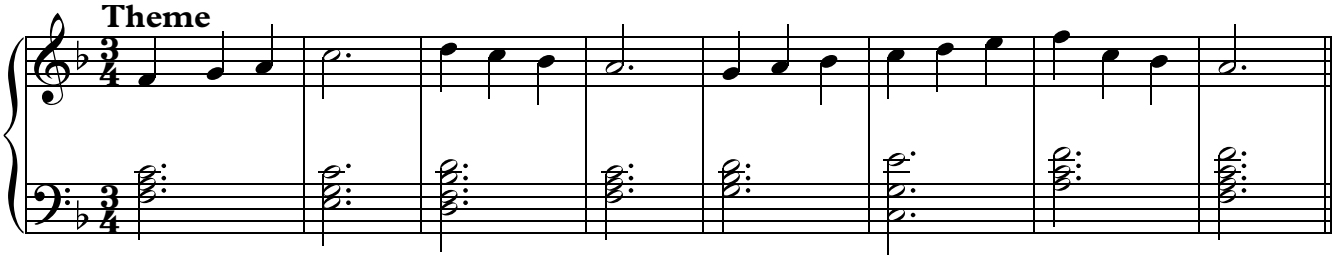
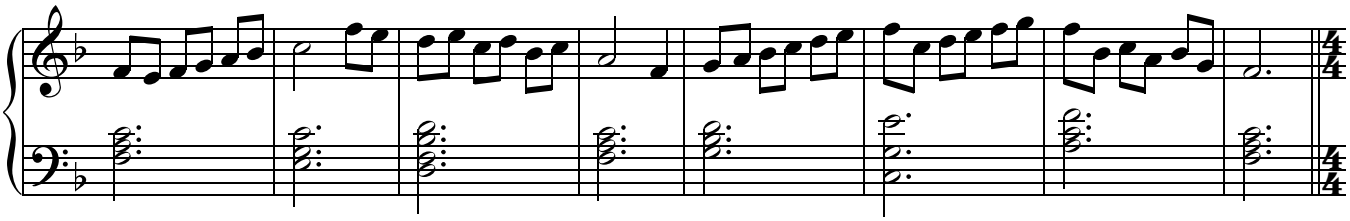
Theme and Variations - Cheat Sheet

Sectional Theme and Variations - A presentation of a theme and then distinct and separate variations
Continuous Theme and Variations - A passacaglia or chaconne where the bass/harmony stays the same and the melody creates constant variations (think Pachabel's Canon in D)

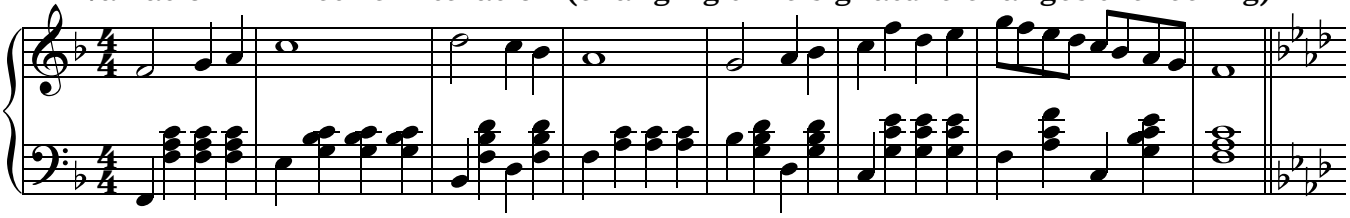
The key to understanding (and interpreting) theme and variation movements is to analyze what the composer is doing in each variation.



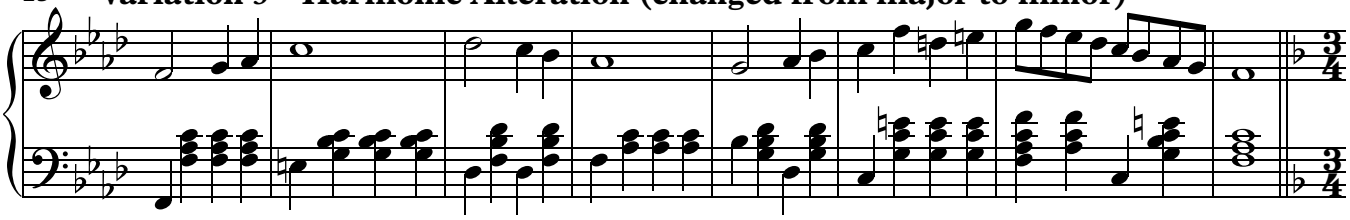
9 **Variation 1 - Rhythmic alteration (filling in the gaps)**



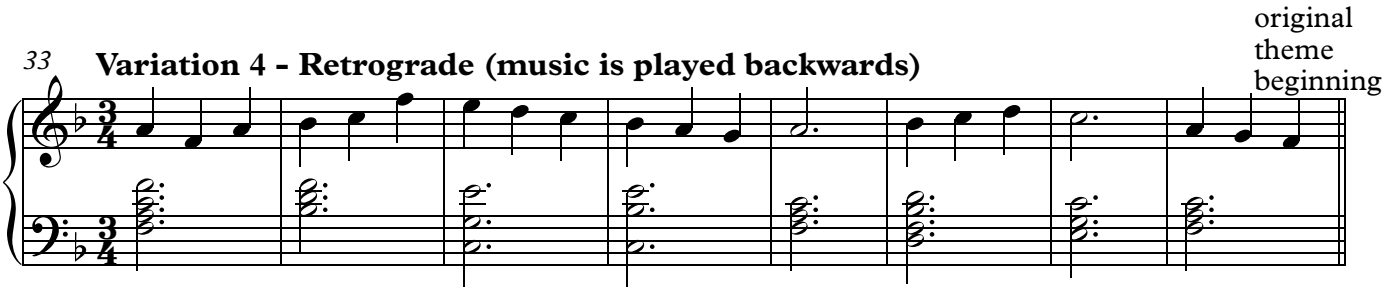
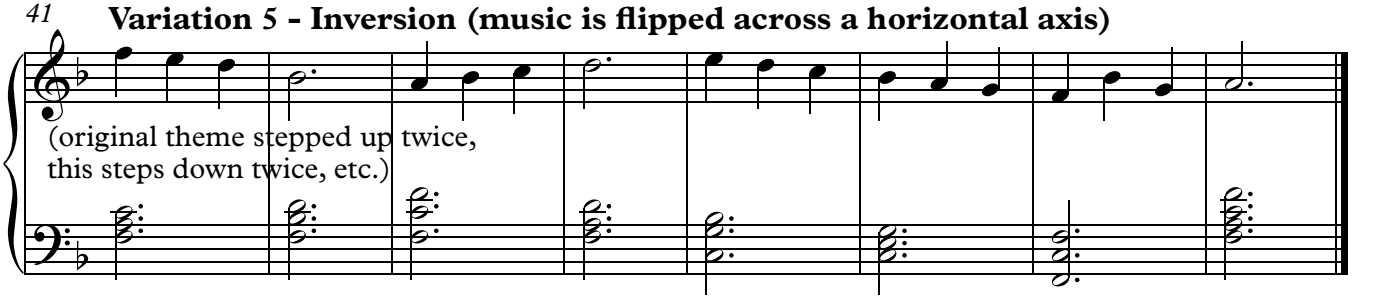
17 **Variation 2 - Metric Alteration (changing time signature changes the feeling)**



25 **Variation 3 - Harmonic Alteration (changed from major to minor)**



33 **Variation 4 - Retrograde (music is played backwards)**



41 **Variation 5 - Inversion (music is flipped across a horizontal axis)**