

Once you have a good tune it can be developed into A Theme with Variations.

This chapter explores the different ways a melodic idea can be developed into a set of variations for different instruments.

A Theme with Variations is a musical structure with few limitations. Composers can write many variations on a motif (a melodic fragment) or a complete tune by adopting several compositional techniques, this chapter explains how to use some of those techniques.

In addition to the detailed explanations, examples and tasks provided in this chapter, we can learn a great deal from listening to other composers who have written in this medium, below are some suggestions:

Ernest von Dohnanyi 'Variations on a Nursery Rhyme'

J.S.Bach 'Goldberg Variations'

Ludwig van Beethoven 'Variations on a Waltz by Diabelli'

Robert Schumann 'Symphonic Studies' (a set of variations)

Sergei Rachmaninov 'Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini' (a set of variations)

*At the end of this chapter the puzzle **The Composition Crossword** is designed to test your knowledge of the compositional tools you have been using to create your set of variations...Have fun!!!*