

AN ANALYSIS OF VARIANTS AFFECTING STRUCTURAL CHANGES
IN THE VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY SCHUMANN, OP. 9, BY JOHANNES BRAHMS

by

MICHELE BYRD HEGWOOD

B. M. E., Mississippi State University, 1971

A MASTERS REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MUSIC

Department of music

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1974

Approved by:



Major Professor

2148-
5608A

LD
2668

R4
1974

H44

C.2

Document

**THIS BOOK
CONTAINS
NUMEROUS
PAGES WITH
THE ORIGINAL
PRINTING ON
THE PAGE BEING
CROOKED.**

**THIS IS THE
BEST IMAGE
AVAILABLE.**

**THIS BOOK
CONTAINS
NUMEROUS PAGES
WITH DIAGRAMS
THAT ARE CROOKED
COMPARED TO THE
REST OF THE
INFORMATION ON
THE PAGE.**

**THIS IS AS
RECEIVED FROM
CUSTOMER.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.	1
Historical Background	1
Sources	3
Purpose and Procedures	3
ANALYSIS	5
Harmonic Structure	5
The Theme	6
Variation I	7
Variation II and Variation III	7
Variation IV and Variation V	9
Variation VI	10
Variation VII	11
Variation VIII	12
Variation IX	12
Variation X, Variation XI, and Variation XII	14
Variation XIII	18
Variation XIV	19
Variation XV and Variation XVI	20
CONCLUSION.	23
APPENDIX.	25
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	27

INTRODUCTION

Historical Background

From the time the article entitled "Neue Bahnen" appeared in Robert Schumann's Neue Zeitschrift fur Musik in October of 1853, introducing Johannes Brahms to the musical scene in Germany, Brahms and Schumann became enduring friends. Their mutual respect for each other developed into a deep, long-lasting friendship which survived Schumann's stormy last days. The result of Brahms's admiration for Schumann is manifested in the Variations on a Theme by Schumann.

The theme of the Variations on a Theme by Schumann, Op. 9, was taken from the first of Schumann's five Album Leaves from the Bunte Blatter, Op. 99. Brahms dedicated this set of Variations to Schumann's wife, Clara. The original dedication read, "Short Variations on a theme by him dedicated to you."

Op. 9 was written in the second half of 1854. Variations I through IX and XII through XVI were completed in June; Variations X and XI were completed in August. During this time, Schumann was confined at Endenich as a result of his attempted suicide less than four months before.

In November Schumann wrote a letter to Brahms expressing his appreciation for the Variations:

If only I could come to you myself and see you again and hear your magnificent Variations, or my dear Clara's about the wonderful performance of which Joachim has written to me! How splen-

didly the whole is rounded off, and how one recognizes you in the richest brilliance of your imagination and again in your profound artistry in a way that I had not yet learnt to know you - the theme surging up here and there, not so secret, anon so passionate and profound. The theme then disappears again, but how magnificent is the end after the fourteenth, so full of artistic skill as it leads in a canon to the second. The fifteenth in G-flat major with the genial second and last part.¹

Brahms was pleased with his friend's comments. "The overmuch praise which you bestow on my Variations fills me with happiness."²

After Schumann had studied the Variations in greater detail, he again wrote Brahms and commented on them:

I am still refreshing myself with your variations; I should like to hear several of them from you and my Clara; I am not completely master of them; especially the second, the fourth not up to time and the fifth not; but the eighth (and the slower ones) and the ninth - A reminiscence of which Clara wrote to me is probably on p. 14; what is it from? a song? - and the twelfth - oh, if I could only hear you!³

In January of 1855 Brahms visited Schumann at Endenich, and played his Op. 9 for Schumann.

The first edition of the Op. 9 Variations was published by Breitkopf in November of 1854. A revision of the work was published by Simrock in 1888. The manuscript is in the possession of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna.

¹Florence May, The Life of Johannes Brahms (Two vols.; London: The New Temple Press, 1905), Vol. I, p. 177.

²Ibid., p. 178.

³Ibid., p. 179.

Sources

The initial source consulted for information regarding variation forms in general was the Technique of Variation from Cabezón to Reger by Robert U. Nelson. The primary sources consulted for historical background were Brahms: His Life and Work by Karl Geiringer; Letters of Clara Schumann, edited by Berthold Litzmann; and The Life of Johannes Brahms by Florence May. The principal sources referred to during the actual analysis of the Variations were the Handbook to the Pianoforte Works of Johannes Brahms by Edwin Evans, and an unpublished doctoral dissertation entitled "The Solo Piano Variations of Johannes Brahms" by Alan Charles Brandes.

