

# 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 (A <i>Moto perpetuo</i> cadenza) ..	$\text{♩} = 132$ , 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
<b>Note the contrapuntal ingenuity in bars 357 to 396</b>		
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.

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**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'

pochiss rit.

♩ = 60

I

*mp* *legato*

II

*mp*

*legato*

1 2 1

1

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 irresoluto* *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*

(♩ = 84) Theme III - Recitativo

Trompette 8' *mf*

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 agitato* *ff*

Use both hands

*c tr.*

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

111

121

Var. III

$\text{♩} = 66$

*mf calmato*

(Reduce Pedal?)

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, woodwinds, and strings. It features a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 3/4. The tempo is marked **rallentando**. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf* and *p*, and performance instructions like **II** and **I**. The piano part has a **II** marking above the first measure and a **I** marking above the eighth measure. The woodwind part has a **II** marking above the first measure and a **II** marking above the eighth measure. The string part has a **II** marking above the first measure and a **II** marking above the eighth measure. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and articulation marks.

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*  
♩ = 76    ♩ = 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**

rallentando

**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)

199

*leg.*

Alto (B)

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.**

1

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**

1

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*

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

281

121 3 1 4 5 3

292

(B)

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

19

2 4  
1 2  
3  
3 2 1  
4 5  
1 1  
1 3 2  
1

5-1  
4 5

314

*c*

*rallentando*

5  
1 2  
1  
4  
4 3 1  
5  
1  
5  
1

Notes 1 to 4 of Theme I

*mp* *leg.*

(Sub Bass 16' & Princ. 8')

Omit B if necessary

*v*

*I* + 2'

*I*

*II* + Mix.

Ped. + 4'

326

*I*

*I*

*mf*

*trascindo*

2  
1  
1 2 3 1  
2  
4

Add II/I

*allargando*

Add + II/P

*u*

I - 2'  
Off II/I

Var. VII

♩ = 84

336

*f*

*mp legato*

II Wood 8' & Nazard

*mp legato*

*mp legato*

Ped. Off 4'. Off II/P  
(Sub Bass 16' & Princ. 8' only)

348

*non legato*

8va if necessary

+ II/I

*non legato*

Subject

*mf leg.*

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 ↓

Ped. - 16' & 4'

\*\* Canon cancrizans at the 5th

\*\* Canon by inversion and in diminution

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

II

f

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

f legato

U ^ V U V U V

408

II + Mix. Close box

I

I

II

non legato

sempre legato

non 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

Solo

\* NOT B<sub>b</sub> (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