phrase. Unique in the entire set is an extra measure included in the second phrase of this variation because of an extension in measure eleven.

With such drastic changes in the progression, the harmonic-rhythm pattern also undergoes change. Replacing the usual four chord-changes per measure is a varied pattern of two and three changes and in the case of measures ten and twelve only one chord is used throughout the measure.

#### Variation XVI

The harmonic progression of the theme is changed extensively in Variation XVI. Measures one and two are devoted to single harmonies, tonic and dominant respectively. Beginning in measure three is an allusion to dominant harmony with  $V_7$  of V present in both this measure and the next. The second phrase is dominant harmony through measure ten. Tonic harmony is heard on the beginning of the first beat in measure eleven, but the harmony immediately changes to the  $V_7$  of IV for the rest of the measure resolving to IV at the beginning of measure twelve. There is a suggestion of a recapitulation in measure eleven although not as complete as found in the theme. There is an elision between this variation and the



next; the final chord of this variation serves as the beginning of variation XVII.

The contrapuntal techniques used in the construction of this variation occasion changes in the harmonic-rhythm pattern. The number of chord changes vary from a single change to as many as five changes in the final measure. Most measures, however, only have one or two harmonies present, with most of the harmonic changes occurring on the beat.

#### Variation XVII

The harmonic progression of this variation contains many chord substitutions and changes. The first phrase has substitutions in every measure except the fourth. Measures one and two are devoted to tonic and dominant harmonies. A substitution on the fourth beat in measure one,  $V_7$  for IV and varying the order of V and I in measure two are the basic changes. Measure three contains subdominant harmony with its dominant present. Changes and substitutions also abound in the second phrase. Measure nine has flat-VI replacing I on beat two while measures ten and eleven explore D-flat major and E-flat major respectively. The phrase ends with IV substituting for ii on the first beat of measure twelve and concludes with an imperfect authentic cadence in B-flat major.

The harmonic rhythm of the first phrase is very similar to the theme. The expected number of changes are present in each measure, usually occurring on the beat. The pattern in the second phrase strays both in number of changes per measure and in accents. Measure nine has three changes while measure ten and eleven have only two. The final measure has four chord changes replacing the expected three.

### Variation XVIII

The harmonic progression of Variation XVIII has much in common with the theme, especially in the first phrase. The first phrase mirrors the theme through the first beat in measure three and in measure four. The following three chord substitutions occur on beats two, three and four of measure three:  $V_7$  for  $vii^{\circ}$ ,  $V_7$  of IV for I, and IV for V. An inversion change occurs on the first beat of measure four where tonic six-four replaces its first inversion. The second phrase is more varied with substitutions and replacements occurring in each measure. Beginning in the tonic minor, measure ten refers to the relative major, D-flat. Measure eleven emphasizes dominant harmony with  $vii^{\circ}_7$  of V, the  $vii^{\circ}_7$ , and I replacing V, I, and IV on the last three beats. The harmonies in measure twelve are blurred as they overlap each other.

The phrase ends with a plagal cadence, the second variation to do so.

There are basically four changes per measure, again with the exception of the cadential measures of each phrase. The rhythmic and chordal emphasis on the afterbeat is a significant element of variation. Each measure contains a syncopated rhythm pattern, placing the chord changes of the harmonic-rhythm pattern solely on the afterbeat.

#### Variation XIX

There are alterations present in the harmonic progression of both phrases of this variation. The first phrase departs from the theme's progression beginning in measure one with a chord substitution on beat four, vi for IV. The next variation occurs in the third measure where D minor is suggested by its dominant and I replaces V on beat four. The fourth measure is entirely changed with iii replacing I and then dominant harmony, including its dominant, on the remaining three beats. Measure five through eight are written out in this variation with melodic changes; however, the progression remains the same as in measures one through four. Change also takes place early in the second phrase where iii replaces I on beat four of measure nine. The sixth-chord sequence of measure ten is replaced with the following progression: vi, ii,

vi, V. Measure eleven has a single substitution, vi for IV on the last beat. Measure eleven also is a recapitulation of the first measure. Measure twelve uses the progression of the theme. Again the repetition is written out with melodic changes, but no additional harmonic variation.

The expected number of chords are present in each measure; the regularity of change within the 12/8 meter giving the variation a siciliano character.

