

## Beethoven and Handel: The Significance of a Borrowing

### Abstract

The Allegretto movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in F, Op. 54, contains a hitherto unidentified group of borrowings from Handel's keyboard Suite in F minor (1720). The purpose of this paper is not only to identify this group of appropriations but, more important, to seek those elements in Handel's Suite that attracted Beethoven's attention. They include above all frequent, highly characteristic changes in harmonic rhythm and grouping rhythm that operate under the surface of the music. Such changes belie our notion of Baroque temporality as a motoric phenomenon and our view of Beethoven's allegretto as a *moto perpetuo* display piece.

Substantial (if veiled) thematic and registral parallelisms between the Allegretto and the opening in *tempo d'un Menuetto* also point to Beethoven's use of three-part ritornello form (*Vordersatz, Fortspinnung, and Epilog*) on a large scale, with allusions to sonata form. I address briefly the relation of Beethoven's treatment of form to the mixture of genres that pervades the Baroque suite in general and Handel's F minor in particular.