Circular Variations
on a Name

for solo piano

Peter McKenzie Armstrong

Opus 36, Revised

Edition Ottaviano Petrucci

NOTES

for the Revised edition

Most critically new in this revision are the many adjustments of detail in both pitch and attack time. These are recalculations (not reconceptions), made possible by a more dependable means – polar coordinates – of carrying out the axial rotation.

AntiVars I & II: These present Retrograde *or* Inversion – not the single function merging them, but the two independently. They are "Anti", as the rotation cycle never generates them. "I" includes the name parts only; "II" the counterpoint only in its perpendicular rendition.

The *detache* articulation default has one generic exception: a slur's initial note. The slur is specifically to connect, not all notes within it, but just two: start and end. Only the former is to be elongated, with all intervening members matching default. The point is to track rotational separation of the originally slurred pair, as accents track the theme's original stresses. Overall, dynamics should be layered to delineate the intermixing name parts as clearly as possible.

Per the usage style termed "forget", accidentals apply exactly once.

from the Original edition

COMPOSITION

I am interested to explore the implications of generating retrograde inversion, not via the immediate combination of two (horizontal and vertical) reflections, but through the gradual integrated workings of one axial rotation.

To that end and with the characters of a friend's name, I notated a short melody as dots on graph paper (X/Y=time/pitch), then marked separate transparent graph sheets each with a tilt line at the next increment of 15 degrees. Finally, viewing the original graph through these at their respective tilts, I noted the new X/Y values at each step of rotation.

In the result, especially as the thematic identity of individual notes suffers some jumbling at other than cardinal degrees, I have added several notations to aid in listener/viewer tracking: colors for the theme's first, middle and last names; articulations – a pair each of slurs and accents, one tenuto; and a between staves vertical line marking the rotation's timewise center. (The pitch center is B3.)

The theme pitches–classes were specified by mapping its name characters via an alphabet loop around the scale of F–major:

```
A  Bb  C  D  E  F  G
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a           E  F
h   i   J   I
o              t
          y
```

PERFORMANCE

Articulation. The default throughout is *detache.* This is not to say overly short, just that the current note is to end perceptibly/clearly before the next begins.

– PMA

Duration: 4+ min.

Addendum (2024). Ideally, this work would be performed complete as Mvmt. V of "Circular Variations on "F. J. E.", replacing that work's single measure.

to F.J.E.

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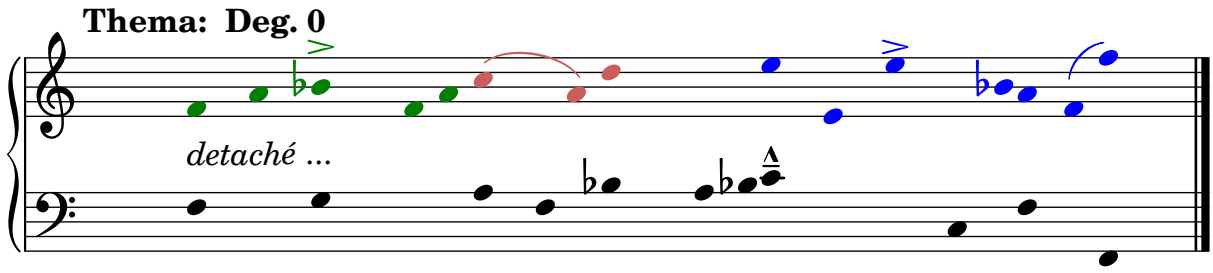

