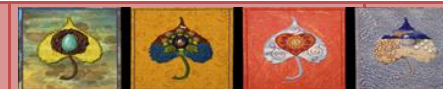


VARIATIONS

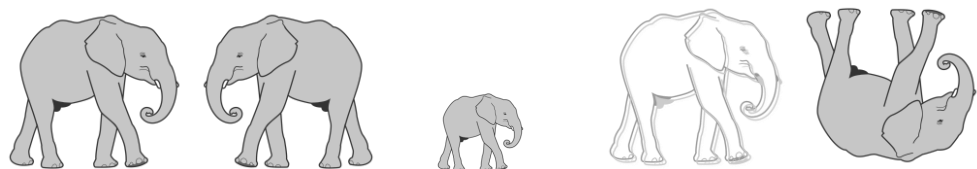
Exploring ways to develop musical ideas



A. Theme and Variations Key Words

MELODY – A tune or succession of notes, varying in pitch, that have an organised and recognisable shape. Often called the main **TUNE** or **THEME** of a piece of music or song and easily remembered.

VARIATION – Where a **THEME** is altered or changed musically, while retaining some of the primary elements, notes and structure of the original. **VARIATION FORM:**



A (Theme) A1 (Variation) A2 (Variation) A3 (Variation) A4 (Variation)

B. Augmentation and Diminution – Note Values and Duration

AUGMENTATION – the process of **DOUBLING** the note values (**DURATION**) of a theme as a means of variation.



DIMINUTION – the process of **HALVING** the note values (**DURATION**) of a theme as a means of variation.

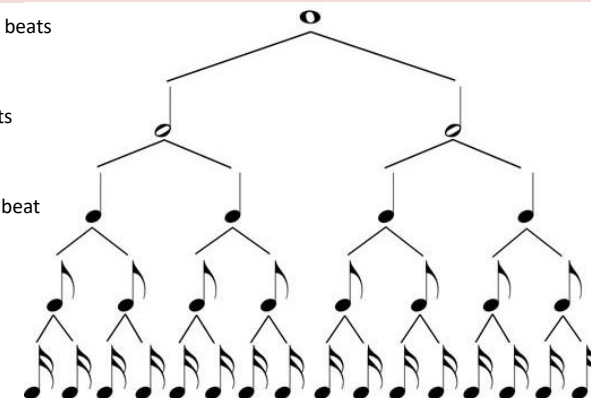
SEMIBREVE = 4 beats

MINIM = 2 beats

CROTCHET = 1 beat

QUAVER
= ½ beat

SEMIQUAVER
= ¼ beat



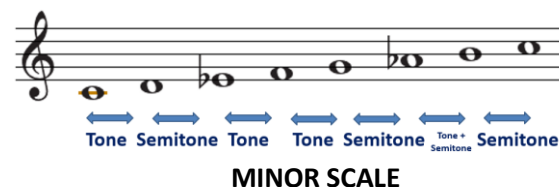
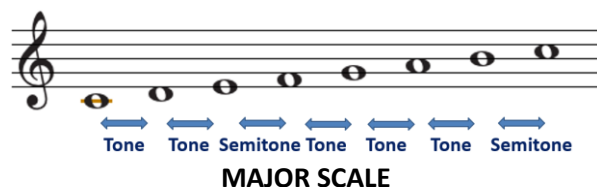
C. Variation Techniques

PITCH – Change the highness or lowness of the theme – play the same notes, but at different pitches <i>e.g. in different OCTAVES</i> .	TEMPO – Change the speed of the theme – play it faster or slower.	DYNAMICS – Change the volume of the theme – play it louder or softer.	TEXTURE – Change the amount of sound we hear – play as a SOLO , add an ACCOMPANIMENT or CHORDS , add a COUNTER-MELODY (an ‘extra’ melody that is played or sung at the same time as the main melody, often higher in pitch and sometimes called a DESCANT).	TIMBRE AND SONORITY – Change the SOUND of the theme – play it on a different instrument.	ARTICULATION – Change the way the theme is played – smoothly (LEGATO – shown by a SLUR) or short, detached and spiky (STACCATO – shown by a dot).	PEDAL – A long (often very long!) note in the bass line of the music over which other parts, including the theme or a variation of the theme can be played. Also called a PEDAL NOTE or PEDAL POINT and often the TONIC note (but can be the DOMINANT or other notes).	DRONE – A long or series of repeated (often long) notes using the TONIC and DOMINANT notes together (a FIFTH).	MELODIC DECORATION – Adding extra notes or embellishments to the theme such as trills, turns, mordents (ORNAMENTS) or PASSING NOTES (extra notes between the main melody notes).	OSTINATO – Adding a repeated musical pattern (rhythmic or melodic) to the main theme as a form of variation.	CANON/ROUND – A song or piece of music in which different performers sing or perform the same THEME starting one after the other.	GROUND BASS – A repeated musical pattern in the bass part upon which chords, and melodies can be performed and varied “over the top” of.
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D. Tonality – Major and Minor



TONALITY refers to whether a **THEME** or **MELODY** is in a **MAJOR** or **MINOR** key. Changing the tonality from major to minor or minor to major is one way of providing a variation on the theme of melody. Major and minor scales follow a certain pattern of tones and semitones:



E. Inversion and Retrograde

INVERSION – Changing the **INTERVALS** between the notes of a theme so that they are upside down from the original.

RETROGRADE – A variation technique created by arranging the main theme backwards.

RETROGRADE INVERSION – Arranging the “inverted” variation of the theme backwards!

