

Part 1

VARIATIONS

Variations pieces explore how music can be developed and transformed through changes to rhythms, modes, and keys, and by adding extra features such as passing notes. There are simple rounds; short, repetitive pieces; and longer pieces with a more intricate structure. It would be possible to create a set of variations from many of these pieces—this would lengthen performances and help players to develop their understanding of structure and form.

Richmond Rag

Richmond Rag demonstrates how very simple parts can be developed through changes to rhythms. Each part comprises only five notes, so this piece is suitable for near beginners.

- First learn the parts as written. When these are secure add the accompaniment.
- Now experiment with some rhythmic variations:
 - Replace all the minims with two crotchets; can Guitar 1 players play minims while Guitar 2 players stick to crotchets, and vice versa?
 - Next insert other rhythms for the minim bars, such as 
 - Ask pupils to make up their own rhythms to play in the minim bars, and get them to take turns to incorporate these in the piece. Keep pupils on their toes by calling out the name of the player who should play their rhythm next!
- Use these ideas to create a set of rhythmic variations; you can repeat as many times as you like!

The Old Galleon

The Old Galleon uses only a small range of notes, with parts 1, 2, and 3 being ideal for beginners as they use only two notes each. Guitar 4 can be played by a teacher or a more experienced pupil. After learning the piece as written, create a performance as a group using the ideas for variations given below. If there are chord players in the group, adding the chords suggested on p. 50 will give the music another dimension.

- Get parts 1, 2, and 3 to replace each of their minims with two crotchets, and then see if each part in turn can do this for two bars.
- Ask the pupils on each part to make up a two-bar rhythm from crotchets and quavers; these could be used for different variations.
- Agree on some *forte* and *piano* dynamics for each variation, or ask a pupil to call out the dynamic at which everyone should play!

Once a Man Fell in a Well

This one-bar round is based on a simple scalar melody, and it can be played by ear in different keys. By changing from major to minor you can also introduce the concept of different tonalities. Perform this in as many parts as suits your group.

- Learn the tune all together as written (in G major), and then play as a one-bar round.
- Now play in C major, beginning and ending on C.
- Then try in A minor, beginning and ending on A.

Café Bonito

This piece has a fade at the end, which requires students to listen to each other and to the accompaniment, and to agree on when to finish. The notes and rhythms are slightly more complex here but there is plenty of scope for having fun with variations:

- Change the bars containing two minims to  or  or 
- The dotted minims could be changed to these same rhythms minus the last crotchet.

2 Variations

- An additional challenge would be for the two guitar parts to play different rhythmic variations at the same time!

Ah! Poor Bird

This round can be transformed from minor to major by changing just one note (sharpening the 3rd).

- Play this as a one-bar round in up to four parts.
- Ask pupils if they want a happier bird! They can make it happy by changing all the Fs into F#s—this will change the key from D minor to D major.
- If performing in two parts, the round can be repeated numerous times, alternating between major and minor each time. For a bit of fun, appoint a pupil to call out ‘happy bird’ or ‘poor bird’ each time the first group reaches the end of the round—this will challenge players to adjust quickly to the new mode!

Rest Awhile

This piece is an exercise in counting rests and leading the tune—you could liven things up by introducing forfeits for those playing in the rests!

- Play as written to begin with, encouraging pupils to stop the strings from ringing on into the rests.
- Now get pupils to leave out the first of the two crotchets in each bar to create a crotchet rest.
- When playing through again, try leaving out the second quaver in each bar instead to create a quaver rest.
- Next bring in the parts with different tone colours—*ponticello* or *tasto*.

Acapulco Beach

This piece uses rhythms associated with Latin America; pupils need to be secure with these rhythms before trying variations. Once confident, try the following:

- Get one player to replace each dotted crotchet with three quavers; swap to a different player on each repeat.
- Now get pupils to switch parts on the repeats, e.g. part 1 players move to part 2; part 2 players move to part 3, etc.
- As a group, create a performance plan incorporating these ideas.

Mood Swings

Like *Ah! Poor Bird*, *Mood Swings* shows how changing one note can alter the mood of a piece, in this case by switching from A minor to A major.

- First play through as written.
- Now ask pupils to change all the C♭s to C#s.
- Next try repeating each line so that everyone plays C♭s the first time and C#s the second time.
- For a rhythmic variation, see if pupils on parts 1 and 2 can swing the quavers (♩ = $\overset{\frown}{\underset{\smile}{\text{♩}}}$). Get part 3 players to shout out ‘straight’ or ‘swung’ every four bars, or even every two!

Adding strummed chords can be effective here (see p. 50), but be sure to switch to A major where appropriate!

