



# COMPOSING A THEME AND VARIATIONS

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MUSICAL FORM



# WHAT IS THEME AND VARIATIONS?

- **THEME:** A MUSICAL FORM BASED ON A MELODIC THEME, FOLLOWED BY REPEATED VARIATIONS.
- **VARIATIONS:** VARIATIONS CHANGE MELODY, HARMONY, AND RHYTHM.



# WRITING YOUR OWN THEME

**SHORT**

**SIMPLE**

**CLEAR**

**SELF-  
CONTAINED**



# NOTABLE EXAMPLES

- **GOLDBERG VARIATIONS (J.S. BACH)**
- **DIABELLI VARIATIONS (BEETHOVEN)**
- **ENIGMA VARIATIONS (E. ELGAR)**
- **RHAPSODY ON A THEME OF PAGANINI  
(RACHMANINOFF)**

# COMPOSING THE VARIATIONS

- **START SIMPLE, AND GRADUALLY INCREASE COMPLEXITY.**
- **KEY TECHNIQUES:**
  - **CHANGE MODE**
  - **CHANGE TIME SIGNATURE**
  - **ALTER RHYTHM**
  - **CHANGE ACCOMPANIMENT STYLE**



# FINISHING THE COMPOSITION

- **REORDER VARIATIONS IF NEEDED.**
- **ENSURE EACH HAS A TEMPO MARKING AND NECESSARY TEMPO CHANGES.**
- **USE DYNAMICS AND ARTICULATIONS FOR EXPRESSIVE INTERPRETATION.**



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# **CONCLUSION**

**THEME AND VARIATIONS IS A VERSATILE AND CREATIVE COMPOSITION FORM.  
USE VARIATIONS TO EXPLORE MUSICAL IDEAS AND SHOWCASE CREATIVITY.**

