

Hermann Schroeder

1904 - 1977

Variationen über den Tonus peregrinus

Variations on Tonus peregrinus

für Orgel
for Organ

(1975)

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Preface

With the wealth of material in Gregorian chant available to composers seeking to write vocal or instrumental arrangements, it is rather surprising that anyone should look beyond the *ordinarium*, *proprium*, and hymns to draw on sources such as psalmody. Psalm tones (numbered to match the modes) with their pattern *initium* – *tenor* – *medius* – *tenor* – *finalis* do not seem apt to fire a composer's imagination, even when approached with the wildest writing variations. What is there to be varied? The elasticity of the tenor line and the varying structure of the prose text in the psalm does not offer much scope for variation, especially the tenor line which, like a pedal point, firmly resists every attempt to vary it, at least where key is concerned. A look at the history of what are known as 'psalm settings', such as the Magnificat, for instance, shows clearly that however varied the instrumental setting of the versets of the Magnificat by a composer such as Samuel Scheerke may be, they still come up against the insuperable obstacle of tonal constraints.

This setting of the ninth tone – the *tonus peregrinus* – adopts a new approach to arrangement and modulation by lowering the *tenor* from *medius* to *finalis* from A to G (that is, from the sixth note of the scale to the fifth) and the *finalis* from D for the *finalis*. The *tonus peregrinus* is in fact the only psalm tone to have been used in the Protestant tradition from Luther's day to the present. Each tone is represented in 'Suscepit Israel' in his Magnificat, while Mozart uses the *tonus peregrinus* in his Magnificat in his Requiem, setting the words of the psalm 'Te decet hymnus' in the form of the *tonus peregrinus* with its upward minor third interval. His 'theme' takes the form of the *tonus peregrinus*.

As early as the sixteenth century, composers began to put psalm tones together with preludes, fugues and other instrumental forms. In the eighteenth century, psalm settings generally free from formal constraints, though essentially derived from the psalm tones, were composed in the manner of fantasias. Here Schroeder adds to the tradition of the psalm tones by using the psalm tones in a more varied way. The psalm tones are to be found everywhere (e.g. the *tonus peregrinus* in the *tenor* part, which becomes a kind of *leitmotiv*), alongside extended passages of instrumental material already heard. Throughout the piece, apart from the *tonus peregrinus* in the form of the *tonus peregrinus* psalm tone only appears again in the *tenor* part in measures 2 and 8: in the pedal part and once with a 4' stop. Then there is variety in the treatment of the psalmic template, reflecting twentieth-century explorations of the psalmic template. Every note of the original could theoretically be given any kind of harmonic support, which is frequently derived from the contrapuntal line.

The whole cycle can be performed in a (church) concert. Using these variations in the form of versets for a performance of a Magnificat, alternating them with verses sung by a *schola cantorum*, might also be very effective. The Gregorian spirit certainly breathes through these Variations.

Raimund Keusen
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Tonus peregrinus (nificat)



Variationen

über den Tonus peregrinus

Hermann Schroeder

Introduction

Allegro maestoso ♩ = 76-80

Manuale

Pedal

The introduction consists of three systems of music. The first system is for the Manual and Pedal. The Manual part is written in two staves (treble and bass clefs) and the Pedal part is in a single bass clef staff. The tempo is marked 'Allegro maestoso' with a quarter note equal to 76-80 beats per minute. The dynamic is 'ff' (fortissimo). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The second system continues the Manual and Pedal parts. The third system shows the Manual part in two staves and the Pedal part in one staff, with a 5/4 time signature change.

The second system of the introduction features the Manual part in two staves and the Pedal part in one staff. The tempo and dynamic remain the same. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

The third system of the introduction features the Manual part in two staves and the Pedal part in one staff. The tempo and dynamic remain the same. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

The fourth system of the introduction features the Manual part in two staves and the Pedal part in one staff. The tempo and dynamic remain the same. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

Thema

Adagio ♩ = 54

The first system of the musical score is in 4/4 time. The right-hand part (treble clef) begins with a melody marked *mp* (Solo trem.) and features a long slur over the first four measures. The left-hand part (bass clef) provides accompaniment, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

The second system continues the piece, with the right-hand part showing a melodic line and the left-hand part providing harmonic support. The tempo remains Adagio.

The third system concludes the 'Thema' section. It includes a *rit.* (ritardando) marking above the right-hand part. The piece ends with a final cadence in the right-hand part.

Var. I

Allegro tempo ♩ = 54

The first system of 'Var. I' is in 4/4 time and marked *Allegro tempo*. The right-hand part features a rapid, sixteenth-note arpeggiated pattern. The left-hand part (bass clef) has a melodic line starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

System 1 of a musical score. It features a grand staff with three staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle in alto clef, and the bottom in bass clef. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes with various articulations and slurs.

System 2 of a musical score. It features a grand staff with three staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle in alto clef, and the bottom in bass clef. The music continues with similar rhythmic patterns and articulations.

System 3 of a musical score. It features a grand staff with three staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle in alto clef, and the bottom in bass clef. This system includes a change in time signature from 3/4 to 4/4.

System 4 of a musical score. It features a grand staff with three staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle in alto clef, and the bottom in bass clef. This system includes a change in time signature from 4/4 to 3/4 and back to 4/4.

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Var. II

Allegretto con moto ♩ = 112

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff begins with a common time signature (C) and a 7/8 time signature, followed by a 3/4 time signature. The bass staff begins with a common time signature (C) and a 3/4 time signature. The second system also consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff begins with a 3/4 time signature, followed by a 4/4 time signature, and then a 2/4 time signature. The bass staff begins with a 3/4 time signature, followed by a 4/4 time signature, and then a 2/4 time signature. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, beams, and slurs. A large, semi-transparent watermark reading "PREVIEW" is overlaid diagonally across the entire page. The tempo marking "Allegretto con moto" and the metronome marking "♩ = 112" are located at the top left. The dynamic marking "mf (bell)" is present in the first measure of the first system. The word "rit." is written above the final measure of the second system.