Purpose and Procedures

This study of the Op. 9 Variations entailed two purposes: first, to determine how the Variations are grouped; and second, to determine where structural changes exist in the Variations and how they are accomplished.

The methods used in analyzing the structural aspects of the Variations were these:

- 1) analyzing the quality of cadences in both the theme and in each successive variation;
- 2) ascertaining which variations fall into groups, and how the grouping is achieved;
- 3) comparing the length of the phrases within each period of the theme to that of each variation;
- 4) determining what techniques are used to achieve alterations when phrase lengths do not coincide with the theme.

In addition to the prime considerations mentioned above, special attention was given to the use of canons or other special devices affecting changes in structure.

A chart was constructed which shows the groupings, unifying devices, and variants used to achieve structural changes in the Op. 9 Variations. This chart, which appears in the Appendix, was compiled to give an overall view of the Variations as a whole.

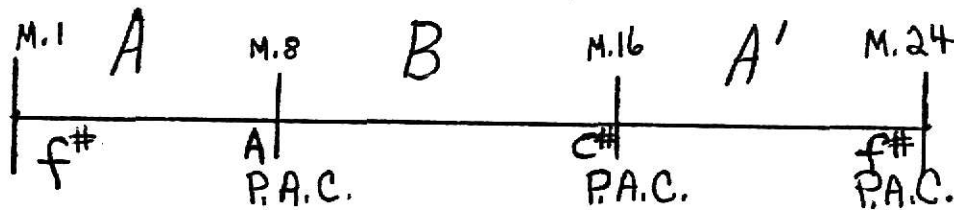
ANALYSIS

Harmonic Structure

In the Schumann Variations Brahms uses the boundaries of a simple ternary form. This three-part plan is maintained throughout the entire set. The harmonic structure of the complete cadence points, however, is not duplicated in each variation.

Each of the three sections of the theme closes with a highly punctuated authentic cadence, as shown in Figure 1:

Figure 1. Outline of Cadential Structure of the Theme.



Each section of the theme is conclusive within itself because of the quality of the perfect authentic cadences. This harmonic pattern is duplicated only in Variations VIII and XVI. Note that the complete cadences of each section outline the tones of the tonic minor triad and emphasize the third relationship. Although this pattern of outlining the tonic key is duplicated in many of the variations, it is not usually followed as rigidly as in the theme.

The harmonic structure of the cadences in the remaining vari-

ations does not conform exactly to that established in the theme. The point at which the cadential pattern generally changes is at the end of the second section where, in most cases, the cadences are not highly punctuated. When the middle section does not end on an authentic cadence, the movement toward the return of the first section is thereby intensified as the tonic key approaches.

The Theme

The theme in f-sharp minor contains 24 measures which comprise three distinct periods. The ternary plan consists of Period A (eight measures), Period B (eight measures), and Period A' (eight measures). The example below shows the theme in its entirety:

Example 1. Theme, Variations on a Theme by Schumann, Op. 9.

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system shows the initial measures of the theme, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system continues the theme, featuring a forte (*f*) dynamic and a decrescendo (*dim.*) marking. The third system concludes the theme, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a pianissimo (*pp*) marking, with the instruction *una corda* indicating the use of the soft pedal.

Thematic Period A has two four-measure phrases: Measures 1 through 4, the antecedent phrase; measures 5 through 8, the consequent phrase. Period B, Measures 9 through 16, consists of two brief phrases (2 measures each) plus a longer phrase (four measures) which form a contrasting section characterized by points of tension at the peak of each phrase. Period A', Measures 17 through 24, is again divided into an antecedent-consequent phrase structure of four measures each and reappears with only slight harmonic and melodic changes.

Variation I

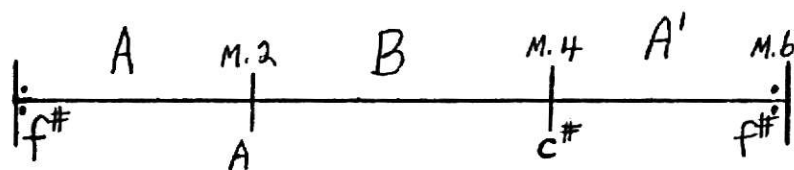
The periodic structure of Variation I coincides with the theme. It is distinguished, however, by its placement of the melody in the bass. For the first 13 measures the bass line follows the original melody. For the remaining half of the variation the bass represents a modified version of the original melody. This modification, however, does not affect the overall structure of the variation. The final authentic cadence enhances movement into Variation II by taking an imperfect form.