Steppes

Steppes introduces the idea of ‘passing notes’, which can transform a simple piece into a much more sophisticated-sounding one.

- Play through as written until pupils are familiar with the music.

- Now ask them to add passing notes by filling in the gap where two notes are a 3rd apart, e.g. bar 1, part 2:



- Ask pupils to see which guitar part has the most places where passing notes can be used.

Allegretto

Play *Allegretto* as written first—it is a useful exercise in observing rests and damping the strings. Then try performing it with different variations; the following ideas will help pupils explore rhythms, rests, and time signatures:

- Fill in all the quaver rests by repeating the previous note. (For the brave, these quavers could then become semiquavers!)
- Each guitar part could play repeated notes for a section while the others keep to the original.
- Try playing it in swing rhythm; this will effectively turn it into 6/8 time.

Take Twelve

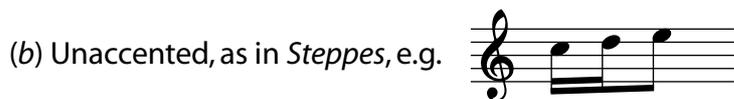
Take Twelve uses rhythmic changes to alter the sound and feel of the music, and it provides an opportunity to introduce swing rhythm. Play through to begin with and then try the following variations:

- Guitar 4: fill in the rests by repeating the given notes in crotchets or swung quavers.
- All or some parts change the crotchets into swung quavers. Choose one player to call out who should play the swung quavers; the other players should play as written.
- Occasionally slide into a note from a lower fret or two.
- You could get a chord player to add a strummed part—see p. 50 for the chords. This piece uses the ‘three chord trick’ found in all traditional blues.

Caprice

This piece provides practice at adding passing notes (both accented and unaccented) and gives pupils the opportunity to play fast semiquavers, not only as passing notes but in the rhythmic change at letter ‘B’.

- Once everyone is playing confidently as written, make up some variations by adding passing notes in sections ‘A’ and ‘A1’. These could be:



- At ‘B’, give students an opportunity to show off their dexterity by challenging them to change some of the quaver passages to semiquavers.

Remind the pupils to observe the rests by deadening the strings.

Richmond Rag

(accompanied)

Moderato ♩ = 120

1 *mf*

2 *mf*

7 *f*

13 *mf*

1,2 etc. last time

Detailed description: This block contains the first variation of the Richmond Rag. It is written for two staves in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is Moderato at 120 beats per minute. The first system (measures 1-6) features a melody in the upper staff and a bass line in the lower staff, both marked *mf*. The second system (measures 7-12) continues the melody and bass line, with the upper staff marked *f* and the lower staff marked *f*. The third system (measures 13-18) includes a first ending marked '1,2 etc.' and a second ending marked 'last time'. The first ending is marked *mf* and the second ending is marked *mf*.

Accompaniment

Moderato ♩ = 120

mf

6 *f*

11 *mf*

15a 1,2 etc. last time

Detailed description: This block contains the accompaniment for the Richmond Rag. It is written for a single staff in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is Moderato at 120 beats per minute. The first system (measures 1-5) features a bass line marked *mf*. The second system (measures 6-10) continues the bass line, with the lower notes marked *f*. The third system (measures 11-14) continues the bass line, with the lower notes marked *mf*. The fourth system (measures 15-18) includes a first ending marked '1,2 etc.' and a second ending marked 'last time'.

The Old Galleon

Andante ♩ = 50

The musical score for 'The Old Galleon' is in 2/2 time and consists of four staves. The tempo is marked 'Andante' with a quarter note equal to 50 beats. The first three staves (1, 2, and 3) are marked with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and feature a simple harmonic accompaniment of half notes. The fourth staff (4) is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic and features a more active bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system containing measures 1-4 and the second system containing measures 5-8. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

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Once a Man Fell in a Well

German trad.

Allegretto ♩ = 102

The musical score for 'Once a Man Fell in a Well' is in 2/4 time and consists of a single staff. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto' with a quarter note equal to 102 beats. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The piece is marked with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and features a rhythmic melody of eighth and sixteenth notes. An asterisk (*) is placed above the second measure. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

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Café Bonito

(accompanied)

Allegretto ♩ = 130

1

2

mf

mf

7

mp

mf

mp

mf

12

17

mp

mp

1, 2 etc.

last time
Repeat ad lib. and gradually
fade away to nothing

Accompaniment

Allegretto ♩ = 130

mf

5 *CI*

9 *mp* *mf*

13

17 *mp* 1, 2 etc.

21 *mf* last time Repeat ad lib. and gradually fade away to nothing

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Ah! Poor Bird

Trad.

Andante ♩ = 80

mp *

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