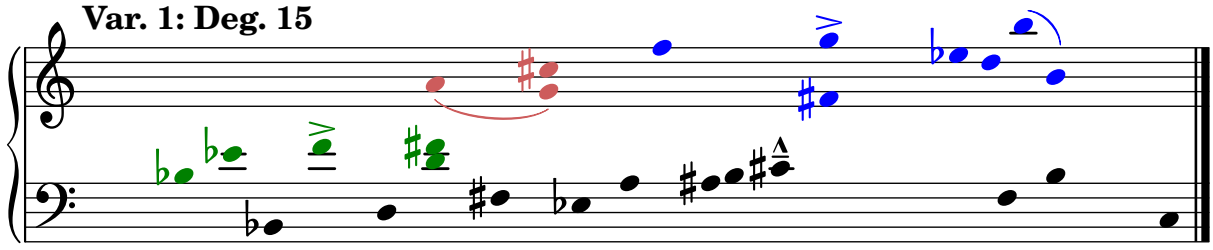

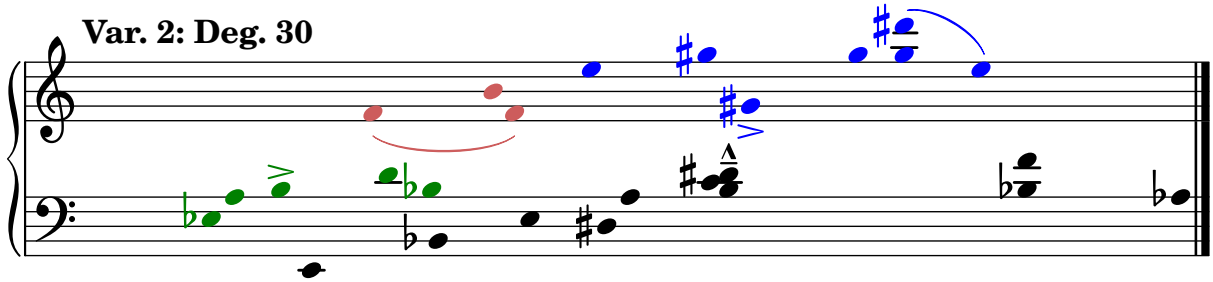

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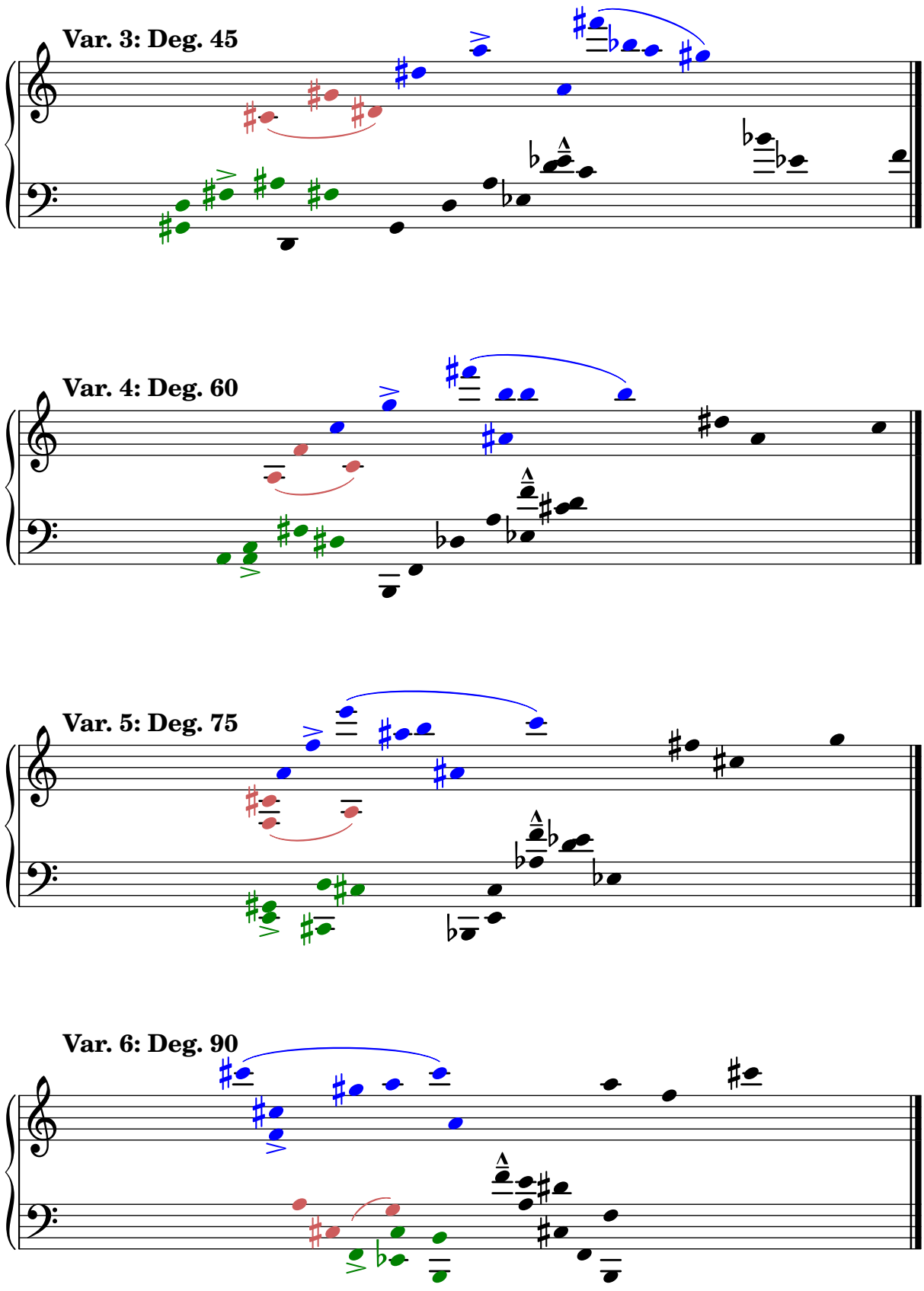