Variation II and Variation III

Variation II and Variation III form a unit in which each depends on the other. Variation II ends on a half cadence which resolves through suspensions into the opening chord of Variation III.

In Variation II the form is compressed into six measures which are repeated. Diminution is achieved by the change from duple to triple meter, and the length of each eight-measure section is reduced to two measures. The form is outlined below:

Figure 2. Outline of Periodic Compression, Variation II.



How the diminution is achieved may be seen by comparing the bass of Variation II with that of the theme, in which the original bass line is merely reduced to a much smaller timespan:

Example 2a. Theme, Bass, Mm. 1 - 8.



Example 2b. Variation II, Bass, Mm. 1 - 2.



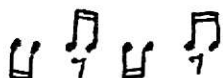
Variation III begins on a half cadence suspended from the last beat of the preceding variation. This variation is 24 measures in length. Both the measures and phrase structure coincide with their counterparts in the theme.

The device used to vary this movement is, like Variation I, that of a cantus firmus technique. The left hand melody, however,

is not always the lowest voice, as the accompaniment figures of the right hand often fall below the left hand melody. This technique does not affect the periodic structure of the variation.

Variation IV and Variation V

Variations IV and V form a pair through the use of repeated couplets of sixteenth notes used consistently in both variations.

The basic rhythmic figure used as the unifying element, , is further developed in Variation V, making it a rhythmic extension of Variation IV.

Variation IV, whose phrase structure coincides with that of the theme, establishes the rhythmic motive and balances it with a lyrical melody in the upper voice. In Variation V, however, an irregular variation of forty-three measures, the constant repetition of the alternating sixteenth-note patterns adds considerable intensity by incorporating the treble voice against the more lyrical treatment in Variation IV.

Of particular interest are the opening two measures of Variation V. Rhythmic reiterations are followed by a strongly punctuated dotted quarter note proclaiming the importance of the basic rhythmic figure, as shown in Example 3:

Example 3. Variation V, Mm. 1 - 3.



After three additional measures of sixteenth-note motion this figure is followed by two measures of quarter-note motion which provides temporary relaxation before the next period of fast movement. These two devices, aside from their dramatic effects, are used as a means of extension throughout the course of the entire variation.

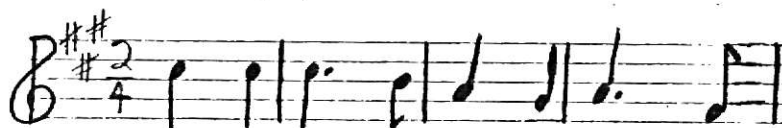
Variation VI

Through its fast rhythmic motion, Variation VI makes a logical musical climax to the first major section of the Variations. This movement is also the quickest of the entire set of sixteen variations, and is composed primarily of arpeggiated patterns of triplet sixteenth notes, set in 6/8 meter.

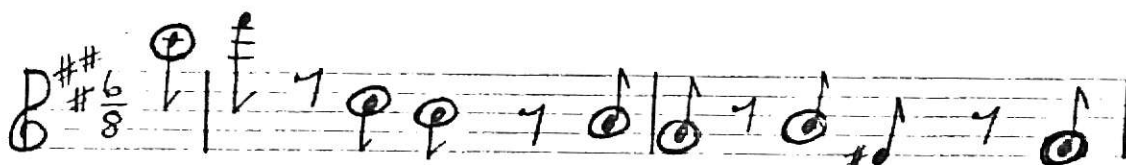
Variation VI is 26 measures long. Measure lengths of the three periods of this variation do not directly coincide with those of the theme. Period A consists of four measures, Period B, seven measures, and Period A', eleven measures.

In Period A the original eight measures of thematic Period A are reduced to four measures which are repeated. These four measures contain a melodic and rhythmic alteration of the first phrase of thematic Period A, as the following example illustrates:

Example 4a. Theme, Mm. 1 - 4.



Example 4b. Variation VI, Outline of Melody, Mm. 1 - 2.



This technique, combined with expanding harmonic and melodic sequences, provides the means of alteration in the remaining sections of the variation.

