

Variations on a Theme by Modeste Mussorgsky

For Solo Unaccompanied Saxophone

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The subject theme for this set of variations comes from the second movement (Il Vecchio Castello / The Old Castle) of Modeste Mussorgsky's (1839-1881) Pictures at an Exhibition (Composed in 1874).

THEME

Song-Like and Sorrowful statement of the theme.

VARIATION I

Rhythmic variation and an increase in rhythmic activity. Introduces change of meter.

VARIATION II

Slightly slower and with a more complex meter. Introduces spaces in the melodic line.

VARIATION III

Increased complexity of meter. Some inversion of melodic shape. Increased spaces in the melodic line. The performer should imagine and "hear" music within the spaces so that cut-offs and entrances are not abrupt. Quick transition to parallel major.

VARIATION IV

Stylistic variation of theme in parallel major. Increased tempo and rhythmic activity.

VARIATION V

Returns to minor key. Faster and still more active. Ends with a climactic flourish and a quick release and return to the final restatement of the theme.

CODA / THEME RESTATEMENT

A slightly slower and more sorrowful restatement of the first half of the theme.