Josse-François-Joseph Benaut

Variations on *O Filii et Filiae* "O Sons and Daughters of the King"

Edited by Barbara Harbach

Mr. Benaut, or Josse-François-Joseph Benaut, Maître of Clavecin, left a wealth of organ music. Unfortunately, very little is known about his life. The nature of his works for organ are short pieces with colorful registrations. The forms include variations, rondos, and song forms. The full range of the organ keyboard is successfully covered, accompanied by copious ornaments, appoggiaturas and suspensions, manual indications, and some articulation markings (heavy wedges, slurs, and fermatas). Filled in thirds, few pedal indications, and a melody and accompaniment style often with an Alberti bass make these works an interesting contribution to the French Classical organ style.

The title page of *O Filii et Filiae* reads:

> O FILII ET FILIAE, AVEC NEUF VARIATIONS ARRANGEES POUR l'ORGUE PAR BENAUT Maître de Clavecin, Prix 1#16f, A PARIS, *Ches /'Auteur, rue Dauphine la Porte Cochere, vis-à-vis l'Hotel de Flandre.*

The text to *O Filii et Filiae* is attributed to Jean Tisseran (died 1494), and the melody is a fifteenth-century French tune.

Each theme and variation of *O Filii et Filiae* preserves the same overall structure of sections and phrases, the same number of measures, and the same melody and harmonic structure. The variation technique is demonstrated by changing the time values for each variation.

The opening theme of *O Filii et Filiae* is clearly stated with the melody in the right hand, chordal style, and octaves in the left hand. Variation 1 has an ornamented melody in eighth notes in the treble clef, while the left hand has material similar to the left hand musical material of the original theme. A descending and ascending chromatic line characterize the left hand of Variation 2 while the right hand has the melody ornamented. Variation 3 has triplets in the right hand still clearly stating the melody; the left hand has quarter notes. The patterns are reversed in Variation 4 with the triplets in the left hand while the right hand contains the ornamented melody. *Musette Flamande* is in the low range of the keyboard for Variation 5. Originally, the right hand was in the alto clef. The left hand has sixteenth notes. Variation 6 utilizes the higher range of the keyboard with the melody in the right hand in sixteenth notes. An ornamented melody in the left hand (originally in the alto clef) contrasts with two-part harmony in the right in Variation 7. In Variation 8, the left hand has sixteenth notes and the right hand has the melody with ornamentation. The final variation, 9, is *grandiose* in style with sixteenth notes in the right hand with sections of parallel thirds, while the left hand has octaves often with full chords.

Although manual registrations indicate a three or four manual organ, these pieces can successfully be played on smaller organs. Performers can use their discretion in playing left hand low notes on the pedal *ad libitum.*

The rhythmic figure of a half note followed by a grace note and then a quarter note may be interpreted as a dotted quarter, eighth, followed by a quarter.

The *O Filii et Filiae* variations are a welcome addition to the performing and teaching repertoire of the late Classical period. They are well constructed, interesting, and rewarding for the performer. The variations are particularly effective during the Easter season as well as other times of the year.

Editor's note: This performing edition is an Urtext in which few ornaments, phrasing, articulation, or dynamics have been added to the score that were not originally provided by the composer. Each performer may determine these details following the composer's indications. However, the editor has unified ornaments, phrasing, articulation, clefs, and dynamics within passages or in restatements except where the composer clearly wanted variety with each recurrence. Likewise, obvious harmonic uniformity was provided by the editor (for example, where chromatic alterations were not carried out consistently in the original edition within passages or chords). Unnecessary accidentals were omitted, and the notation was altered occasionally to conform to modern standards. Accidentals within parentheses are suggestions for harmonic uniformity.