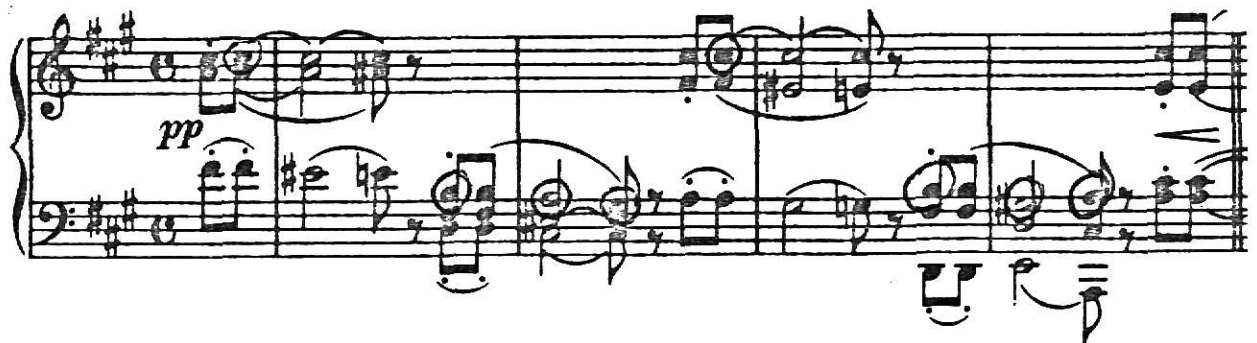
Variation VII

Variation VII begins the second section of this set, and has a homophonic texture similar to the theme. This variation presents a condensed version of the theme, as Example 5 illustrates:

Example 5a. Theme, Mm. 1 - 8.



Example 5b. Variation VII, Mm. 1 - 4.



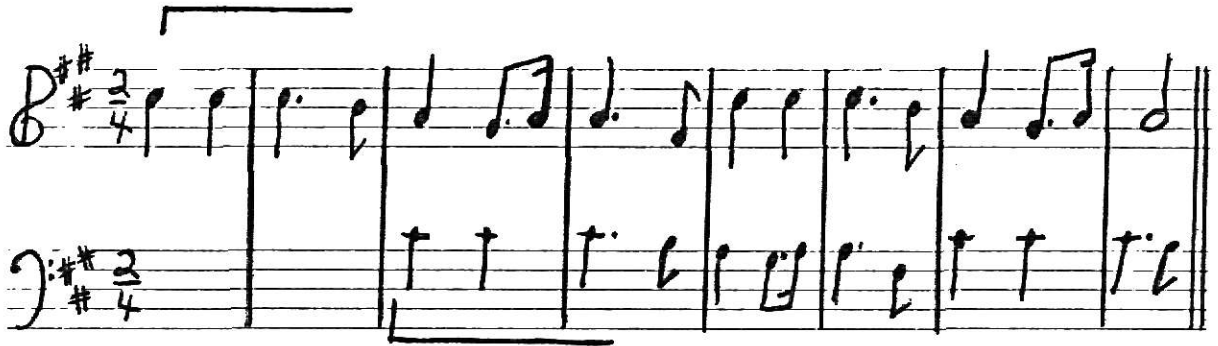
This condensation of the melodic line is achieved by eliminating a few of the notes of the original theme. The notes within the brackets in the above example are eliminated in the melodic line of Variation VII.

The original 24 measures of the theme are reduced to eleven measures through the use of short, segmented phrases built on chords which alternate between the treble and the bass.

Variation VIII

Variation VIII contains a canon between the treble and the bass, an octave or more apart and at the distance of two measures. The relationship of the canon to the theme is illustrated in the example below:

Example 6. Variation VIII, Mm. 1 - 8.



Both the harmonic pattern and the phrase lengths of the three sections of Variation VIII concur with those of the theme, except for Period A', which contains ten measures. This two-measure extension is due to the completion of the canon in the lower voice.

Variation IX

Variation IX is a direct quotation of the first measure of Schumann's Bunte Blatter, Op. 99, No. 5. Brahms uses both the key (b minor) and the figuration of Schumann's piece and duplicates the measure note for note three times in the variation. Schumann's first measure becomes Brahms's second, sixth, and sixteenth measures. The example below shows the relationship between the two works:

Example 7a. Schumann, Op. 99, No. 5, First Measure.

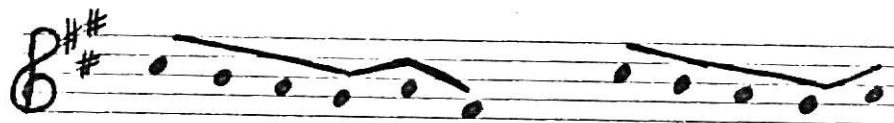


Example 7b. Brahms, Op. 9, Variation IX, Mm. 1 - 2.



This variation in b minor is 21 measures long. The eight measures of thematic Period A are represented by measures 1 through 4, which are repeated. The reduced length is accomplished by a transformation of the thematic melody. The accented notes which fall on the second half of beats one and two provide the basis for the melodic transformation by outlining the general shape of the melody:

Example 8a. Theme, Outline of Shape.



