A Compositional Personalization: Influences of Late Beethoven Piano Sonatas on Schumann's Phantasie in C Major

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A Compositional Personalization: Influences of Late Beethoven Piano Sonatas on Schumann’s *Phantasie* in C Major

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Prerequisite for Honors in the Wellesley College Music Department

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Introduction

Schumann’s *Phantasie* in C Major Op. 17, has been frequently cited as one of the monumental works most characteristic of musical Romanticism. Indeed, many sources stress Schumann’s and other Romantic composers’ intentions to branch out from the Classical style that had been so firmly established by Haydn and Mozart, and taken to its limits by Beethoven. This intention to deviate from tradition is certainly manifested in the *Phantasie*’s unusually flexible treatment of form and harmony.\(^1\) Thus, the *Phantasie* might be taken to represent a radical departure from Beethoven’s music. However, careful consideration of the original purpose of the *Phantasie* as a memorial to Beethoven, as well as of Schumann’s deep admiration for Beethoven’s late music, lead to the speculation that the *Phantasie* actually drew inspiration from Beethoven’s distinctive compositional style. In fact, the innovations introduced in the *Phantasie* may have been derived, at least in part, from characteristics of Beethoven’s late piano music, much in the same manner in which Schumann reworked elements from Beethoven’s late string quartets in his own quartets.

Although some general conclusions have been drawn, mainly by Charles Rosen and Richard Taruskin, regarding Schumann’s references to Beethoven’s music in the *Phantasie*, in particular the quotation of the last song from Beethoven’s song cycle, *An die Ferne Geliebte*, close observations of the musical parallels in harmony, rhythm, key-relations, and texture between Schumann’s *Phantasie* and specific Beethoven piano works have yet to be substantiated. This paper will explore the musical characteristics of late Beethoven works adopted by Schumann in his *Phantasie* through juxtaposition of the *Phantasie* with Beethoven’s

Op. 109, Op. 110, and Op. 111 piano sonatas, and suggest ways in which he developed these characteristics creatively. Examination of these pieces can aid in identifying and understanding the specific characteristics of Beethoven’s music from which Schumann drew inspiration. Additionally, I hope that these analyses will aid in the performance of these pieces, in suggesting the possible expressive functions of the techniques used in each piece.
Chapter I: Background

i. History of the Phantasie

The Phantasie was composed in 1836 with the primary intention of raising funds for a monument to Beethoven in Bonn, his birthplace. A committee called the Bonner Verein für Beethovens Monument (Bonn Committee for Beethoven’s Monument) was formed in 1835, eight years after Beethoven’s death, to gather funds for the endeavor. More specifically, the committee, led by the philosopher August Wilhelm Schlegel, sent out notices asking for private donations and encouraged benefit concerts for the cause. In contributing to this project, Schumann’s original plan was to sell one hundred copies of his Phantasie (then called the Grosse Sonata für das Pianoforte für Beethovens Denkmal (Grand Sonata for Pianoforte for Beethoven’s Monument), listing its three movements as Ruinen, Trophaen, Palmen (Ruins, Trophies, Palms), and to donate the proceeds. He first presented this idea in a letter to publisher Friedrich Kistner in December 1836: “Should you [Kistner] wish to take the work under your wing, I would ask you to send the Bonn committee one hundred complimentary copies, which the committee would soon sell. Let the resulting profit go towards the monument”. Unfortunately, Kistner rejected the piece for publication, but after undergoing a few title changes (first to Dichtungen (Poems) with the last two movements renamed Siegesbogen and Sternbild (Triumphal Arch and Constellation), and finally to Phantasie), it was eventually published by Breitkopf and Härtel in 1839.

3 Marston, Schumann Fantasie Op. 17, 3.
ii. Dedication to Beethoven and “An die Ferne Geliebte”

Schumann’s intention of making the *Phantasie* a dedication to Beethoven is certainly manifested through the original movement titles, as brought to light by Richard Taruskin, who states that *Ruinen* suggests “the antique aura of veneration…and the idea of the Beethoven monument”; *Trophaen* implies memorials “erected in commemoration of victory, the most ‘Beethovenian’ of all concepts,” and *Palmen* also echoes the idea of victory in that these are “ceremonial palm branches awarded at victory celebrations.” Additionally, the third movement of the *Phantasie* includes a quotation from Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony, as noted by Schumann himself.\footnote{Richard Taruskin, *Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. 3, *The Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 311.}

The most readily apparent and frequently discussed reference to Beethoven in the *Phantasie*, however, is Schumann’s quotation from the song cycle *An Die Ferne Geliebte* (To my distant beloved). Specifically, Schumann quotes the singer’s opening line, “*Nimm sie hin, denn diese Lieder*” (“So take them, these songs”) from the last song of the cycle in the coda of the *Phantasie*’s first movement. This quotation is strongly emphasized not only through its placement at the ending of the movement, but also in being the sole instance in the movement where there is a definite sense of harmonic arrival in the tonic key of C Major. As Taruskin explains, “[the *Phantasie*] is contrived in such a way that the whole movement up to the point of recall seems to function as a gigantic upbeat to it.”\footnote{Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (Harvard University Press, 1998), 102-103.} Moreover, as both Charles Rosen and John Daverio observe, most of the main themes in the first movement are in fact derivations from this one excerpt, which is finally brought to light in its entirety only at the conclusion.\footnote{Ruskin, *Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. 3, *The Nineteenth Century*, 311.} Thus, the

\footnote{Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 109.}
melody from *An Die Ferne Geliebte* serves as the cell from which almost the entire movement is derived, and the ending quotation, as Taruskin aptly puts it, is “not a new idea but a synthesis,” a harmonic and thematic completion.  

### iii. The Connection to Clara Wieck

Although the quotation’s prominence in the first movement of the *Phantasie* is undoubtedly tied to the piece’s original intention as a dedication to Beethoven, it is also highly probable that this quotation was meant to convey a message to Clara Wieck, to later become Clara Schumann. As a matter of fact, there has been much evidence to suggest that the *Phantasie* partly served as a way for Robert to communicate with Clara. At the time of its composition, her father had forbidden the two to meet or correspond. In a letter to Clara in March 1838, Schumann called the *Phantasie* a “profound lament for you [Clara],” and also stated in a letter to Heinrich Dorn, his former teacher, that the *Phantasie* was “almost entirely inspired by [Clara].” Thus, the *An Die Ferne Geliebte* quotation may have been incorporated to serve the dual purpose of declaring his love for Clara as well as of paying homage to Beethoven.

Furthermore, as Linda Roesner suggests, C major, the key of the *Phantasie*, may also be an allusion to Clara (where C stands for her name). Roesner proposes that Schumann may also have been trying to communicate secretly with Clara in his C-Major Symphony op. 61, as well as through the idiosyncratic but prominent use of C major in his *Davidsbündlertänze*.

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10 Letter to Dorn of 5 September 1839, in Schumann, *Briefe*, pp. 170
11 Roesner, “Schumann’s Parallel Forms,” 270.
iv. Schumann’s View of Beethoven

Apart from the implications of the movement titles and the *An Die Ferne Geliebte* quotation, however, there is very little existing commentary about other possible references to Beethoven in the *Phantasie*. Despite the lack of such explicit evidence, Schumann’s deep admiration for Beethoven, the overwhelming presence of Beethoven in the cultural imagination of nineteenth century Europe, along with the *Phantasie’s* original purpose, all lead to the conjecture that Schumann may have incorporated further Beethovenian elements into this work. Schumann’s participation in the fund-raising for a Beethoven monument is not surprising, as he revered Beethoven to the point of idolization. In a diary entry from November 1832, Schumann writes, “I love Mozart dearly, but Beethoven I worship like a god who remains forever apart, who will never become one with us.”

