Encoding musical variants
What is a musical source?

A physical instance of a musical work

- Notation: a notated original or copy
- Sound: an audio instance of a musical work
Source survival

Staples of musical repertory are known through surviving sources

Whole repertories can be lost

Multiple sources can survive. When multiple copies survive, discrepancies among them are common.
Source authorities

Who is authorized to identify a first/best version of a source?
Composer, editor, publisher

We may know printed works in multiple versions
Popular music: we know one version (copyright conventions)
What is a musical variant?

Musical variants come in a range of degrees

Definitions serve practical needs
1. Note-level variants

Very common

- Missing note/extra note
- Sharp/flat/natural discrepancy
- Difference in articulation marks
  - Staccato vs. unmarked
  - Different slurs, detached legatos, note diminutions
Note-level differences

May reflect differences of interpretation

- Single vs double dots (bars 1-3)
- 5+3 interpretation (bass, bar 3) vs 9 + 3
- Editorial accidental (bar 2, bass)
Note-level group and phrase-level variants

Vivaldi Concerto in E Minor, Op. 3, No. 5 movement iii

(a) (A) clarichord transcription

(b) (b) Violino Pr., Villoncello parts
Broad scope for realization

Arpeggiation in Vivaldi’s
Concerto Op. 8, No. 8
Chordal presentation
Reialized presentation
Unusual bowing in Vivaldi’s Op. 8, No. 11, 1st mvmt

Example suggests which string each note should be played on
Part-level and structural variants

Instrumental substitutions
◦ e.g. oboe instead of violin

Structural variants
◦ Alternative aria or slow movement
  ◦ E.g. Vivaldi flute concerto Op.. 10, No 2 (G Minor) = “Night”
Structural variants

Vivaldi Op. 10, No. 2 (“Night” concerto)
Key = G Minor
Slow movement – “Sleep”
Version A = G Minor

Version B
Key Bb Major
Tree-structure variants

- Extensive revisions all contained in one source, which may produce
- Movements of varying lengths
- Presence/absence of ritornellos where expected
Vivaldi Op. 8, No. 11

Movement 3

Structural sections

Possible paths (not exhaustive)

Paths:
  148 bars
- Rit A1, Ep 1, Rit A2, Ep 2, Rit A2, Ep 4, Rit A4, Ep 6, Rit 5(2).
  163 bars
- Rit A1, Ep 1, Rit A2, Ep 2, Rit A2, Ep 4, Rit A5(1).
  205 bars
- Rit A1, Ep 1, Rit A2, Ep 2, Rit A3, Ep 3, Rit A6, Ep 7, Ep 8, Rit A5(3).
  197 bars
  201 bars