### Variation XX

Variation XX is the most chromatic of all the variations. It is the climax of this variation technique with chromatic movement in all voices. This chromatic style lends itself very well to many and varied harmonic changes. With chord changes sometimes occurring as often as every half beat, the additions to the progression are numerous. Also used are other tonics and allusions to other keys through secondary dominants. Measures one and two contain dominant and tonic relationships in the following keys: B-flat major, E-flat major, and D major. A modulation to D-flat major occurs in measure three with its tonic, dominant, and incomplete dominant ninth chords present. B-flat major returns on the second beat of measure four and the phrase ends with dominant harmony in the original key. The repetition of the first phrase is

written out an octave higher with the harmonic progression remaining intact. The second phrase begins with some resemblance to the dominant and tonic harmonies of the theme. The sixth-chord sequence of measure ten is replaced with a series of secondary dominants with the following progression:  $V_7$  of IV to IV,  $vii_7^{\circ}$  of V to V,  $vii_7^{\circ}$  of vi to vi, and  $vii_7^{\circ}$  of VII to VII. The end of this sequence is a modulation to D major continuing through the third beat of measure eleven. At this point tonic harmony returns through its subdominant, but after an enharmonically-spelled Neapolitan-sixth chord, alludes to C major and F major through their dominants. The phrase concludes in B-flat major with an imperfect authentic cadence in the final measure. Again the repetition is written out without harmonic change.

The chromaticism also affects the harmonic-rhythm pattern. The chord changes in each measure vary to as many as eight, with changes occurring with the movement of the bass line.

### Variation XXI

Variation XXI is written in the key of G minor, the only variation not in the key of B-flat, giving rise to new relationships affecting the harmonic progression. Changes become apparent in the first measure where iv and

vii<sup>o</sup><sub>7</sub> replace V and IV on beats two and four respectively. Further change occurs on beats two and four of measure two as vii<sup>o</sup><sub>7</sub> and iv are used in place of V. An emphasis on the subdominant key of C minor begins on the second beat of the third measure and continues through the third beat of measure four. Other tonics are also suggested during the second phrase. The III with a raised fifth replaces I on the fourth beat of measure nine and the sixth-chord sequence is replaced by the following progression: iv<sub>7</sub>, V<sub>7</sub> of VI, VI, V<sub>7</sub> of III, and III. Mediant harmony prevails through the third beat of measure eleven and the phrase concludes with a very traditional chord progression VI, flat-II<sub>6</sub>, V<sub>7</sub>, and I, the VI and flat-II<sub>6</sub> replacing the IV, and ii<sub>6</sub> of the original progression.

The harmonic-rhythm pattern remains the same as the theme. The expected number of changes are present in each measure, but the pattern is slightly altered to allow each chord change to occur on the beat.

### Variation XXII

Variation XXII returns to the original key. With this return is also a closer relationship with the theme's harmonic progression. The entire variation is written over a reiterated B-flat pedal point and only a few substitutions occur in each phrase. The first substitution appears on

beat four of measure three where IV and ii replace V. Included in measure four is an extra tonic to dominant progression. The two-beat repetition pattern of measures one and two is altered slightly, with the first three beats of measure one being repeated on similar beats of measure two. There are also a few substitutions found in the second phrase. The iii and IV chords are reversed on beats two and three of measure ten, vi replaces IV on the fourth beat of measure eleven, and vi substitutes ii on the first beat of the final measure. Present again in this variation is the recapitulation of measure one in measure eleven.

The harmonic-rhythm pattern varies from the theme slightly more in the first phrase than in the second. Most of the chord changes occur on the beat with no emphasis on any beat. Each measure has the expected number of changes with the exception of an insertion of an additional chord in measure four. The second phrase is more closely linked to the pattern of the theme to the extent of harmonic change taking place on the second half of the fourth beat in measures nine and ten.

#### Variation XXIII

The harmonic progression used in the first phrase of this variation is characterized by the substitution of

the incomplete dominant ninth chord for the dominant chords found in the theme's progression. Two additional changes occur on the second and fourth beats of measure one as iv substitutes for V and  $Vii_7^{\circ}$  replaces IV. This entire progression occurs over a B-flat pedal used throughout the phrase. The second phrase departs even more, with additional substitutions as well as a short modulation to D minor. ii replaces I on beat two and the  $vii_7^{\circ}$  of iv in the key of D minor replaces I on beat four of measure nine. The sixth-chord sequence of measure ten is replaced by a rising chromatic sequence in D minor. B-flat major returns on beat four of measure ten and remains for the rest of the phrase. Again the  $vii_7^{\circ}$  chord replaces V and is heard over a B-flat pedal alternately with tonic six-four in measure eleven. It is also found in measure twelve following a minor subdominant on beat two. The continual use of G-flat either in the minor subdominant or as part of the  $vii_7^{\circ}$  chord provides a distinctive harmonic color throughout the phrase.

