

Unit K3 - Theme and Variations



Keyboards in the Classroom

UNIT K3 - Theme and Variations

Card 1

Learning about theme and variations

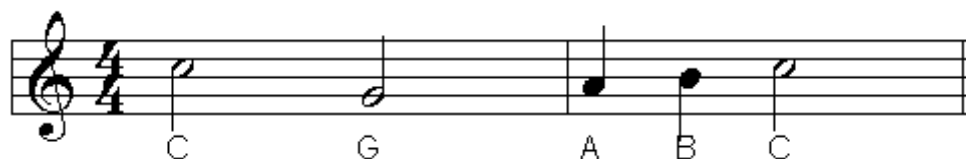
A *theme* is a tune. You can write the theme or you can borrow one that someone else has written

A *variation* is what you do when you change the theme. There are lots of things you can do to change it.

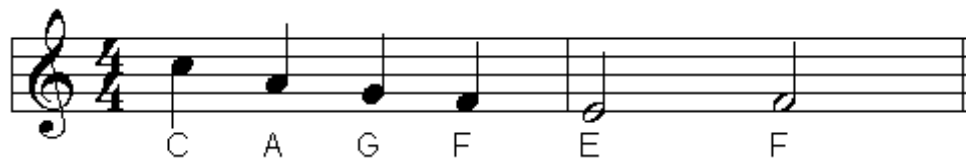
- Change the rhythm
- Add extra notes
- Play it with different chords
- Take away some notes
- Repeat some notes

Play these themes together then try making *two variations* on each.

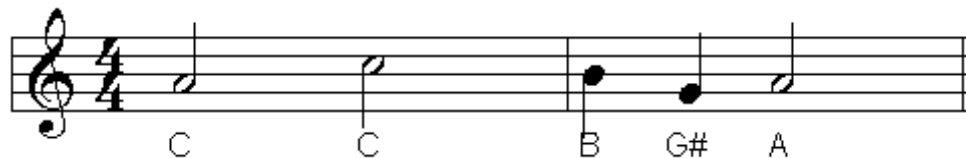
Theme 1



Theme 2



Theme 3



UNIT K3 - Theme and Variations

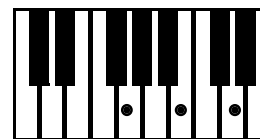
Card 2

Variations on chord playing

There are lots of things you can do to chords to make them sound interesting. Here is a G chord played all at once. This is called a *block chord*



G chord
play these notes



First, try splitting the notes up



Now play them backwards



Make up your own order to play them in



Go to different octaves

Change the rhythm

Try these ideas with these chords. If you aren't sure where they are, ask your teacher.

C chord

F chord

Am chord

UNIT K3 - Theme and Variations

Card 3

Composing variations on a simple tune

Play this tune. Learn it in stages. First learn bars 1 & 2, then 3 & 4, then 5 & 6 then 7 & 8.



Now that you can play it, try to change it 3 or 4 times. Here are a few hints to help you.

Try changing the rhythm slightly
Try repeating some notes
Change or add some notes

UNIT K3 - Theme and Variations

Card 4

Compsing variations on the 'Dies Irae' chant

This is a 13th century song written by Thomas de Celano. Dies Irae is part of the Requiem mass (used for funerals). It is about the Day of Judgement when God decides if the soul should go to heaven or to hell.

This tune has also been used by composers writing music for films

Dies Irae



C B C A B G A A C C D C B A G B C B AA

Compose variations on this theme.

UNIT K3 - Theme and Variations

Card 5

Composing variations on Pachelbel's Canon

This tune has been used in lots of music, including 'Altogether now' by the Farm, 'Don't look back in Anger' by Oasis and 'I'll see you when you get there' by Coolio. Originally it was composed by a composer called Pachelbel. It is based on these 8 notes.

Learn to play these 8 notes. Be careful whether it goes up or down to the next note.



Now try putting a chord on each of these bass notes. The first note is C, so add a E and G to make the chord. Do the same to each note so it sounds like this :



UNIT K3 - Theme and Variations

Card 6

Composing variations on Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy'

This piece of music was written by Beethoven and is part of his Symphony No. 9. It is also the European National Anthem. Try to play it in stages, then compose some variations on it.

The image shows three staves of musical notation for the first three staves of Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy'. Each staff is in 4/4 time and uses a treble clef. The notes are represented by letters (E, F, G, D, C) and are placed on a five-line staff. Chord symbols (C, G, D) are placed above the notes. The first staff has a repeat sign with two endings. The second staff has a repeat sign. The third staff has a repeat sign.

Staff 1: C G C G C
E E F G G F E D C C D E E DD D CC

Staff 2: G C G C G C D G
D E C D E F E C D E F E D C D G E

Staff 3: C G C G C
E E F G G F E D C C D E D CC

UNIT K3 - Theme and Variations

Extension card 1

Composing variations 'La Folia'

La Folia is a type of Spanish Dance called a Sarabande. A Sarabande has 3 beats in each bar and an accent on the 2nd beat.

Make up some variations on this tune. You can use the auto chord function of your keyboard if you want. Remember to use a rhythm with 3 beats in it (Waltz)

La Folia

The image shows the musical notation for 'La Folia' in 3/4 time. The first staff contains four measures of music. Above the staff are the chords: Am, E, Am, and G. Below the staff are the notes: A A, G# G#, A A, and B B. The second staff contains four measures of music. Above the staff are the chords: C, G, Am, and E. Below the staff are the notes: B B, B B, A A, and G# G#. The piece ends with a double bar line at the end of the second staff.