vary mary

\js (john saylor 2013)

A.1: *gliss.* pass between players as needed (approximately a half step per dotted half note)

A.2: declaim any or all of the following words as often as desired: *obey play (pray)*

Music engraving by LilyPond 2.16.1—www.lilypond.org

Bloated

At first glance, the score may look like it is written to be played by a large ensemble; however, it's not that kind of score. The notation is at a more abstract level. The top staff is the theme, "Mary had a little lamb," and the following staves each hold a distinct setting of that theme. So it's more like a catalog of various settings than a traditional score. Musical time is layered instead of being continuous.

I wrote it in this manner to encourage the musicians to think about their options regarding how they might like to practice or perform or conceptualize these variations. For instance, one player could play the theme one time alone, then again with one of the supporting voices, and one last time with all three playing together. Of course, this is only one of many ways the material can be presented.

Similarly, there are no tempo or dynamic or expression marks in the score. This is not because I want the players to play without expression or tempo or dynamic changes. It is because I want the players to consider many options regarding these attributes of the music. Instead of directing like a dictatorial composer, who wants to control the musicians in every way possible; I am acting as an anarchist composer who wants the musicians to bring some of their own preferences and desires to the music.

The variations are grouped into three sets: harmonic, contrapuntal, abstract. These labels are imperfect, and each variation may utilize techniques from all three categories.

Noted

Some notes on the individual variations.

H.0 traditional setting

H.1 the lower voice moves at half the speed of the upper voice, affecting harmonic change

H.2 the theme is pulled into more unusual and rapidly shifting harmonic contexts

C.0 pseudo-fugal treatment, the entrances of the voices are marked with accents, the ending notes of the supporting voices are in parens so it is easier to understand how they are offset from the main theme

C.1 slowed down and inverted theme fragment played against shorter and slower fragment that is not inverted

C.2 uses cliched melodies from different styles

A.0 one of the supporting voices continually divides time in half played against the other that marks off nested golden section divisions, also chromatic scale covered in different gamuts of each voice

A.1 glissando should be as even as possible throughout, this is the only variation in which both supporting voices are given the same line

A.2 voice variations: one player is free to improvise within limits while the other counts (in any language), both should be expressive even if using a speaking voice (for instance, "act" like a teacher . . .)