The theme's harmonic rhythm is retained with the expected number of chord changes in each measure except in measure four where there is an additional chord inserted. The pattern is altered to allow each change to occur on the beat.



Variation XXIV

The harmonic progression of this variation is very similar to the progression found in variation XXIII. This similarity includes the almost continuous use of G-flat and the reiterated B-flat pedal. There is one exception to this relationship in each phrase. These exceptions occur on the second beat of the first measure in both phrases. In phrase one, the  $vii_7^{\circ}$  replaces iv and in phrase two the complete dominant ninth is used in place of  $ii^{\circ}$ . Measure eleven contains a recapitulation of the first measure, another technique not found in variation XXIII.

The harmonic-rhythm pattern is the same as the theme's with most chord changes occurring on the beat.

Variation XXV

The final variation closely resembles the harmonic progression of the theme. Two substitutions occur in the first phrase; I replaces V and IV replaces V on the fourth beats of measure two and three respectively. As in the first phrase, the second contains few substitutions.  $vii_7^{\circ}$  and vi replace V and IV on beats two and four of measure eleven and IV replaces ii on the first beat of the final measure. Missing is the recapitulation usually found in measure eleven.

The harmonic-rhythm pattern is also closely related

to the one used in the theme. The expected number of chord changes are present with the exception of measure four where the dominant chord is repeated on the fourth beat. All changes occur on the beat, thus abandoning the theme's pattern of change on the second half of the fourth beats.

## CHAPTER V

### A SUMMARY OF THE HARMONIC VARIATION TECHNIQUES

On the basis of the foregoing analysis of each variation it would appear that the chief techniques of harmonic variation employed in this set are chord substitutions, secondary dominants and modulation, the alternation of modes within a variation and in the scheme of the set, chromatic alteration and texture, the treatment of the characteristic sequence, and the repetition of thematic and harmonic material. Also alterations of the harmonic-rhythm pattern are made by allowing most chord changes to occur either on the beat or on the afterbeat and by altering the number of chord changes occurring in each measure. This chapter will briefly examine each of these techniques.

#### Chord Substitution

One of the primary sources of harmonic variation used in this set is chord substitution. Since no variation has the exact progression found in the theme, chord substitutions appear in each of them. It is the only technique to be used in all twenty-five of the variations.

The number of chord substitutions used changes with each variation. Some of the variations are closely related to the theme while others are quite far removed because of

chord substitutions. Variations I, III, X, XII, XVIII, and XXV, each contain few substitutions and have progressions similar to that of the theme. Variations II, IV, IX, XI, and XX, on the other hand, have many substitutions and consequently vary radically from the theme.

Chord substitutions seem to occur most often in the second and third measures of each phrase, although some also occur in the first and fourth measures. This is due largely to the composer's intention of retaining the general harmonic outlines of the theme. Substitutions of mediant and subdominant harmonies are the most frequent in the second and third measures, usually substituting for tonic harmony. Tonic and dominant harmonies are substituted most frequently in the outer measures usually replacing each other. This is not to say that no other harmonies appear; triads of every scale degree are used as substitute harmonies throughout the set.

Variation VII is an excellent example of the use of chord substitution in measure two and three of each phrase. Beginning on the fourth beat of measure two,  $V_7$  of *iii* is substituted for *V*. The third measure has substitutions on each beat; *iii* for *I* on beat one,  $V_7$  of *iii* and *iii* on beat two, *iii* for *I* on beat three, and *vi* for *V* on the fourth beat. The *iii* and  $V_7$  of *V* replace *I* on the first and second beats of the fourth measure and the phrase ends with a half

cadence. The second phrase contains additional substitutions. In place of the sixth-chord sequence is an allusion to the subdominant with IV,  $V_7$  of IV, and IV on the first three beats. Measure eleven returns to the expected progression and continues to the cadence. Substitution in the outer measures is typified by variation XVI where broad general harmonies prevail. Measure one is predominantly tonic with only suggestions of movement through dominant. Measure four has several substitutions; V replaces I on beat one, vi replaces I on beat two, and  $V_7$  of V and V are used on the final two beats of the phrase. The second phrase begins with dominant harmony replacing the tonic chord on beats two and four in measure nine. The final measure includes substitutions on the first beat, IV for ii, with dominant harmony prevailing for the rest of the measure. The expected tonic chord is found on the first beat of the next variation.

