

# Cadenza

Franz Joseph Haydn: F minor Variations, Hob. XVII:6

Edward Neeman

The image shows a musical score for a cadenza in F minor, measures 145-146. The score is written for piano and consists of three systems of music. The first system starts at measure 145 and features a treble clef with a 2/4 time signature. The right hand plays a series of chords and eighth notes, while the left hand plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The second system continues the piece, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a crescendo (*cresc.*) instruction. The right hand plays a series of chords and eighth notes, while the left hand plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The third system ends at measure 146, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a sixteenth note (*6*). The right hand plays a series of chords and eighth notes, while the left hand plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The score concludes with the word "etc." to the right of the final measure.

**Author's Note:** Haydn's F minor variations is undoubtedly one of his masterpieces for piano. Yet the abrupt transition to the final minor variation (when the theme returns in its original form) always bothered me. What did Haydn mean by this?

The genesis of the work provides some clues. The original version, composed in 1793, does not reprise the minor theme at all. After the second major variation, this version finished with a five-measure coda. A year or so later, Haydn added the F minor coda to his unpublished composition during his trip to London in 1794–1795. He initially left in the extra five measures from the 1793 version, even though this coda felt out of place when followed by such an extended and glorious return to F minor. It was only just prior to the publication of the piece in 1799 that Haydn removed these measures.

While almost all modern performers follow Haydn's final version, I feel there is a gap where Haydn took out those five measures. And yet the five measures, originally written as a conclusion for a much shorter version of this piece, do not quite fit in anymore. My solution has been to insert a brief cadenza to provide a bridge between the last major variation and the final return to F minor. The printed version of this cadenza, slotting in between measures 145 and 146, should be used as the basis for improvisation. I typically replace the final measure of the cadenza with a more elaborate rumination that leads back to the F minor theme.