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THE BRAHMS VARIATIONS ON A THEME OF PAGANINI  
AND THE RACHMANINOFF RHAPSODY ON  
A THEME OF PAGANINI

THESIS

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## CHAPTER I

### BIOGRAPHY

Born April 2, 1873, on the estate of Oneg in the province of Novgorod, Russia, Sergei Vassilyvitch Rachmaninoff was the fifth of the six children of Vassili and Lyoubov Boutakova Rachmaninoff. Rachmaninoff's aristocratic descent was traced to the Hospodars Dragosh, rulers of the realm of Molday from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century. One of the daughters from this family had married a son of the Grand Duke Ivan III of Moscow. The son's nephew was named Rachmanin, and from this source the family name originated.<sup>1</sup> Rachmaninoff's mother was the daughter of a general, head of Araktcheyev Military College in Novgorod and the owner of a number of estates in the district. It was with a dowry of five of these estates that Lyoubov Boutakova married Vassili Rachmaninoff, and on one of these estates, Oneg, the couple settled down to married life.

The first major crisis in the Rachmaninoff family occurred in 1882, when Sergei was nine years old. His father's riotous living had reached such a point that he had squandered most of his own property and all but the Oneg estate (on which

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<sup>1</sup>John Culshaw, Rachmaninoff (New York, 1950), p. 14.



they were living) of his wife's dowry. This situation eventually led to a final separation of Rachmaninoff's parents, the Greek Orthodox Church not permitting divorce. Rachmaninoff, his mother, brothers and sisters moved to St. Petersburg in the early months of 1882.

Rachmaninoff's introduction to the piano, administered by his mother, came when he was four years old. Two years later he began lessons with Mlle. Anna Ornazkaya, a graduate of the St. Petersburg Conservatoire. Mlle. Ornazkaya recognized his talent and urged that young Rachmaninoff be sent to St. Petersburg Conservatoire. Financial affairs made this impossible, but Mlle. Ornazkaya prepared him for a scholarship which he eventually obtained when he entered the Conservatoire in 1883.

Rachmaninoff's progress was rather erratic, his interest in music being not intense. Rachmaninoff's mother spoke to one of her nephews, Alexandre Siloti, a young but most talented musician who had studied at the Moscow College under Tchaikovsky and Rubenstein, and who had just returned from a two-year period of study with Franz Liszt. Siloti advised that Rachmaninoff be sent to Nicholai Sverev, Siloti's early teacher. It was agreed, and Rachmaninoff went to Sverev in the autumn of 1885 in Moscow.

It was while under the tutelage of Sverev that Rachmaninoff changed from rowdy youngster to serious young musician. Sverev proved to be a severe disciplinarian.

Rachmaninoff lived in Sverev's house with two other young men, Maximov and Pressman. Visits to family were prohibited while studying with Sverev, and household rules were exceedingly strict.

The rumours of Sverev's excessive strictness with which I had been frightened proved to be utter nonsense. He was a man of rare intelligence and great kindness, qualities that earned him the highest respect from the best of his contemporaries. He was an enthusiastic admirer of Dostoyevski, whom he had known personally and whose works he had closely studied. Yet his irritability was as great as his kindness. When he lost his temper he was capable of attacking his victim with his fists and throwing at him any object within his reach; in some cases he might not have hesitated even to kill his opponent. We boys had many a chance to test his "loose wrist." I was chastised by him four or five times, but never, as the others, for any "musical" sin. In my case they always said: "To-day the boy's laziness has got him into trouble again." But on the whole Sverev was an unusually humane, fine, and noble-thinking man. Amongst the Professors at the College of Music, who--with the exception of two or three outstanding artists teaching in the high "virtuoso" classes--were ordinary, uninteresting people of a mediocre mentality, Sverev was by far the most original character and distinguished himself through his vivacious and sparkling intellect, which lifted him high above his environment.<sup>2</sup>

Sverev's pupils were given a sound basis of literature and languages, and in addition to this, he took them regularly to the theatre, always occupying the best box in the house. He encouraged the boys to discuss matters musical

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<sup>2</sup>Oskar von Rieseemann, Rachmaninoff's Recollections (New York, 1934), p. 44.

and otherwise, and was long in advance of his time as an advocate of self-expression.<sup>3</sup> Sverev, through lavish entertainment, gave his students opportunity to meet the highest musical and theatrical celebrities. It was in Sverev's house that Rachmaninoff met Tchaikovsky, who had great influence upon Rachmaninoff's compositions.

While studying piano with Sverev, Rachmaninoff began harmony and composition with Arensky at the Moscow Conservatoire. He later studied counterpoint under Taneyev also at the Conservatoire.

As for the theoretical studies, they were divided between two teachers, the composers Arensky and Taneyev. Anton Arensky had the class in free composition and fugue, and Sergei Taneyev taught counterpoint. Both men left a definite mark on Rachmaninoff--one on his music, the other on his character.

According to the stories told, Arensky hardly ever drew a sober breath and did not like teaching, but fortunately he took great interest in Sergei right from the start. Arensky's influence was twofold: on the positive side his influence showed in Rachmaninoff's songs and particularly in the full melodic piano accompaniment, while in the negative side it was due to Arensky that Rachmaninoff's music had much of a "salon" character.

As for Taneyev, it was the personality of this remarkable man that impressed Rachmaninoff, who looked up to him as a model of high principles and ideals.<sup>4</sup>

A disagreement with Sverev about living conditions changed and had effect upon Rachmaninoff's life.

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<sup>3</sup>Culshaw, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>4</sup>Victor I. Seroff, Rachmaninoff (New York, 1950), p. 27.

Rachmaninoff's aunt, Madame Satina, was to take charge of her nephew, since it was impossible for Rachmaninoff and Sverev to be compatible. This move eventually led to Rachmaninoff's marriage to one of Madame Satina's daughters, Natalie (Rachmaninoff's cousin). Also, Rachmaninoff began piano with Siloti at the Moscow Conservatoire. Rachmaninoff continued work at the Conservatoire until Siloti's resignation at which time Rachmaninoff thought a change of teacher would be a difficult matter, having completed three of the necessary four years of piano. Without hesitation Rachmaninoff asked to be allowed to sit for the final examination in piano a year early. He later requested the same for his other examinations. The decision was a wise one, for Rachmaninoff graduated from the Conservatoire with the Gold Medal Award, a coveted distinction, and high praise for his one-act opera, Aleko, the composition which prompted the board of examiners to present him the award.

On leaving the Conservatoire in 1892, the course of Rachmaninoff's life was by no means settled. As a composer he had made an impression, and as a pianist he was considered to be very good without being exceptional. His own interests were, however, in composition.

Success came easily for Rachmaninoff, perhaps far too easily, for there soon came a downfall. His First Symphony proved to be a temporary end to his success. The first

performance of the work took place in St. Petersburg, autumn of 1897, and was given bad reviews.

Rimsky-Korsakov, in talking to Rachmaninoff about the performance, said: "Forgive me, but I do not find this music at all agreeable," while Cesar Cui, the venerable critic, old archenemy of the Muscovites, a man whose sarcastic articles had harmed more than one composer (incidentally, including himself), spoke his mind with characteristic venom.

"If there was a conservatory in Hell," Cui wrote in the St. Petersburg News, "and if one of the talented pupils there was commissioned to compose a symphony based on the story of the 'Seven Egyptian Executions,' and if he composed one resembling that of Rachmaninoff's, he would have brilliantly accomplished his task and would have brought ecstasy to the inhabitants of Hell." Cui said further that he thought Rachmaninoff's symphony lacked themes and that, with its diseased and perverted harmonizations, it created a morbid atmosphere. He added, a little more generously, that while Rachmaninoff shunned banality, he most probably felt deeply and strongly and tried to express his emotions in new musical forms. Cui laughed at the very idea upon which the symphony was based.<sup>5</sup>

Rachmaninoff even was unable to sit through a performance of it. The bad reviews also resulted from the rivalry between the two schools of composition existing at that time in Russia, the Russian Nationalists, in St. Petersburg, whose idol was Rimsky-Korsakov and the Moscow group for which Tchaikovsky served as model. The failure of the symphony made a deep impression on Rachmaninoff and eventually drove him to a fit of depression. During this period,

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

1897-1898, his creative powers seemingly left him, and as a livelihood Rachmaninoff began conducting at Solodnikov Theatre in Moscow.

In 1900, his depression remained, having abated for only a short time while he was in England. Rachmaninoff discovered that there happened to be living in Moscow at that time a man named Dahl who had aroused much interest through his treatment of mental disorders by means of hypnotism and suggestion. Submitting to Dr. Dahl's treatment, Rachmaninoff's depression was cured. It is to this man that Rachmaninoff's second concerto is dedicated.

Rachmaninoff's marriage to his cousin, Natalie Satin, took place April 29, 1902.<sup>6</sup> Due to the fact that he was in constant demand as conductor or soloist in his own, or other works, it became increasingly obvious that if he were to continue his career as a composer he would have to seek solitude elsewhere. After the birth of his first daughter, Irene, Rachmaninoff and his family settled in Dresden in 1906.<sup>7</sup> The remainder of this period of Rachmaninoff's life was spent in Moscow and Europe, concertising, composing, and as Vice-President of the Imperial Music Society of Russia. (He made one concert tour as conductor and pianist to America during this time.)

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<sup>6</sup>Culshaw, op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>7</sup>Culshaw, op. cit., p. 35.

In March, 1917, the great revolution began in Russia. Rachmaninoff's aristocratic descent, he felt, would not be viewed with favor by the new government. Quite by luck he received an offer for a recital tour in Scandinavia; he accepted, and managed to obtain a visa for his family and himself. In November, 1917, Rachmaninoff and his family left Russia never to return.<sup>8</sup>

His departure from Russia cannot be treated too lightly. Rachmaninoff loved his country second only to his family, and despite the comfortable years which followed his eventual arrival in America, his life was never the same. A practical instance of his nostalgia and his love for Russia is the fact-- a closely guarded secret during his life--that throughout the years in America and France he continued to send large sums of money to worthy causes in Russia.<sup>9</sup>

During the Scandinavian tour he received repeated offers from America, and it soon became obvious that only in America could he pick up the threads of his career. On November 1, 1918, he and his family left Oslo for New York, travelling in a little Norwegian steamer which somehow managed to sail through the mine-infested seas without mishap.

Upon his arrival in America Rachmaninoff found his name by no means forgotten, and he soon began the round of

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<sup>8</sup>Culshaw, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>9</sup>Culshaw, op. cit., p. 40.

recitals and appearances with orchestras which continued with few interruptions until the time of his death. Owing to the extreme pressure of his concert work, Rachmaninoff found little time to compose during his first few years in America, and the first of his compositions, the Fourth Piano Concerto in G Minor, appeared in 1927.

In 1931, at the end of a long European tour, Rachmaninoff bought a house on the Lake of Lucerne, in Switzerland. There, in peaceful surroundings, he found more opportunity to compose, and it was there that he wrote the Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Opus 44.

The Rhapsody on the theme of Paganini is undoubtedly one of the most important works of the composer written after he left Russia and will probably live as long as his second and third concertos. It belongs to the few compositions for piano and orchestra which, like Liszt's Danse Macabre and Cesar Franck's Symphonic Variations, are written in a form of variations. For his theme Rachmaninoff chose Paganini's Caprice in A minor known better through the brilliant Liszt and Brahms variations<sup>10</sup> in piano arrangement than in its original version.

Rachmaninoff visited England frequently; in 1932 he was awarded the gold medal of the Royal Philharmonic Society. In company with Toscanini, Bruno Walter, Ansermet, Horowitz and Casals, Rachmaninoff was invited to appear at the International Musical Festival at Lucerne in 1939. His program for the concert was Beethoven's First Concerto and his own Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini. He returned to his New

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<sup>10</sup>Seroff, op. cit., p. 211.



York home at 33 Riverside Drive, later in the year, and in December a special concert was held in Carnegie Hall to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of his first appearance in the United States. With the Philadelphia Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski, Rachmaninoff played his Second and Third Concerti as well as conducted his Third Symphony. With the outbreak of war Rachmaninoff found himself restricted to the American sphere, but by that time his health was giving way under the strain of excessive concert work.

Early in 1942, Rachmaninoff bought a small house in the beautiful district of Beverly Hills, California. It was in this house that cancer took his life March 28, 1943.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORY OF VARIATION FORM

From the first systematic beginning of the variation, in the second quarter of the sixteenth century, to the emergence of the contemporary style in the first quarter of the twentieth, seven distinct kinds may be distinguished.

1. Renaissance and baroque variations on secular songs, dances and arias.

2. Renaissance and baroque variations on plain songs and chorales.

3. The baroque basso ostinato variation.

4. The ornamental variation of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

5. The nineteenth-century character variation.

6. The nineteenth-century basso ostinato variation.

7. The free variation of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>1</sup>

Renaissance and baroque variations on secular songs, dances and arias were the first type to appear. The primary aim of this kind of variation was the decoration and embellishment of the theme by means of new figurations and counterpoints. They retain the essential structure of the

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<sup>1</sup>Robert A. Nelson, The Technique of Variation (Berkeley, 1949), p. 3.

theme throughout a series of variations, a point in common with most pre-nineteenth century types.

Renaissance and baroque variations on plain songs and chorales may be distinguished from the variations on secular songs, dances and arias not only by the fact that they use liturgical subjects but also because their style was more serious and complicated. These variations were written for the most part for the organ: a well-known example of the chorale variation is Vom Himmel hoch da komm' ich her by J. S. Bach.

Ostinato variations differ from the preceding by virtue of their continuous construction. Their continuous construction is achieved by one voice of a composition repeating a figure throughout the work. The repetition usually occurs in the bass voice but can be altered. "The ostinato variation is generally built upon a short melodic phrase, normally four or eight measures long, which, ideally, recurs without change from the beginning of a piece to the end."<sup>2</sup> This type of variation enjoyed a prominence in both the baroque period and the nineteenth century. The J. S. Bach Passacaglia in C minor is an excellent example of this type of variation.

The ornamental variation of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is the successor to renaissance and baroque variations on secular songs, dances and arias.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

As in the ornamental variation of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this variation aims at decoration of the theme by means of new figurations and counterpoints. The primary difference between the two is stylistic. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' variation exhibits greater simplicity, and avoids becoming too complex contrapuntally.