Schumann started to study Beethoven’s music closely in the spring of 1832 and became especially fascinated by Beethoven’s ability “to make much out of little.” In other words, Schumann saw Beethoven’s music as a good model for maintaining the life of an idea through simple means without much harmonic elaboration. In another diary entry from the same year, Schumann again remarks on Beethoven’s ability to make simplicity meaningful: “if an idea is lacking, then try to make the form and structure of the parts interesting; if, however, a thought is

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at hand, then it won’t require fancy harmonic attire, which in any case often does more harm than good. Here Beethoven will provide an incomparably fine model.”

Moreover, Schumann admired the capacity of Beethoven’s music to stimulate the listener both mentally and spiritually. In the Neue Zeitschrift für Musik (New Music Journal,) Schumann expressed his opinion that music should serve to provoke serious discussion and “strong empathic responses.” In fact, Schumann’s ideal music was one that produced the same effect as literature; that is, he saw music as an intellectual pursuit, rather than as a merely entertaining or enjoyable one. Thus, he aspired to create music that offered not only sensory but also spiritual stimulation, as Beethoven’s music had done.

Schumann’s reverence for Beethoven was most likely intensified by the overwhelmingly positive opinions of other eminent musicians, giving further reason to speculate that Schumann would incorporate more references to Beethoven in a work so clearly identified with Beethoven as the Phantasie. One might say that Schumann was almost conditioned to have a high regard for Beethoven from a young age, as he attended regular soirées held at the house of Ernst August Carus (a family friend), where “the names of Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven were spoken daily and enthusiastically.”

Not only was Beethoven already highly regarded, but he was also a highly feared individual and an overwhelming presence even among his immediate contemporaries. This powerful image of “Beethoven” took hold among these younger composers: as Taruskin writes, “Beethoven’s looming, unshakeable presence as the most authoritative and influential figure in

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16 Daverio, Herald of a “New Poetic Age,” 97.
18 Ibid., 293.
19 Ibid., 294.
the tradition…that was formed so to speak in the image of Beethoven…Beethoven has been among the most feared, resisted, and even hated of composers.”

Because of this strong impression of Beethoven, many composers saw him as “the one to conquer” and aimed to develop original aspects of their own music that would distinguish it from Beethoven’s music.

Even Schubert was known to be intimidated by him, as he once said, “Secretly, in my heart of hearts, I still hope to make something of myself, but who can do anything after Beethoven?.”

This anxiety was also experienced later by Brahms, who for many years was inhibited in the composition of string quartets and symphonies, as these were two of Beethoven’s principal genres.

In addition, Schumann himself also claimed that he lacked confidence in tackling string quartets, one of the “higher forms” that Beethoven had worked with: “I started a quartet again yesterday; but I lack the courage and the peace necessary for such work.” Nicholas Marston speculates that Schumann’s switch to vocal work from the composition of string quartets was also the result of feeling intimidated by Beethoven’s accomplishments in the genre: “Schumann’s own admission that in mid-1839 he was still timid about writing for string quartet may adequately account for his sudden switch to vocal composition: he did not yet feel ready to tackle the ‘higher forms’ bequeathed by Beethoven.”

Thus, Schumann’s decision to compose the *Phantasie* in Beethoven’s honor, based on his deep admiration for him reinforced by public...
opinion, gives us reason to believe that Schumann would have drawn on elements from Beethoven’s music in the *Phantasie*.

**v. Musical Influences of Beethoven on Schumann**

Schumann’s great interest in late Beethoven was specifically documented by the composer himself. We know from Schumann’s own words of his admiration for Beethoven’s late quartets and the fact that they influenced his own quartets. As he wrote to Hermann Hirschbach, “the [Beethoven string quartet] in A minor is heavenly and the Adagio is beautifully clear…I am now living through some of Beethoven’s quartets in the truest sense, and feel even the love and hate in them.”

He also called Beethoven’s late quartets works “for whose greatness no words can be found.” Schumann explained, “next to some of the choruses… of J.S. Bach…[they] represent the extreme limits that human art and imagination have yet reached.”

Daverio mentions several specific instances of influences of Beethoven’s late string quartets on Schumann’s own quartets. For example, the imitative slow introduction of Schumann’s string quartet op. 41 no. 1 draws on the same detached character and a-minor tonality of the opening *Assai sostenuto* of Beethoven’s op. 132, as well as on the fugal texture of the first movement of Beethoven’s C# minor string quartet op. 131. The manner in which Schumann makes his op. 41 no. 1 string quartet an “over-arching, but delicately woven unity” by tying the different movements together with common tonalities and motives is similar to the

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28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., 252.
30 Ibid.
way Beethoven unifies his op. 131.\textsuperscript{31} Schumann’s special admiration for Beethoven’s late music along with the influence of Beethoven’s late string quartets on his own quartets make it reasonable to suggest a similar influence of Beethoven’s late piano music on the \textit{Phantasie}.

Still, it is important to realize that Schumann was most likely looking to create something new in relation to previous music, instead of merely imitating what had been established in the past. In fact, Schumann has been quoted as saying that contemporary music must look back to the tradition created by Beethoven, and “turn to higher forms, to the sonata, the concerto, or to larger creations of [one’s] own,”\textsuperscript{32} but at the same time he maintained that “we ought not to repeat the same thing for centuries, but should also think about creating something new.”\textsuperscript{33}

Thus, the influence of Beethoven’s late piano music on Schumann’s \textit{Phantasie}, the topic of the following discussion, is not functioning merely on the level of emulation, but more on that of recomposition and remodeling. In Daverio’s comparison of the string quartets of late Beethoven and Schumann, he points out that even though there are parallels, Schumann never directly copies from Beethoven: “what we have instead is an imaginative encounter with the spirit of Beethoven”.\textsuperscript{34} I will not simply explore the influence and the parallels between Beethoven piano sonatas and Schumann’s \textit{Phantasie}, but will also focus on how Schumann made something unique out of these influences.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[31] Daverio, \textit{Herald of a “New Poetic Age,”} 252: (“[in Op. 41 no. 1] F major of the first movement recurs as the key of the Adagio and again as an important tonal station in the finale’s development section…the Scherzo’s main theme serves as the basis for the shape of a significant countermelody in the Adagio”
\item[33] Ibid
\item[34] Daverio, \textit{Herald of a “New Poetic Age,”} 253.
\end{footnotes}
Chapter II: Musical Parallels Between the Phantasie and Beethoven’s Late Piano Sonatas

i. Introduction

Without a doubt, comparing pieces that, on the surface, are only loosely linked historically, is a highly sensitive matter. However, close examination of the Phantasie and the late sonatas of Beethoven reveals musical resemblances which in totality, will, I believe, substantiate the comparison. In fact, the characteristics of Beethoven’s last sonatas that are echoed in the Phantasie are particularly those that help evoke an inner striving and a journey toward enlightenment. In these pieces, striving is characterized by a progression from a “searching” to a “finding” stage in the first and last movements of the pieces, through a clear transition from a rapid, highly chromatic, sonically dense, and harmonically ambiguous first movement to a slower, harmonically and rhythmically more stable, and gradually intensifying last movement. Furthermore, both Beethoven’s and Schumann’s pieces have strong spiritual implications and possess qualities suggestive of a stream of consciousness, through techniques such as harmonic and formal flexibility, musical recall and recontextualization of earlier material, melodic deviations, as well as connective transitions between highly contrasting sections. These parallels suggest that Schumann was perhaps influenced by Beethoven’s late sonatas in their ability to suggest a mental process of striving.