Example 8b. Variation IX, Outline of Shape



This device is used to shorten each section of the variation. A three-measure coda, cadential in nature, closes the variation with the progression $\text{vii}_7^0 - \text{i}$, which is also used to conclude Schumann's original.

Variation X, Variation XI, and Variation XII

Variations X, XI, and XII form a related group of movements through the use of two connecting devices: arpeggiated transitions and half cadences. Variation X is concluded with a half-measure arpeggiated transition leading directly into Variation XI. To further strengthen the continuity of movements, Variation XI closes on a G-sharp major chord, acting as the dominant preparation of Variation XII, which is in f-sharp minor. Variation XII restores harmonic stability due to its return to the tonic minor after key departures in the previous three variations.

The first eight measures of Variation X employ a melody and its mirror between the two outer voices. The melody is taken from the original bass line of the theme, as the example below illustrates:
Example 9a. Theme, Bass line, Mm. 1 - 8.



Example 9b. Variation X, Melody and its Mirror, Outer Voices, Mm. 1 - 8.



This variation, in D major, consists of 32 complete measures and a half-measure transition into Variation XI. The three periods of this movement coincide with those of the theme, except for Period A, which contains sixteen measures, due to an altered repetition of its first eight measures. The following illustration indicates the nature of the alteration:

Example 10a. Variation X, Mm. 1 - 3.

Poco Adagio.

Example 10b. Variation X, Mm. 9 - 11.

While the inner voice is now incorporated as part of the melody, the main alterations appear in the bass line where arpeggiated sixteenth notes are added.

Measures 9 through 16 of this variation also include a modified canon in contrary motion between the soprano and alto voices at a distance of one measure. A portion of the canon is shown in Example 11:

Example 11. Variation X, Soprano and Alto Voices, Mm. 9 - 13.



The mirror in the bass line of the first eight measures of this variation is discontinued here because of the use of different chord inversions.

Variation XI acts as a transitional movement between Variation X and Variation XII. Resembling the character of an intermezzo, this variation has a key signature of one sharp, and is constructed largely upon a D pedal point which implies the dominant of G major throughout the entire variation.

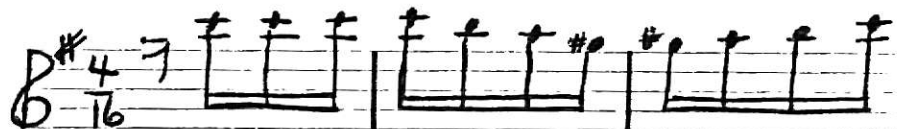
This variation contains 27 measures of almost continuous step-wise movement. Measures 14 through 26 are the exact repetition of measures 1 through 13. These thirteen measures represent a variation of thematic Period A and B, which is repeated. A variant of Period A' does not return in this variation, which reemphasizes its function as a transitory movement.

The original sixteen measures of Periods A and B of the theme are reduced to thirteen measures in this variation. The reduction is achieved through a slightly altered version of the melody. In the following example, the initial melodic phrase of the theme is compared to the treble of the first three measures of Variation XI:

Example 12a. Theme, Melody, Mm. 1 - 4.



Example 12b. Variation XI, Melody, Mm. 1 - 3.



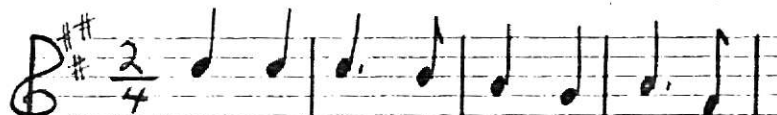
The second phrase of Period A sequences the previous melodic pattern a third higher.

The final half cadence on C-sharp major in measure 27 functions as the dominant preparation of the next variation in f-sharp minor.

Variation XII, the rhythmic culmination of the preceding five variations, is twenty-two measures long. Like the theme, the overall structure is ternary, but the phrases within each section are irregular in length. The variant elements of the thematic substance are contained in the first seventeen measures of the variation, while measures 18 through 22 function as a coda.

The eight measures of thematic Period A are represented by four measures in this variation. These four measures contain a modification of the thematic melody, as shown in Example 13:

Example 13a. Theme, Mm. 1 - 4



Example 13b. Variation XII, R. H. Melody, Mm. 1 - 2.



The second melodic phrase of Period A of Variation XII is altered to coincide with the altered harmony. This device, which is achieved through the melodic modification, is used to shorten each section of the variation.