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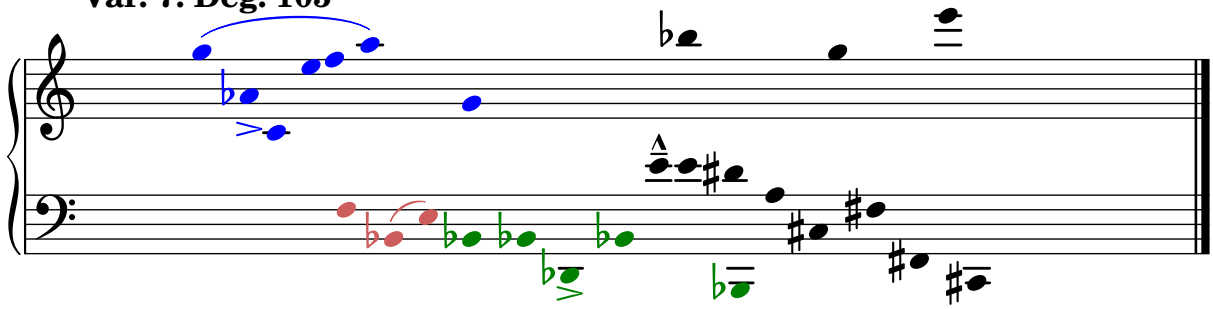
Var. 4: Deg. 60
Var. 5: Deg. 75
Var. 6: Deg. 90