The nineteenth-century character variation contrasts with the earlier types in general. This type of variation tends not to preserve the expression of the theme throughout a series, but rather to alter the character of the theme. Perhaps the most celebrated example of this type of variation is the Diabelli Variations of Beethoven. It is of this work that Sir Donald Tovey is thinking when he makes the statement, "To speak of the progress in variation-form since Beethoven is like speaking of the progress in reinforced concrete since the Parthenon."<sup>3</sup> In the character variation there is exhibited an emphasis upon the development of motives from the theme. Other criteria which distinguish this type of variation are sharp contrasts of mood, a more organic construction, greater length, and generally more elaborate in every way.

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<sup>3</sup>Donald Francis Tovey, "The Forms of Music" (New York, 1956), p. 245.

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<sup>3</sup>Donald Francis Tovey, The Forms of Music (New York, 1956), p. 245.

Subordinate voice changes also include harmonic alterations, examples of which are change of mode and cadence, omission of chords, use of pedal point, and virtual reharmonization of the theme to name only a few.

To be sure, all methods of varying the theme are not employed at one time. The result would, of course, be nothing like the original theme. Rather it has been the custom to combine certain alterations or changes with certain constants. Thus, there has evolved certain broad techniques or plans of variation writing as the structural variation and the free variation.

The structural variation can be further divided into three contrasting kinds, the cantus firmus, the melodico-harmonic and the harmonic.

In the cantus firmus plan of variation the variations follow the theme closely. The method of variation is largely by use of new figural and harmonic settings. The subject is usually presented literally but occasionally may be ornamented.

The underlying principle of this treatment (cantus firmus) originated in polyphonic vocal music hundreds of years before the advent of the variation form proper; the various kinds of late medieval organa and clausulae, the motet of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and the fifteenth-century mass (Missa L'homme arme) are all manifestations of the cantus firmus idea.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Nelson, op. cit., p. 10.

The melodico-harmonic plan can be distinguished by the fact that it retains at the same time the melodic subject and the theme harmony. The melodic subject usually remains in the soprano and is changed only occasionally. The change is usually by figuration. The subordinate voices may also undergo similar change of figuration but to a lesser degree. The theme harmony is preserved and undergoes change only in detail.

The underlying principle . . . originated earlier than the variation proper; clearly seen in the colored organ piece as early as Paumann, it can be traced back to a still more significant prototype in the dance pair. This simple form, dating from at least the fourteenth century, is at times virtually a variation set in miniature, in which a slow duple-meter dance is followed by a faster triple-meter dance built on the melodic and harmonic outlines of the first. Melodico-harmonic elaboration of this kind was introduced into the variation form proper by the Spanish lute and keyboard composers, Navarez, Mudarra and Cabezon,<sup>5</sup> who used it to vary secular songs and dances.

The harmonic plan of variation is like the melodico-harmonic plan in that it preserves the general structural and harmonic outlines of the theme. It is different from the melodico-harmonic plan by virtue of the fact that it abandons the melody of the theme entirely. The abandonment of the melody of the theme permits a great deal of flexibility. The harmonic treatment has as its basic principle a recurring series of chords which, after appearing first in the theme, underlies each of the following variations.

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<sup>5</sup>Nelson, op. cit., p. 16.

Numerous significant works, among them J. S. Bach's Goldberg Variations and the Diabelli Variations of Beethoven, attest to the importance of this plan, while its almost uninterrupted continuance for over three centuries is evidence of its vitality. In the baroque period it was often the servant of contrapuntal development; in the nineteenth century it served equally well the exigencies of a more homophonic style, as well as of the development of motives from the theme.<sup>6</sup>

Returning now to the broad classifications of variation technique, the free plan is opposed to the structural plan. The variations utilizing the free plan show little relationship to the original theme. The basic structure and harmony of the theme are substantially altered, and at times are completely abandoned. The technique used in this case is more an expansion of the theme structure by means of motival development. At the close of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, this plan of variation enjoyed prominence in the hands of such composers as Dvorak, Franck, D'Indy, Elgar, Strauss, and Reger.

Although motival development within the free variation is closely related to that found in the classical sonata and symphony, the motives are derived from the theme in a much freer way. Instead of springing literally from the theme (the common practice in the sonata and symphony), they generally represent modified versions of the figures in the theme, being formed from the original figures through extensive alterations of rhythm, tempo, and dynamics.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Nelson, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>7</sup>Nelson, op. cit., p. 26.



Another important technique in this variation type is the transformation of themes. Large sections of a theme are radically changed in rhythm, tempo, dynamics, and so on, while the main outlines of the original melodic contour are preserved. The connection with the theme in the free variation is a melodic one whether the technical method of variation used is motivial development or theme transformation.

## CHAPTER III

### BRAHMS' VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY PAGANINI

#### Book I

#### Theme

The theme used is that of the twenty-fourth Caprice in A minor of Paganini for the violin. The theme is presented in the Brahms Variations as it is in the violin caprice save for the harmonization of the final cadence and the harmonization of the first beat of each of the last eight measures of the theme. Twenty-four measures contain the theme if including the repeat after the fourth measure and the repeat at the close of the theme. The following table shows the harmonic scheme of the theme.

TABLE I

HARMONIC ANALYSIS<sup>1</sup> OF THE BRAHMS  
ADAPTATION OF THE THEME


Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6
Harmony $\frac{2}{4}$	i   --	v   --	--i   --	--v   --	--I   --	--iv   --

<sup>1</sup>The system of harmonic analysis is Ottman's in his books: Elementary Harmony: Theory and Practice and Advanced Harmony: Theory and Practice (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1961).


Measure	7	8	9	10	11	12
Harmony	--VII--	--III--	--ii <sup>o</sup> --	--i--	ii <sup>7F</sup> V	--i--

The subdivisions of the measures denote each beat, the time signature being  $\frac{2}{4}$ . The first four measures of the theme are harmonically i - V - i - V. The remainder of the theme perhaps presents the greatest possibility of harmonic variation. Measures five through eight are the material with which Brahms does the most in the ensuing variations. Each measure has the harmonic relationship of a fifth to the other or a secondary dominant relationship. Measures five through eight may also be analyzed as V-i in D minor for measures five and six, and V-I in C major for measures seven and eight.

Fig. 1--Brahms, Variations, theme, measures five through eight.

The remaining four measures of the theme work toward the final cadence. (See Table I.) The rhythmic pattern, , is used almost consistently throughout the theme. Paganini marks his theme to be played quasi presto while Brahms says non troppo presto. Paganini gives one dynamic marking of piano: Brahms also presents one dynamic marking although his is forte.

### Variation 1

Brahms manipulates the theme in Variation 1 by use of the continuous motion of sixteenth notes as opposed to the rhythmic pattern, , used in the theme. Structurally Brahms remains true to the original form of the theme, the only difference being that he writes out the repeats instead of using the repeat sign. Harmonically the variation is strict also. The harmony is the same as that of the theme with two exceptions. In measure nine of the theme (see Table I) Brahms uses a  $ii^{\circ}$  chord in approaching the cadence while in measure thirteen of the variation, the corresponding measure number if the variation were compressed to the same twelve measures of the theme, a  $bII$  chord approaches the cadence. The remaining exception is that a  $ii^{\circ}$  chord in the variation (measure fifteen) replaces the French augmented sixth chord in the theme. These harmonic variations will again be used in later variations and at this point tend to establish a precedent. Variation 1 is built figurally upon

oscillating sixths and thirds in continuous motion of sixteenth notes. Each alternate sixth implies a triad and a diminished seventh chord. The primary motivic connection between the variation and the theme is the leap of a third in the first measure of the theme.

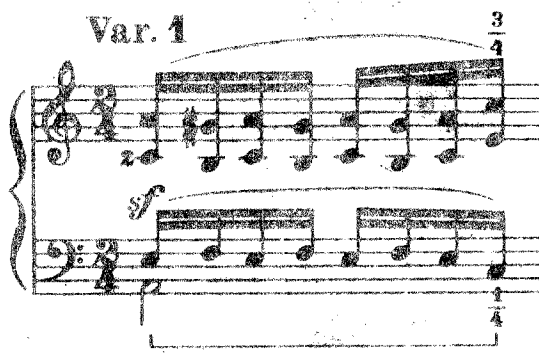


Fig. 2--Brahms Variations, Variation 1, measure one

Brahms uses this device in the first eight measures of the variation. The key used for the variation is A minor, the same as the theme.

### Variation 2

Of Variation 2 little more can be said than was said of Variation 1. The difference in the two variations is that Variation 2 in substance is an inversion of Variation 1. Harmonically, structurally, and figurally they are essentially the same. The oscillating sixths are now placed in the left hand and a new figure is constructed above them in the right hand.

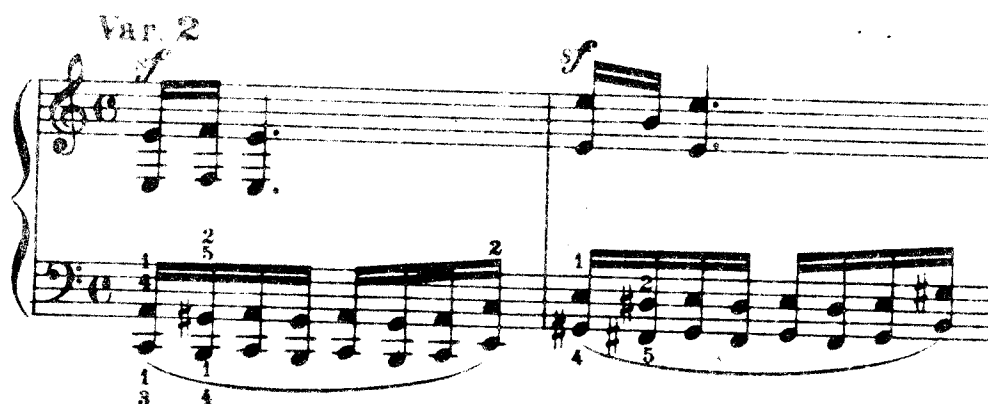


Fig. 3--Brahms Variations, Variation 2, measures one and two.

This figure is used also in measures nine through twelve, the beginning of the second half of the theme. Each time the respective section is repeated, the sixths remain in the left hand. The right hand, however, adds an octave containing the interval of the sixth. The use of the octave containing the interval of the sixth contributes to the already evident technical difficulty of performance. That these variations are difficult technically to perform is a point in common with other nineteenth century character variations. The virtuoso display in evidence here and in later variations reflects the romanticism of the time.

### Variation 3

Brahms introduces a repeated pedal point in this variation and labels it with a sforzando marking. The pedal is E in the first eight measures, the tone common to both the

i and the V chord in A minor. The pedal in the last section of the variation, measures nine through twenty-four, is the tone common to the particular chords in use. Brahms elaborates on the i to V progression by using a chromatic progression below the pedal E.

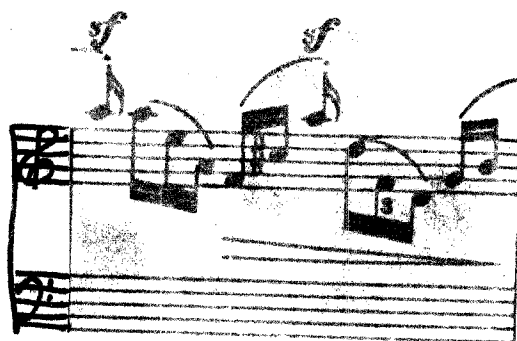
Var. 3

The musical notation shows two measures of Variation 3. The right hand (treble clef) plays a melodic line with accents and slurs. The left hand (bass clef) plays a chromatic line with a 'sopra' marking. Dynamics include *sf*.

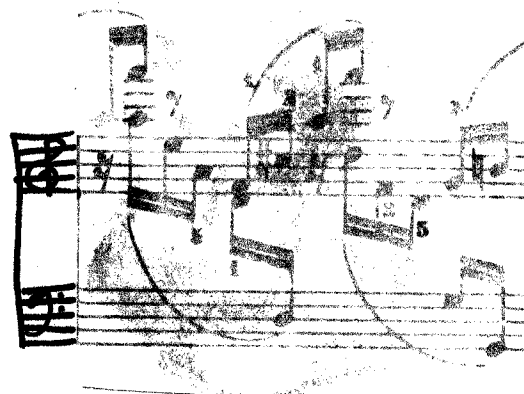
The musical notation shows two measures of Variation 3, focusing on the pedal point. The right hand (treble clef) plays a melodic line with accents and slurs. The left hand (bass clef) plays a chromatic line with a 'Ped. simile' marking. Dynamics include *sf*.

Fig. 4--Brahms, Variations, Variation 3, measures one and two.

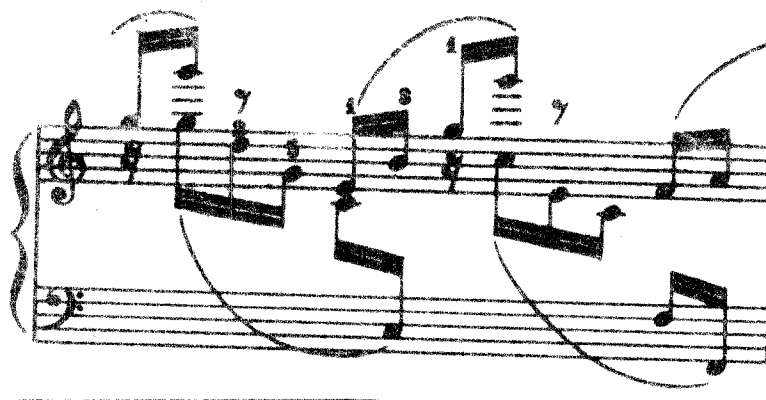
This chromatic progression is the new harmonic element in this variation. Superimposition of harmonies is evident in the variation also, occurring in measures ten, eighteen and twenty.

*Ped. simile*

Measure 10



Measure 18



Measure 20

Fig. 5--Brahms Variations, Variation 3, measures ten, eighteen and twenty.