The coda, which comprises measures 18 through 22, is constructed on a C-sharp pedal point. The example below shows how the coda traces the second melodic phrase of thematic Period A. Note also the quasi-hemiola effect of the altered melody:

Example 14. Variation XIII, Mm. 18 - 21.

At this point, the rhythm becomes intensified, and the coda resolves with a perfect authentic cadence in the last measure.

Variation XIII

Variation XIII consists of 24 measures. Although the total length of this variation coincides with the theme, each section is, nevertheless, slightly irregular in length. Four measures are used

to vary Period A, nine for Period B, and seven for Period A'.

The original eight measures of thematic Period A are reduced to four measures which are repeated. The thematic melody is again the implement used to shorten the lengths of each section. The first two measures of this variation illustrate how the alteration is achieved:

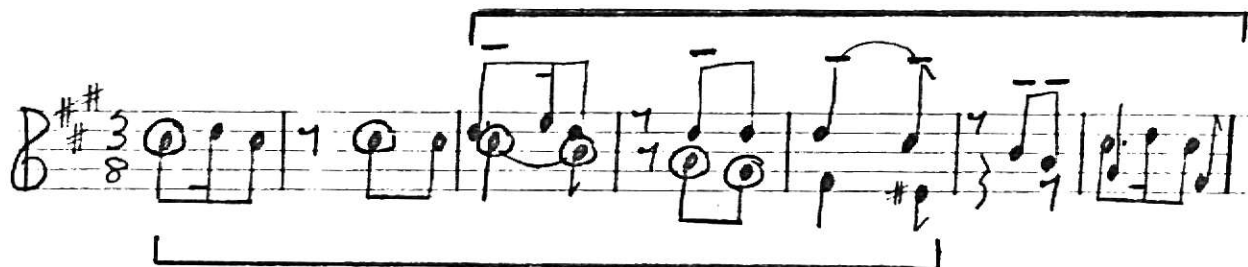
Example 15. Variation XIII, Mm. 1 - 2.

As can be seen, the rhythmic motion is in sixteenth notes, eight to a measure. The melody occurs generally on the weak part of the beat and is approached from an upper or lower neighbor. In Period B this stepwise motion is expanded to include the interval of a fourth, and incorporates a series of sequences maintained throughout the course of the Variation. The melodic mutations combined with the sequential nature of this variation contribute to the irregular lengths of each section.

Variation XIV

Variation XIV contains a free canon in the treble a second above and at a distance of two measures. The following example shows the canon as it appears at the opening of this variation:

Example 16. Variation XIV, Canon at the Second, Mm. 1 - 7.



This canonic pattern appears only in part during the remainder of the variation.

This variation is 34 measures in length. Period A consists of twelve measures, Period B of ten measures, and Period A' of twelve measures. The extension in each section are due to both the canonic technique and a melodic variation of the theme.

Variation XV and Variation XVI

Variations XV and XVI form a pair by leading into each other without any break in the rhythm. The last two measures of Variation XV serve as both an extended cadential coda and an introduction to the last variation. These two variations also form a contrasting pair by distinct differences in their polyphonic and homophonic textures.

Variation XV contains a canon between the soprano and the bass. It occurs at an interval of two octaves plus a sixth below and at a distance of one measure. The example below shows a portion of the canon:

Example 17. Variation XV, Mm. 1 - 5.

Handwritten musical notation for Variation XV, measures 1-5. The score is in G-flat major (three flats) and 6/4 time. The treble staff contains a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, some beamed together. The bass staff contains a series of notes with various rhythmic markings (accents, ties, and bar lines) below them. A bracket spans the first four measures of the treble staff.

Unlike Variation XIV, this canonic treatment is consistently employed throughout the variation.

This variation, which is in G-flat major (enharmonic with F#), is 26 measures long. The lengths of each period in this variation coincide with those of the theme. The two-measure extended cadence at the end functions as a transition into the next variation. The pulsating movement of the perpendosi arpeggios leads quietly into Variation XVI, where the harmonic rhythm slows into a more relaxed state.

Variation XVI, the last variation in this set, is constructed in the style of a chaconne. The bass of the theme is augmented to notes three times its original value and becomes the framework of this variation, a portion of which is illustrated below:

Example 18a. Theme, Bass line, Mm. 1 - 4.

Handwritten musical notation for the bass line of the theme, measures 1-4. The score is in D major (two sharps) and 2/4 time. The bass staff shows a simple four-measure bass line with quarter notes.

Example 18b. Variation XVI, Mm. 1 - 4.

