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**Contrasting fortepiano Colors and Developing Variations in Beethoven's Piano Sonata,
Opus 111**

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Abstract

While there is universal agreement about the form of the first movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 32 in C, Opus 111, its splendid variation movement remains only partially understood. Numerous critics and editors from Adolph Bernhard Marx to Donald Francis Tovey offer conflicting views about the number of variations in the set and/or the formal relationships of its parts. Heinrich Schenker's groundbreaking analysis identified a rhythmic continuity in the first three variations but assessed the remaining variations anecdotally. In his impressive examination of the sketches, William Drabkin imposed sonata form over the second half of the movement but did not identify a second group. Few studies have mentioned Opus 111 in light of the keyboard instrument for which it was composed. The fourth variation, for example, calls for specific pedal registrations available on Beethoven's Broadwood fortepiano that no longer exist on modern pianos; performing the work on later instruments is essentially an act of musical transcription. Formal aspects of the Opus 111 piano variations thus merit re-examination in terms of information gained in Beethoven's sketches, manuscripts and the original instrument on which the work was composed.

Since the second movement of Opus 111 divides into three large sections in terms of its timbre, the variations are here characterized as a resurrection drama in which the arietta—or main character—is presented, liquidated, and subsequently renewed in a final apotheosis. This paper explains how a strong sense of return in the final variation is made possible by episodic understatement in Variation 4 and pedal registrations available on the composer's Broadwood fortepiano—a structural assertion supported by having actually performed the passagework on Beethoven's original instrument in Budapest.