

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:                   SELECTED VARIATIONS BY COMPOSERS  
  IN GERMANY AND FRANCE

Sung-ok Kwak, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2006

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The *Harvard of Dictionary of Music* (1983), defines variation as “a technique modifying a given musical idea.” From the Baroque period on, the form and the techniques of variation were developed and enriched in Germany and France. Therefore, I presented the works of composers from these two nations. Even though there was a vast number of possibilities, I wanted to be scholastically fair and interesting in making my selections by choosing well-known pieces along with lesser-known ones.

Haydn’s well-known Variations in F minor consist of two sets of double variations which break into an improvisation fantasy.

The first movement of Beethoven Sonata in A flat major, Op. 26, is a set of five variations on the composer’s original theme. The variations are positioned in the first movement instead of Sonata-Allegro form.

In 1861 Brahms composed the Variations and Fugue, Op. 24, on the theme of Handel. Brahms displays a wealth of rhythmic, harmonic and textural contrasts in the variations.

Chopin's E Major Variations without opus number are written on a Swiss-influenced German folksong.

Faure's Theme and Variations in C sharp minor, Op. 73, includes eleven variations. The work displays the composer's subtlety, grace and reticence.

12 Variationen über ein eigenes Thema were written by Alban Berg as a composition study with Schönberg.

The Finale of Dutilleux's Piano Sonata, titled "Chorale with Variations", is written in an impressionistic style. A rich expressiveness is well blended in a classical form.

In 1742, the remarkable Aria and thirty variations known as the *Goldberg Variations* were composed by J. S. Bach. The thirty Variations are unified by the bass line, which forms the foundation of the Aria.

The pieces discussed above were presented in three recitals. Compact disc recordings of these recitals are available in the Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library of the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland.

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by

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Beethoven: Sonata in A flat major, Op. 26

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#### Compact Disc Two

Goldberg Variations, BWV988

#### Compact Disc Three

Faure: Theme and Variations, Op. 73

Chopin: Variations in E major

Berg: 12 Variations on an Original Theme

Dutilleux: Chorale with Four Variations