The superimposition of harmonies is with the I over the iv chord in measures ten and eighteen, and the III over the VII chord in measure twenty. A fluid figuration of sixteenth notes is used throughout the variation, reminding one of the fourth variation of the Rachmaninoff Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini for piano and orchestra.



**VAR. IV**  
**Più vivo**

Fig. 6--Measures one through four of Variation 4 of Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini for piano and orchestra.

Compare Figure 6 with Figure 4. Structurally Brahms is still true to the original form of the theme: the

variation consists of twenty-four measures, the repeats being written out as seen in previous variations.

#### Variation 4

With this variation a plan becomes evident which Brahms used in the first few variations of Book II. Variation 2 was in substance an inversion of Variation 1. Variation 4 utilizes a pedal point, this time a trill, as Variation 3 also used a pedal point, thereby allowing suspicion that Variation 1 and Variation 2, likewise Variation 3 and Variation 4 were composed in pairs. The fact that both the third variation and the fourth variation use pedal points ends the comparison. In Variation 4 Brahms presents his first significant harmonic difference from the theme. The variation's harmonic analysis is as follows:

TABLE II

#### HARMONIC ANALYSIS OF VARIATION 4

12

16 Time signature

Measure	1		2		3		4		5		6			
Harmony	:	i	v	VI <sup>7</sup>	v	i	v	VI <sup>7</sup>	v	:	I <sup>7</sup>	iv	I <sup>7</sup>	iv

Measure	7		8		9		10		11		12	
Harmony	VII <sup>7</sup>	III	VII <sup>7</sup>	III	i <sup>d7</sup>	bII	vii <sup>d7</sup>	i	ii <sup>d7</sup>	v	i	i :

Refer to Table I for comparison. The pedal in this variation is a trill which Brahms gives first to the right hand and then to the left. Against the trill are set octave arpeggios. It is of this variation that Huneker pleads, "it asks too much of mortal man with a top trill on a chord and the left hand gambolling over the impossible."<sup>2</sup> Structurally the variation remains the same as the theme with the repeats written out. At the beginning of each second repeat, measures five and seventeen respectively, Brahms changes hands with the trill pedal and the octave arpeggios.

#### Variation 5

This variation presents a sudden contrast harmonically, figurally and rhythmically to the previous variations. Harmonically Brahms still uses his basic framework of the chord progression i-V, but twice intersperses a harmonization of chromatic bass movement which includes a temporary modulation.

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<sup>2</sup> James Gibbons Huneker, Mezzotints in Modern Music (New York, 1947), p. 68.

Var. 5  $\text{♩}$  in  $\frac{3}{8}$  -  $\text{♩}$  preceding

*espress.*

*p*

*molto leggero*

$\text{VI}$   $\text{\#IV}$   $\text{II}$   $\text{\#VII}$   $\text{i}$

$\text{V}$   $\text{II}$   $\text{V}$   $\text{\#III}$   $\text{VII}$   $\text{\#VI}$   $\text{i}$   $\text{V}$

$[\text{e}:\text{i} \text{V} \text{i}]$

Fig. 7--Brahms, Variations, Variation 5, measures one through four.

In Figure 7, the bass line leaps immediately to the dominant octave and then begins its chromatic ascent to the tonic note by means of descending arpeggiated octaves. After reaching the tonic tone, a momentary modulation to E minor is presented. The bass line begins another chromatic ascent on

C# eventually reaching E, the dominant of the key. The dominant immediately goes to tonic, and the progression begins again, this time an octave higher than was written the first time. The harmonies obtained by the chromatic line and temporary modulation are analyzed above in Figure 7. The temporary modulation to E minor in measure three of Figure 7 is analyzed in A minor, the original key of the variation. For comparison with the harmony of the theme see Table I.

In the second section of the variation, measures nine through sixteen and its repetition, the framework is the harmonic progression found in measures five through eight of the theme.

The image shows a musical score for a variation. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. A brace on the left side groups the two staves together. The treble staff contains a melodic line with various ornaments and fingerings (3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 4, 3, 4). The bass staff contains a harmonic line with a circled '1' under the first measure. Below the staves, a horizontal line with a wavy pattern is marked with 'IV' at the beginning and end, indicating a harmonic progression.

Fig. 8--Brahms Variations, Variation 5, measures nine through thirteen.

Chromatic movement is evident in this section of the variation in the left hand as it was in the first section. The chromatic movement is indicated by the circled notes in Figure 8 above. Brahms gives the aural effect of modulation in measures ten through thirteen in the respective progressions of IV to VII and iii to VI. The use of the VI chord in measure thirteen, a chord not usually found in the progression I-IV-VII in other variations, allows balance after the use of the first aural modulation in measures ten and eleven. The remaining three measures of the variation move toward the cadence in the same figuration as the preceding part of the variation. Rhythmically Brahms is at variance with the preceding variations. Against a  $\frac{2}{4}$  time signature in the right hand a  $\frac{6}{8}$  time signature is set for the left, another fact pointing to the virtuosic display of

the period. The eighth note is the only value used in the variation save for the quarter note at the final cadence. The variation is structurally the same as the theme.

### Variation 6

The distinctive factor of this variation is its rhythm. Although the time signature is  $\frac{6}{8}$ , the right hand throughout the variation is syncopated, thus in effect making the rhythm work out as  $\frac{3}{4}$  against  $\frac{6}{8}$ , an exceptional adjustment. The harmony of this variation is not unlike that of the theme except for the use of the bII chord seen previously in other variations. In measure seven Brahms uses an augmented second in a major chord for the sake of sequence with the augmented second in measure five. The motivic relationship between this variation and the theme is seen in the left hand in augmentation.

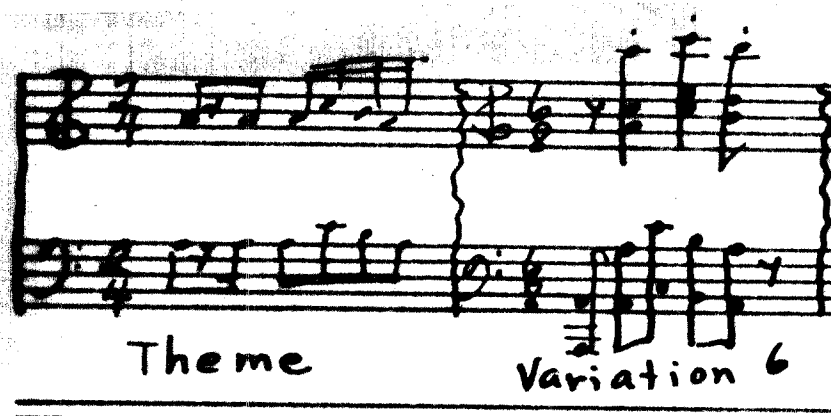


Fig. 9--Measure one of the Theme and measure one of Variation 6 showing motivic relationship between the two.

Structurally the variation is the same as that of the theme.

### Variation 7

With Variation 7 an interesting method of harmonic analyzation may be used. Measures one and two of the variation are essentially measures of *i* and *V*, each measure beginning on the tonic and dominant respectively.

Var. 7

$I - V - I^7 - IV - A^6$  |  $I - v^7 - I^7 - iv - I$

Fig. 10--Brahms Variation, Variation 7, measures one and two.

Within the octaves a harmonic sequence is implied in the first measure, that being *i* - *V* - *I*<sup>7</sup> - *IV* and *A*<sup>6</sup> (augmented sixth chord). The first measure is considered to be in the key of A minor. The second measure, if considered to be in the key of E major also implies a progression within the key of E major, that being *I* - *v*<sup>7</sup> - *I*<sup>7</sup> - *iv* and *I*. Thus, we see a new technique of variation not presented in previous variations. Each measure is essentially a *i* and a *V* chord



in A minor, but within each chord we see outlined a harmonic progression within each chord. It is on this technique that Brahms constructs this variation. Measures three and four repeat the first two measures while measures five, six, seven and eight are made of the same material as the first four except inverted. In the second section of the variation, the same technique is used.

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 9 through 13, and the second system covers measures 14 through 18. Each system consists of a treble staff and a bass staff. The piano accompaniment in both systems features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The vocal line has a melodic line with a dotted rhythm. The score includes dynamic markings (f) and articulation marks. Below the staves, Roman numerals indicate the chord progressions for the piano part.

System 1 (Measures 9-13):  
 Treble staff:  $I$   $IV$   $I$   $IV$   $V$  |  $i$   $IV$   $I$   $iv$   $V$   
 Bass staff:  $I$   $IV$   $I$   $IV$   $V$  |  $i$   $IV$   $I$   $iv$   $V$

System 2 (Measures 14-18):  
 Treble staff:  $I$   $I$   $IV$   $I$   $IV$   $V$  |  $I$   $I$   $IV$   $I$   $iv$   $v$   
 Bass staff:  $I$   $I$   $IV$   $I$   $IV$   $V$  |  $I$   $I$   $IV$   $I$   $iv$   $v$

Fig. 11--Brahms Variations, Variation 7, measures nine through thirteen.

Each measure (see Figure 11) uses the same harmonic progression as the theme, but within each measure harmonic progressions are implied. Harmonic analysis is included in the above figure. The implied harmonic progression is essentially the same for each measure. Intervallmatically the variation is composed of octaves, thirds and sixths in continuous eighth-note motion. There is no difference between the structure of this variation and that of the theme.

#### Variation 8

Non-harmonic tones constitute the device used for variation's sake in Variation 8. A non-harmonic tone is introduced on the first beat of each measure in the right hand, and its resolution is on the second beat. The left hand accompanies the right with thirds outlining each chord in the original thematic harmonic progressions. Again, structurally, there is no change. Figurally the variation is composed of octaves and thirds.

#### Variation 9

With this variation Brahms returns to the use of the decoration of a pedal, the pedal appearing in the left hand in the first section of the variation and in the right hand in the second section of the variation. In the first two measures of the variation Brahms remains true to the

thematic progression, i-V. The last chord of the first measure is an Italian sixth chord with its normal resolution, the first chord of the next measure, a V chord. These progressions are built on the pedal F in the first measure and the Pedal E in the second measure, all in triplet octaves. The third and fourth measures are a variation on the first two measures.

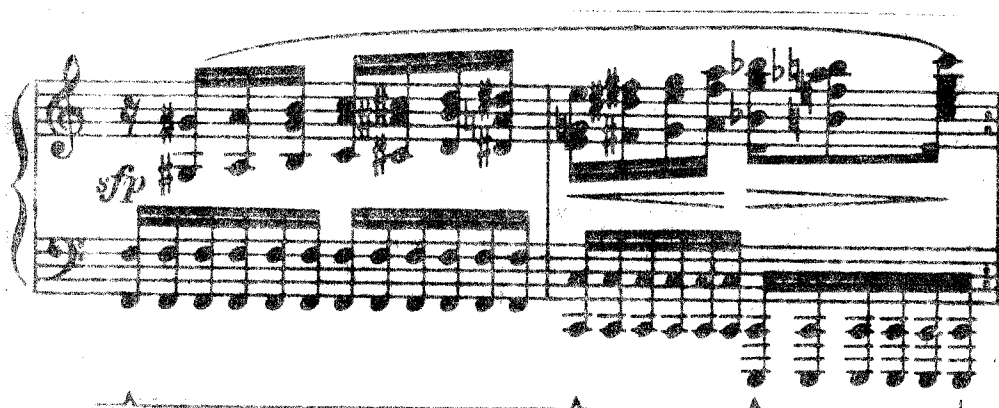


Fig. 12--Brahms Variations, Variation 9, measures three and four.

In this third measure Brahms begins his harmonic progression exactly as in measure one built over the pedal F. Again the Italian augmented sixth is the last chord of the measure. The resolution this time is unusual. Instead of resolving the Italian sixth to a V chord, its normal resolution, Brahms takes the resolution to a III chord, an infrequently used resolution. The remaining measures of the variation use a chromatically descending pedal still in triplet octaves in the right hand (measures five through eleven). Under this pedal Brahms implies his original

thematic harmonic progression for the section, I-IV-VII-III. Implied in measure five is the  $i^{+7}$  chord spelled A, C, Eb, G, resolving to the IV chord in measure six. Measure seven implies a VII chord built on the lowered seventh scale degree in A minor and spelled G, Bb, Db, F, resolving to the III chord in measure eight. Continuing the sequence, measure nine implies a diminished seventh chord on the dominant, E, spelled E, G, Bb, D, with its normal resolution to I in measure ten. The middle of measure ten displays a chromatic chord sequence in the left hand continuing through measure eleven built under the chromatic pedal in the right.

Fig. 13--Brahms Variations, Variation 9, measures ten and eleven.

Measure twelve to the end implies the cadential pattern,  $ii^{\circ}-V-I$ . The variation contains the same number of measures as the theme and is structurally the same. Intervallically Brahms returns to the use of octaves with the interval of the sixth contained within, construction seen previously in other variations.

Variation 10

Not only continuous syncopation of the right hand throughout but also the contrasting marking of the left hand staccato against the right hand legato add the spice to this variation. In this variation Brahms spreads his i to V progression over four measures. In previous variations he has used a measure for each chord. The i chord occupies the first two measures while the V chord utilizes the remaining two. The remaining four measures of the first section of the variation are an exact repetition of the first four, thus fulfilling the requirement of eight measures in the first section and at the same time showing variation of the section by means of extension. The remaining section of the variation also uses extension to fill the last sixteen measures. The chords of measures nine through twelve, except for the last beat, are built on the tonic, the  $I^7$  of measures eleven and twelve, being an extension of the I triad of measures nine and ten.



Fig. 14--Brahms Variations, Variation 10, measures nine through twelve.

The resolution of the chord occurs on the second beat of the twelfth measure, the resolution normally going to IV as in the corresponding section of the theme. The same type of construction is used with the VII and the III chord in measures thirteen through sixteen. Measures seventeen and eighteen imply a bII chord, and measures nineteen and twenty imply a i chord. The cadential pattern is as follows: i-V-ii-i-i-V-iv-I. It is worthy of note that this variation is the only one of the set which uses a final plagal cadence: all other variations use authentic cadences. Extension is the main technique in this variation; harmonically and structurally the variation remains the same as preceding ones.

