

Variations on Three Original Themes

for organ

This is a work with both tonal and atonal sections

Anthony Skilbeck

Approximate duration of the complete *Variations* - 14 minutes

Available separately

- 1 Recitative (Atonal - bars 20 to 83) - Approx. duration 2' 07"
- 2 Evocando i ricercari di Andrea Gabrieli (Duet) (Tonal - bars 174 to 245) - Approx. 3' (Bars 174-205 only, approx 2')
- 3 Prelude and Fugue of 2000 (The tonal sections only of the work) - Approx. duration 7'

Theme I was inspired by a visit to San Marco, Venice. Variation IV is marked *Evocando i ricercari di Andrea Gabrieli (ca. 1518 - 1586)*. Gabrieli became organist of San Marco in 1556.

After the (simplified) tonal theme has been presented ($\text{♩} = 68$), *Variations* follows the following scheme, which shows how the work may also be perceived as a Prelude and Fugue. Tonal sections (Variations I, III and V) are indicated by T; atonal sections (Variations II, IV, VI and VII) by A.

Page 03 .. bar 009 .. T .. Variation I	$\text{♩} = 60$	1st Prelude
03 020 .. A .. Themes II & (bar 46) III (<i>Recitativo</i>)	$\text{♩} = 84$	2nd Prelude
05 084 .. T .. Variation II	$\text{♩} = 84$	1st Fugal Exposition
06 124 .. A .. Variation III	$\text{♩} = 66$	2nd Fugal Exposition
12 174 .. T .. Variation IV (<i>Ricercare / Duet</i>)	$\text{♩} = 76$ ($\text{♩} = 152$), and at bar 210, <i>Doppio movimento</i> ($\text{♩} = 152$)	1st Development
17 246 .. A .. Variation V (<i>Trio - irrealmente</i>)	$\text{♩} = 60$	2nd Development
18 272 .. A .. Variation VI (<i>A Moto perpetuo cadenza</i>) ..	$\text{♩} = 132$, and at bar 322, a <i>rall.</i> to $\text{♩} = 120$ at bar 326	3rd Development
20 343 .. T .. Variation VII	$\text{♩} = 84$, with a <i>meno mosso</i>	1st Final Section
Note the contrapuntal ingenuity in bars 357 to 396		
24 419 .. T .. Variation VIII (Taken from Var. 1)	$\text{♩} = 84$; bar 441, $\text{♩} = 60$	2nd Final Section

The Pedal compass required is from C to d' (when middle c is c'). Where the manual part goes above f"', the player is instructed to play an octave lower.

The sounding pitch range of the bass instrument in the *Ricercare* is E to d'.

In atonal sections, ornamental auxiliary notes to be used are indicated in the score; in tonal sections, the key signature determines the pitch of auxiliaries.

Material for a programme note

Born in Coventry (1947), Anthony Skilbeck's composing life has been supported by work as a teacher, pianist, organist and choir trainer. Musical studies were begun during Skilbeck's childhood in Bournemouth, where his principal musical mentor was Michael Peterson. First professional qualifications were obtained whilst studying at the Royal College of Music and London University Institute of Education. Since 1977 he has resided in Nottinghamshire. In 2000, composition studies with David Harold Cox and George Nicholson culminated in a Ph.D. degree for original composition being awarded by The University of Sheffield. During his time as a mature student, for a short period, Skilbeck also studied the interpretation of organ music with Nicolas Kynaston.

Of his compositional language (usually atonal, but "listener-friendly") Skilbeck writes:

The pianoforte music of Debussy and works from Schoenberg's 1908 to 1912 period have had a particular influence on my harmonic language, which is not based on and has not evolved into a text-book schema. Only comparatively rarely does my music find itself in a key, creation and release of tension in harmony and melody holding a greater interest for me than the use of keys and their relationships. This gives rise to compositions often starting in one area of harmony and ending in another. Justification for a language neither tonal nor serial was strengthened on the discovery of Liszt's *Bagatelle without Tonicity*.

The tritone, whole tones and the bitter-sweet intervals of minor and major sevenths figure prominently. Practical knowledge of contrapuntal organ works has been significant, but I have not been drawn to overtly mathematical processes, though frequently changing and unusual time signatures are often employed.

Planning a structure, or letting one evolve, gives me much pleasure, as does finding that a passage of my music has an evocative quality. The expression of moods and human temperaments fascinates me.

The work has Italian influences. Originally in B minor, Theme I was inspired by a visit to San Marco, Venice, in 1979. Although rhythmically simplified at the opening of the work and used Variation I, it is clearly heard for the first time as the fugue subject in Variation II. Other works using this theme to date are the setting of *Ave Maria* and the *Introit Round: Ave Maria*, both of 1979; *Trio for organ* of 1980, and an arrangement of the setting for brass quartet (*In San Marco*) of 1998.