### Secondary Dominants and Modulations

Secondary dominants are most often used, as were chord substitutions, in the second and third measures of each phrase, but they are also found in the outer measures as well. Dominants of each scale degree may be found; however, allusions to the subdominant, dominant, and mediant keys are used most frequently.

The highly chromatic variation XX is the best example of the use of secondary dominants. Beginning in measure one, secondary dominants of iii, IV, and III occur. In measures nine and ten of the second phrase is a sequence of secondary dominants of the following chords: IV, V, VI, and VII. Measures eleven and twelve also have secondary dominants with the subdominant, the dominant, and the supertonic keys referred to.

Closely related to the use of secondary dominants is the actual modulation to other tonal centers. Eight of the variations--VII, IX, XI, XIII, XIV, XX, XXIII, and XXIV--have passages that must be analyzed in other keys. The most unusual of these is variation IX where modulation occurs every two measures with the following key scheme: B-flat major to D major in the first phrase, and F major to B-flat major to F-sharp major to B-flat major in the second phrase and its repetition.

Another interesting characteristic of the modulations in this set is the number of references to D minor. Half of the modulating variations move to this key. Speculation as to the possible reason for continued reference to this relatively distant key leads to an observation of the theme's melody where measure three presents measures one and two a third higher. Other modulations are more closely related, as in variation XIII,

where B-flat minor modulated to its relative major, D-flat.

### Modal Alternation

A third technique of harmonic variation is the alternation of modes within the individual variations. This technique is present in over half of the variations. The basic change is from major to the tonic minor. The usual pattern is established in variation III where B-flat major is heard in the first phrase. The second phrase begins in the minor mode, using chords related to the key of B-flat minor, but returns to major before its conclusion. Variation X is an interesting exception to this pattern. In this variation B-flat major and minor are freely mixed with both modes present in each of the first three measures. The second phrase is entirely in minor ending with a tonic chord without a third.

Three variations--V, VI, and XIII--are entirely in the minor mode. In each of these the normal modulation to D-flat major occurs. Other mode shifts are found in the modulating variations previously mentioned, where references are made to D minor.

### Chromaticism

In three variations--II, IX, and XX--a characteristic feature is chromatic movement in the voices. The three

become increasingly more complex with variation XX being the most chromatic. Variation II uses the chromatic alterations to suggest the minor equivalents of the major chords and to suggest other tonics with secondary dominants. Variation IX has been discussed earlier. It contains a two measure repetition of chromatic material over a new tonic in each group. Variation XX is the most chromatic with alterations occurring in each voice, causing modal shifts, suggestions of secondary dominants, and altered chords and non-chordal tones. This highly chromatic variation acts as the climax for this type of variation. The three variations are well spaced in the set to allow for maximum effectiveness.

### Sixth-Chord Sequence

Beginning on the fourth beat of measure nine and continuing through measure ten of the theme's progression is a sixth-chord sequence:  $I_6$ ,  $ii_6$ ,  $iii_6$ ,  $IV_6$ ,  $V_6$ . This sequence is found in only five of the variations: I, II, XII, XIV, and XXV. It is replaced in several ways in the remaining variations. One of the common substitutions is the use of secondary dominants. Variation XIII is an example of the twelve variations to use this technique. Seemingly unrelated and spontaneous chord substitutions also replace the expected sequence. For example, measure



ten of variation XIX has the progression vi, ii, vi, V. The above two alterations are frequently accompanied by melodic sequences or suggestions of melodic sequences. Variation XXIII is an excellent example with the bass line rising by half step in measures nine and ten.

There are three additional progressions used in place of the sixth-chord sequence. Variation X emphasizes the root of flat-VI, G-flat. Variations XI and XX each use a sequence of secondary dominants. The progression used in variation XI is  $V_7$  of IV to IV,  $V_7$  of V to V, and  $V_7$  of vi to vi; and the progression of variation XX is similar,  $V_7$  of IV to IV,  $vii_7^{\circ}$  of V to V,  $vii_7^{\circ}$  of VI to VI, and  $vii_7^{\circ}$  of VII to VII.