Var. 7: Deg. 105



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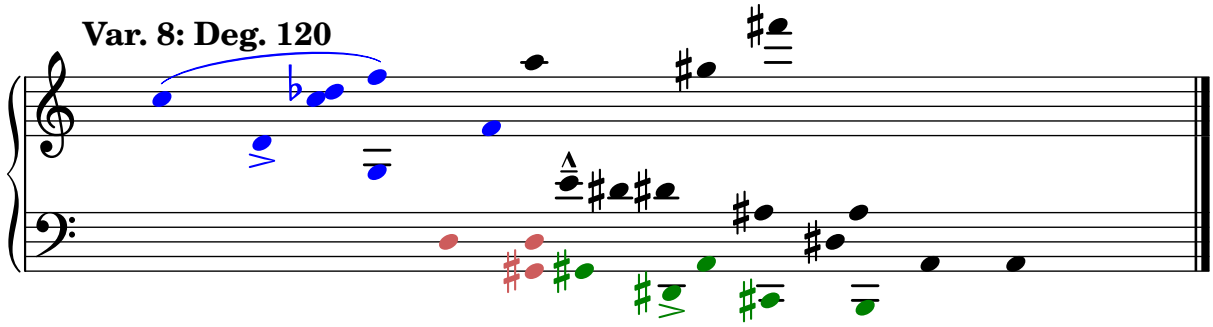

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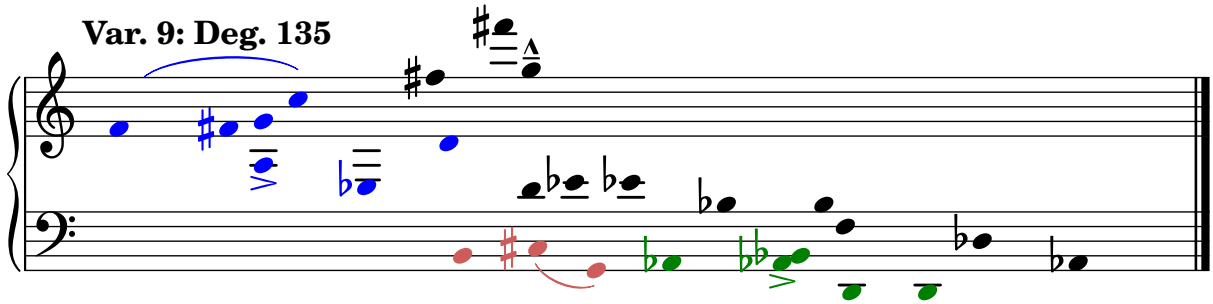

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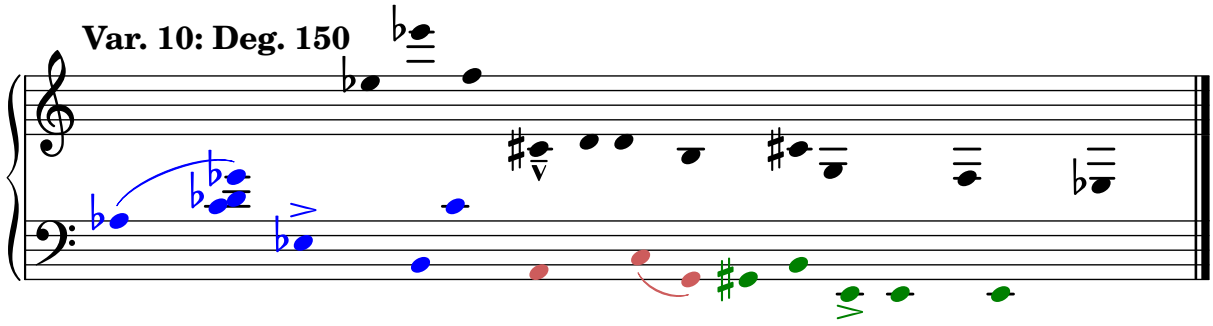