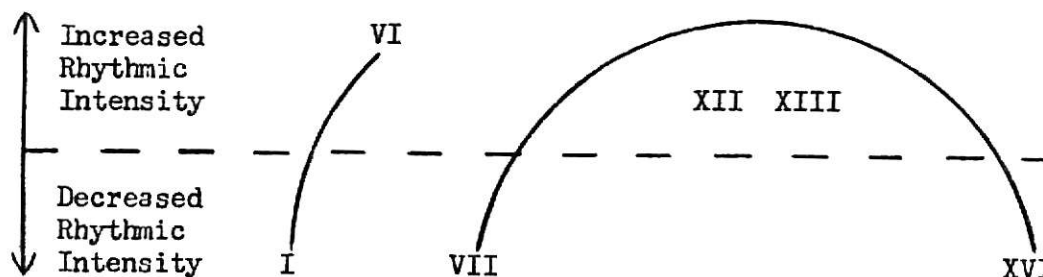


Accompanying the bass line in the treble voice are short enigmatic phrases which always begin on a syncopated beat. These two phrases make disguised references to the direction of the melodic line of the theme, tying the last variation to the theme even more convincingly.

This variation, in F-sharp major, consists of 24 measures. Both the harmonic structure of the cadence points and the periodic structure of this movement coincide with those of the theme.

The simple texture of this concluding variation is quite similar to both the theme and Variation VII, which began the second section of this set. Variation VII also initiated the formation of a symmetrical arch which is completed by Variation XVI. The diagram below illustrates the overall grouping pattern of the Op. 9 Variations as achieved through a curve of rhythmic content:

Figure 3. Outline of Rhythmic Shape of Op. 9 Variations.



CONCLUSION

An analysis of the cadence points in the Op. 9 Variations revealed that the highly punctuated authentic cadences at the end of each period in the theme are duplicated only in Variations VIII and XVI. The cadential pattern of the remaining variations is not as conclusive. The point at which the cadential pattern generally changes is at the end of Period B where the cadences are usually not highly punctuated. In this way, Brahms incorporated the individual variations into a harmonically-structured cohesive unit by reemphasizing the thematic harmony at the middle and at the conclusion of the composition.

The overall grouping pattern of this set of variations consists of three sections: Section 1 comprises Variations I through VI; Section 2, Variations VII through XII; and Section 3, Variations XIII through XVI. In each of the first two sections, the increased rhythmic tension reaches a peak in the concluding variation. In Section 3, this pattern is reversed, the final variation having the slowest rhythmic pulse. Within each section several variations form smaller pairs or groups. Variations II and III, Variations X, XI, XII, and Variations XV and XVI form sets through connecting links of arpeggiated transitions or half cadences. Variations IV and V are related through the use and development of a rhythmic motive common to both.

The periodic lengths of Variations I, III, IV, VIII, and XV coincide with the theme. The remaining eleven variations employ extensions or reductions in their phrase structures. The main devices used to achieve alterations are rhythmic and melodic transformations of thematic melody or bass line patterns; harmonic and melodic sequences; and imitative techniques.

Special devices characteristic of Brahms's compositional style are also used to achieve structural changes. Four variations (VIII, X, XIV, XV) contain canons; two of them are complete. Variation IX is based on an excerpt from the first measure of Schumann's Bunte Blatter, Op. 99, No. 5 and Variation X employs a melody and its mirror in the bass. Finally, the melodic treatment in Variation XVI resembles the style of a chaconne.

Appearing in the Appendix is a chart which gives an overall view of the groupings, unifying devices, and variants which are used to achieve structural changes in the Op. 9 Variations.

A P P E N D I X

UNIFYING AND VARIANT DEVICES IN VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY SCHUMANN

MVT.	GROUPINGS			PERIOD LENGTH	ALTERATION TECHNIQUES	SPECIAL DEVICES
	Large Sections Rhythmic Intensity	Internal Sets Unifying Device				
Theme				A - B - A'		
I	I			8-8-8		
II		II Suspended Half Cadence		8-8-8		
III		III		1:2-2-2:1	Bass Diminution	
IV		IV Common Rhythmic Figure		8-8-8		
V		V		8-8-8		
VI	VI			11-12-20	Figural Rhythmic Development	
VII	VII			1:4:1-7-11	Altered Melody	
VIII				4-3-4	Harmonic Sequence Condensed Melody	
IX				8-8-10	Completion of Canon	Canon
X				1:4:1-6-7	Altered Melody	Borrowed Theme
XI		X Arpeggiated Transition		16-8-8	Double Variation (Period A)	Melody and its Mirror Incomplete Canon
XII	XII	XI Half Cadence		1:6-7:10	Altered Melody (No variant-A')	
XIII	XIII	XII		4-7-11	Altered Melody	
XIV				1:4:1-9-7	Altered Melody	
XV		XV Cadential Transition		12-10-12	Canonic Technique	Free Canon
XVI	XVI	XVI		8-8-10	Extended Cadence	Canon
				8-8-8		Style of Chaconne