### Pedal Points

Variations II, VIII, IX, XVII, XXII, XXIII, and XXIV all make some use of a pedal point. The pedal points are either a sustained tone or some type of reiterated eighth note pattern. Variation II, for example, uses a sustained tonic pedal point for the final two measures. Variation VIII, on the other hand, uses a reiterated tonic pedal in the first phrase; and divides the second phrase with two measures each of dominant and tonic pedals, following the same eighth and sixteenth pattern of the first phrase.

Three interesting uses of pedal points occur in variations IX, XXII, and in XXIII-XXIV, a pair with similar progressions. Variation IX has been discussed as having a two measure motive repeated with different tonal centers. The tonic of each of these modulations is presented as a pedal point throughout its two measure span. A tonic pedal runs throughout variation XXII. It is a reiterated pedal point presented in steady eighth notes, giving this variation its Musette character. In variations XXIII-XXIV, tonic pedal points are used in the first phrase of each variation and again at the close below diminished-seventh harmony.

### Repetition

Another source of harmonic variation is the repetition of thematic sections and their related harmonic material. This repetition takes several forms, from repeating certain beats to the repetition of entire phrases.

Beginning in variation II is an interesting two-beat repetition pattern. Beats three and four of measure one are immediately repeated on beats one and two of the second measure. This pattern is found in variations IV, V, XI, and XIX. It is also used in altered form in variation VI where the repetition in measure two is beats two, three, and four of measure one. The pattern is also used

in variations VII and XXII with alterations. In these variations measure one is entirely repeated in measure two. Variation XXI has the pattern although some changes are made on the first beat of the repetition.

Another significant form of melodic and harmonic repetition is the reiteration of measure one and two in measures three and four. This technique is begun in variation V, but is first used in its full form in variation VII where the repetition occurs a third above the original. Variation VIII has the repetition in a modified form. It occurs with the same tonic but, with an inversion of the soprano and alto voices. This technique is expanded in the second phrase to include the repetition of the entire phrase with inverted upper voices. Variation IX has been well discussed previously as having two measure repetition. Variations XI, XIV, and XV, with some modification, each have a repetition pattern similar to variation VII.

Measure eleven of the theme is a melodic and harmonic reproduction of the first measure. This short recapitulation is reflected in fifteen of the variations. There does not seem to be any significant pattern used in the variations not containing the recapitulation. Since variation XV has an extra measure included in the second phrase, the recapitulation is found in the twelfth measure.

Variations XXIII and XXIV are unique in this set as their harmonic progressions are nearly identical and are indeed closely related enough to be described as a doubles set. Their melodic and textural characteristics are quite different, however.

A final method of variation through repetition occurs in the variations where the repetition of the first and/or the second phrase is written out. Normally, the repetition is handled by a repeat sign; some, however, are written out to allow for additional alterations. In each case the harmony remains the same during the repetition and only melodic changes occur. The main alteration used is the writing of the repetition an octave above the original. Sometimes this occurs with melodic changes as, for example, in variation XIX.

#### Harmonic-Rhythm Pattern

There are fewer alterations made to the harmonic-rhythm pattern than were made to the harmonic progression. The harmonic-rhythm pattern of the theme has been described as having four chord changes in each measure except the two cadential measures where only three changes are present. The three non-cadential measures of each phrase have chord changes occurring on the first three beats and on the last half of the fourth. This basic pattern is present in the

following six variations: I, V, VII, XII, XIV, and XXII.

The harmonic-rhythm pattern is most frequently altered to allow most of the chord changes to occur on the beat. This pattern is found in ten of the variations, spaced throughout the set. Three examples of this alteration are variations II, XI, and XXV.

Three variations have the appropriate number of chord changes in each measure. However, the pattern has been altered with most of the changes occurring on the afterbeat. This pattern becomes increasingly more evident in each succeeding variation. Variation III has most of the changes stated on the afterbeat, but the appoggiatura pattern places most of the emphasis on the downbeat. Variation XIII has an eighth rest, eighth note pattern in the left hand where every chord is emphasized on the afterbeat except for the final chord. And finally, variation XVIII has a syncopated harmonic-rhythm pattern with most of the chord changes occurring on the afterbeat.