Despite these striking similarities, it is nonetheless important to understand that these pieces are operating within two very different contexts and telling two distinct kinds of stories. Both Beethoven’s and Schumann’s pieces convey a sense of struggling to achieve something; however, the object that is to be gained is different. Considering the historical background of the pieces, the last sonatas of Beethoven could be depicting the process of re-establishing one’s faith
in a Higher Power, while the *Phantasie* suggests striving to communicate with one’s beloved, and in this effort, trying to recollect moments experienced in the past. Thus, the *Phantasie* incorporates into its depiction of striving the evocation of memory and recall, as well as that of personal closeness, as its message is directed to Clara. Whereas Beethoven’s last sonatas exemplify the largely forward-looking process of recovering and rebuilding from a state of emptiness, the *Phantasie* undergoes striving in the opposite direction; that is, the protagonist hearkens back to an earlier time in order to find the most heartfelt message to impart to his beloved.

Thus, I argue that Schumann, inspired by Beethoven’s ability to convincingly portray a spiritual journey in his last sonatas, not only adopted aspects of these sonatas that could generate a sense of inner striving within the *Phantasie*, but also reconfigured these techniques to convey the element of recollection, as well as of intimacy, in order to communicate his own personal story. To this end, Schumann takes techniques, albeit mostly subtle ones only hinted in the late Beethoven sonatas and either modifies or brings them more to the forefront in his *Phantasie* to produce a convincing portrayal of the wandering mind looking back to past times spent with his beloved. One may even say that the very aspects of the *Phantasie* that have led to its being termed monumental are in actuality creative expansions and re-workings of what had been previously established by Beethoven; a piece as exemplary in pianistic expressivity and poetry as the *Phantasie* may have been unimaginable without the precedent of the last three Beethoven sonatas.

**ii. A Bit of Historical Context**

The fact that Beethoven’s late sonatas and Schumann’s *Phantasie* both seem to exhibit a process of working towards and struggling to achieve a certain destination or state of
enlightenment is not surprising, considering that they were composed at times of great unrest and
difficulty in the composers’ lives. As stated in the previous section, during the time of the
Phantasie’s composition, Schumann was separated from Clara against his will. Beethoven, when
he composed the Op. 109, 110, and 111 trilogy, had become almost completely deaf, and was
battling other ailments. He was also fighting to gain custody of his nephew, Karl, during the time
these three sonatas were composed. About twenty years earlier, in 1802, he had written his
Heilegenstadt Testament avowing the crossroads at which he found himself between choosing
life or death. It makes sense, therefore, that Schumann’s Phantasie and Beethoven’s last sonatas
all exude throughout a sense of constant inner striving to reach a certain goal. Indeed, upon close
examination of these at first seemingly unrelated pieces, we find that many of the musical
similarities between Beethoven’s sonatas and the Phantasie directly contribute to this aura of
inner striving.

iii. Striving in Op. 111: From Searching to Finding

One striking aspect of Beethoven’s last sonatas, and in particular, Op. 111, is their goal-
oriented nature and their illustration of a long but continuous thought process that evolves
gradually over the course of the entire work. As I have already suggested, this effect is achieved
largely through Beethoven’s characteristic “striving” in two distinct stages (a “searching” stage,
which transitions into a “finding” stage), and their rough alignment with the first and last
movements of the sonata. This shift from “searching” to “finding” is articulated by a movement
from an overwhelmed, agitated feeling in the first movement to a more unidirectional music with
a focused goal by the last movement. This kind of emotional shift, which occurs most clearly
over the course of Op. 111, but also in Op. 109 and 110, is akin to a plot archetype\textsuperscript{35} of feeling lost and disconnected in a pool of darkness in the first movement, but then seeing a glimpse of light by the end of the movement; the last movement then proceeds to depict the actual process of progression toward an enlightenment which is now more clearly envisioned. In exhibiting such an emotional shift in this way, the piece as a whole carries an overarching sense of direction and evolution.

Along these lines, the first movement of Op. 111 embodies a “searching” stage, in which one is struggling to make sense of all of the different emotions and ideas that are racing through one’s mind, and trying to find a way out of feeling disconnected and lost. We may start from the sonata’s beginning, which demonstrates many of the techniques that convey the sense of disorientation that pervades the movement. Without warning, Beethoven immediately thrusts the listener into an imaginary state of disorientation and emotional tumult through harmonic instability, wide leaps, dotted rhythms, and fluctuating dynamics.

Among these characteristics, we may first comment on the harmonic instability of the beginning. The opening chord of Op. 111 is a diminished seventh chord of the dominant, a highly unstable and unusual chord with which to start a piece. The anticipatory quality and need for resolution of this first chord urgently propel this beginning section forward. Any kind of harmonic progression from this diminished chord, however, is withheld until the beginning of the second measure, where the dominant sounds, then resolving momentarily to the c-minor tonic, providing a brief sense of closure, albeit a weak one. However, this tonic resolution is swept aside by the sweeping, arpeggiated dominant chord that follows. Thus, even from the

\footnote{Anthony Newcomb, “Schumann and Late Eighteenth-Century Narrative Strategies,” \textit{19\textsuperscript{th}-Century Music XI} (Autumn, 1987), 165: Newcomb invokes the term “paradigmatic plot”, which refers to a unidirectional narrative or unfolding of events exemplified in late 18\textsuperscript{th} century music.}
beginning, the harmonic progressions defy the sense of being seemingly grounded in the tonic key.

Also noteworthy in the *Maestoso* beginning are the dramatic leaps already mentioned. For instance, the first measure features wide leaps in the left hand, during the prolongation of the diminished seventh chord. Paired with the diminished sevenths, these wide leaps give a feeling of disorientation, like the action of blindly reaching without a sense of what to reach for, and thus never quite being able to establish a sense of purpose. Additionally, the dotted rhythms convey a feverish character, and erratic rhythmic spacing between successive chords as well as the fluctuation in dynamics between *forte* and *piano* indicate a certain unpredictability. Immediately characterizing the beginning of the piece in this way suggests that the searching has been ongoing even before the music begins, further deepening the feeling of an extended circuitous and arduous process.

These characteristics are heard not only in the beginning, but can be observed throughout the entire movement. The harmonic instability persists. Brief tonicizations to a variety of keys, with an unusually frequent focus on the subdominant in the first movement, heighten the sense of disorientation. For example, within the *Allegro* exposition of Op. 111, a sequence of tonicizations occurs starting in m. 35, from which the music follows a harmonic trajectory from c minor, through E-flat major (m. 38), f minor (m. 40), b-flat minor (m. 41), A-flat major (m. 42), back to b-flat minor (m. 45) and then culminating in D-flat major (m. 47). There is very little
sense of anchoring during these key changes; just as one key seems to have arrived, a harmonic shift occurs into a different key, intensifying the sense of roaming and confused searching. This chain of tonicizations can also be heard in a similar passage in the recapitulation (mm. 100ff).

Not only do frequent key changes give a sense of searching in this movement, but also harmonic ambiguities where the key itself is not clear, contribute to this effect. A noticeable example of harmonic ambiguity comes at the beginning of the development section (m. 70). This section is preceded by a definite modulation to the key of A-flat major, and after an irregular
pause, unison Gs sound hesitantly in octaves in both hands on a weak beat. At this point, the key is very vague, as the harmonic significance of the octave G pitches is unclear; one may wonder if these G pitches act as neighboring tones leading to a re-establishment of an A-flat major triad, or perhaps as the dominant, leading back to the key of C minor. Instead, after another pause, a D major chord arrives, initiating a change of key to g minor. Thus, these harmonic ambiguities, along with pauses and arrival of chords on weak beats, heighten the sense of searching, as well as an uncertainty of direction.

In addition, a few instances of alternating major and minor modes in the movement indicate brief moments of indecisiveness, contradictory feelings, and emotional turmoil, deepening the searching quality of the movement. For example, in m. 76, early in the development section, there is a hint of G major within the g-minor area, with the subtle introduction of b natural in the left hand. However, this G major suggestion is very brief, as a b-flat sounds in the left hand in the next measure, re-establishing the key of g minor.
Another example of major-minor polarity is in m. 149, where there is a hint of F major, which immediately shifts to f minor.

