

“Zu brilliant’—The Original Finale of Beethoven’s Violin Sonata in A major, Op. 30 No. 1, and Its Assimilation into the *Kreutzer* Sonata, or, What’s in a Chord?”

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It is well known that Beethoven did not hesitate to redistribute and recycle material from one composition to another when it suited his needs. There are several well-known cases—for example, thematic material from the early Bonn piano quartets reappeared in his Op. 2 piano sonatas, and one of the contredance melodies from WoO 14 resurfaced in *The Creatures of Prometheus*, the Piano Variations in E-flat major, and the finale of the *Eroica*. In the case of the *Waldstein* Sonata, the original slow movement, the protracted *Andante favori* variations, was removed and replaced by the hyphen-like *Introduzione*, which served better to connect the outer movements. A special case is afforded by the finale of the *Kreutzer* Sonata, which, as several Beethoven scholars have considered (most recently Stephen Whiting in the *Journal of Musicological Research* in 2013), originally served as the finale of the Violin Sonata, Op. 30 No. 1, of 1802. But soon enough, according to Ferdinand Ries, it was judged “zu brilliant” for that sonata, and Beethoven replaced it with a set of variations. A year later the original finale was incorporated into the finale of the *Kreutzer* Sonata, in what Richard Kramer viewed as a “layering of reversals,” a process by which the finale shaped certain aspects and structural features of the newly composed first and second movements. At this point Beethoven added the *fortissimo*, fermata-adorned piano chord that prefaces the tarantella-like principal theme of the finale. This presentation will consider the original version of the movement without the chord in the context of Op. 30 No. 1, and then Beethoven’s decision to add the chord to the *Kreutzer* finale, and its implications for performance. In particular, the purpose of the fermata will be re-examined, and the possibility considered that Beethoven may have had in mind to embellish the fermata, with a short virtuoso passage before launching into the finale proper. The presentation will include demonstrations of possible realizations, before concluding with a performance of Op. 30 No. 1 with its original finale.

Length of program: ca. 35-40 minutes, including the performance.