Commenced in Vigano, Italy, in October 1998, *Variations* was completed in November, 2000. Themes II and III (both atonal) are presented in a *Recitativo* and include the use of reiterated notes as in the Italian vocal ornament (*trillo*) of the 17th and 18th centuries. Variation IV is a *Ricercare*, evoking such compositions by Andrea Gabrieli (who became the organist of San Marco in 1566), Theme I being used as the subject. The *Recitativo* and *Ricercare* can be played as separate pieces, and there is the possibility of using an additional (bass) instrument in the latter, thus making a duet.

Ideally, *Variations* should be played on an organ with an eclectic tonal palette, for stops from French, German, and Italian schools are called for. Nevertheless, as is always the case, the performer is expected to modify the given registration scheme according to the instrument being played. (On the instrument used to work out the printed scheme, the Pedal Sub Bass is louder than the Bourdon).

Preference for stops from various schools of organbuilding and the use of structures from past eras are not the only ways in which *Variations* reflects a wide span of musical history. In addition, the work comprises both tonal and atonal sections; for the composer, the atonal harmonisation of a tonal melody holds a particular fascination.

That *Variations* employs both tonal and atonal sections has made possible a derivative work - *Prelude and Fugue*, which comprises the tonal sections only of *Variations*.

Variations on Three Original Themes

for organ

A work with both tonal and atonal sections

Suggested basic registration scheme

I Principal 8' II Flt. 8' + strings 8' & 4' (no Celestes)

Pedal Bourdon 16' & Flute 8'

Anthony Skilbeck

Theme I

♩ = 69

I

mf

Var. I

I – Princ. + Flt. Harmonique 8'

♩ = 60

mp

legato

pochiss rit.

II

1 2 1

1

mp

legato

p

14

ritardando

Theme II - Recitativo

♩ = 84

Cornet

Use both hands

mp

teneramente

Use the dynamic markings when a swell box is available

* Like the Italian vocal ornament (trillo)
of the 17th & 18th centuries.

4

24

f *espansivo* *mp* *irrisoluto* *mf* *risoluto*

Both hands on the Voix Humaine, or a suitable substitute (with tremulant)
- or Flute Harmonique 8'

35

mp *irato* *f* *mp* *tranquillo* *mf* *teneramente*

Theme III - Recitativo

Trompette 8' *mf* *teneramente*

Bars 41-44 from the Trio for organ
of September, 1988.

Ped. with Voix Humaine, and possibly Flute 4'.
If Flute H. used, Pedal remains unaltered.

p ^ ^ ^

48

mf *mp* *mf* *crescendo* *ff*

Use both hands *agitato*

61

5

Registration as at bar 41 (♩ = 84)

I Principal tone, 8' & 4'
 II Wood 8' & Princ. 4'
 (- Trompette)

Var. II

♩ = 84

74

Sub Bass 16', Principal 8' & Flute 4'

88

100

6

5 5

111

2

II *mp* I *f*

5-4 1 1 2-1 2 *leg.* 5 4 3 1 4

f V U V U V U V

121

3-5 4

5 5 4-5 5 4

1 1 2 1 2 1-2 2 4 2 1 3 2 1 5 3 1 2 1 3 1 2 5 3 1 2 1 4 1 U V U U V U

Var. III

♩ = 66

II *mf calmato* II

II *mp* II

(Reduce Pedal?)

mp U V U U V U

128

2-1 5 3-5 4 2

2 1 2

agitato

I + Quintaton 16' & 2'

M.s. add small notes if 16' not available

(II) *mp*

I *mf*

legato

u

non legato

134

2 2 1 3 b 4 5

mf

legato

140

I

I - Quintaton (I)

II *mp*

I + Sesquialtera

145

I *mf*

legato gravemente

(II) *mp*

I - Sesquialtera II + Mixture

153

+ II/I

II

I { *f*

grottesco

II *mf*

+ reed 8' ↑ *f non legato*

159

II

I {

II + Trumpet 8' ↓

f non legato

+ Mixture ↑

rallentando

II Wood 8' & Princ. 4' only

Musical score for measures 165-174. The score is written for piano, violin, and bass. Measure 165 is marked with a box containing the Roman numeral II. The piano part features a complex rhythmic pattern with many rests. The violin part has a melodic line with a first ending bracket labeled I and a second ending bracket labeled II. The bass part has a melodic line with accents (^) and breath marks (v) above it. Dynamics include *mf* in the piano part and *p* in the bass part. The tempo is marked **rallentando**.

Bourdon 16' & Flute 8' only

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Var. IV *Evocando i ricercari di Andrea Gabrieli (c. 1518 - 1586)*

II Wood 8' & Princ. 4' only

174 *sereno*

$\text{♩} = 76$ $\text{♩} = 152$

II *legato*

(II) *legato*

Tenor, Phrase A

No pedals until bar 246, unless
without stops and coupled to II

181

Soprano, Phrase A

Bass, Phrase A

Lozenge-shaped notes can be played by a bass instrument.

186

rallentando

4 5 5 4 5 4

2 1 2 1

A tempo

Middle section of fugue - 16 bars.

190

sereno, sempre legato

Tenor (A)

espressivo

leg.

Bass (A) *leg.*

195

subito gioioso

Soprano, Phrase B
(Sop. & Bass - gravemente)

leg.