Six variations have alterations in the number of chord changes present in each measure. These six form an interesting pattern with three variations, IV, VIII, and XX, having a general increase in the number of chord changes; and three variations with generally less, VI, XV, and XVI. Variation IV is unique as the harmonic-rhythm

pattern is virtually doubled. The three variations with fewer changes per measure are characterized by broad general harmonies, and contrapuntal textures. Variation VI is a strict canon at the octave except for measures nine and ten where canon by inversion is used. Variation XVI is also written in contrapuntal style with canonic imitation.

### Conclusions

There are many techniques of harmonic variation used throughout this set. A catalog of these techniques would include the following: chord substitutions, secondary dominants and modulation, the alternation of modes within a variation and in the scheme of the set, chromatic alteration and texture, treatment of the characteristic sequence, pedal points, and the repetition of thematic and harmonic material. Also, alterations of the harmonic-rhythmic pattern are made by allowing most chord changes to occur either on the beat or on the afterbeat and by altering the number of chord changes occurring in each measure.

The variations are presented in a well organized and logical sequence. For example, the variations with more harmonically adventurous progressions, II, IV, IX, XI, and XX, are either closely preceded or followed by variations whose progressions are more closely related to that of the theme, I, III, X, XII, and XVIII. The only

variation indicated to be played slowly is placed in the exact center of the set, variation XIII; and as previously mentioned, the three chromatic variations II, IX, and XX are well spaced for maximum effectiveness.

The limitations of this thesis does not allow for a discussion of the other variation techniques used in the set. It is these techniques in combination with the techniques of harmonic variation that contribute to the reputation of this composition. Without the composer's self discipline and sense of organization this set would be just another of the many sets of theme and variations written throughout the course of history. Two musical traditions are at work in this set. The organization and discipline of the Classic period is combined with the Romantic desire for expressive character. Paul Fontain aptly summarizes his discussion of the work in this way:

It is evident throughout that the work is that of a disciplined mind. The theme was not used as an excuse to go flying in all directions, and Brahms' powers as a melodist and tonal architect were in constant play but always subordinated to the task at hand (6:103).

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**APPENDIX**

# Variationen und Fuge über ein Thema von Händel

Op. 24. (1862)

## Aria

♭: I X I X I V I X I V I X I V

## Var. I Più vivo

♭: I V I X I X I X I X I X I X

♭: I V I X I X I X I X I X I X

♭: V I V I X I X I X I X I X I X

♭: V I X I X I X I X I X I X I X

Var. II

*p animato*

B<sup>b</sup> I | V<sub>2</sub> V<sub>6</sub> V<sub>7</sub>/4 | V<sub>4</sub> V<sub>7</sub>/4 | V<sub>6</sub> V<sub>7</sub> V:5

*cresc.*

Var. III

*p dolce  
soberzando*

B<sup>b</sup> I | V I IV I V I V I II | V<sub>7</sub>/4 V<sub>7</sub>/4

*poco cresc.*

Edition Peters

V<sub>7</sub>/4 | V<sub>7</sub>/4 | V<sub>7</sub>/4 | V<sub>7</sub>/4 | I V I

Var. IV

*risoluto*  
*f* *sf* *sf* *sf* *stacc. sempre*

*ten.* *ten.*

*cresc.*

*sfz sfz sfz*

*1.* *2.*

Var. V

*espress.*  
*p sostenuto*

*cresc.*

*p*

Var. VI

*p sempre misterioso*

*poco marc.*

III III I V I V I V

IV V N  $\frac{3}{4}$  N I VII  $\frac{3}{4}$  VII IV V I

Var. VII \*)

*con vivacità*

*p deciso*

B $\flat$ : I V $\frac{3}{4}$  I IV I V I V/III

*cruc.*

III  $\frac{3}{4}$  III VI III  $\frac{3}{4}$  I V I V I

*cruc.*

II V

\*) Der Herausgeber hat die folgende Variation sehr spitz, mit klarem Rhythmus.  
Edition Peters.