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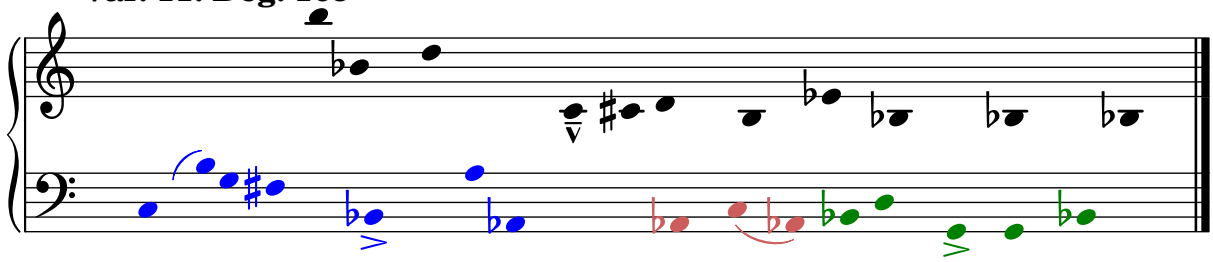

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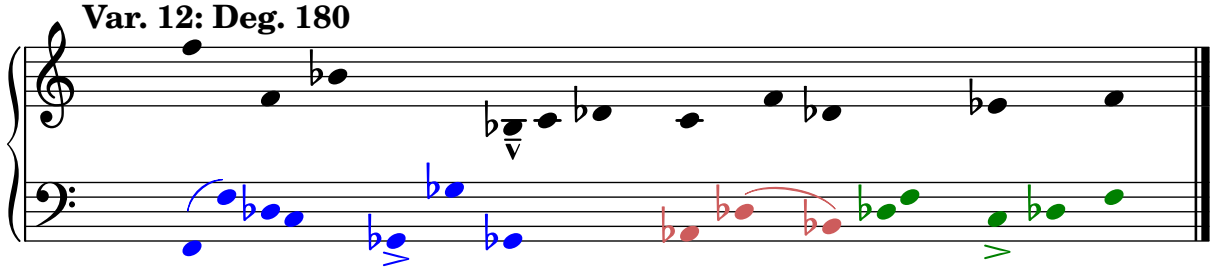

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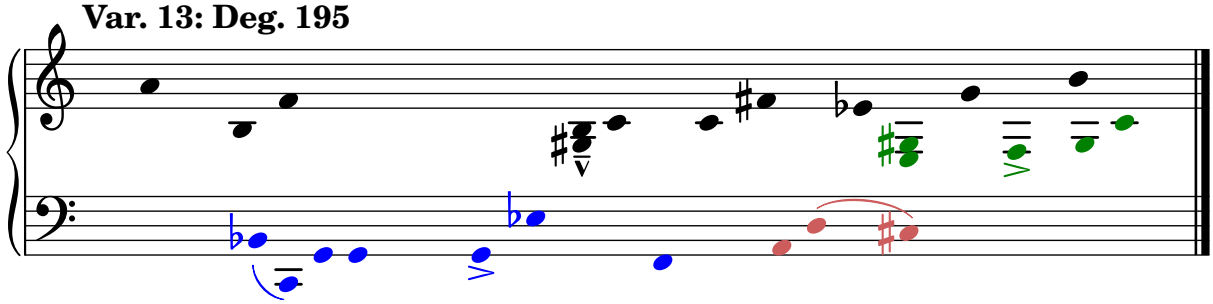

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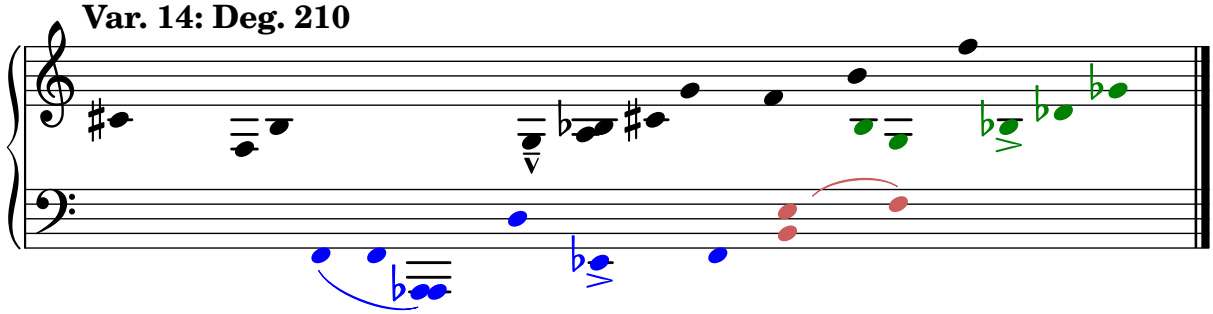