This push and pull between parallel major and minor keys is not exclusive to Op. 111, but is also noteworthy at the very end of the first movement of Op. 109, in the measures leading up to the *Prestissimo* second movement. Although carrying a much more peaceful nuance than in Op. 111, measures 90-92 here suggest a similar sense of indecisiveness and contradictory emotions, with the switching back and forth between C natural and C sharps in the right hand.

Wide leaps are also observed throughout the entire first movement of Op. 111, and not just in the beginning *Maestoso*. The exploration of extremities of range is very noticeable in mm. 48-49, for example, in which the right hand demonstrates enormous leaps spanning nearly three octaves.
In addition to wide leaps played by one hand, there are a number of instances in which the left and right hands are spaced very far apart, for example in the sequence heard starting in m. 135. Thus, the first movement of Op. 111 pushes the limits of range and takes advantage of the entire keyboard, which suggests a reaching motion that intensifies the searching quality of the movement. The occurrence of these extremities in range is especially significant in view of the limited pitch range of the keyboard during Beethoven’s time.
Rapid chromatic rhythmic figurations that emerge, at times suddenly and without warning, throughout the first movement of Op. 111 heighten the sense of frantic, agitated searching and give a dizzying effect. These textures create a swarming quality in the sound, offering a rich background sonority, without investing every pitch with motivic significance. An example of this technique is the trill in the left hand beginning in m. 16, leading to the Allegro section of the first movement. Rather than providing any thematic material, these trills serve as a rumbling background to the sustained whole notes in the right hand. Musically, they produce an ominous and foreboding atmosphere, and a feeling of frustration which builds in intensity, leading up to the first theme in m. 20.

Another example of rapid repeating figurations that intensify the quality of agitated searching can be observed in m. 58, in which swirling right hand figurations sound against a relatively simple melody in quarters and half notes in the left hand.
The repeating serpentine left hand textures in m. 100 under the main theme in the right hand in octaves provide yet another example of a dense and active texture, albeit now with greater motivic significance.

Fugal textures bring an obsessive quality to the disorientation and suggest an almost crazed state. The most salient instance of the fugal texture in Op. 111 comes in the development
section, beginning in m. 76, where the three-note motive of the main theme (in which the intervals are not exactly the same as before, but the contour is maintained) is repeated again and again in both hands at different tempi and in changing keys. More specifically, an augmentation of the three-note motive is heard starting on D in the right hand in m. 76, then again in the left hand starting on G, then back in the right hand on C in m. 80. The motive is heard in its original tempo in quarters in the left hand starting on G in m. 76, again in the right hand starting on C in m. 77, and in the right hand starting on F in m. 80. It may also be said that an inverted form of the motive is heard in the left hand in m. 80.

In each occurrence of the motive, the three notes are followed by what seems to be a continuation of the main theme, but instead deviates in a way that returns to the three-note motive, creating a relentless loop of the motive over and over again. The three-note motive beginning on G in the left hand in m. 76, for example, continues with a diminished seventh leap and a descending eighth note figure in m. 77, a familiar line. However, instead of a sixteenth note figure of Bb-C-Bb-A-G following as one would expect, the line continues in the right hand in m. 78 in a different key, leading into the next three-note motive on C. This alternation of phrasing between the high and low registers of the two hands brings a disconnected quality. Thus, this fugal section in the development produces a sense of disorientation not only in obsessively repeating the three-note motive, but also in distorting it by altering its speed and harmony, as well as continuing the line between the two hands in a way that sounds familiar but instead turns upon itself in a vicious cycle.
Amid the chaos and confusion, however, there are nonetheless brief moments of respite, achieved through sudden islands of calm where the mood shifts. But, these periods of retreat are short-lived; the music snaps back into agitation, as though one is rudely awakened from a daydream or reminded once again of reality. An example of this comes in m. 50, in which rhythmic undulations cease and the key changes to A-flat major. This section, with its slower rhythm, is completely devoid of the “c-minor mood”, with a slower rhythm, although the dotted rhythms are one element that is retained from the previous material of the movement. The music continues in A-flat major in m. 52, giving way to a melismatic top line reminiscent of bel canto style. This pleasant mood, however, begins to change gradually with the deceptive cadence in m. 54 into an f minor triad, suggesting a feeling ofloneliness or isolation, as well as of doubt and uncertainty, after which the music returns to an agitated state in m. 56.
A similar island of calm can be heard again in the recapitulation, but in extended form, with greater registral expansion.

Yet, the “hero” still perseveres; what underlies the apparent disarray is a strong determination and an assertiveness to create some sort of order, made clear through the use of octave doublings and driving rhythms. For example, the main theme of Op. 111, first clearly heard in m. 20-26 is a very emphatic melody in octaves, expressing a will to keep one’s head high and look forward without apprehension.
Moreover, the forte dynamic and purposefully placed sforzandos suggest effortful control and organization. The sequential ascending line starting in m. 23 is an example of this technique, in which the sforzandos seem to function to prevent the line from propelling itself forward too fast or from escaping one’s conscious control. Additionally, these regularly placed sforzandos contribute to the sense of rhythmic exactness and maintenance of a pulse, which suggests an understanding that one must accept painful reality despite wishing otherwise, and an awareness
of the inevitability of struggle. Also along the lines of effortful maintenance of metrical stability, in m. 96, the left hand part continues to sound on the offbeats, destabilizing the descending line in the right hand, generating a sense of disorientation; however, metrical alignment returns suddenly and forcefully with the declamatory main theme in the left hand in m. 100, suggesting a conscious regaining of control.

These examples demonstrate how Beethoven illustrates the feeling of disorientation and confusion exemplifying searching in the first movement of Op. 111 through techniques such as chromaticism, rapid rhythmic figurations, leaps between extremities in range, fugal passages, sudden interruptions and islands of calm, and, finally, extended harmonic ambiguity without anchoring or arrival. One can clearly detect the protagonist’s anger and frustration, as well as his attempts to find a way to articulate and make sense of them. In addition, one can imagine that Beethoven perhaps felt “cheated” by a Higher Power and felt an overwhelming sense not only of rage, but also of loneliness and isolation in realizing that he may very well be alone in the world, and that he will have to rely on his own mettle in order to build himself up again.
The ending of the first movement, however, sounds hopeful, as if expressing a newfound awareness that there is a Higher Power after all and that one can choose life, that this may very well be the ultimate test of one’s strength, and that one does actually have the power to view life in a positive light. This new feeling that emerges at the very end of the movement is most strongly indicated by the harmonic change from the minor mood of the entire movement to C Major. Furthermore, the reiteration of the C Major triad three times in the right hand in the two measures that end the movement reassures that this change to C Major is not yet another example of a temporary island of calm that will revert to c minor, but is indeed a realization that has been successfully reached.

Expanding upon this newfound sense of hope and strength hinted at the very end of the first movement, the second and final movement of Op. 111 represents a “finding” stage, in which one gradually re-establishes a connection with a Higher Power, and retrieves one’s sense of purpose in living after a period of complete collapse. This sense of recovery and regaining one’s footing in the world of the living is expressed most strongly by the notably slower, more spiritual and contemplative tempo. Beethoven indicates that the tempo of the second movement is Adagio molto semplice e cantabile (slowly, very simply and singingly).

Additionally, the regularity of the rhythm, along with the slow tempo, suggests a sense of calm confidence, clear purpose and direction that was lacking in the first movement. Throughout
the second movement, a consistent triple pulse is present, which, unlike the first movement’s duple meter, suggests greater ease and tenderness in its sense of lilt (particularly noticeable in the long-short groupings within the triple meter). Whereas the metrical consistency of the first movement seemed to function as a means of purposeful constraint which the protagonist imposed upon himself in order to overcome confusion, the metrical regularity of the second movement instead appears to serve as a motivating force that helps him continue onward on his journey, now that he has a clearer sense of his final destination. The regular pacing and slow tempo of the last movement of the sonata is also an aspect of the third movement of Op. 109, which features metric groupings of three frequently, although not as consistently as throughout the final movement as Op. 111.