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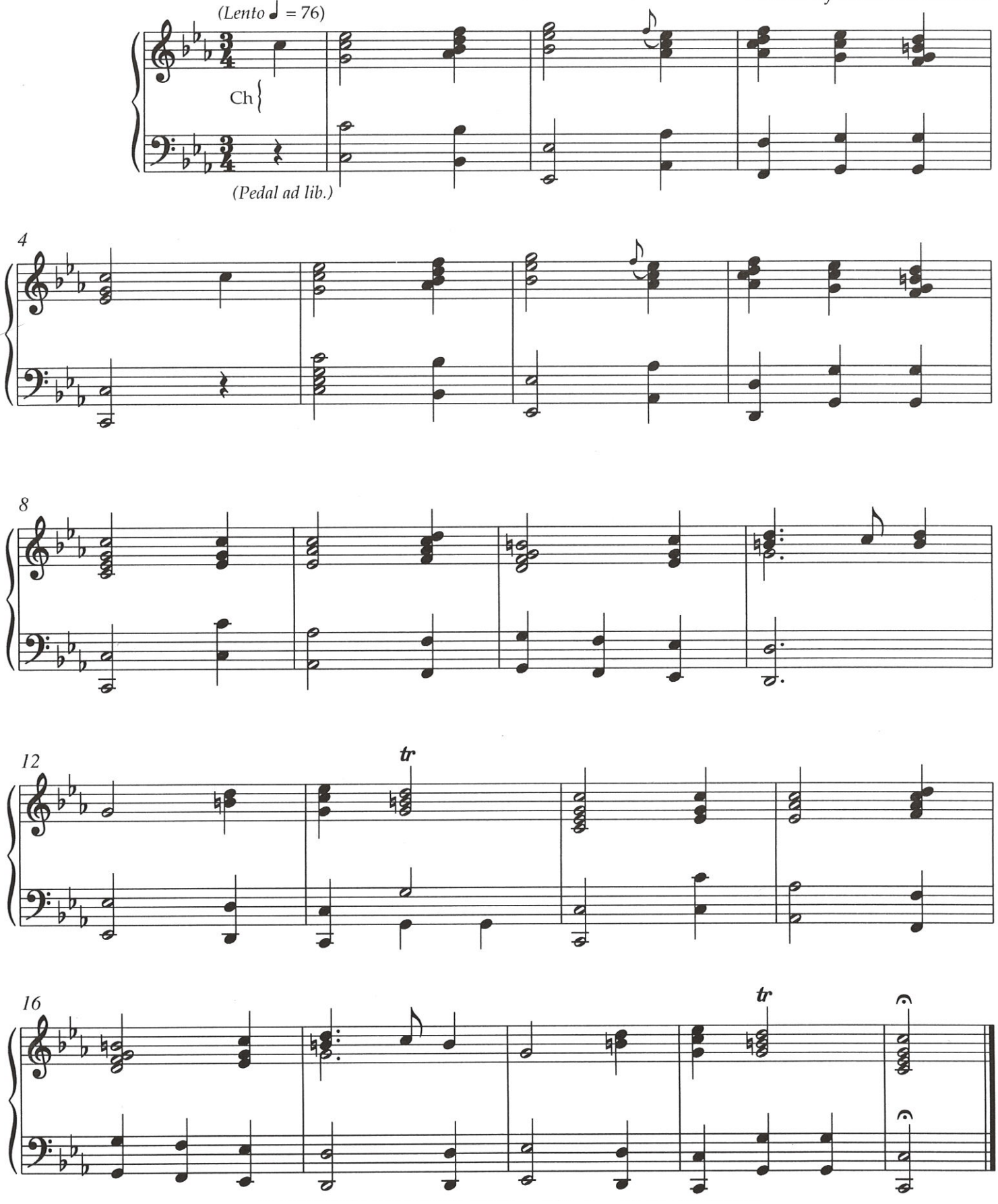
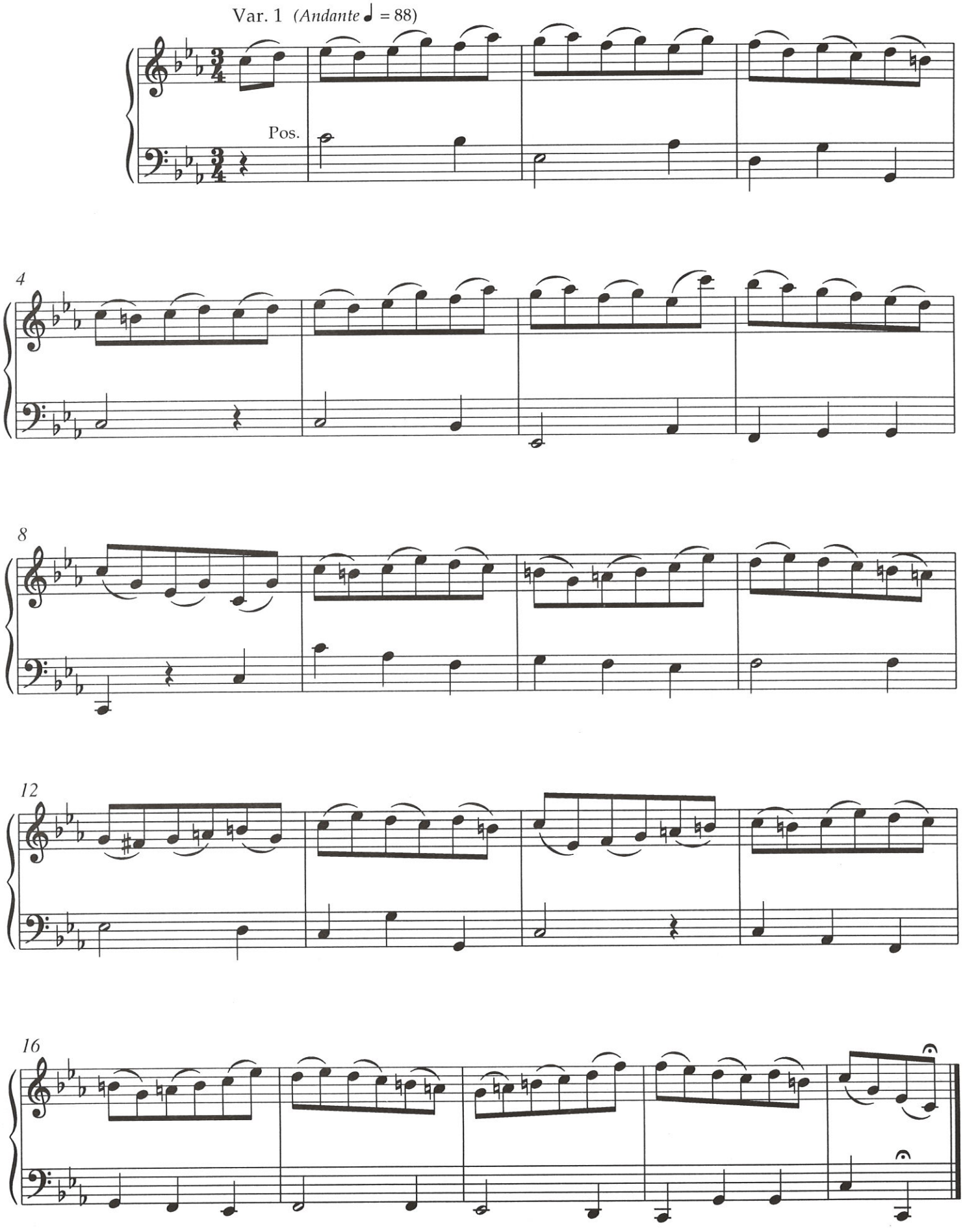
O Filii et Filiae

O Sons and Daughters of the King

Nine Variations arranged for the organ

MR. BENAUT
Edited by Barbara Harbach




Var. 1 (Andante ♩ = 88)
Pos.
4
8
12
16