#### Variation 11

Variations 1 through 10 have had at least one characteristic in common: each was in the key of A minor. For Variation 11 and the succeeding variations Brahms changes the key of each. Change of key was an element used sparingly throughout the nineteenth century character variation.<sup>3</sup> Evans terms this variation a chaconne in two-bar settings.<sup>4</sup> The variation appears to be constructed polyphonically, the top voices in each hand playing the melody and the alto voice

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<sup>3</sup>Robert U. Nelson, The Technique of Variation (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1949), p. 93.

<sup>4</sup>Edwin Evans, Handbook to the Pianoforte Works of Johannes Brahms (London, 1936), p. 155.

being an inversion of the bass. Harmonically Brahms retains the basic framework of the theme but embellishes it.

TABLE III  
HARMONIC ANALYSIS  
OF VARIATION 11

Measure	1		2		3		4		5	
Harmony	I	vi	V	V <sup>7</sup>	I	vi	V	V <sup>7</sup>	I	vi
Key	A major ----->									

6		7		8		9		10		11	
V	V <sup>7</sup>	I	vi	V	V <sup>7</sup>	I	I <sup>7</sup>	IV	vi= iv in C# min.	V	V
										----->C# minor ----->	

12		13		14		15		16		
i	chrom. mod. to B minor	V	<sup>i</sup> and F maj. pivot chord returns to A major	V	i	ii <sup>o</sup>	V	I		
		i iv								
		i iv								
----->B minor ----->A major ----->										

See Table I for harmonic comparison.

### Variation 12

Evans also calls this variation a chaconne with the subject stated in a single bar.<sup>5</sup> A harmonic rearrangement of the first four measures is distinctive of this variation. Brahms places a I chord in the first measure and a i chord in the second measure. Measures three and four both contain a V<sup>7</sup> chord. This is in contrast to the theme and previous variations in which I and V are found in alternate measures.

Var. 12

*p*      *molto dolce (2<sup>da</sup> volta pp)*

Fig. 15--Brahms Variations, Variation 12, measures one through four.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 156.



Also distinctive of this variation is the manner in which Brahms fuses the harmonies of each measure. As shown in Figure 15, the left hand begins the harmony of any succeeding measure by an upbeat, shown by the asterisk. At the same time the left hand begins the harmony for the next measure, the right is finishing the harmony of its particular measure. This technique presents a fluid harmonic movement unlike most previous variations whose harmonies generally begin on the first beat of each measure. Harmonically and structurally there is relatively no difference from the theme. The motive of the left hand shows little relation to that of the theme.

#### Variation 13

To add difficulty to difficulty in performance Brahms introduces for the first time in the set of variations octave glissandi and instructs the tempo to be Vivace e scherzando. In this variation Brahms inverts the theme motive as shown in Figure 9. Structurally and harmonically Brahms is true to the theme.

#### Variation 14

The length of this variation, eighty-one measures, is certainly unorthodox considering that the theme and all other variations of this set have each been contained in twenty-four measures. In actuality this variation contains

three settings of the theme, the second beginning with measure twenty-five and the third beginning with measure thirty-six. The first setting of the theme, measures one through sixteen, employs two motives from the theme shown in the figure below.

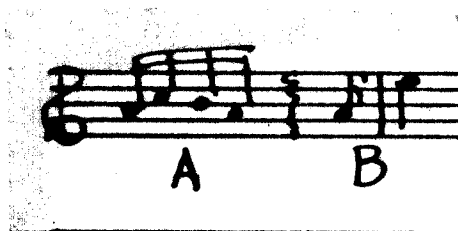


Fig. 16--Motives from the Theme employed in Variation 14

Each of these motives is set in thirty-second note figures and is used throughout the first setting in canonic imitation. For the first four measures of the variation Brahms retains the key of A minor and his normal thematic harmonic progression, I - V - i - V. The next four measures, five through eight, are usually a repetition of the first four as seen in almost every previous variation. However, in this variation Brahms modulates to C# minor to present these four measures. This modulation, well placed in the last variation, lends dramatic contrast. Measures nine through twelve are the normal harmonic progression for the second section of the theme, I - iv - VII - iii. With the last half of the second beat of measure twelve and measure thirteen an improvisation using the same motivic material

presents itself. A normal cadential pattern is presented in measures fourteen through sixteen. Measures seventeen through twenty-four can be labeled a codetta to the first setting of the theme. Motivic element A of Figure 16 is still present in its thirty-second note figuration. The second setting in the variation is done in stretto using motivic element B of Figure 16. This setting, measures thirty-two through thirty-five, is ended by a trill which is the foundation upon which the remaining setting of the theme is based. For the final setting of the theme Brahms indicates a tempo of Presto, ma non troppo. Over the pedal point trill Brahms constructs motivic element A of Figure 16 in its original form and in inversion. With measure fifty the second section of this setting is begun still using the pedal point trill. Over the trill motivic element A appears this time in octaves. It is a difficult matter to point to one place and say that Coda begins here because the fusion of material is done so expertly. However, for the sake of simplicity measure fifty-six to the end is termed a Coda. The Coda consists largely of a series of secondary leading tone chords and their resolution. The resolution of these chords often form a thematic harmonic progression as seen in measures fifty-seven and fifty-eight with the progression I-IV-VII-III.



Fig. 17--Brahms Variations, Variation 14, measures fifty-seven and fifty-eight.

The Coda sees the return of the basic intervallic construction of the set, the octave with the interval of the sixth contained within as in the right hand of Fig. 17.

## Book II

Variation 1

The fact that a *i* to *V* progression provides infinite possibilities of variation was seen in the variations of Book I and is certainly in evidence in Variation 1 of Book II. Measures one through four are based on a *i* to *V* chord progression, the harmony used in the corresponding measure numbers of the theme.

preceding

*And. simile*

V i VII IV

V i V vii°

The image shows a musical score for Brahms' Variations, Variation 1, measures 1 through 4. The score is written on two systems of staves. The first system contains measures 1 and 2, and the second system contains measures 3 and 4. Handwritten harmonic analysis labels are present below the staves: V, #vi, IV, C# minor i in the first system; VII, #iv7, V, V in A minor in the second system.

Fig. 18--Brahms, Variations, Variation 1, measures one through four.

The first beat of measures one and two are a *i* and a *V* chord respectively (see harmonic analysis of Figure 18), not too unlike the harmony of measures one and two of the theme. Brahms precedes his *i* chord with an upbeat of *V* chord and follows it with a *vii*<sup>d7</sup> - *i* - *IV* progression to the *V* chord of measure two. Measure two presents the progression *V* - *i* - *V* - *vii*<sup>d7</sup>. Measure three, however, holds forth with a surprise, a subtle modulation to *C# minor*. Measure three must be considered to be in *A minor* until the second beat of the measure, when the

last sixteenth note, third of the group, is sounded (shown by a circle in Figure 18). To establish the tonality more firmly, Brahms again outlines the tonic C# minor chord on the last half of the second beat of measure two. Brahms then proceeds to close the section with the V chord in C# minor and marks it with a fermata. Brahms' favorite intervallic constructions, the octave, thirds, and sixths are again seen in this variation: thirds are set in the left hand against octaves in the right. For the sake of variation and to repeat measures one through four, Brahms places the thirds in the right hand against left hand arpeggiated octaves and utilizes exactly the same harmony. This repetition with the thirds in the right hand against the left hand arpeggiated octaves gives an entirely different sound from its first statement in measures one through four. Measures nine through sixteen, corresponding measure numbers in the theme are five through twelve, present the same harmonic progression, I-iv-VII-iii, as the theme with added improvisatory material. The figuration is the same as that used in the first section of the theme, thirds and octaves, each used alternately in the right hand then in the left. After Brahms presents the I-iv-VII-iii progression, the improvisatory material is stated. This improvisation is found in measures twelve through fourteen (Figure 19) of the theme. As was seen in previous variations Brahms sometimes uses the bII chord in this place.

Fig. 19--Brahms, Variations, Variation 1, measures twelve through fourteen.

The bII chord now turns into elaboration in the key of Bb minor, the bII chord was built in previous variations on Bb. The improvisation on the bII chord is preceded by an F major upbeat, the dominant of Bb minor. The i chord (an A minor chord) of measure ten of the theme here becomes an Ab minor chord and Brahms again improvises for part of a measure. The Ab minor improvisation like the Bb minor improvisation is preceded by its dominant, an Eb major chord. Brahms must now work towards a cadence from the rather remote key of Ab minor.





Fig. 20--Brahms, Variations, Variation 1, measures fourteen through sixteen.

To effect the modulation Brahms goes through the keys of F# minor and E major to A major. The dominant of F# minor which is also a IV chord in Ab minor is spelled enharmonically, C#, E#, G#. Refer to Figure 20. To repeat this section, measures seventeen through twenty-four, Brahms divides the thirds between each hand and they now become tenths, again giving an exact harmonically repeated section an entirely different sound from its first statement evidenced previously in the repeated first section.

Variation 2

Variation 2 contrasts forcefully with the theme in every way. Harmonically the variation is quite unlike the theme.

TABLE IV  
HARMONIC ANALYSIS  
OF VARIATION 2

Measure	1		2		3		4		5		6	
Harmony	i	i	III	III+	VI	VI+	iv	#ivIt	i	i	III	III+

Measure	7		8		9		10		11	
Harmony	VI	VI+	iv	#ivIt	#iii d7	#iii d7	iv	iv	ii <sup>o7</sup>	ii <sup>o7</sup>

Measure	12		13		14		15		16	
Harmony	III	III	i <sup>o7</sup>	iv	vii <sup>d7</sup>	i	ii <sup>o7</sup>	V	i	i :

See Table I for comparison. Brahms places left hand triplets against right hand legato octaves throughout the variation. In measure eleven the use of an augmented second in the melodic line for the sake of sequence is apparent as in measure seven of Variation 6 of Book I.

Variation 3

The treatment of the i to V progression in measures one through four, like that of Variation 1, is interesting. Brahms places a i chord in measure one and the V chord in measure four. Between these measures he places a measure of superimposed harmony of ii<sup>o</sup> and VI chord in measure two going to a iv chord in measure three. The figuration again is thirds and octaves.

Var. 3

*p* *leggero*

i                      ii and VI.

iv                      v

Fig. 21--Brahms, Variations, Variation 3, measures one through four.

This variation is like Variation 12 of Book I in that the same technique of beginning the harmony of a succeeding

measure before that measure is finished is used. This technique is evident in the left hand of measure two with the D tied over to the succeeding measure. This device is used throughout the variation and produces a syncopated rhythmic variation effect at the final cadence.

Fig. 22--Brahms, Variations, Variation 3, measures twelve through sixteen.

Measures nine through twelve present the secondary dominant progression, I-iv-VII-III, in the same figuration and technique described above and illustrated in Figure 21.

It will be noted that the cadence, Figure 22, continues the secondary dominant idea used in measures nine through twelve. See the harmonic analysis of Figure 22.

#### Variation 4

If the question were posed as to which variation sounded most like Brahms, the answer would have to be Variation 4. This variation is a simple waltz set in  $\frac{3}{8}$  time with the melody sounded in octaves. The left hand accompanies with an interval of the tenth on the first beat of each measure (except for the use of the octave in measures thirteen through sixteen). Harmonically Brahms remains true to the theme measure for measure except for a slight variation of the final cadence. The key of this variation is A major, an earlier change of key in this set of variations than was experienced in Book I. This variation has little relationship to the theme other than a harmonic one.

#### Variation 5

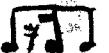
Against a descending figuration of triplet sixteenth notes going from the right hand to the left, Brahms sets an octave figure in the rhythm .

Fig. 23--Brahms, Variations, Variation 5, measures one through four.

This rhythmic pattern is a variation on the original rhythmic pattern of the theme. See Figure 1. Measures three and four of Figure 23 provide harmonic variation, measure four being a III chord which normally should be a V chord. The use of a VI chord on the last beat of measure three also provides harmonic variation. The remainder of the variation continues in the same figuration and harmonically is not unlike the theme except for the use of a VI chord in measure ten. The corresponding measure of the theme, measure ten, uses a i chord. Measure eleven

utilizes a iv chord while measure eleven of the theme uses an augmented French sixth. Structurally, this variation like all previous variations of the set is not unlike the theme.

### Variation 6

Mono-linear in construction, Variation 6 harmonically is quite similar to the theme except for a slight harmonic variance of the final cadence. The variation is set in  $\frac{9}{8}$  time and each beat outlines the triad of each chord in a particular progression.

*roco piu vivace*

The musical score shows two measures of music. The first measure is marked with a piano dynamic (*p*) and the instruction *leggero*. The second measure is marked *m.d.*. The score is written for piano, with a treble clef and a bass clef. The time signature is  $\frac{9}{8}$ . The tempo is marked *roco piu vivace*. The first measure contains a sequence of chords in the right hand, with a bass line in the left hand. The second measure continues the sequence. A large slur covers the first two measures. The left hand has a *m.s.* marking below the first measure.

Fig. 24--Brahms, Variations, Variation 6, measures one and two.

Measure one of Figure 24 is a measure of i chord. Each beat of measure one outlines the i or  $\Delta$  minor chord. The same technique is used in measure two and so on throughout the variation.

Variation 7

Variation 7 and the third setting of Variation 14 of Book I show a resemblance to one another.



Fig. 25--Brahms, Variations, Variation 7, measures one and two.

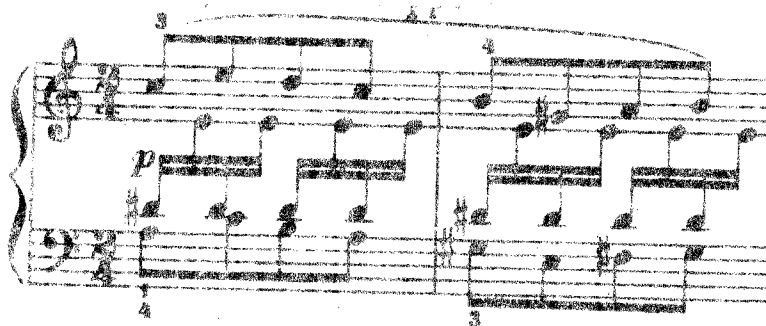


Fig. 26--Brahms, Variations, Variation 14, Book I, measures thirty-six and thirty-seven.