Along with the regularity of the pulse, the phrasing brings a constantly forward-looking motion in the line. The phrases are crafted in such a way that there is little hesitation as the forward motion is continued. For example, in m. 12 of the main theme, Beethoven could easily have stretched out the a-minor chord over two beats instead of one, resolving on to the E major dominant at the end of the measure. Instead, he only gives the a-minor second inversion one beat, resolves briefly to the dominant and continues on to the momentarily tonicized a-minor chord which subsequently leads into the next measure, avoiding the potential hesitation that could have occurred. By continuing the line in this way, Beethoven maintains the sense of striding forward.

Wide leaps in range are maintained in the second movement of Op. 111, but coupled with the slow tempo, they now sound more spacious and purposeful. Whereas the reaching motions in the “searching” stage were in agitation, without a clear aim, the reaches here are more intentionally directed out to a sustaining power. In this movement, the range is wider than ever
before, as if to represent the distance between earth and the sky. The middle part of the main theme in which the high G is repeated suggests a reaching up to a Higher Power; this climactic ascent in the right hand is accompanied by the left hand’s descent to its lowest pitch, which additionally indicates a spaciousness characteristic of the sky or wherever the Higher Power resides.

A more prominent example of this sense of reaching upward comes in mm. 38-39 of variation IV, also in the same section of the main theme just specified. Here, the distance between the top and bottom voices is remarkable, heightening the feeling of spaciousness.
Moreover, the second movement is full of ascending lines, giving the feeling of steadily taking deliberate steps to reestablish a sacred connection. The sense of gradually building up is achieved in particular in m. 7, and the corresponding measures of the other variations, characterized by a step-wise rising line in the top voice and accompanied by a rising line in the left hand as well. The latter part of the second half of the theme, starting in m. 13, also has the feeling of gradual ascent, mainly through the contour of the top line, which rises from C in the preceding measure to D, then E to reach F, but then falls back to linger on D before gaining the motivation to reach up all the way to the G.

Furthermore, the final movement of Op. 111 features greater harmonic stability and direction than the first; there are markedly fewer modulations and a greater sense of being grounded in the home key. Unlike the beginning of the first movement, for example, the second movement clearly establishes its key of C Major by beginning on the tonic chord. There is little modulation from this key in the piece, other than a passage at the very end of variation IV, which is highly modulatory in key, and could indicate entrance into a new state of being.

Moreover, this movement conveys the sense of homecoming through its cyclic quality, in that the main theme returns clearly at the end, after a period of being hidden and thickly embedded in texture in variation IV. One definitely has this sense of arriving home in variation V, in which the theme returns with greater clarity and in a simple form, much like that of the first variation. Thus, despite the fact that the main theme is present throughout the fourth variation, it is concealed in such a way that when it reemerges in the forefront in variation V, there is a sense of familiarity and an added warmth to it, very much like the feeling of returning home, but only then realizing how much one had missed it.
The same cyclical quality may be observed in Op. 109, in which the last 16 measures of the final movement mirror the beginning 16 measures.
A similar sense of homecoming and rebuilding can also be found in the last movement of Op. 110, especially starting in m. 136, marked *poi a poi di nuovo vivente*, or “returning back to life”, at which the rising fourth theme from earlier in the movement is suddenly heard again in clear but inverted form, in G Major.
Finally, the theme and variation form of the final movement of Op. 111 supports the sense of gradual rebuilding. The variations can be regarded as sub-stages of the process of regaining or retrieval. The same may be said for the last movement of Op. 109, which is also in variation form. In both sonatas, therefore, the variations serve as more than just decorative elaborations of the main theme; they indicate a process of moving forward to a goal.

Finally, one may also comment on the difference in connotation between the three notes of the main motive of the final movement as opposed to the first three notes of the motive of the first movement. Both of these motives begin on C; however, one may argue that the first movement’s motive is characteristic of searching and the second movement motive is characteristic of finding. The three-note motive of the first movement, C – E flat – B natural, features a change in direction (ascending a minor third, then dropping a diminished fourth). However, the motive of the second movement, C – G – G, has a unidirectional, descending contour, with the repeated Gs producing a comforting, “giving” gesture. Also, whereas the first movement motive is very dissonant, the motive of the second movement is consonant, giving the sense that the motive has been “cleansed” from the chromaticism and disorientation of the first movement. Thus, an examination of the two motives suggests by itself the transition from searching to finding between the first and last movements of Op. 111.

iv. Similar Evocation of Striving in the Phantasie

Remarkably, Schumann also represents two stages of striving, like those exemplified in Beethoven’s last sonatas, in the first and last movements of the Phantasie. The first movement, very much like the first movement of Op. 111, captures the sense of being overwhelmed with a multitude of emotions and struggling to explain and make sense of them. The techniques utilized
to express this condition in Beethoven’s first movement are adopted in the *Phantasie*. For example, the beginning of the *Phantasie* conveys the same quality of being “in medias res” as the beginning of Op. 111 in its harmonic instability, forte dynamic, rapid rhythmic figurations, and octave doublings. Although the beginning chord is suggestive of the dominant of C Major, one can not be entirely sure, as the A pitches within the undulating left hand textures and in the right hand melody destabilize the sense of a dominant. The harmonic instability is heightened further by the prolongation of this dominant chord without any resolution to the tonic C Major.

As in Op. 111, the first movement generates a sense of disorientation and confusion through the use of rapid rhythmic figurations. As can be said of the Beethoven, these rapid figurations in one hand serve as more than mere accompaniment to a slower moving, main melody in the other hand; these textures, rather, function as a kind of summoning, a means of inciting and energizing the melody. A pertinent example of this rich texture already occurs at the beginning of the *Phantasie*, in which the left hand figurations act as sources of energy in a deep, primal sense; they almost seem to represent an overpowering force of nature, to conjure up the melody, rather than merely providing support. This effect of generating energy is enhanced by the use of the pedal, producing a swarming but blended quality in the sound, creating a rich background sonority. The way the *Phantasie* begins immediately with these rapid figurations in tempo, without any easing in, is similar to the way in which Op. 111 starts in the middle of things. The dotted rhythms in the melody contribute a sense of agitation as well.
Other examples of rich textures include mm. 173ff, in which repeating 16\textsuperscript{th} note rhythms sound in octaves underneath the \textit{Im Legendenton} theme, and mm. 205ff where 16\textsuperscript{th} note patterns sound simultaneously with the \textit{Im Legendenton} theme at its climax.
As in Op. 111, the first movement of the *Phantasie* also evokes the sense of disorientation and striving by pushing the limits of range and maintaining harmonic instability. For example, starting at m. 82, the line travels rapidly from very low to very high registers of the keyboard, and then returns back down again. This wide coverage of range, as well as the upward direction of the sequence of phrases, suggests reaching motions. Also within this excerpt, there is a great deal of harmonic instability, where tonicizations occur but in rapid sequence, without much sense of arrival in any one key. The sequence begins in m. 82 on the dominant of g minor which is prolonged until m. 87 (although at m. 82 it is difficult even to tell if the key is g minor, as the preceding measure ended with an f-natural). The resolution to the g-minor tonic immediately shifts to the dominant of c minor, which is again prolonged until m. 90, shifting immediately to B-flat major, before gradually reorienting itself toward the home key of C Major.
Like Op. 111, amid the confusion, the *Phantasie* demonstrates islands of respite, in sudden moments of lyricism and quiet. The few measures of the *Adagio* starting at m. 77 that come before the *im Tempo* section just mentioned are an example, in which time seems to be suspended and reality is put on hold, before the violent, passionate atmosphere returns in the fortissimo *im Tempo* section at m. 82. An even broader example of a sudden island is the entire *Im Legendenton* section of the *Phantasie* beginning in m. 129, in which the free, very intense character of the preceding material is interrupted by this slower, more rhythmically regular middle section.