Var. VIII

*f*

B<sup>b</sup> I V<sub>7</sub> I IV V<sub>7</sub> V<sub>7</sub> I VII<sup>o</sup> VI V I V I IV

*p*  
*stacc. sempre*

V<sub>7</sub> V<sub>7</sub> I VII<sup>o</sup> VI V V<sub>7</sub> II V<sub>7</sub> I V<sub>7</sub> III I IV<sup>o</sup>

*cresc.*  
*f*  
*p*

V I V<sub>7</sub> I V<sub>7</sub>/IV IV V VII I V<sub>7</sub> I V<sub>7</sub> I VI V<sub>7</sub>

*p*  
*dim.*

I V<sub>7</sub> I II V I V<sub>7</sub> I V<sub>7</sub>/IV IV V VI V<sub>7</sub> I

Var. IX  
*poco sostenuto*

*sf legato*  
*p*

Red. I I VI V<sub>7</sub>/IV (IV) I (I) V<sub>7</sub> I V<sub>7</sub> I Red. I VII<sup>o</sup> V<sub>7</sub>/IV (IV) I (I) V<sub>7</sub> II, I 3<sup>b</sup>. V<sub>7</sub> F. I



sf sf p sf sf p rinforz

Pod. simile  
 F I I VI<sup>o</sup> IV(V) I (A) III, I I I I VI<sup>o</sup> I<sup>o</sup> II (A) I (U) I, III, I I I I

sf sf p sf sf p

F<sup>o</sup> Var. XVI<sup>o</sup> V<sup>o</sup> III(N) I (I) II, III, I I I I I I VII<sup>o</sup> V<sup>o</sup> II(N) I V<sup>o</sup> V<sup>o</sup> I I

Allegro.  
*f* *energico* *pp*

B<sup>b</sup> I V I IV

f p pp

I III I IV I I V I II

f f f f f p

bVI I V I IV I<sub>4</sub> V I

168 Var. XI  
Moderato

*p dolce esp.*  
*p*  
*legato*

B $\flat$ : I $_2$  V $_2$  I IV $_2$  I $_4$  IV I V di I $_6$  V $_7$  II $_7$

*cresc.*  
*esp.*

vii $\flat$  V V $_7$  V $_2$  I *esp.* IV V $\flat$  V $\flat$  V $\flat$ /IV

*p dolce*

VI V $\flat$  V $\flat$ /IV IV (iv) V $\flat$ /IV IV (iv) I I

Var. XII  
L'istesso tempo

*soave*  
*pp*

B $\flat$ : I $_2$  V I IV $_2$  I $_4$  V I V I I $_2$  I $_2$  V $\flat$ /IV IV

I $_2$  vii $\flat$  V $\flat$  V $\flat$  V $\flat$  V I V I bII $_2$  III $\flat_2$  IV $_2$  V $_2$

I $_2$  V $\flat$  V $\flat$ /IV IV $_2$  I I

Var. XIII  
Largamente, ma non troppo

*espress.*  
*molto sostenuto*  
*f* *espress.*

*f*

*sempre cresc.*

*rinfor.* *f*

Chord diagrams below the bass staff:  
 System 1: b<sup>7</sup>, I, V<sub>7</sub>, I, N<sub>6</sub>, I, V, I, V<sub>7</sub>, II, V<sub>7</sub>, III, V<sub>7</sub>, III, N<sub>6</sub>  
 System 2: II, I, V, V<sub>7</sub>, I, V<sub>7</sub>, I, II, I<sub>4</sub>, I, V<sub>7</sub>, I, V<sub>7</sub>, III  
 System 3: III, V<sub>7</sub>, III, N<sub>6</sub>, II, I, V, V<sub>7</sub>, V, I, V<sub>7</sub>, II, V<sub>7</sub>, III  
 System 4: N, N<sub>6</sub>, V<sub>7</sub>, III, III, N<sub>6</sub>, V, I, I, I, V<sub>7</sub>  
 System 5: V<sub>7</sub>, II, II, V<sub>7</sub>, III, III, N, N<sub>6</sub>, V<sub>7</sub>, II, IV, V, I, I

*sf sciolto* \*)

35

tr I V<sub>7</sub> I II I V

I IV I IV I IV I V<sub>7</sub> V I V I

Var. XV III<sub>6</sub> I V<sub>7</sub> I V<sub>7</sub> I

I II I V<sub>7</sub> I

V VII<sub>7</sub> V<sub>7</sub>/III

VII<sub>7</sub> I I<sub>9487</sub> IV || V I

\*) sciolto: ungebunden.  
Edition Peters.