The single difference between the melodic lines of each is that Variation 7 begins on A while the third setting of Variation 14 of Book I begins on C. The bass line of



Variation 14 is the same as the soprano line of Variation 4. Both variations contain a pedal. The pedal of Variation 14 is the trill functioning in both hands. The pedal of Variation 7 is the repeated A in the left hand. Variation 7 is also like Variation 5 of Book I in that separate time signatures are set for each hand. In Variation 7 a  $\frac{2}{4}$  time signature is set for the right hand against a  $\frac{3}{8}$  time signature for the left. Variation 5 sets the same signature for the right hand against a  $\frac{6}{8}$  signature for the left. To make the performance of Variation 7 even more difficult Brahms changes the octave melody of Figure 25 to arpeggiated octaves in measures five through eight. This is similar to the treatment in Variation 14 of Book I in measures thirty-eight through forty-one.

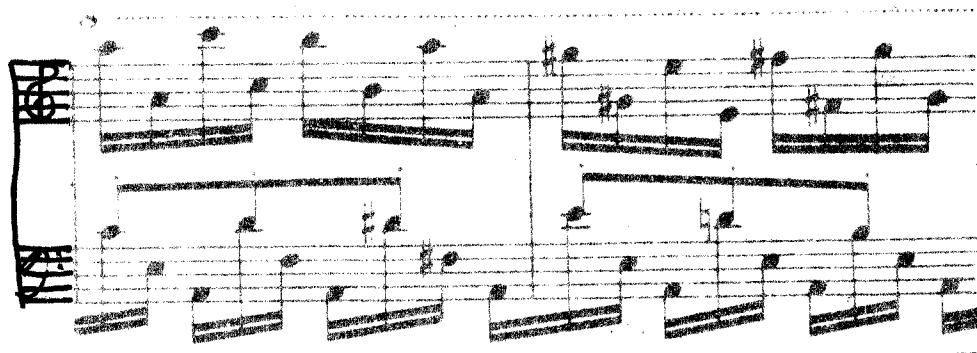


Fig. 27--Brahms, Variations, Variation 7, measures five and six.

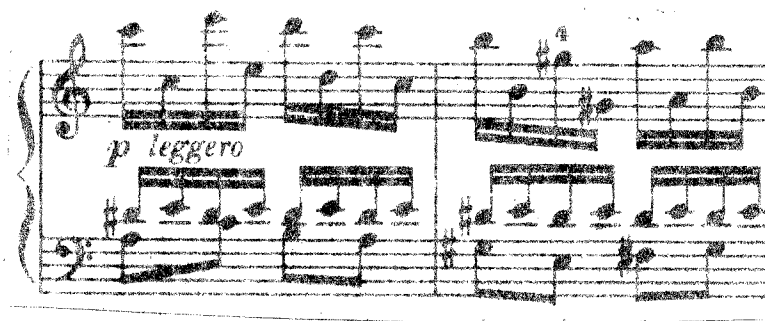


Fig. 28--Brahms, Variations, Variation 14, Book I, measures thirty-eight and thirty-nine.

Measures nine through sixteen complicate performance difficulties even further by giving the  $\frac{3}{8}$  time signature now to the right hand and the  $\frac{2}{4}$  signature to the left. Measure seventeen gives another time signature change, this time back to the original. Harmonically Brahms is uncomplicated in this variation and uses the harmony of the theme except for slight cadential modification. Structurally the variation is the same as the theme.

### Variation 8

This variation like Variation 7 is harmonically uncomplicated, and the harmony is even more like the theme than that of Variation 7. The hands are set in contrary motion throughout the variation. The upbeat to each measure is an arpeggiated chord set in contrary motion for each hand in thirty-second notes, again pointing to the difficulty of performance. This variation presents no new material harmonically or structurally.

Variation 9

Again in Variation 9 Brahms turns the theme motive around as shown on the second beat of measure one of Figure 29.



Fig. 29--Brahms, Variations, Variation 9, measures one and two.

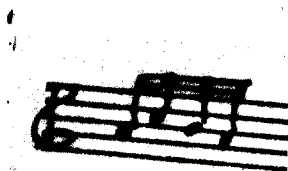


Fig. 30--Brahms, Variations, Motivic element taken from measure one of the theme.

Each measure of the variation uses almost the same construction as measures one and two in Figure 29, two leaps of a major seventh followed by some variation of the theme motive, be it in retrograde as in measure one or merely descending octaves as in measure two. Harmonically the variation varies little from the theme except

at the final cadence. Structurally the variation is the same as the theme.

Variation 10

Brahms uses an interesting device to relieve the harmonic monotony established by the preceding four variations, but at the same time essentially does not change the harmony.

12 var. 10  
Feroce, energico

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Variation 10. The first system is for piano, with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The second system is for violin, with a treble clef on the upper staff. Both systems show a melodic line with a fermata over the first measure and a cadence in the second measure. The tempo/mood is marked 'Feroce, energico'. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Fig. 31--Brahms, Variations, Variation 10, measures one and two.

The variation is begun with an arpeggiated figure on the  $i^{d7}$  chord (see Figure 31) followed by octaves in the  $i$  chord. At the beginning of the second measure the normal expectation is an E octave. However, instead of an E octave a D# octave is presented. Then follows another arpeggio using the notes G#, B, and D#. The arpeggio is resolved aurally, however, with the presentation and repetition of the E octave at the end of measure two. It now may be considered that the D# was really a non-harmonic tone, its resolution being E, and the measure was in actuality a measure of V chord, E, G#, B. This device is used throughout the variation and lends a great deal of variety to the harmonic progressions of the theme. Structurally the variation remains the same as the theme.

#### Variation 11

The right and left hands of this variation like Variation 8 are set in contrary motion. The figuration of Variation 8 utilized arpeggios: this time the figuration for each hand is an octave followed by a single note used alternately throughout the variation. Brahms gives a tempo marking of vivace. The harmonic difference from the theme in this variation occurs in measures five through eight analyzed harmonically in Figure 32.



Fig. 32--Brahms, Variations, Variation 11, measures five through eight.

The cadence pattern of measures nine through twelve is not unlike those seen in previous variations. The variation is contained in twenty-four measures, not unlike the theme.

#### Variation 12

After six variations in the key of A minor the change to F major for Variation 12 is refreshing. This variation is set in  $\frac{6}{8}$  time; for purposes of discussion the variation is considered to have six beats in each measure. For the

first four measures of the variation Brahms uses a device used in Variation 9 of Book I: measures three and four are a variation of measures one and two. The first measure of the variation is a measure of I chord in F major. The second measure progresses normally to V on the first and second beats. The third and fourth beats of measure two present a II chord (secondary dominant) while the fifth and sixth beats return to the V chord. Against this progression in the left hand, the right hand plays a lyrical melody and countermelody. Measures three and four are in the key of D minor to repeat the first two measures. The differences of the repetition of measures one and two and measures three and four are twofold: the key is now D minor and the third and fourth beats of measure four present an augmented sixth chord instead of a secondary dominant as in measure two. Both the secondary dominant and augmented sixth chord function in the same way, that being to establish aurally more firmly the dominant chord of each key. Measures five through eight utilize the same pattern established by measures one through four. The normal progression of these measures, I-IV-VII-iii, is indicated by circles in the Table of Harmonic Analysis.

TABLE V  
HARMONIC ANALYSIS  
OF VARIATION 12

Meas	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sub-division	123456	123456	123456	123456	123456	123456
Harmony	I	V II V	i	V <del>#v</del> <sup>It</sup> V	(I <sup>7</sup> )	vi (IV) vi
Key	--F major-----		--D minor -----		F major -----	

Meas	7	8	9	10	11	12
Sub-division	123456	123456	123456	123456	123456	123456
Harmony	(VII)	VII (iii) V	IV <del>#i</del> <sup>d7</sup>	iii <del>#i</del> <sup>d7</sup>	ii ii <sup>d</sup>	v <sup>7</sup> I
Key	--F major -----					

Measures nine and ten of this variation also present new harmonic progressions not seen previously in other variations. See Table I for comparison with the theme harmony. The use of a countermelody is seen throughout the variation in the inner voice of the right hand. There is no structural change in this variation from that of the theme.



### Variation 13

The unusual feature of this variation is that it is based on the Hungarian scale. The Hungarian scale is a diatonic scale featuring two augmented seconds between the second and third or third and fourth scale steps and between the sixth and seventh scale steps.<sup>6</sup> The right hand throughout the variation presents the Hungarian scale or fragments thereof while the left retains the harmonic framework of the theme. The left hand retains the harmonic framework of the theme by means of pedals seen in measures one through ten. At the end of measure twelve Brahms places a double bar. The measures that follow, thirteen through seventeen, normally in other variations repeat exactly the material of measures five through nine. There is a repetition, of course, but in different figuration. The right hand still retains the function of playing the descending Hungarian scale, this time in octaves without the thirds and sixths accompaniment seen in measures one through twelve. The left hand of measures thirteen through seventeen again outlines the thematic harmonic progression, I-IV-VII-III, this time by means of ascending arpeggios. Measures eighteen through twenty display a normal cadential pattern. Structurally the variation is that of the theme.

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<sup>6</sup>Bela Bartok, Hungarian Folk Music (London, 1931), p. 55.

Variation 14

This variation like the last variation of Book I contains three settings of the theme. A fourth setting is begun but dissolved into transition material and finally into a coda. Measures one through sixteen contain the first setting of the theme. For this first setting Brahms uses the same device as Variation 13 except in a less elaborate way. The right hand plays the Hungarian scale while the left retains the thematic harmonic progressions.

The image shows a musical score for Variation 14, measures 1 through 4. The score is written for piano (p) and scherzando. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff for the right hand and a bass clef staff for the left hand. The time signature is 2/8. The right hand plays a melodic line that is a variation of the Hungarian scale (F#-G-A-B-C-D-E-F#-G-A-B-C-D-E-F#). The left hand plays a harmonic progression of chords: F#m, Dm, Bm, and F#m. The tempo and dynamics are indicated as *p scherzando*. The score is marked with a '3' and a '5' above the right hand staff, indicating fingerings for the notes G and B respectively.

Fig. 33--Brahms, Variations, Variation 14, measures one through four.

Measure seventeen begins the second setting of the theme, and this setting continues through measure forty. The figuration for this setting is illustrated in Figure 34.



Fig. 34--Brahms, Variations, Variation 14, measures seventeen through twenty.

Measures forty-one through sixty contain the rather austere third setting of the theme. This setting, doubled by the left hand, is monolinear.

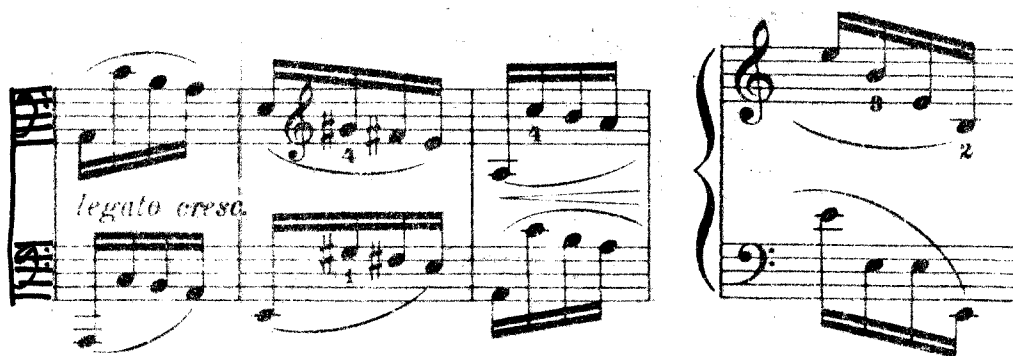


Fig. 35--Brahms, Variations, Variation 14, measures forty-one through forty-four.

Measures sixty-one through seventy-three comprise a codetta and are fashioned of the same figuration as the third setting of the theme. A fourth setting of the theme is begun with measure seventy-four but at measure eighty this setting is dissolved into transition material to measure eighty-nine. Measure eighty-nine begins the coda proper which continues to the end of the piece. Each setting of the theme is harmonically uncomplicated and follows rather closely the theme harmony. The coda displays rhythmic variation by means of separate time signatures for each hand. The right hand is set with a  $\frac{2}{4}$  signature while the left has a  $\frac{6}{8}$  signature. This device was used in Variation 7 of this book and in other variations of Book I.

## CHAPTER IV

### RACHMANINOFF RHAPSODY ON A THEME OF PAGANINI

The Rachmaninoff Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini for piano and orchestra represents the free variation of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as discussed in the preface to Chapter Two. The primary points of interest in the Brahms Variations were their harmony, figuration, rhythmic variation, and structure. The Rachmaninoff, however, composed in a completely different vein, offers other points of interest differing from those of Brahms. Primary among these points is the motivic development of the theme. The basic structure and harmony of the theme are substantially altered, and at times are completely abandoned. Attention then shall be focused essentially on motivic development rather than harmony and structure.

#### Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Unlike Brahms, Rachmaninoff offers an introduction to his set of Variations. The introduction is eight measures

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<sup>1</sup>The text used for discussion is that published by Charles Foley, 67 West 44th Street, New York City, arranged for two pianos.

in length, and the primary responsibility lies with the orchestra which begins the work with a motive from the theme illustrated in the figure below.

**INTRODUCTION**  
Allegro vivace

8

Fig.36--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Introduction, measures one and two.

#### Variation 1

The variations of the Rachmaninoff unlike the Brahms Variations flow into each other. An example is the fact that the final note of the introduction is the first note of Variation 1. A more decisive finish and beginning to each variation was felt in the Brahms. Variation 1 played exclusively by the orchestra is twenty-four measures in length, the same length as the theme. Variation 1 hints

at the theme but does not actually state it. Measures one through four outline the harmony of the theme as shown in Figure 37.

VAR. I (Precedente)

The image shows a musical score for Variation I (Precedente) of Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody, measures 1 through 4. The score is written for piano (p) and consists of two systems of staves. The first system has two staves, and the second system has four staves. The music is in 6/8 time and features a melodic line in the upper staves and a harmonic accompaniment in the lower staves. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor).