Furthermore, the determination to keep searching is expressed in a similar way as in Beethoven’s sonatas by the use of octave doublings as well as by the effortful control of meter despite potential dangers of derailment, very much as in Op. 111. For example, in m. 196 within the *Im Legendenton* section, notes that sound on the offbeats destabilize the metrical order, but the fortissimos at the beginning downbeats of a few measures seem to indicate the sense of deliberate control and organization. The sforzando at mm. 199-200 sounds in octave doublings,
even further reinforcing the sense of determination to keep searching. The harmony in this passage, as well, changes very often with little anchoring, and thus lacks a clear sense of direction, implying frantic but aimless searching.

The last movement of the *Phantasie* is comparable to the final movements of Op. 109 and 111 in expressing a process of calmly rebuilding with a new sense of direction and purpose, and utilizes the same means encountered in the Beethoven sonatas: a slower tempo, smoother phrasing, as well as greater textural simplicity and harmonic direction. The last movement of the *Phantasie* is labeled *Langsam getragen. Durchweg leise zu halten* (Carried slowly. Consistently kept quiet), and begins clearly on the tonic triad of C Major, in contrast to the harmonically ambiguous beginning of the first movement, implying the development of a calmer, more assured character throughout the course of the piece. Moreover, the movement maintains a
strikingly similar pulse of triplet groupings to that of the final movement of Op. 111. There are no instances of downbeat and offbeat conflict between the two hands, and thus greater coordination and unity is achieved between the upper and lower lines. Along with the clearer sense of the downbeat and the slower tempo, there is a lack of textural complexity; the main melody is not suspended over a whirl of sound, but rather is grounded and supported by the left hand. For example, in m. 5 the melody can be heard in the middle voice played in the right hand, which sounds simultaneously on the downbeat with the left hand octaves. The consistency and stability of the meter in this last movement of the *Phantasie* seem to serve the same function as in Op. 111 of maintaining a sense of an easeful, but still constant, forward pulse.

Whereas the ascending leaps signifying reaching motions in the first movement of the *Phantasie* were often sudden and spasmodic, with a forte dynamic, the ascending lines in the third movement are softer in dynamic level, slower, and seem to represent more focused reaching motions, as in Op. 111. For example, if one follows the middle voice part (starting on E) that carries the main melody in mm. 5-14, one can hear that the theme reaches upward but is not quite able to reach high enough, and thus tries again and again, traveling higher, ultimately to the A in m. 10. In these sequential reaching gestures, the height that is achieved gradually becomes greater and greater, indicating a unidirectionality in the ascending motion, and a clearer sense of intention behind the theme.
In addition, it is important to note that an earlier version of the *Phantasie* actually incorporated the theme from *An die Ferne Geliebte* heard in the first movement again at the end of the final movement, which reflected a similar cyclical, homecoming quality as in Beethoven’s late sonatas.

Thus, the last movement of the *Phantasie* exemplifies the feeling of earnestly searching for and only eventually finding its “true melody”, much as in Beethoven’s sonatas Op. 109 and 111, and using the same techniques as the sonatas to convey this quality. Moreover, these two Beethoven sonatas may in fact be the first multi-movement sonatas that end with a slow movement, or at least the first pieces ending with variations on a really slow-moving theme, further supporting the speculation that a work like the *Phantasie*, in which the last movement illustrates a process of rebuilding, could never have been composed without the precedent of Beethoven’s last sonatas. Additionally, Beethoven’s earlier Op. 90 sonata anticipates this innovation in its moderately slow, lyrical finale.
However, it goes without saying that compared to the final movement of Op. 111, the third movement of the *Phantasie* maintains more of the searching and disorientating qualities found in the respective first movements. For example, although the third movement of the *Phantasie* clearly begins in C Major, that implied harmonic stability is immediately cast into doubt by the unusual major chord with a raised third on VI (an A-Major chord) that follows the tonic triad. Moreover, this movement demonstrates many instances in which a tonic resolution is avoided. For example, in m. 10, the dominant of a minor is left suspended under a fermata, but instead of resolving to that key, a C-Major chord follows. Another instance is m. 29, where a dominant of C Major is left unresolved and instead leads into the unexpected key of A-flat Major. Similarly, in m. 71, the dominant of d minor is left hanging with no resolution to d minor in sight.

**v. A Shared Sense of Stream of Consciousness**

Throughout both Schumann’s and Beethoven’s pieces, the entire process of striving is represented as a spiritual one. In other words, between the beginning and end of the pieces, nothing has physically changed, or been materially acquired; rather, one has achieved a kind of enlightenment or realization. Thus, it may be further argued that Schumann gained inspiration from Beethoven, not only in the representation of striving in two distinct stages, but also in his characterization of striving as largely a mental, rather than a physical, struggle. In their depictions of spiritual journeys, both Beethoven’s last sonatas and the *Phantasie* (particularly the first movement) have the shared quality of a stream of consciousness.

In order to discuss musical representations of stream of consciousness, however, we must first identify and clarify some of the characteristics that define what a stream of consciousness is.
The term refers to the flow of thoughts in the conscious mind, and it may be said that this “stream” has three distinct characteristics: 1) it is continuous and constantly in flux, that is, the thoughts are always evolving and wandering in unpredictable ways; 2) it is associative, in that it has a tendency to unify and connect seemingly disparate thoughts together as in Freudian “free association”; and 3) it is subjective, and is therefore not limited in any way by established rules or conventions; it reflects the imagination and the freedom of one’s thoughts.

One notable way Beethoven produces the first characteristic mentioned, the sense of evolving and frequently changing thought, is by having phrases or lines that appear at first simply to repeat what was heard earlier, but instead deviate, or wander off in a radically different direction. For example, in the first movement of Op. 111, when the island of calm is repeated in the recapitulation, it is extended and continues on in a different direction than before. Compared to the first instance of this sudden interruption in m. 50, the repeat of this interruption in m. 116 has a prolonged melisma in m. 118, and the line itself meanders on for much longer than before, and than would now be expected. This deviation in the melody convincingly portrays the flow and continuously changing nature of thought.
Furthermore, as explained by Andreas Schiff, the second variation of the third movement of Op. 109 has repeats that are written out, instead of making the conventional choice of indicating a repeat in the score and observing a simple binary form in that way. This directly written out repeat of the theme gives the same effect of a familiar theme wandering off in a new direction.

Schumann employs a similar method of deviating from a familiar line at the very end of the first movement of the *Phantasie*. In m. 293, the melody continues in a different direction.
from that taken in m. 25, and this, it turns out, leads the protagonist to find the concluding *An die Ferne Geliebte* theme.

One might say that these deviations of familiar lines are just examples of thematic development which are not especially notable. However, the chromatic lines, which indicate a sense of wandering, as well as the lack of decorative elaboration in these examples, suggest that these extensions and deviations are more than just superficial embellishments of a theme.

Next, the associative tendency of one’s stream of consciousness to connect various, seemingly disparate ideas is evoked in Beethoven’s sonatas through techniques such as seamless
connections from one markedly contrasting section to another, as well as musical synthesis or conglomerations. In each of Beethoven’s last three sonatas, the separate movements are all linked, supporting the sense of associating seemingly unrelated and juxtaposed ideas. For example, the first movement of Op. 111 transitions smoothly into the second movement, in which the C-Major triad that sounds both at the end of the first movement and at the beginning of the second movement, serves as the connective tissue. Similarly, the first movement of Op. 109 links immediately into the second movement from an E-Major to e-minor chord, and from an e-minor to an E-Major chord in the transition from the second to the third movement.
The same method of associating two juxtaposing sections can be observed in the transition into the *Im Legendenton* theme in the *Phantasie*. In m. 128, the melody sinks down above a dominant harmony over a tonic pedal of C Major to settle on a low G pitch, which connects into the g minor triad that begins the *Im Legendenton*.