199

Alto (B)

leg.

Ending if the 3/2 section which follows is not (liturgically) appropriate - applies when the Ricercare is being played by itself as part of a church service.

14

202

II + a light 2' (e.g. a Piccolo)

allargando

rit.

From start of the Ricercare to here, c. 2'

Continue from here, if the next (3/2) section is to be played (as in a full performance of the work as a whole).

206

II + a light 2' (e.g. a Piccolo)

allargando

Phrase B (Sop. to Alt. to Ten.)

rallentando

Bass (B - canon with Sop.)

209

5-4

Reminiscent of Phrase A ending. Echoed by the Tenor.

Soprano A-B-C anticipates the Alto in next bar.

rallentando

4

Final section - 36 bars.

II Wood 8', Principal 4' & a light 2'

Doppio movimento (minim = 152)

Soprano - both phrases

15

210

subito energico

Ten. - Phrase A augmented

Lozenge-shaped notes for a bass instrument, if playing. No pedals until bar 246.

217

Ten. - Phrase B augmented and a tone lower than A in Alto part above

224

231

Bass (A) Bass (A)

237

Final cadence section
A tempo

precipitato

2 3

241

precipitato

5th from end of B.

A tempo

rallentando

I Flute Harm. 8' II Flute 8' & Nazard

2/4 2/4

Ped. 8' only

Var. V (Trio)

I Flute Harm. 8' only II Flute 8' & Nazard

Ped. 8' only.

♩ = 60

246 II Theme III

mf
irrealmente

Db
tr

(No turns on the trills) *mp* 3rd free part

mf
Theme II (transposed)

258

5323
C
tr

5-1

Gb
tr

4

1-5

D

II + Flute 4' ↓ II

ad lib.

(Style of writing). Compare bars 271 to 325 here with bars 60 to 77 of my "The Time is Right (In Westminster also)"

I Princ 8' & Flute 4'
(to balance with II)

Var. VI A "moto perpetua" cadenza 18

Subito ♩ = 132 (♩ = 66)

M.d. derived from Theme II (transposed);
M.s. derived from Theme III (transposed).

Play as if a single melody line.

270

mp
sempre non legato; scintillante; con bravura

mp

Prepare Ped. + Sub Bass 16' & Princ. 8'

281

mp

292

mp

I + Stpd. Diap. 8' (balanced manuals)
senza rall.

II + Larigot (- Nazard?)

M.d. derived from Theme III (original pitches);
M.s. derived from Theme II (tritone lower).

303

314

rallentando

Notes 1 to 4 of Theme I

mp

leg.

(Sub Bass 16' & Princ. 8')

Omit B if necessary

II + Mix.

Ped. + 4'

326

allargando

trascendo

mf

Add + II/P

Add II/I

I - 2'
Off II/I

Var. VII

♩ = 84

Musical score for Variation VII, measures 336-347. The score is in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features three staves: Treble, Middle, and Bass. Measure 336 starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes fingering numbers 1, 2, 4, 3, 4, 3. A dynamic change to *mp legato* occurs at measure 340. A first ending bracket labeled 'I' spans measures 340-342, and a second ending bracket labeled 'II' spans measures 343-347. Performance instructions include 'Ped. Off 4'. Off II/P (Sub Bass 16' & Princ. 8' only)' and 'II Wood 8' & Nazard'. The piece concludes with a *mp legato* dynamic.

Musical score for Variation VII, measures 348-357. The score continues with three staves. Measure 348 begins with a *non legato* dynamic. A second ending bracket labeled 'II' spans measures 348-357. A dynamic change to *mf leg.* occurs at measure 355. A first ending bracket labeled 'I' spans measures 355-357. Performance instructions include '+ II/I' and '8va if necessary'. The piece concludes with a *mf leg.* dynamic.

358 I Canon by inversion

legato

Subject in diminution

Subject

mf legato

Canon by augmentation

368

(leg.)

**

**

5 4

poco rit

I - 4' - II/I ↓

** Canon cancrizans at the 5th

** Canon by inversion and in diminution

Ped. - 16' & 4'

377 **Meno mosso** ♩ = 80 (No ornaments)
calmato

(I) *sempre legato*
p

Ped. - 16' & 4' *p sempre legato*

388 **subito** ♩ = 84 **(II)**

(leg.) **(II)** *non leg.*
mf non legato

398

II + 2'

I + 4'

I

f

f

Sub Bass 16', Principal 8' & Flute 4'

f legato

408

II + Mix. Close box

I

I

II

non legato

sempre legato

non legato

Var. VIII

♩ = 84

Solo + T. en Chamade,
perhaps coupled

417 + II/I **rall.** II + reeds 16' & 8'

+ 32' flue. No reeds or mixture.
If coupled, uncouple.

con sonaramente

426

* NOT B_b (as in bar 14).

436

ritardando

I possibly + Mix.
II + reed 4'

$\text{♩} = 60$

Couple to Solo

$\text{♩} = 50 / \text{rit.}$

Solo

$\text{♩} = 60$

ff

fff

non legato

ff

ff

+ II/P

Add