

The Composition

Five Variations on a Theme, features a variety of keys, tempos, styles, and left hand position work to reinforce technical and rhythmical skills introduced to the young string player. It is correlated to *Artistry in Strings, Book 2, Unit IV*.

The *Theme*, based on a German Folk Song, is set in a typical waltz style. Quarter notes in the melody and the accompaniment should be played with a bit of separation and not too heavy.

In *Variation 1*, full bows on the harmonics and slurs will produce the appropriate flowing style accompaniment. Work to achieve the desired dynamic balance so that the melody doesn't get hidden by the harmonics.

Contrast is essential in *Variation 2*: a lyric melody and a light, crisp accompaniment. Let the dynamics follow the natural contour of the melody. You may want to have the 2nd violin and viola sections clap and count their part before playing.

Variation 3 offers new key and time signatures. During the rest in measure 30, encourage students to look ahead in order to prepare for C Major and also train them to look at you for the new tempo. You may want to add a slight pause before beginning *Variation 3* so that students can better prepare. In this variation, a slight emphasis on the syncopated melodic figure will add much musical interest. The low strings should maintain sufficient bow weight so that their eighth notes are well defined.

The texture of *Variation 4* requires well-counted rests. Extra attention to the dynamics will also bring this variation to life.

Variation 5 should be played in the middle of the bow with the accompaniment crisp and rhythmic in a traditional fiddle style. Since the low strings will have a tendency to rush, make sure they are carefully listening to rest of the orchestra.

Each variation presents its own musical challenge and students will learn much as they become familiar with the specific technical requirements. The piano part is optional but would greatly add to the rehearsal and performance, especially with smaller orchestras, to reinforce the rhythmic aspects of the accompaniment.

FIVE VARIATIONS ON A THEME

Full Conductor Score

Approx time – 2:50

Arranged by Robert S. Frost

Allegro moderato (♩ = 108-112)

Violins 1: *f*

Violins 2: *f-p*

Viola: *f*

Cello: *f-p*

Double Bass: *f-p*

Piano (for rehearsal only): *mf-pp*

2x rit.

Moderato Var. 1 (♩ = 96-104)

Vlins. 1: *p*, *mf*

Vlins. 2: *p*, *mf*

Vla.: *p*, *mf*

Cello: *mf*

Bass: *mf*

Pno.: *mp*

2x rit.

14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21

Vlns. 1
Vlns. 2
Vla.
Cello
Bass
Pno.

cresc. *f* *rit.*

cresc. *f* *rit.*

cresc. *f* *rit.*

cresc. *f* *rit.*

cresc. *f* *rit.*

cresc. *mf* *rit.*

22 Allegro Var. 2 (♩ = 116-120)

23 24 25

Vlns. 1
Vlns. 2
Vla.
Cello
Bass
Pno.

f *div.* *f*

f

pizz. - arco *simile*

f

22 Allegro Var. 2

26 27 28 29 30

1. 2.

Vlns. 1 2

Vla.

Cello

Bass

Pno.

ff *unis.* *ff* *ff* *ff*

(arco)

31 Andante Var. 3 (♩. = 72-80)

32 33 34 35

Vlns. 1 2

Vla.

Cello

Bass

Pno.

mf *cresc.* *f*

mf *cresc.* *f*

mf *cresc.* *f*

mf *cresc.* *f*

mf *cresc.* *f*

mp *cresc.* *mf*

36 37 38 39 40 41

Vlns. 1 *dim.* *mf* *cresc.*

Vlns. 2 *dim.* *mf* *cresc.*

Vla. *dim.* *mf* *cresc.*

Cello *dim.* *mf* *cresc.*

Bass *dim.* *mf* *cresc.*

Pno. *dim.* *mp* *cresc.*

42 43 44 45 46

Vlns. 1 *f* *rit.*

Vlns. 2 *f* *rit.*

Vla. *f* *rit.*

Cello *f* *rit.*

Bass *f* *rit.*

Pno. *mf* *rit.*

Andante Var. 4 (♩. = ♩)

47

1 Vlns. *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

2 Vlns. *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

Vla. *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

Cello *f* *f*

Bass *f* *f*

IV III

47 Andante Var. 4 (♩. = ♩)

Pno. *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

1 Vlns. *f* *ff* *f* *ff*

2 Vlns. *f* *ff* *f* *ff*

Vla. *f* *ff* *f* *ff*

Cello *f* *ff* *f* *ff*

Bass *f* *ff* *f* *ff*

II I

Pno. *mf* *f* *f*

56 Allegro Var. 5 (♩ = 104-116)

1 Vlns. *mf* 57 58 59 60 1

2 Vlns. *mf* 4

Vla. *mf* div.

Cello *mf*

Bass *mf*

Pno. *mp* 56 Allegro Var. 5

1 Vlns. 61 62 63 3 64 65 *f*

2 Vlns. *f*

Vla. *f* V

Cello *f*

Bass *f*

Pno. *mf* 64

66 67 68 69 70 71

1 Vlns. 2 Vlns. 3

Vla.

Cello

Bass

Pno.

72 73 74 75 76 77

1 Vlns. 2 Vlns. 3

Vla.

Cello

Bass

Pno.

p *f* *ff*

p *f* *ff*

p *f* *ff*

p *f* *ff*

pp *mf* *f* *ff*

div. *ff* *ff* *ff*

SAMPLE

SAMPLE