These instances of connection seem to illustrate the organic process of one idea leading into another in one’s stream of consciousness; more specifically, one idea leads to a subtle
realization, from which the protagonist subsequently builds to produce a new idea. This associative nature of one’s stream of consciousness is further exemplified in the third movement of the *Phantasie*, in places where the phrase pauses on the dominant, from which a subtle shift is introduced, then leads into a new section which arises from that shift. For example, in m. 86, the music comes to a halt on the dominant seventh of F Major; however, instead of resolving, the bass and soprano lines move up a half step, leading into the next section in D-flat Major.

Another technique that Beethoven draws upon to illustrate the associative tendency of one’s stream of consciousness is the synthesis and unification of disparate musical elements from previous material. For example, Variation V of the second movement of Op.111 is essentially a synthesis of elements from the entire movement. The top line melody, as mentioned earlier, brings one back to the very beginning of the movement.
The rhythms of the middle line seem to have come from the left hand part of variation IV, as noted previously by William Kinderman.\textsuperscript{36}

The lowest line in variation V refers back, in inversion, to the top melody in m. 16 of variation IV, in both rhythm and contour. In this way, Beethoven portrays the ability of one’s mind to take

\textsuperscript{36} William Kinderman, \textit{Beethoven} (USA: Oxford University Press, 2009) 261.
seemingly unrelated ideas and synthesize them to create a cohesive whole. This associative nature of Beethoven’s late music has been observed by music scholars as well. According to Martin Cooper, Beethoven’s late music reflects “a search for unity in diversity…a growing awareness of a unity lying behind the diversity of the phenomena of human existence.”

A similar synthesis is produced in the third movement of *Phantasie*. For example, as perceptively noted by Linda Roesner, the main melody of this third movement (m. 5) may be derived from the mysterious melody that emerges in the coda of the *Im Legendenton* section of the first movement. In addition, the descending bass line in octaves accompanying the melody in the third movement sounds like the opening melody of the first movement. Thus, the main theme of the third movement may actually be a synthesis of earlier material introduced in the first movement.

38 Roesner, *Schumann’s “Parallel” Forms*, 276.
The third characteristic of stream of consciousness, the limitless and imaginative quality of one’s subconscious, is also illustrated by Beethoven through techniques such as wide leaps, harmonic flexibility, with unusual focus on the subdominant, and suspensions of time. Wide leaps in register, as previously mentioned, are frequently found in both Beethoven and Schumann’s pieces, in ways that contribute to the sense of reaching and striving. Furthermore, these wide leaps may signify reaching into the realm of the subconscious, beyond the physical world, and serve to generate a sense of spaciousness and freedom of thought.
As also mentioned earlier, harmonic ambiguity as well as unusually frequent modulations particularly to the subdominant and subdominant-related keys, occur throughout both Beethoven’s Op. 111 Sonata and Schumann’s *Phantasie*, contributing to the sense of spaciousness as well. These frequent suggestions of the subdominant are quite surprising, as one would expect emphasis on the dominant or relative major/minor keys, more than on the subdominant key. The subdominant in particular seems to signify boundlessness, as there is no clear expectation for what follows it, compared to the seventh or the second scale degrees, and it lacks the finality of the dominant or the tonic. Thus, the subdominant indicates an open feeling, full of possibility, as it can lead to different harmonic avenues. For example, both Heinrich Schenker and Theodor Adorno have pointed out that the most distinctive focal pitch is F in the Arietta; F is present in most of the right-hand chords at the beginning of Variation IV.

![Musical notation]

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Additionally, there is a very noticeable climactic F in the bass following the triple trill in m. 39 of Variation IV.

Furthermore, the end of the Arietta features emphasis on high Fs in the right hand.

A similar emphasis on the subdominant is heard in Schumann’s *Phantasie*, contributing to the harmonic flexibility of the work, and ultimately to the sense of the open and limitless nature of one’s subconscious. For example, the F that sounds in m. 81 as an unfulfilled tonic, full of longing, is very pertinent.
Furthermore, the third movement features a clear resolution and arrival in F Major in m. 67, strongly reinforcing the continuous withholding of C Major throughout the movement.

Another way Beethoven evokes the free and imaginative quality of one’s stream of consciousness is through illustrating an escape from the awareness of time. The flow of one’s thoughts is not constrained or limited in any way, and the passage of time is irrelevant. For example, there are moments in the *Maestoso* introduction of the first movement of Op. 111 in which there seems to be a suspension of time, as in m. 9 at the tied A-flat major chord.
The second movement of Op. 111 also creates a sense of timelessness in Variation IV with the repetitive triplet figures in the left hand set against the tied sixteenths in the right hand.

Similarly, m. 81 in the first movement of the *Phantasie*, stopping on the lone F pitch, where the line simply dissolves, conveys the feeling of a suspension of time. In addition, the swirling textures underneath the main theme in the beginning of the first movement throw off the sense of meter and impart a floating, other-worldly effect to the main melody.

Thus, Beethoven’s last sonatas and the *Phantasie* are not acting at the level of what is physically present, but instead evoke the limitless imagination of the subconscious. We may be reminded of the fact that this spirituality and immense profundity was indeed one of the aspects of Beethoven’s music that Schumann deeply admired. This expression of the metaphysical world in Beethoven’s last sonatas may be what musicologists, as well as Beethoven himself, have described as “art surpassing art.”

The music leaves behind formal and harmonic conventions. Schumann, in his *Phantasie*, emulates Beethoven in evoking a stream of consciousness, making

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the music escape the rigid confines of established rules and forms, allowing it to transcend the physical world and reflect spiritual truth.

\textit{vi. Schumann’s Reconfigurations}

In these ways, I have been arguing that Schumann may have been influenced by Beethoven’s musical depiction of inner, spiritual striving, as exemplified in the Op. 109, 110, and 111 sonatas, and applied techniques that enabled his \textit{Phantasie} also to convey its own kind of striving. However, one must continue to keep in mind that, despite these similarities, the contexts and stories underlying these pieces are very different. Going back to the historical background of these works, one may infer that Beethoven’s last sonatas represent the journey to renew his faith in a Higher Power and consequently adopt a more positive view of life after experiencing what seemed like a spiritual nadir. Considering Schumann’s forced separation from Clara, the \textit{Phantasie}, on the other hand, can be regarded as embodying a process of striving to communicate with Clara, and in the struggle to find the right words to express his feelings, trying to recollect various memories of their times together.

Therefore, although both Beethoven’s and Schumann’s pieces evoke striving, they do so with different goals in mind, as well as with different ways of reaching those destinations; unlike Beethoven’s pieces, Schumann’s \textit{Phantasie} brings to its interpretation of striving an element of intimacy, as the music is directed toward Clara, as well as an element of hearkening back to an earlier time. Taking into account these distinctions, I wish further to claim that Schumann did not merely adopt techniques from Beethoven’s last sonatas to depict striving in the same fashion, but modified the techniques creatively in order to express his own personal striving to reach Clara, and in doing so, introduced elements suggestive of intimacy and memory in the \textit{Phantasie}. 

\textbf{58}
One of the reconfigurations of Beethoven’s techniques that suggest Schumann’s relationship with Clara is in the use of octaves that occurs in Schumann’s second theme, and again in his finale. While the use of octaves at the beginning of the *Phantasie* is like Beethoven’s in its forcefulness, Schumann later reintroduces octaves to generate an opposite, affectionate nuance. For example, his use of octaves is markedly different in the first theme compared to that in the second theme, in F Major (mm. 62ff). Whereas his use of octaves at the beginning of the *Phantasie* suggests an exclamation or declaration, in the second theme, the octaves mimic the quality of a duet, in which two people are singing or dancing together.

