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**Beethoven's 'Kreutzer' Sonata:  
Nineteenth-century Art of Arrangement –  
One Piece, Three Ways.**

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*For my family*

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## Abstract

Beethoven's 'Kreutzer' Sonata transgressed the expectations – and likely captivated the minds – of early nineteenth-century musicians and audiences alike. The 'Kreutzer' is stylistically removed from his Op. 10 No. 1 composed less than six years earlier; it demands virtuosic technical proficiency from both performers. Through the combination of harmonic evasion playing on audience expectations in the first movement and the conversational interplay between the personalities of both performers and instrumental parts alike, this audacious work has fascinated the minds of both listener and critic from the 1803 premiere through to the modern day.

In 1805 an *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* review suggested that it would require two virtuosi to study the work in order to communicate the 'Groteskeste' work to an audience – this is indicative of not just technical difficulty but also the importance of the dynamic relationship between the two partners of the duo to the 'Kreutzer'. This highly charged relationship inspired Tolstoy and Prinnet (and by extension Janacek and many twentieth-century film and multimedia artists) to create adaptations of 'Kreutzer'.

High-quality musical arrangements of 'Kreutzer' appeared as early as 1827, when Carl Czerny completed a four-hand version of 'Kreutzer'. This was closely followed by an anonymous string quintet arrangement released by the Simrock publishing house in 1832. These arrangements translated the virtuosic sonata into different mediums for wider dissemination, making it more readily available to both musicians active in the chamber music scene, and domestic students and dilettantes proficient at the piano. Both arrangements manage to transform the 'Kreutzer' into a different format while retaining aspects of both the conversational relationship between musicians as well as the technical demands of Beethoven's original sonata.

The string quintet arrangement tends to fragment melodic ideas between parts, rather than transplanting entire phrases or providing a direct transcription – exceptions generally occurring at important transitions or particularly special moments. This generates a highly differentiated conversational landscape to that the original, which manifests also in the visual shift to five performers. While the arranger also reworks some of the piano writing

into more idiomatic string writing, it still demands a high level of technical proficiency from all five players.

The four-hand arrangement reworks the same dialogue and thematic ideas into a more intimate setting, taking an almost entirely opposite approach to the quintet. As the two instrumental parts are combined for one instrument, the difficulties from Beethoven's piano part are divided quite literally between *primo* and *secondo*. In a similar manner, the conversational and thematic interplay resemble Beethoven's original in a far more direct manner than the quintet. Although the four-hands medium is recognised more for study and wider transmission of concert pieces, it is difficult enough that the virtuosic essence of Beethoven's 'Kreutzer' is maintained.

This dissertation closely examines the relationship between the two instruments within Beethoven's 'Kreutzer' Sonata, and the manner in which both the contemporary arrangements above maintain and alter that relationship through the transformation into another format. In addition, it explores why the textural and idiomatic changes in both arrangements – fundamental and ornamental – remove none of the virtuosic and captivating essence of Beethoven's 'Kreutzer', while simultaneously allowing them to bridge the divide between the emergent nineteenth-century concert hall scene, close study of the score, and domestic music-making.