Var. XVI

*ada*

*p ma marc.*

Var. XVII

*p più mosso*

*p grazioso*

B<sup>b</sup> I I V I IV I<sub>4</sub> V I<sub>7</sub>

\*) wesentlich leichter ausführbar

Ossia più facile:

Var. XIX

*leggiero e vivace (ma non troppo)*

VI<sub>1/2</sub> VII<sub>1/2</sub> I

*p*

*più p*

*poco f*

*p*



This page contains a musical score for guitar, consisting of six systems of staves. Each system includes a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a bass line and guitar tablature. The score is in a key with one flat and a common time signature.

Key features and markings include:

- System 1:** Starts with *poco f* and ends with *pp*. Tablature: Var. XX, I, II, VI, II, VI, I, I, VI, II, VI, I, I.
- System 2:** Marked *Andante* and *p legatissimo*. Tablature: B, I, I, VI, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I.
- System 3:** Features a *p* marking. Tablature: I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I.
- System 4:** Features a *p* marking. Tablature: I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I.
- System 5:** Marked *p espress.*. Tablature: I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I.
- System 6:** Features a *p* marking. Tablature: I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I.

Dynamic markings include *poco f*, *pp*, *Andante*, *p legatissimo*, *p*, and *p espress.*

Var. XXI

Vivace

*p dolce*

*non legato*

I VII<sup>9</sup> I VII<sup>9</sup> I IV I IV V<sub>7</sub>/IV IV

*poco rubato*

*espress.*

V<sub>7</sub>/IV V<sub>7</sub>/IV IV V V<sub>7</sub> I V<sub>7</sub> III+5 IV<sub>6</sub> V<sub>7</sub>/III V<sub>7</sub> V<sub>7</sub>/III

*a tempo*

*pp*

III V<sub>7</sub>/III III V<sub>7</sub> bII<sub>7</sub> V<sub>7</sub> I I I I

1. 2.

Var. XXII  
Alla Musette

*p*

B<sup>b</sup> I<sup>ma</sup> V<sub>7</sub> I II IV *simile* V<sub>7</sub> I V<sub>7</sub>

I V<sub>7</sub> I IV II I V<sub>7</sub> I V<sub>7</sub>



*sempre p*

8 9 I V<sub>7</sub> I II IV III V<sub>7</sub>

*pp*

I V<sub>7</sub> I VI VI V<sub>7</sub> I I

Var. XXIII \*)  
Vivace  
*p e stacc.*

B<sup>b</sup>: I IV I VII<sub>b</sub> I VII<sub>b</sub> VII<sub>b</sub>

I VII<sub>b</sub> I VII<sub>b</sub> I I VII<sub>b</sub> VII<sub>b</sub> V I d: VII<sub>b</sub>/V

*p = f p = f p cresc. f p = f f f*

IV VII<sub>b</sub> I V VII<sub>b</sub> I IV VII<sub>b</sub> I I

\*) Der Herausgeber empfiehlt, die beiden Teile dieser und der folgenden Variation nicht zu wiederholen.  
Edition Peters.

stacc.  
(ped) I (ped) I (ped)

The musical score for Var. XXIV is presented in two systems. The first system consists of a piano part (left) and a violin part (right). The piano part features a complex texture with many chords and some sixteenth-note passages. The violin part has a melodic line with slurs and accents. Dynamic markings include *p*, *cresc.*, and *f*. Chord symbols like  $B^b$ , I, VII $^b$ , and I are visible. The second system continues the piece, with the piano part showing further chordal development and the violin part maintaining its melodic focus. Dynamic markings include *p*, *cresc.*, and *f*. Chord symbols include VI, V $^b$ , V $^b$ , d: VII $^b$ /IV, IV, VII $^b$ /V, V, and II  $B^b$  VII $^b$ /I. The score concludes with a final chord and a double bar line.

The image shows a musical score for piano, consisting of two systems of staves. Each system has a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The music is written in a minor key, indicated by the key signature (one flat). The first system begins with a dynamic marking of *f* (forte). The second system begins with a dynamic marking of *ff* (fortissimo). Below the bass clef staff of each system, there is a line of figured bass notation, which includes Roman numerals and other symbols (such as *6*, *7*, *9*) indicating the harmonic structure. The first system's figured bass includes: V, I, V, I<sub>6</sub>, II<sub>6</sub>, III<sub>6</sub>, IV<sub>6</sub>, V<sub>6</sub>. The second system's figured bass includes: I, VII<sup>o</sup>, I<sub>6</sub>, VI, IV, V<sub>7</sub>, I, I, I. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and articulation marks. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.