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brahms, Johannes. "Variations on a Theme by Schumann." Piano Works, Vol. I. Ed. by Emil V. Sauer. New York, New York: Edwin F. Kalmus, pp. 104-119.
- Brandes, Alan Charles. "The Solo Piano Variations of Johannes Brahms." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1968.
- Colles, Henry C. Brahms. London: John Lane, 1920.
- Dale, Kathleen. Nineteenth-Century Piano Music. London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1954.
- Evans, Edwin. Handbook to the Pianoforte Works of Johannes Brahms. London: William Reeves, 1936.
- Ferguson, Donald N. Piano Music of Six Great Composers. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1947.
- Gal, Hans. Johannes Brahms: His Work and Personality. Translated by Joseph Stein. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1963.
- Geiringer, Karl. Brahms: His Life and Work. Translated by H. B. Weiner and Bernard Miall. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1936.
- Goss, Madeleine and Schauffler, Robert Haven. Brahms the Master. New York: H. Holt and Co., 1945.
- Hill, Ralph. Brahms. London: Duckworth, 1941.
- James, Burnett. Brahms: A Critical Study. New York: Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1972.
- Kirby, F. E. A Short History of Keyboard Music. New York: The Free Press, 1966.
- Litzman, Berthold, ed. Clara Schumann: An Artist's Life. Translated by Grace E. Hadow. London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd. 1913.
- May, Florence. The Life of Johannes Brahms. Two Volumes. London: The New Temple Press, 1905.

Murdoch, William D. Brahms: With an Analytical Study of the Complete Pianoforte Works. London: Rich and Cowan, 1933.

Nelson, Robert Uriel. The Technique of Variation. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1948.

Schumann, Robert. Bunte Blatter, Op. 99. Ed. by Harold Bauer. New York: G Schirmer, c. 1945. 48p.

AN ANALYSIS OF VARIANTS AFFECTING STRUCTURAL CHANGES
IN THE VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY SCHUMANN, OP. 9, BY JOHANNES BRAHMS

by

MICHELE BYRD HEGWOOD

B. M. E., Mississippi State University, 1971

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTERS REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MUSIC

Department of Music

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1974

ABSTRACT

This study of the Variations on a Theme by Schumann, Op. 9, by Johannes Brahms, entailed two purposes: first, to determine the grouping pattern of the Variations; and second, to determine where structural changes exist in the Variations and how they are accomplished. Special attention was also given to the use of canons or other special devices affecting changes in structure.

An analysis of the cadence points revealed that the highly punctuated authentic cadences at the end of each period in the theme are duplicated only in Variations VIII and XVI. The cadential pattern of the remaining variations is not as conclusive. The point at which the cadential pattern generally changes is at the end of Period B where the cadences are usually not highly punctuated. Brahms incorporated the individual variations into a cohesive unit by re-emphasizing the thematic harmony at the middle and at the conclusion of the composition.

The overall grouping pattern of this set of variations consists of three main sections: Variations I through VI; Variations VII through XII, and Variations XIII through XVI. In each of the first two sections, the increased rhythmic tension reaches a peak in the concluding variation. In the third section, the last variation of the group has the slowest rhythmic pulse. Within each section several variations form smaller pairs or groups. Variations II and III, Variations X, XI, XII, and Variations XV and XVI form sets through

connecting links of arpeggiated transitions or half cadences. Variations IV and V are related through the use and development of a common rhythmic motive.

The periodic lengths of Variations I, III, IV, VIII, and XV coincide with the theme. The remaining eleven variations employ extensions or reductions in their phrase structures. The devices used to achieve alterations are rhythmic and melodic transformations of thematic melody or bass line patterns; harmonic and melodic sequences; and imitative techniques.

Special devices are also used to achieve structural changes, while adding variety and interest. Four variations (VIII, X, XIV, XV) contain canons, two of them complete. Variation IX is based on an excerpt from the first measure of Schumann's Bunte Blatter, Op. 99, No. 5, and Variation X employs a melody and its mirror in the bass. Finally, the melodic treatment in Variation XVI resembles the style of a chaconne.