Form and Analysis
Day 22
Theme and variations day 1

Two kinds of theme and variation:

1) traditional: theme followed by variations primarily of the melody, but of many parameters in fact.
2) ground-based (ostinato): repeated melodic figure, often in bass, runs through whole piece or movement

#1: separate theme, sections clear >> **sectional variations**
#2: chaconne, passacaglia, variations on a ground, etc. >> **continuous variations**

(We are dealing with sectional variations first.)

Analyzing sectional variations:

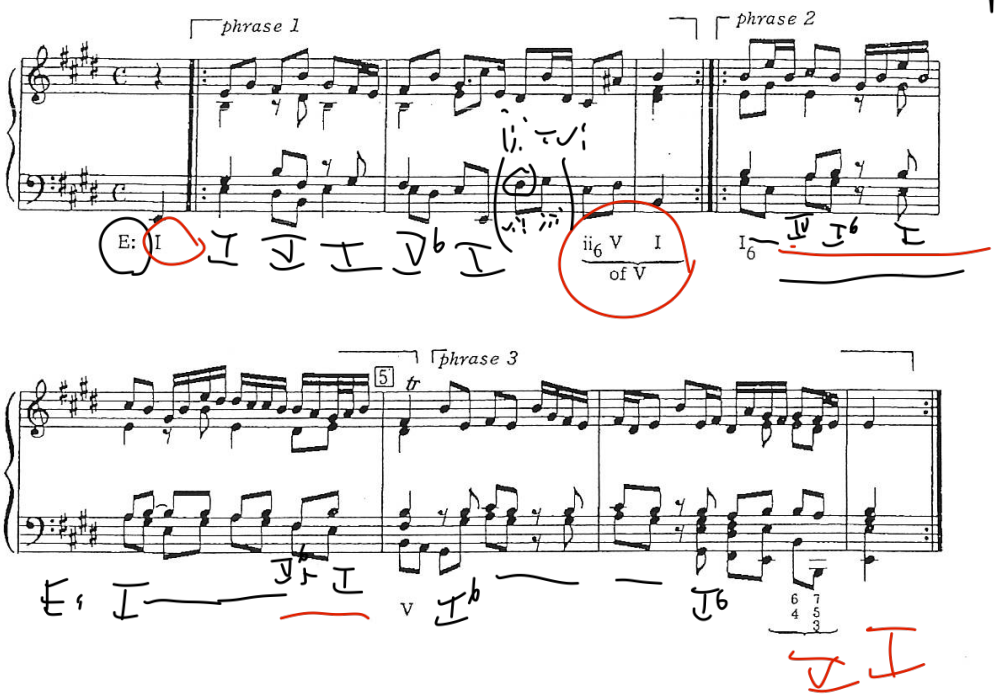
1. Analyze and describe original
2. Analyze changes of basic features through variations
3. Take note of what does not change
4. Devise an account of the shape the music takes as it goes through the series of variations

Keep track of: Key, mode, form, length, basic tonal structure, precise harmonic sequence, tempo, melody, bass, and texture

Green: theme and variation examples

Example 6–1

HANDEL: *Suite No. 5 in E Major*, Air ("The Harmonious Blacksmith")



1. Key: E
2. Mode: major
3. Form: simple continuous binary
4. Length: part one, two bars, repeated; part two, four bars, repeated
5. Basic tonal structure:

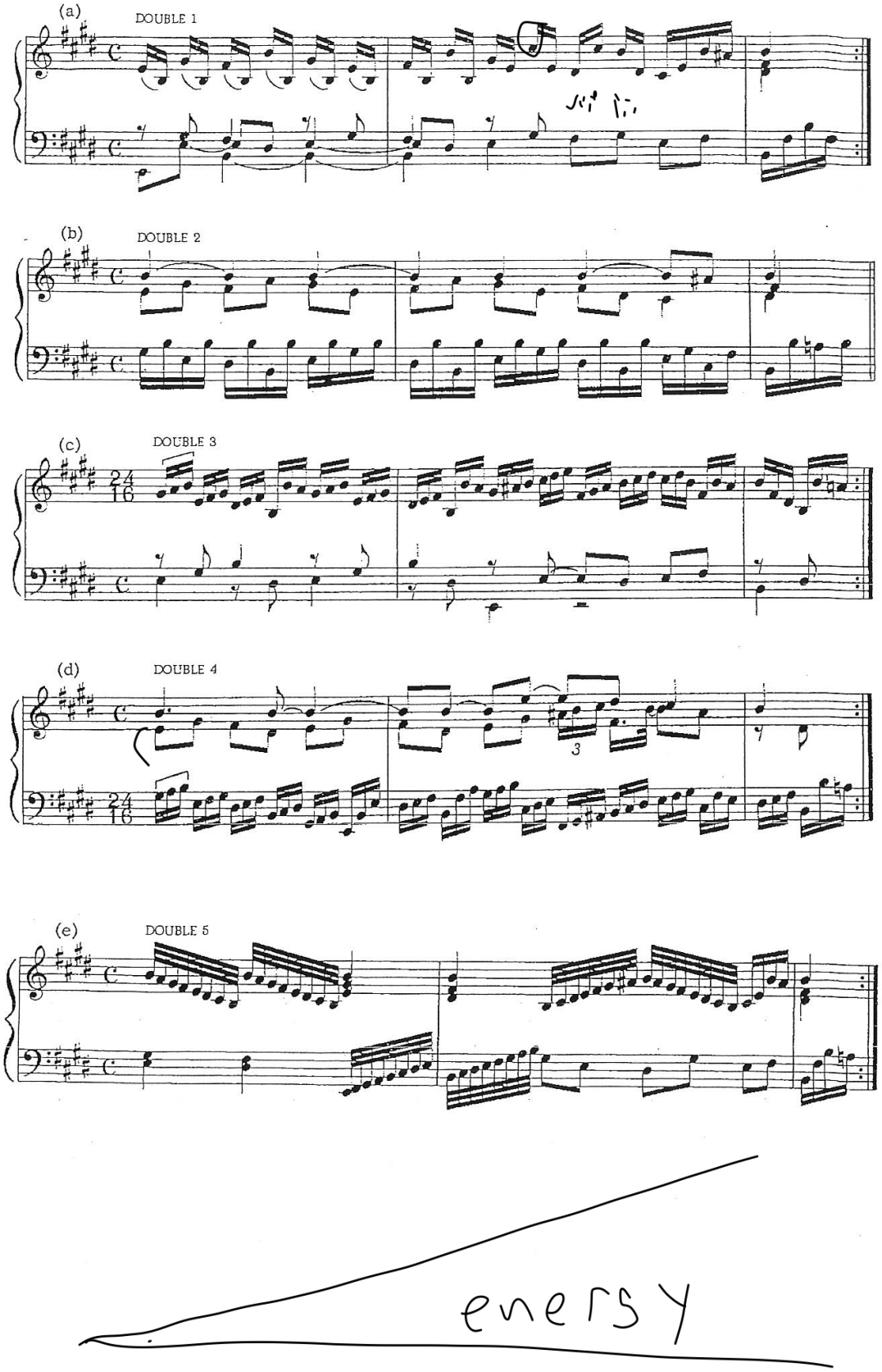
6. Precise harmonic sequence:

$$\| : \text{I V I} \mid \text{V}_6 \ \text{vi}_6 \ \text{vii}^{\circ}_6 \ \text{iii} \ \underbrace{\text{ii}_6 \ \text{V}}_{\text{of V}} \ \text{I} : \|$$

$$\| : \text{I}_6 \ \text{IV} \ \text{I}_6 \ \text{I} \mid \text{IV} \ \text{I}_6 \ \text{IV} \ \text{I}_6 \ \text{vii}^{\circ}_6 \ \text{I} \mid \text{V} \ \text{I}_6 \ \text{ii}_6 \ \text{I}_6 \mid \text{ii}_6 \ \text{I}_6 \ \text{vii}^{\circ}_6 \ \text{I} \ \text{V}_7 \mid \text{I} : \|$$

7. Tempo: not indicated; presumably *moderato*
8. Melody
9. Bass
10. Texture: homophonic, mostly four-part chordal style

HANDEL: *Suite No. 5 in E Major*



Types of variation (i.e., ways of varying):

Ornamental
Simplifying
Figural
Melodic: new melody added to a variation (typically in continuous variations)
Contrapuntal (imitative, canonic, fugal, etc.)
Characteristic: make the variation resemble a specific musical form or dance type