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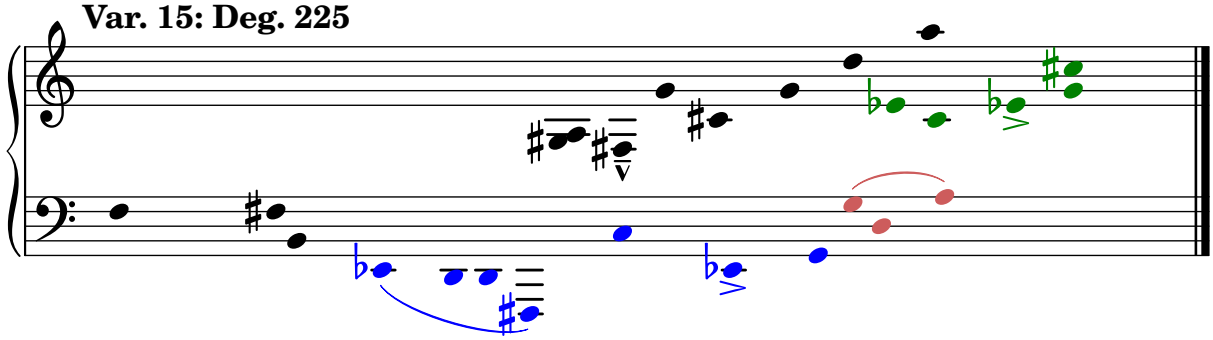

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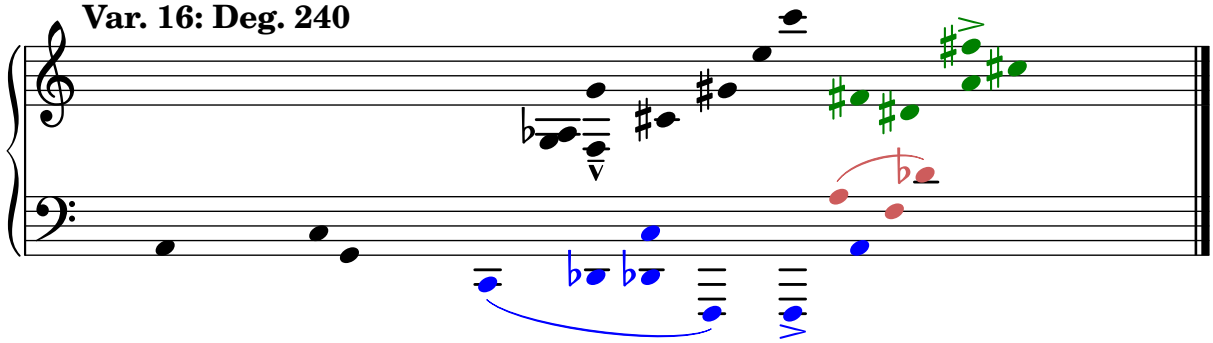