Fig. 37--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 1, measures one through four.

The second beat of measures sixteen through twenty also present outlines of the theme.

The image shows a musical score for Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody, Variation 1, measures 16 through 20. The score is written for piano and orchestra. The piano part is in the lower staves, and the orchestral part is in the upper staves. The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the orchestra provides a melodic line. A dynamic marking of 'mf' is present in measure 17.

Fig. 38--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 1, measures sixteen through twenty.

Their origin is the motivic element of Figure 16A.

#### Theme

The theme is now stated by the orchestra while the piano continues the idea of outlining the theme harmony presented in Variation 1. This variation is contained in twenty-four measures also. Measures seventeen through twenty-four present a variation on the section of the theme stated in measures nine through sixteen. The piano retains the function of outlining harmonically the theme while the orchestra states a motive of the theme. Measures seventeen through twenty provide an example of this technique.



The image shows a musical score for Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody, Theme, measures 17 through 20. The score is written for piano and consists of four staves. The first two staves are in treble clef, and the last two are in bass clef. The music is in 4/4 time and features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The first staff begins with a piano (p) dynamic marking. The score is divided into two systems, each containing two staves. The first system covers measures 17 and 18, and the second system covers measures 19 and 20. The music is characterized by its complex, flowing lines and rich harmonic texture.

Fig. 39--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Theme, measures seventeen through twenty.

#### Variation 2

In this variation the first literal statement of the theme by the solo instrument is presented, measures one through sixteen. Rachmaninoff develops measures seventeen through twenty-four freely, or rather in new figuration, for the piano (the harmony, however, remains) while the orchestra occasionally presents fragments of the theme, principally that of Figure 16A.

## Variation 3

Rachmaninoff sets the piano figuration in octaves divided between the hands. Against this figuration, in quarter and eighth notes, the orchestra is given a figuration of sixteenth notes throughout the variation again emphasizing the motivic element of Figure 16A. Outlines of measure four of the theme are seen in the fourth measure of this variation in the piano part. Until this variation Rachmaninoff set each variation in twenty-four measures which is the same number as the theme. This variation, however, departs therefrom and is contained in thirty-one measures.

## Variation 4

It is this variation which resembles Variation 3, Book I, of the Brahms Variations. Throughout the variation Rachmaninoff toys with the motivic element of Figure 16A, setting it first as it is in the theme and then inverting it. It is stated by the piano in almost every measure of the variation. The orchestra also states it several times and otherwise accompanies the piano with new free material. Again Rachmaninoff departs from the usual twenty-four measures and contains this variation in forty measures. The first four measures of the theme are each developed two times using slightly different figuration in the piano part.

VAR. IV  
Più vivo



Fig. 40--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 4, measures one and nine.

The key for the first development, measures one through sixteen, is A minor while the key for the second development, measures seventeen through forty, is A major.

#### Variation 5

For the performer this variation and others are lessons in the importance of counting while playing with an orchestra. This variation is based on the rhythmic figure,  $\gamma \text{ ♩ } \text{♩} \text{ ♩}$ , which Rachmaninoff diabolically utilizes on every beat of the measure possible. Rachmaninoff punctuates this rhythm occasionally with a return to the motivic element of Figure 16A. The orchestral accompaniment is chordal with harmonic relation to the theme. ✓

## Variation 6

This variation is composed almost entirely of free material. The figure in measure one perhaps might be compared with the motivic element of Figure 16A. The variation is improvisatory in nature and contains cadenzas. The pianist is mostly responsible for the variation. Rhythmic relations between the variation and the theme are evident in the rhythm, , of measure seven and the rhythm, , of measure fourteen.

## Variation 7

The second main theme of the composition is introduced in this variation, that being the Dies Irae. The Dies Irae is presented by the piano throughout the variation in chorale style. The orchestra sets against the chorale setting of the Dies Irae the motivic element of Figure 16A sometimes in its entirety and sometimes fragmented. The motivic element of Figure 16A is set both in eight notes and thirty-second notes, in the variation.

## Variation 8

The variation returns to the statement of the motivic element in the piano, this time set in thirds, sixths, as well as octaves containing the interval of a sixth. Measures seventeen through twenty-four are based on the harmony of the second half of the theme. See Figure 1. The harmony

in the theme is in the relation of a fifth for each measure. Instead of carrying out the relationship of a fifth in each measure Rachmaninoff in this variation changes that relationship to a third. Measures seventeen and eighteen consist of a Bb minor chord progressing in measures nineteen and twenty to a D minor chord, while measures twenty-one and twenty-two are an Ab minor chord progressing in measures twenty-three and twenty-four to a C major chord.

The image displays a musical score for a variation by Rachmaninoff, consisting of four staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb). A dashed box encloses the first four measures of the piece. The notation includes chords, single notes, and eighth notes. The word "etc." is written to the right of the second staff. The score illustrates the harmonic progression described in the text: Bb minor chords in measures 17-18, D minor chords in measures 19-20, Ab minor chords in measures 21-22, and C major chords in measures 23-24.



Fig. 41--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 8, measures eighteen, nineteen, twenty-two and twenty-three.

Thus, the relationship of a third between the Bb minor and D minor, Ab minor and C major replaces what normally in other variations is a relationship of a fifth. Measures thirty-one through thirty-eight repeat the idea of measures seventeen through twenty-four in a new figuration, this time huge chords set for each hand in the typical florid style of Rachmaninoff. The style of the Rhapsody is of course florid but not to the extent of that style in the second and third concerti. An undertone of irony pervades the Rhapsody while not so with the two concerti mentioned. Rachmaninoff in the Rhapsody saves his notes and does not spend them as freely as in earlier compositions.

## Variation 9

Variation 9 is perhaps the most rhythmically treacherous of the entire work. The time signature is  $\frac{2}{4}$ . The piano plays on the off beat while the orchestra accompanies with a triplet figure (the third section of each triplet is a rest).

VAR. IX  
L'istesso tempo

The musical score for Variation 9, measures 1 through 4, is presented in a grand staff format. The piano part is written on two staves (treble and bass clef), and the orchestral part is also written on two staves (treble and bass clef). The time signature is 2/4, and the tempo is marked 'L'istesso tempo'. The piano part features a triplet of eighth notes on the off-beat in each measure, while the orchestral part features a triplet of eighth notes on the downbeat. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The piano part is marked 'p' (piano). The orchestral part is marked with a '3' above the triplet figures.

Fig. 42--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 9, measures one through four.

This rhythmic arrangement would naturally make the ensemble of this variation difficult. Rachmaninoff develops basically one idea throughout the variation. This idea is seen in the first four measures of the variation. (Refer to Figure 42 above.) The piano part outlines a 1

chord with a D# included. In measure four there is a sudden cadence on the V chord. This pattern is repeated throughout the variation in different harmonies and progressively with more notes in each chord for the piano part.

#### Variation 10

Variation 10 illustrates a fusion of the two themes upon which the work is based. The pattern of the theme is seen in measures one through fifteen. The second section of the theme begins at measure nine. Intertwined with the first half of the theme, measures one through eight, is an almost continuous statement of the Dies Irae by the solo instrument set in octaves. At measure sixteen the plan of the theme dissolves. The Dies Irae continues to the end of the variation. It is set on the beat for the orchestra and on the off beat for the piano. The figuration for the right hand of the piano part is based upon the motivic element of Figure 16A. At measure twenty-four the piano supplies free figuration accompanying the Dies Irae played by the orchestra to the end of the variation.

#### Variation 11

Little more can be said of this variation than the fact that it is a cadenza in the style of Liszt containing references to Figure 16A chromatic runs set in thirds and



sixths, arpeggios, and the intricate material for which Liszt cadenzas are famous.


### Variation 12

For the first time in the set of variations Rachmaninoff presents a variation in a key other than A minor, that key being D minor. The variation is set in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time with a tempo indication of Tempo di Minuetto. A conjecture may be made as to the derivation of the opening of this minuet.

**Tempo di Minuetto**

The image shows a musical score for Variation 12, measures 1 and 2. The score is in D minor, 3/4 time. It features a piano introduction in the right hand and a rhythmic figure in the left hand. The first two measures are shown in a grand staff format. A separate detail shows the rhythmic figure in the left hand, which is a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, marked with a 'p'.

Fig. 43--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 12, measures one and two and thematic element.

The variation is based on the rhythmic figure, , or derivations therefrom. The harmony of the theme is apparent in this variation in measures one through sixteen. The I-iv-VII-III progression is discernable on the first beat of each measure of measures seventeen through twenty.

Measures twenty-one through twenty-four work toward a cadence only to start a repetition of measures seventeen through twenty at measure twenty-five. The orchestra repeats the idea established in measures one and two as a countermelody. Reference is made to the motivic element of Figure 16A in the orchestral part in measures twenty-four and twenty-six.

#### Variation 13

In this variation the orchestra takes the responsibility of stating the theme. The theme is varied rhythmically in this variation and occasionally uses syncopation; the theme is stated in quarter and eighth notes set simply in octaves with no decoration save its rhythm. The piano serves a decorative function in this variation, the piano part containing only chords on the second and third beat of each measure. This variation returns to the use of twenty-four measures, and the sections of the theme are discernible at measures one, five, nine, and seventeen. The variation is set in D minor as was the previous variation.

#### Variation 14

Variation 14 presents a key change to F major. The motive upon which this variation is based can be derived from that motivic element of Figure 16A.



Fig. 44--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 14, measure two.

The triplet figure on the third beat of the above illustration is in essence an inversion of Figure 16A, and it is upon this figure illustrated above that the entirety of the variation is based. The orchestra is given the greater amount of responsibility in the variation while again the piano serves in a decorative function. The piano part from the last beat of measure sixteen to measure twenty-eight is optional. Measures thirty-two through thirty-eight in the piano part brings a gradual dissolution to the variation and the succeeding variation is begun in measure forty of this variation in the piano part.

#### Variation 15

Variation 15 is a scherzo for the piano; the orchestra plays a minor role in the variations. The scherzo is based

on the section of the theme illustrated in Figure 16A. Throughout the variation this figure is seen in inversion and the idea of a V-I progression is felt.

The image displays two systems of musical notation. The first system consists of two staves: a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a bass line. The second system also consists of two staves, with a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The dynamic marking 'mf' is written in the first measure of the second system. The music is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first system shows measures 2 and 3, and the second system shows measures 10 and 11. The melodic line in the first system is a sequence of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The bass line in the first system is a sequence of eighth notes: G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2. The second system shows a similar melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, with some chromatic alterations.

Fig. 45--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 15, measures two and three, and ten and eleven.

It is this inversion that is responsible for most of the melodic invention in the variation. The variation can be divided into four sections, measures one through fifteen, sixteen through twenty-seven, twenty-eight through forty-three, and forty-four through fifty-seven. The first two sections show similarity in their make-up while the third section contrasts harmonically with the preceding, although

this section still utilizes the inversion of Figure 45. The fourth section gives the impression of a codetta to the variation building to a climax in measure fifty-six. In keeping with the ironic flavor of the work Rachmaninoff ends the variation on an F major chord marked piano.

#### Variation 16

Another key change presents itself in this variation now in Bb minor. This variation like Variation 15 is based on the idea of Figure 45 above. The piano states rhythmically the idea first on the second beat of the fifth measure. The orchestra literally states the figure in measure seven at the same time the piano states it rhythmically. The variation follows the plan of the theme. Measures one through ten may be termed a prelude. At measure eleven the variation corresponds with the first section of the theme. The second section of the theme begins at measure twenty-five with the inversion of motivic element of Figure 16A in the orchestra part. At measure forty-four the material of the prelude returns flowing at measure fifty into the next variation without a key change.

#### Variation 17

Variation 17, strategically placed before the well-known eighteenth variation, is a masterpiece of tone color for both the orchestra and solo instrument. The sole

connection of this variation with the theme is seen in the orchestra, measures three, four, and five, with the idea of a V-I progression on the last half of the fourth measure and the fifth measure.

The image displays a musical score for Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody, Variation 17, measures three, four, and five. The score is presented in two systems. The first system shows a piano part with a 'crescendo' marking and a 'marcato' marking. The second system shows a grand staff with piano (p) and forte (f) markings, and a separate staff with a 'mf' marking. The music features a V-I progression in the piano part.

Fig. 46--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 17, measures three, four, and five.

This idea is repeated several times in the variation. Throughout the variation the piano continues the figuration in the illustration above. The piano part continues in the same figuration illustrated throughout the variation with an indication to bring out the quarter notes in each measure thus giving color to first the right hand and then the left. At measure twenty-five the variation flows into the next with no break at all.

### Variation 18

It seems that it is to this variation that the entire work builds and from which the work departs. Rachmaninoff takes the motivic element of Figure 15, puts it in an exact inversion and in a major key, Db major, and develops with it a lyrical melody.

The image displays a musical score for Variation 18, consisting of three systems of staves. The top system features a right-hand melody in the treble clef, starting with a *mf* dynamic and a slur over a triplet of eighth notes. The middle system shows the piano accompaniment in the bass clef, with a *p* dynamic and a slur over a triplet of eighth notes. The bottom system shows the continuation of the piano accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, triplets, and dynamics.

The image shows a musical score for two instruments, labeled I and II. Instrument I is shown in two staves (treble and bass clef) and Instrument II in two staves (treble and bass clef). The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The score covers measures 2, 3, and 4. In measure 2, Instrument I has a half note chord (F4, A-flat4, C5) and Instrument II has a half note chord (F3, A-flat3, C4). In measure 3, Instrument I has a quarter note (F4), a quarter note (A-flat4), and a quarter note (C5), while Instrument II has a quarter note (F3), a quarter note (A-flat3), and a quarter note (C4). In measure 4, Instrument I has a quarter note (F4), a quarter note (A-flat4), and a quarter note (C5), while Instrument II has a quarter note (F3), a quarter note (A-flat3), and a quarter note (C4). A triplet of eighth notes (F4, A-flat4, C5) is marked with a '3' and 'mf' in measure 4. A first ending bracket is above the triplet. A fermata is placed over the final notes of both instruments in measure 4.

Fig. 47--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 18, measures two, three, and four.