The same duet-like quality is demonstrated in the third movement. These two functions of the octaves here reflect the dual purpose of the *Phantasie*, not only paying homage to Beethoven but also reconfiguring the use of octaves to play a role in communicating with Clara.
Schumann also uses the technique of unmasking a secret/hidden theme, bringing in the dimension of effortful recall to the inner striving evoked in the *Phantasie*. Although the concept of recall is actually suggested in the first movement evoked in the *Phantasie*, although the concept is actually suggested in the first movement of op. 109 by Beethoven’s reference to his own earlier Sonata in G-Major, Op. 79, Schumann takes a further step in illustrating the process of uncovering a memory that has been repressed, and actively trying to pull it out. For example, the second theme in the first movement of the *Phantasie* is previewed in m. 41, accompanied by a sixteenth note figure. At this point the memory is still a little blurry, but it emerges with greater clarity and presence in m. 62 as a “real” theme.

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40 Ludwig van Beethoven, *The Last Three Piano Sonatas, opp. 109, 110, 111*, Royal Academy of Music, Master class given by Andras Schiff, directed by Mischa Scorer, 170 min., The Masterclass Media Foundation, MMF 003, OCN 214813352, 2007, DVD.
Again, the way the theme first introduced in m. 33 later reveals itself to be a real theme in the Im Legendenten section is another instance of a memory being recalled with greater clarity than at first.

Along the same lines, the kind of variation form used in Op. 111 is now used in the Phantasie to further suggest effortful retrieval of a past experience. Surprisingly, variation form
can serve as an ingenious and very evocative way of suggesting the action of recollection; just as a memory is always present, but stored in the back of one’s mind all the time although one may be unaware of it, in variations the emotional and musical potential of the theme is always present but at times disguised and difficult to ascertain. Variation techniques can thus exemplify the process of a memory transitioning from the unconscious to the conscious mind. The *Im Legendenton* section as a whole is a set of variations on a theme, which suggests the process of this effortful recall. The way in which the theme gains more and more depth and elaboration over mm. 129 – 154 is like a memory slowly being envisioned with greater and greater vividness.
vii. Conclusions

As demonstrated above, Schumann therefore may have been inspired by Beethoven’s ability to evoke a process of striving by musically illustrating a sense of searching in the first movement and then a sense of finding in the final movement of his *Phantasie*, just as Beethoven had done in his last sonatas, particularly Op. 111. In his *Phantasie*, Schumann also seems to have adopted techniques that suggest the evolving, associative, and limitless qualities of a stream of consciousness from Beethoven’s last sonatas. However, Schumann also alters and applies these various elements from Beethoven’s music in very innovative ways to express a sense of closeness and recollection, in order to musically depict his personal struggles to connect with Clara. In his creative reconfigurations, it can be argued that Schumann evokes a stream of consciousness in an even more convincing way than Beethoven, by bringing the element of recollection to the fore.
Postlude: Performance Strategies

One of the most interesting and compelling aspects of the first movement of the *Phantasie* is the way in which the theme from *An die Ferne Geliebte* is hinted in fragments throughout the entire movement but is only revealed in its entirety at the end. A few questions, however, arise for the performer regarding this remarkable compositional choice made by Schumann. First of all, how can the performer make this thematic emergence at the end understood, or at least sensed by the first-time listener? What are ways in which one can perform the piece so that everything preceding the ending sounds like an upbeat leading up to it? How can one not only capture, but also sustain the anticipatory quality of the entire movement, culminating in the quotation? Rosen suggests that a performance of the *Phantasie* must convey a “kind of restlessness” that maintains the sense of tension as the resolution to C Major is withheld until the very last page; how can the performer keep the momentum going?

Musically speaking, one of the main reasons why the final revelation of the *An die Ferne Geliebte* theme feels so much like an arrival is that it is the most harmonically and thematically resolved passage of the entire movement. The ending is in stark contrast to the material that comes before it; everything before the last section is characterized in large part by erratic motivic and harmonic changes that suggest a sense of emotional fluctuation and disorientation. Thus, perhaps by intensifying these frequent emotional changes throughout the movement, the performer could make the steadiness of the ending even more striking. To do so, the performer could heighten the moments of quiet withdrawal from all of the passion evoked in the movement. Annie Fischer, Murray Perahia, Sviatoslav Richter, and Mikhail Pletnev all demonstrate subtle but highly effective ways in which to take advantage of opportunities to convey retreat within an

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otherwise highly passionate mood. There are, of course, variations in mood within this category of “retreat”; tenderness, peacefulness, worry and loneliness to name a few. However, all of these moments contribute to the unpredictability of the movement, and consequently strengthen the sense of culmination at the final emergence of the An die Ferne Geliebte theme.

Even from the very beginning, which starts very passionately, there are places in which the music pulls back, and which can be accentuated by the performer. For example, the passionate fortissimo beginning shifts to a phrase with a piano dynamic in m. 10. Fischer marks and intensifies this shift by introducing the soft pedal here. She also takes greater liberties with the rhythm of the half notes in this section by taking a bit of time at the beginning, and subtly accelerating as the line descends. This rhythmic shaping of the falling line contributes to the melancholy, lonely character of this section as opposed to the more declamatory beginning bars.

Richter strongly characterizes the descending passage starting in m. 49, contributing to the emotional fluctuation of the first movement. He performs this section with a notable
heaviness, intensified by greater weight on each quarter, a lagging tempo, and by the soft pedal. His interpretation of this section suggests the feeling of the protagonist becoming fatigued and feeling defeated, in ways that contrast markedly with the mood of the opening of the movement.

Another such subtle opportunity to intensify a sense of respite comes at the beginning of the “development” section in m. 82. Perahia, in his recording of the first movement, incorporates a brief moment of quiet tenderness amid the outwardly striving quality of the sequence of ascending lines that characterize this section. One can easily make this section sound static by repeatedly playing the ascending lines in the same fashion, with a crescendo to fortissimo every time, as written. However, Perahia responds with remarkable sensitivity to the subtle harmonic twists and turns in these sequences. For example, following the brief tonicization of c minor in m. 90, the beginning of m. 91 suggests the dominant of B-flat Major, which leads instead to another seventh chord in m. 92. Perahia, who introduces a subtle change in dynamic level and a slight hesitation at specifically this moment, accentuates this brief hint of B-flat Major. His performance of this section, as a result, effectively portrays the protagonist’s overwhelming sense of yearning for the past, but at the same time his awareness and determination to move forward and to stay on message.
In addition, Pletnev, in the measure preceding the section starting m. 82, takes more liberties with tempo, and takes a greater pause in comparison to other performers where the phrase dissolves, heightening the sense of time being suspended. Before the pause, the line ends on an isolated F in the right hand, which as mentioned before, is very harmonically ambiguous. Thus, the unusually long pause that Pletnev takes here leaves the listener wondering what the continuation will be and intensifies the sense of disorientation, which is finally resolved at the end of the movement.

Thus, although incredibly subtle, these techniques of taking advantage of the moments of retreat that the first movement contains, intensifies the sense of emotional fluctuation and unpredictability, further making the predictable and steady ending all the more of an arrival. This
strategy of withdrawing in order to further evoke passion and maintain tension is similar to the idea behind the phrase *reculer pour mieux sauter* (to draw back to make a better jump),\(^{42}\) and can be an extremely useful strategy for the performer to keep in mind when playing the first movement of the *Phantasie*.

\(^{42}\) This phrase was first introduced to me by my piano teacher, Prof. Shapiro.
Works Cited


**Discography**