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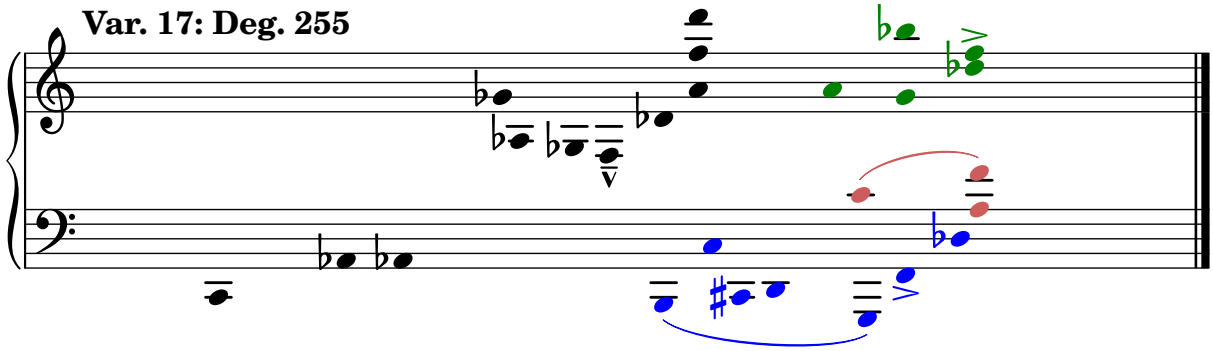

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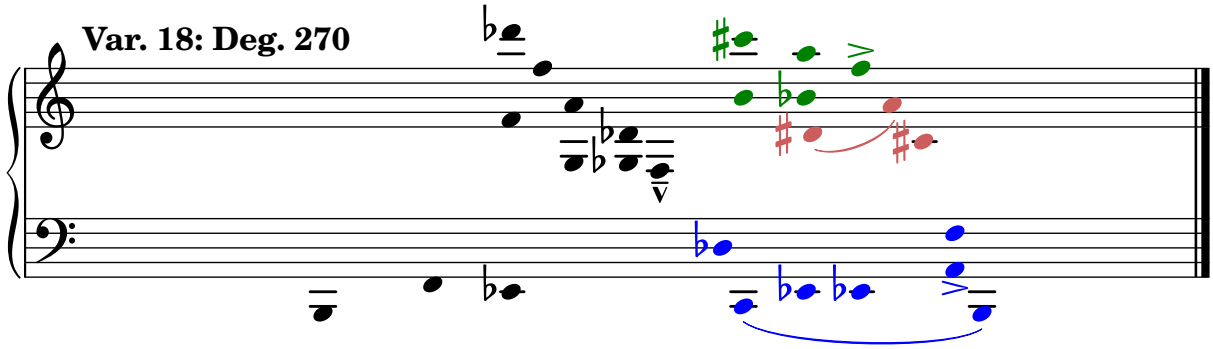

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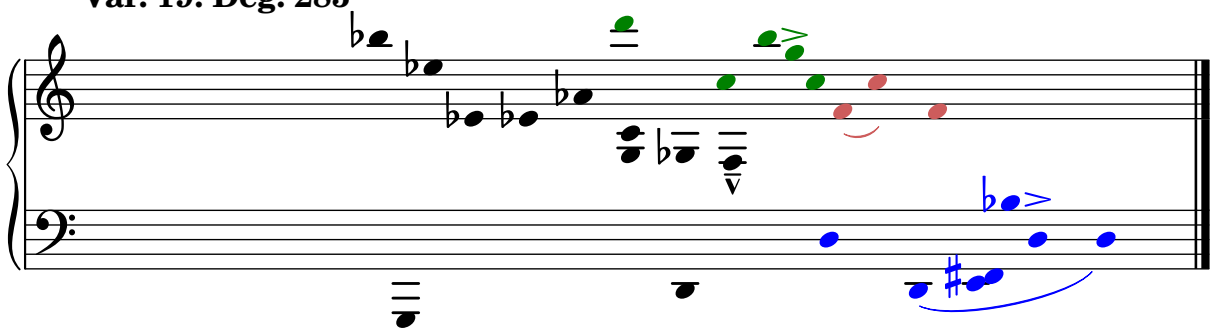