A countermelody is seen in measures seven through nine.

The solo instrument handles the variation alone until the thirteenth measure at which the orchestra takes the melody and the piano accompanies with big chords in a triplet figure.



Fig. 48--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 18, measures fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen.

A new countermelody makes an appearance at measure twenty-nine going through measure thirty-two. The countermelody in this case is a descending scale line largely diatonic.

This musical score shows measures 29 through 32 of Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody, Variation 18. It features four staves: two for the piano (treble and bass clefs) and two for the violin (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is three flats (B-flat major/D-flat minor). The time signature is 3/4. A box containing the number '52' is placed above the first measure of the violin part. The piano part includes a triplet of eighth notes in measure 30 and a dynamic marking of *p dolce* in measure 31. The violin part features a descending scale line in measure 29, which continues through measure 32.

This musical score shows measures 29 through 32 of Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody, Variation 18, focusing on the piano accompaniment. It consists of two staves: the upper staff in treble clef and the lower staff in bass clef. The key signature is three flats (B-flat major/D-flat minor). The time signature is 3/4. The piano part includes a triplet of eighth notes in measure 30 and a dynamic marking of *dim.* in measure 31.

Fig. 49--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 18, measures twenty-nine through thirty-two.

The variation ends as softly as it was begun after forty-two measures.

#### Variation 19

Between Variation 18 and Variation 19 are six measures of music played by the orchestra which might be termed an interlude. The material of these six measures hints at the composition of Variation 19; however, the score does not designate that these measures are a part of any variation.

The piano part of Variation 19 is mono-linear in construction throughout, and it may be conjectured that Rachmaninoff had the idea of violin pizzicato in mind when he composed the variation. The variation being in  $\frac{4}{4}$ , the piano plays in staccato triplets throughout the variation. The structure of the variation adheres rather closely to that of the theme. Measures one through four correspond to measures one through four of the theme. The orchestra accompanies on the first and last beat of each measure with chords. The chords on the last beat of a measure and the first beat of the next imply the V-I progression of the theme, although the harmony actually is not V-I.

Figure 50 shows the first system of musical notation for Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody, Variation 19, measures 1 through 4. The score is written for piano and consists of four staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The music is in 3/4 time. The first two staves feature a melodic line with triplets and slurs, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The bottom two staves provide harmonic support with chords and single notes, also marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The notation includes various musical symbols such as slurs, triplets, and dynamic markings.

Figure 50 shows the second system of musical notation for Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody, Variation 19, measures 1 through 4. The score is written for piano and consists of four staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The music is in 3/4 time. The first two staves feature a melodic line with triplets and slurs, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The bottom two staves provide harmonic support with chords and single notes, also marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The notation includes various musical symbols such as slurs, triplets, and dynamic markings.

Fig. 50--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 19, measures one through four.

Measures five through eight are essentially the same as measures one through four. The harmony of measures five through eight is changed slightly but the same skeletal structure is present as that of measures one through four. Measures nine through fourteen of the variation present the second half of the theme. Part of the I-iv-VII-III progression is discernible in these measures. Measures nine and ten present a I-iv progression. At measure ten, however, the progression dissolves. Measures fifteen through twenty are in essence a repetition of measures nine through fourteen, formally corresponding to the theme. Harmonically these measures are altered slightly, but as in the previous repetition, the same skeletal structure is present.

#### Variation 20

The composition of this variation is based on two thematic elements, one exhibited in the piano part while the orchestra presents the other.

Un poco più vivo

Fig. 51--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 20, measures one and two.

The orchestra presents the motivic element of Figure 16 while the piano part throughout uses the rhythm,  $\text{♩} \text{♪}$ , seen at the beginning of the theme. These two thematic elements are imposed upon each other, and present one of the many examples of Rachmaninoff's inventive mind. The divisions of the theme are present in the variation. Measures one through five correspond to measures one through four of the theme. The idea of a i-V progression is evident on the first and second beats of measure two of the above illustration. Measures six through ten essentially repeat measures one through five, though the harmonies of the cadences differ. The second half of the theme begins at measure eleven and continues until measure twenty. The I-iv-VII-III progression is seen more clearly in the

repetition of this section, measures twenty-one through twenty-nine. At measure twenty-one the I chord is presented and at measure twenty-two the IV chord, measure twenty-four the VII chord (this time built on G#), and measures twenty-five through twenty-six the III chord. At measure twenty-seven the bII chord is presented, the measure continuing toward a cadence in measure twenty-nine.

#### Variation 21

This variation is reminiscent of Variation 19 in its figuration of staccato triplet eighth notes, and in the left hand doubling the right almost continually through the variation producing for the most part one line of music. The variation may be divided into sections like the theme. Measures one through four might be considered in their entirety as essentially a i chord, while measures five through eight are considered essentially as V, thereby giving the i-V progression of the theme. Measure one presents a quasi chromatic figuration on the i chord while measure five does the same thing on a v chord.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody, Variation 21. The first system (measures 1 and 5) features a right-hand part with a triplet of eighth notes and a left-hand part with a triplet of quarter notes, both marked *p staccato*. The second system (measures 2 and 6) continues this pattern, with the right hand playing a triplet of eighth notes and the left hand playing a triplet of quarter notes, marked *p*.

Fig. 52--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 21, measures one and five.

With measure nine the second half of the theme is presented and continues until measure fourteen. Measures nine through twelve present the I-IV-vii-III progression while measure thirteen presents the  $b$ II chord and continues to a cadence in measure fourteen. An immediate repetition at measures fifteen through twenty essentially is the same material harmonically as that presented in measures nine through fourteen. Figurally they are the same.

#### Variation 22

Variation 22 may be divided into four sections and a cadenza. Harmonically and structurally sections of this variation are remotely related to the theme if at all. The preceding variation flows into this variation set at first



like a march. The first section, measures one through twenty-two, shows a rhythmic and a thematic relationship to the theme in the orchestra part. The first measure of the orchestra part utilizes the same rhythmic figure on the last beat of the measure and the first beat of the succeeding measure as the theme.



Fig. 53--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 22, measures one and two.

The motivic element of Figure 16 is present throughout this section in the orchestra. The piano accompanies the orchestra with eighth note chords on each beat emphasizing the march character of this section of the variation. The second section of the variation begins with the last beat of measure twenty-two and continues to measure thirty-three. This section consists of huge diminished chords for the

piano and orchestra and serves as a bridge between the first and third sections of the variation.

The image shows a musical score for Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody, Variation 22, measures 23 and 24. The score is written for piano and orchestra. The piano part is in the upper staves, and the orchestra part is in the lower staves. The piano part features a scale passage with a 'p legato' marking and a 'cresc.' marking. The orchestra part features a chordal accompaniment with a 'p' marking. The score includes a box containing the number '8' and a bracketed section of three notes marked '3'.

Fig. 54--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 22, measures twenty-three and twenty-four.

Section three of the variation begins at measure thirty-three and proceeds to measure forty-six. The piano has scale passages against a chordal orchestral accompaniment. At no time in this section is a definite key center established.

8va -----

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system contains two staves: a vocal line (top) and a piano line (bottom). The piano line features a series of arpeggios, with dynamics marked *ff* and *mf*. The vocal line has a melodic line with triplets and slurs. The second system contains two staves: a vocal line (top) and a piano line (bottom). The piano line features a series of arpeggios, with dynamics marked *ff* and *p cantabile*. The vocal line has a melodic line with slurs.

Fig. 55--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 22, measures thirty-three and thirty-four.

A definite key of Eb major is established in the fourth section of the variation, measures forty-six to fifty-eight. The arpeggios of the piano part serve a decorative function to the repetition of the motivic element of Figure 16A throughout the section.

The image shows two systems of musical notation for Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody, Variation 22, measures 46 and 47. The first system consists of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. The right hand plays a melodic line with a long slur, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment. Below the grand staff, the word "Arpe" is written, followed by a single staff of arpeggiated chords. The second system is another grand staff with a forte (*f*) dynamic marking, showing the continuation of the melodic and accompanimental parts.

This image shows a second system of musical notation for the same piece and measures. It features a grand staff with a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. The right hand continues the melodic line with a slur, and the left hand provides accompaniment. Below the grand staff, there is a single staff with a forte (*f*) dynamic marking, likely representing a specific accompaniment or arpeggiated texture.

Fig. 56--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 22, measures forty-six and forty-seven.

Measures fifty-eight through sixty-five bridge into a cadenza built upon the motivic element of Figure 16A for the piano at measure sixty-six.

### Variation 23

This variation again conforms to the plan of the theme. The piano at measures five through eight states the theme and repeats it at measures nine through twelve in A $\flat$  minor. The orchestra suddenly modulates to A minor by the use of the V chord of A minor and repeats the statement and repetition of the theme just presented by the piano, this time in A minor. The second half of the variation begins at measure twenty-one and continues to measure twenty-nine. The I-iv-VII-iii progression is discernable in the orchestra part in measures twenty-one through twenty-four.

The image shows a musical score for Variation 23, measures 21 through 24. The score is written for piano and orchestra. The piano part is in the upper system, and the orchestra part is in the lower system. The piano part begins with a box containing the number '0' above the first measure. The piano part is marked *ff* (fortissimo) and features a melodic line with eighth notes and a descending eighth-note pattern. The orchestra part is marked *p* (piano) and features a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The key signature changes from A $\flat$  minor to A minor between measures 21 and 22. The score is written in a standard musical notation style with a treble clef for the piano and a bass clef for the orchestra.

Fig. 57--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 23, measures twenty-one through twenty-four.

The piano accompanies with descending octave movement for each hand. A quasi cadence is reached at measure twenty-eight and the repetition of this section is begun at measure twenty-nine. The variation ends with a cadenza beginning, perhaps arbitrarily, at measure forty-five with an octave figure.

#### Variation 24

Variation twenty-four, set in  $\frac{4}{4}$  time, brings back the eighth note triplet figure of Variations 19 and 21.

A tempo, un poco meno mosso

The first system of the musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with three triplet eighth notes in each of the first three measures, followed by a quarter note and a half note in the fourth measure. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a bass line with three triplet eighth notes in each of the first three measures, followed by a quarter note and a half note in the fourth measure. The tempo marking "A tempo, un poco meno mosso" is positioned above the first staff. The dynamic marking "p staccato" is placed below the first staff. A fermata is placed over the final note of the first staff. The second system also consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with a quarter rest in the first measure, followed by quarter notes in the second and third measures, and a triplet eighth note in the fourth measure. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a bass line with a quarter rest in the first measure, followed by quarter notes in the second and third measures, and a triplet eighth note in the fourth measure. The dynamic marking "p" is placed below the second staff. A fermata is placed over the final note of the second staff.

The second system of the musical score consists of five staves. The first two staves are in treble clef and contain a melodic line with three triplet eighth notes in each of the first three measures, followed by a quarter note and a half note in the fourth measure. The third staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with a quarter rest in the first measure, followed by quarter notes in the second and third measures, and a triplet eighth note in the fourth measure. The fourth staff is in bass clef and contains a bass line with a quarter rest in the first measure, followed by quarter notes in the second and third measures, and a triplet eighth note in the fourth measure. The fifth staff is in bass clef and contains a bass line with a quarter rest in the first measure, followed by quarter notes in the second and third measures, and a triplet eighth note in the fourth measure. The tempo marking "A tempo, un poco meno mosso" is positioned above the first staff. The dynamic marking "p" is placed below the second staff. The word "Arpe" is written above the third staff. A fermata is placed over the final note of the first staff.

Fig. 58--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 24, measures one and two.

The figure set for the piano in measures one and two is reminiscent of Liszt's La Campanella from the Paganini Etudes. The figure for the orchestra on the third and fourth beats of the first measure and the first beat of the second measure is again the motivic element of Figure 16 in rhythmic disguise. Measures one through four of this variation may be compared to measures one through four of the theme. A repetition of these measures in D minor occurs in measures five through eight. These measures are figurally the same. The second section of the theme begins at measure nine. The I-iv-VII-III progression is present in measures nine and ten on the first and third beats of each measure.

The image shows a musical score for measures 8, 9, and 10. The score is written for piano (p) and orchestra. It consists of four staves: two for the piano (treble and bass clefs) and two for the orchestra (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is D minor (one flat). The time signature is not explicitly shown but appears to be 3/4. The piano part features a melodic line with slurs and a triplet in measure 9. The orchestra part provides harmonic support with chords and rhythmic patterns. The score is enclosed in a dashed-line box.



Fig. 59--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 24, measures nine and ten.

See the figure above. This section closes at measure twenty-two, and measures twenty-three through twenty-six present a bridge using the same figuration as the preceding. Aurally these triplet figures seem to be in a dominant relationship. A coda begins at measure twenty-seven. The orchestra continues the statement of the thematic element of Figure 16 while the piano accompanies in sixteenth note chordal figuration. At measure thirty-nine there is again a statement of the Dies Irae. The orchestra states it on the first beat while the piano figuration presents it on the second beat of the measure.

78

*ff*

*molto marcato*

*ff*

This musical score shows measures 39 through 44 of Variation 24 from Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody. It is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 39-41) features a treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. The right hand plays a melodic line with triplets and accents, while the left hand plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The second system (measures 42-44) features a grand staff with a key signature of two flats and a 3/4 time signature. The right hand continues the melodic line, and the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment. The tempo/mood is marked *molto marcato* and the dynamics are *ff*.

*etc.*

This section continues the musical score from the previous system, showing measures 42 through 44. It features a grand staff with a key signature of two flats and a 3/4 time signature. The right hand continues the melodic line with triplets and accents, and the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment. The tempo/mood is *molto marcato* and the dynamics are *ff*. The word "etc." is written below the right hand staff in the first measure of this section.

Fig. 60--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 24, measures thirty-nine through forty-four.

The coda builds to a climax at measure sixty-seven. Then so characteristic of the ironic flavor of the work, Rachmaninoff ends the variation softly with a V-i progression and again a statement of the thematic element of Figure 16A.

The image shows a musical score for two systems of four staves each. The top system consists of a treble clef staff, a bass clef staff, a tenor clef staff, and a bass clef staff. The bottom system consists of a treble clef staff, a bass clef staff, a tenor clef staff, and a bass clef staff. The music is in 4/4 time and features a V-i progression. The first system (measures 68-69) includes a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) in the first staff of each system. The notation includes various note values, rests, and a fermata over the final note of the first staff in the first system.

Fig. 61--Rachmaninoff, Rhapsody, Variation 24, measures sixty-eight and sixty-nine.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis was primarily to analyze two works written in the same general form, variation form. Is there now any relationship between the two other than the fact that they are written in the same form and that the variations of each work are written on the same theme? This question may be answered by considering the elements of each work, form, harmony, rhythm, and structure.

It is true that both works are written in variation form, but in that statement lies a vast difference between them. The Brahms Variations are an example of the nineteenth-century character variation, while the Rachmaninoff Rhapsody is written in the style of the twentieth-century free variation. The difference between the two types is, of course, in the manner in which the theme is handled. The Brahms Variations preserve the general structural and harmonic outlines of the theme. The basic principle of the Brahms is that each variation contains a recurring series of chords, which, after appearing first in the theme, underlines each following variation. The Rachmaninoff Rhapsody, however, does not lie upon this principle. Rachmaninoff, instead of developing each variation patterned after the entire

structure of the theme, will utilize only a small section of the theme and upon this small section will build his entire variation. This small section of the theme may be part of the first measure of the theme, perhaps two or three notes of the theme, or sometimes only a rhythmic idea presented in the theme. The majority of the Rachmaninoff variations will follow the basic structure of the theme -- that is, it will contain a section utilizing a i-V progression and a section utilizing a I-iv-VII-III progression in one manner or another. Rachmaninoff is much farther away from following the basic structure of the theme for each variation than is Brahms.

Brahms almost always displays a close relationship with the theme harmonically. The Brahms Variations may be divided into three classifications illustrating how closely they adhere to the harmony of the theme.

- I. Those exactly like the theme except for the cadential pattern. (See Table VI.)
  - Book I: Variations 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 13
  - Book II: Variations 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10
- II. Those whose harmonies differ from the theme but use the same skeletal structure as the theme. (See Table VII.)
  - Book I: Variations 3, 10, 12, 4, 11, 14
  - Book II: Variations 1, 3, 5, 11, 12, 13, 14
- III. Those variations whose harmony is unlike the theme. (See Table VIII.)

Book I: Variations 5, 9

Book II: Variation 2

A table for each classification is presented to show relationships between the harmony of each variation and the theme.

TABLE VI  
CLASSIFICATION I OF THE  
BRAHMS VARIATIONS

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Theme	i	V	i	V::I	iv	VII	III	ii	i	A <sup>6</sup> V <sup>7</sup>	i		
Var	Book	Key											
1	I	A min	i	V	i	V::I	iv	VII	III	bII	i	iiV	i
2	I	" "	i	V	i	V::I	iv	VII	III	bII	i	ii <sup>o</sup> V	i
6	I	" "	i	V	i	V::I	iv	VII	III	bII	i	ii <sup>o</sup> i	Vi
7	I	" "	i	V	i	V::I	iv	VII	III	VIbII	Vi	iv V	i
8	I	" "	i	V	i	V::I	iv	VII	III	bII	i	ii V	i
13	I	" "	i	V	i	V::I	iv	VII	III	ii <sup>o7</sup>	i	ii <sup>o</sup> V	i
4	II	A maj	I	V	I	V::I	<sup>ii</sup> over IV	vii	iii	vi ii	iii	ii V	I
6	II	A min	i	V	i	V::I	iv	VII	III	vi bII	V	iv V	i
7	II	" "	i	V	i	V::I	iv	VII	III	bII	i	iv V	i
8	II	" "	i	V	i	V::I	iv	VII	III	bII	i	ii V	i
9	II	" "	i	V	i	V::i	iv	VII	III	bII	i	iv V	i
10	II	" "	i <sup>d7</sup>	V	i <sup>d7</sup>	V::I	IV	VII	III	i bII	V	iv V	i

TABLE VII  
CLASSIFICATION II OF THE  
BRAHMS VARIATIONS

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
Var	Book	Key	i and chromatic progression to--	V and i then chromatic progression to--				III over VII		V and i	iv and V	i		
3	I	A min.			V:	:I	IV	VII	bII					
4	I	A min.	i and V	VI <sup>7</sup> and V	i and V	VI <sup>7</sup> and V	I <sup>7</sup> and iv	I <sup>7</sup> and iv	VII <sup>7</sup> and III	VII <sup>7</sup> and III	i <sup>d7</sup> and bII	vii <sup>d7</sup> and i	ii <sup>d7</sup> and V	i
									could be analyzed as modu- lation to C# min.	B min.	A maj.			
11	I	A maj.	I	V	I	V	:I	IV	vii	iii	V and i	V and i	ii and V	I
12	I	A maj.	I	i	V <sup>7</sup>	V <sup>7</sup>	:I	IV	VII	iii	VI and V	V and ii <sup>d</sup>	ii <sup>d</sup> and V	I
3	II	A min.	i	ii over VI	iv	V:	I <sup>9</sup>	iv	VII <sup>9</sup>	III	vi <sup>7</sup> and ii <sup>d</sup>	v <sup>7</sup> and i	iv-VII and III-VI	ii <sup>d</sup> -V and i
5	II	A min.	i	V	i	III:	i	iv	VII	III	ii	VI	iv and V	i
11	II	A min.	i	V	i	V:	I	vi and IV	VII and IV	V and III	bII	i <sup>7</sup> .	bII and V	i
					D minor F Major									
12	II	F maj.	I	V-II V	i	V- #iv-:	I <sup>7</sup>	vi- IV- vi-	VII	VII- iii- V	IV and #ii <sup>d7</sup>	iii and #i <sup>d7</sup>	ii	V and I

TABLE VII (Continued)

CLASSIFICATION II OF THE  
BRAHMS VARIATIONS

Measure			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Var	Book	Key												
10	I	A min	i	i	V	V	i	i	V	V	I	I	I <sup>9</sup>	I <sup>9</sup> and IV on last half of 2nd beat
13	II	A min	i	V	i	V:	V <sup>7</sup>	I	IV	VII	III	II and V	I and i and ii and bII	V <sup>7</sup> and I

Measure			13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Var	Book	Key												
10	I	A min	VII	IV	VII <sup>7</sup>	VII and III on last half of 2nd beat	bII	bII	i	vi	i and V	ii and i	i and V	iv and I
13	II	A min	Aug. 6th Chord	I and aug 6th Chord and I	IV	VII	III <sup>7</sup>	II and V <sup>7</sup>	I and i and bII	V <sup>7</sup> and i				



Because of their irregular length the last variations of each Book were not included in the table. Also see the discussion of Variation 1, Book II, for harmonic analysis. Also see the discussion of Variations 5 and 9 of Book I for harmonic analysis (these variations are of Classification III).

TABLE VIII  
CLASSIFICATION III OF THE  
BRAHMS VARIATIONS

Measure			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Var	Book	Key												
2	II	A min	i	III and III+	VI and VI+	iv and #iv I+	#ii <sup>o</sup> d7	iv	ii <sup>o</sup> d7	III	i <sup>o</sup> d7 and iv	d vii <sup>o</sup> d7 and i	ii <sup>o</sup> d7 and V	i

Brahms exhibits an affinity for one particular cadential pattern throughout the variations, the bII-i-ii<sup>o</sup>-V-i. This cadential pattern was used in Book I, Variations 1, 2, 6, 8 and in Book II, Variations 8, 11, and 14. The second most prominent cadential pattern, bII-i-iv-V-i, contains only one difference from the previous cadential pattern, the substitution of the iv chord for the ii<sup>o</sup>. This pattern was found in Book I, Variations 3 and 7, and Book II, Variations 6, 7, and 10. Only one plagal cadence was found throughout the variations in Variation 10 of

Book I. All other cadences in the variations of both books are authentic. Other cadential patterns used are not far from the bII-i-(ii<sup>o</sup> or iv)-V-i.

Harmonically the two works are almost a century apart. Rachmaninoff essentially does not base each variation upon the harmony presented by the theme; however, traces can be found of the theme harmony. As stated previously, the Rachmaninoff variations will follow the basic structure of the theme, usually having sections of i-V and I-iv-VII-III. A table is presented to show the location of these sections in each of the variations. The assumption should not be made that the separate progressions will be found in their entirety. The table purports to illustrate that these particular measures are based on the first or second sections of the theme.

Like the Brahms Variations the Rachmaninoff Variations may be divided into harmonic classifications:

- I. Those variations using the skeletal harmonic structure of the theme. See Table IX of Classification I of Rachmaninoff Variations.  
Variations 1, Tema, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 19, 20, 21, 23, and 24.
- II. Those variations which deviate from the harmonic structure of the theme.
  - A. Those variations containing Dies Irae:  
Variations 7, 10, 24.

- B. Those variations which do not contain the Dies Irae but still deviate from the harmonic structure of the theme.

Variations 9, 11 (cadenza), 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, and 14.

TABLE IX

## CLASSIFICATION I OF RACHMANINOFF VARIATIONS

Var	Length	Location of 1-V prog.	Location of I-iv-VII-III prog.	Location of Cadences	Free material related to the theme	Free Un-related Material
1	24	1-8	9-12, 16-20	13-15, 21-24		
Tema	24	1-8	9-12, 17-20	13-16, 21-24		
2	24	1-8	9-12, 17-20	13-16, 21-24		
3	31	1-12	13-16, 22-25	17-21, 26-31		
4	40	1-8	17-20		9-16, 21-40	
5	36	1-8	9-16, 23-30	17-22, 31-36		
6	54	1-13	14-42	50-54	43-49	
8	44	1-16	17-24, 31-38	25-30, 39-44		
10	31	1-8	9-12	13-15	16-31	
12	32	1-8	16-19, 25-27	20-24, 28-32	9-15	
13	24	1-8	9-12, 17-20	13-16, 21-24		
19	20	1-8	9-10, 15-16	11-14, 17-20		
20	29	1-10	11-17, 21-26	18-20, 27-29		
21	20	1-8	9-12, 15-18	13-14, 19-20		
23	53	1-20	21-24, 29-32	25-28	33-53	
24	69	1-8	9-10		11-12, 23-69	13-22

Variation 7 is not included in the table because it is based essentially on the Dies Irae. Variations 9, 11, 15, 16, 17, 18, 14, and 22 are not included in the table because their construction does not lend itself to a sectional analysis and comparison to the theme as did the variations in the table. These variations rather are constructed on rhythmic ideas from the theme, small sections of the theme, or rhythmic patterns unrelated to the theme.

It is interesting now to consider the source of the rhythm for each variation of the Brahms and Rachmaninoff. A table is presented for this purpose. An examination of the previous harmonic and rhythmic tables will reveal that the primary connection of the Brahms variations and the theme is a harmonic one while the Rachmaninoff variations show a rhythmic one rather than a harmonic one. Rachmaninoff exhausts the theme rhythmically. He uses it in almost every rhythmic possibility and combination.

Structurally, Brahms is consistently true to the theme. Each variation or setting of the theme presents the first four measures of the theme and repeats them then presenting the remainder of the theme with a repetition. Almost all the Brahms variations are contained in twenty-four measures. With the Rhapsody this is not true.

TABLE X.

DERIVATION OF THE RHYTHMIC FIGURE  
UPON WHICH EACH VARIATION OF THE  
RACHMANINOFF RHAPSODY IS BASED




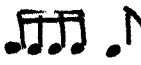


	Variations 1, 2, Tema, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 22, 23, 24, 21, 22
	Variations 6, 12, 17, 20
	Variations 5, 20
Patterns unrelated to theme	Variations 9, 19, 21, 22, 23, 124

TABLE XI

DERIVATION OF THE RHYTHMIC FIGURE  
UPON WHICH EACH VARIATION OF THE  
BRAHMS VARIATIONS IS BASED

	1(I) <sup>1</sup> , 2(I), 3(I), 6(I), 10(I), 13(I), 14(I), 3(II), 7(II), 9(II), 11(II), 14(II)
	11(I), 5(II), 3(II)
	14(I)
Patterns unrelated to theme	4(I), 5(I), 7(I), 8(I), 9(I), 12(I), 1(II), 2(II), 4(II), 6(II), 8(II), 10(II), 12(II), 13(II), 14(II)

<sup>1</sup>Roman numerals indicate the Book of Variations. Arabic numerals indicate the variation.

The majority of the Rachmaninoff variations vary in length from the regular twenty-four measures of the theme to sixty-odd measures. Rachmaninoff puts in his Rhapsody free material unrelated to the theme, while almost every note of the Brahms variations may be said to have come from this or that measure of the theme.

Both the Brahms Variations and Rachmaninoff Rhapsody occupy their respective place in piano literature. In common with the Paganini Caprice for violin is the fact that both the Brahms and Rachmaninoff are material for virtuosos. Each presents enough technical material to provide a challenge to anyone attempting to execute them. Brahms combines the classical with the acrobatic while Rachmaninoff submits a mixture of the romantic, diabolic, and acrobatic in the tradition of Liszt. In recognizing the tradition of the Rachmaninoff Rhapsody, a work such as the Liszt Totentanz should certainly be mentioned. Liszt, like Rachmaninoff, proffers the same qualities in his Totentanz as Rachmaninoff in the Rhapsody, the romantic, diabolic, and acrobatic. The idea of theme transformation used in the Rhapsody was also utilized in the Liszt B minor Sonata and the Concerto in A major.

As for the heritage of the Brahms works such as the Bach Goldberg Variations and the Beethoven Variations in C minor and the Reger Variations on a theme of Telemann

should be mentioned. These works, however, perhaps do not surpass the Brahms Variations in the matter of technical difficulty of performance. The Brahms Variations are a product of the nineteenth century era of big piano playing seasoned strongly with the classical. The Rachmaninoff, too, is big piano playing gazing back to the romantic, showing strong Lisztian influence.

Looking now at the two works as separate wholes, is there a comparison that can be made between the two? Yes, both works are tempered to virtuosic piano playing; they use the same theme; and they are constructed in the same general form. Here the comparison should end. They remain two works constructed on separate principles by two creative geniuses whose minds did not bask in the same sunlight of creativity.

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