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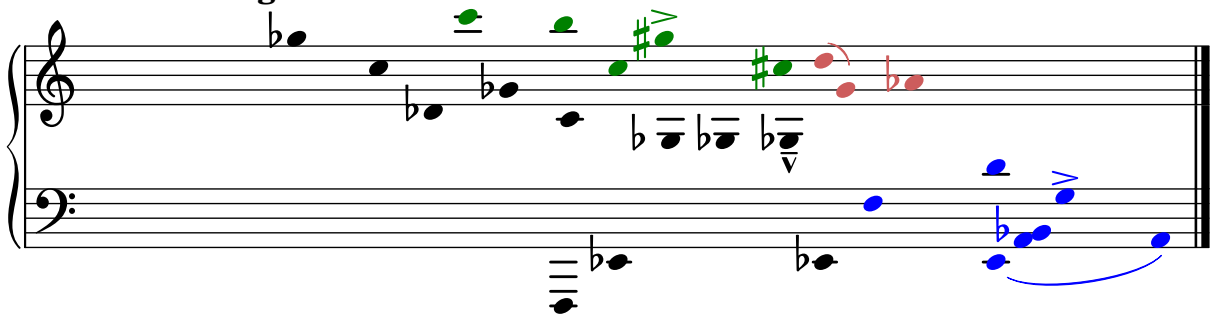

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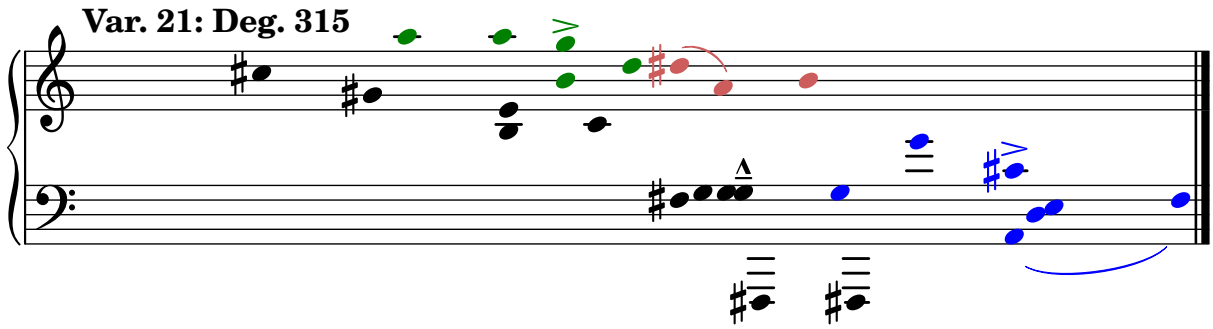

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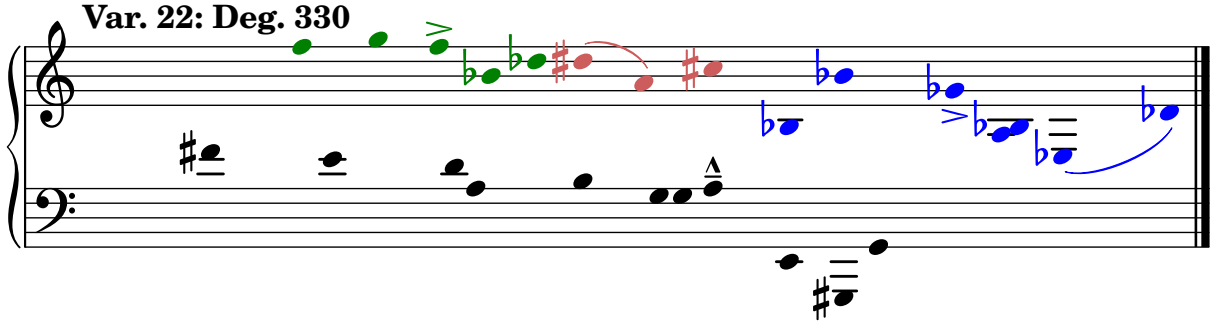

Var. 23: Deg. 345

AntiVar. I

AntiVar. II

Thema Da Capo: Deg. 360

F a i t h J o y E l l i o t t

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