

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Sonata No. 8 in C Minor ("Pathétique"), Op. 13

(*Grande Sonate pathétique*)

Edited by Stewart Gordon

About This Edition

Foreword

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) is often regarded as a link between the balance and clarity of Classicism and the emotional intensity and freedom of Romanticism. In

his 32 piano sonatas, he experimented constantly with structure and content. These works span a period of almost 30 years of Beethoven's mature creative life. He used the sonatas as a workshop in which to try out innovations, many of his compositional techniques appearing in the sonatas first and then later in chamber or symphonic works.

The autograph manuscript for Sonata No. 8 in C Minor (*Grande Sonate pathétique*), Op. 13, is lost; therefore, this edition is based on the first edition published in Vienna, Austria, by Hoffmeister in 1799. Additionally, a number of other esteemed editions were referenced (see "Sources Consulted for This Edition" on page 28) when decisions have had to be made due to lack of clarity or inconsistency in the first edition, or when realization of ornamentation was open to question.

Recommended solutions to problems are suggested in footnotes in this edition. If, however, a problem is such that it is open to several solutions, other editors' conclusions are also often included. In this way students and their teachers are not only offered choices in individual cases but, more importantly, gain an awareness of the editorial and performance problems that attend studying and playing this music.

The insurmountable problems that arise in trying to distinguish between the staccato dot and the wedge in these works have led this editor to join ranks with most others in using but one marking (dot) for both symbols.

Like almost all other editors, I have chosen not to indicate pedaling markings in the sonatas except those left by the composer. The matter of pedaling, especially as might be applicable to music of this era, must be based on innumerable choices that result from stylistic awareness and careful listening, these possibilities changing as different instruments or performance venues are encountered.

Both autographs and first editions contain inconsistencies. First editions especially are prone to many discrepancies, such as differences in articulation in parallel passages in expositions and recapitulations of movements in sonata-allegro form, or the many cases of an isolated note in passagework without the articulation shown for all its neighbors. Even those editors whose philosophy is to be as faithful to the composer as possible subscribe to the practice of correcting these small discrepancies without taking note of such through the addition of parentheses. This edition also subscribes to that practice to avoid cluttering the performer's pages with what would turn out to be a myriad of parenthetical changes. By the same token, this editor has proceeded with an attitude of caution and inquiry, so that such changes have been made only in the most obvious cases of error or omission. If, in the opinion of the editor, there seemed to be the slightest chance that such inconsistencies could represent conscious variation or musical intent on the part of the composer, the issue has been highlighted, either by the use of parentheses that show editorial additions or footnotes that outline discrepancies and discuss possible musical intent on the part of the composer.

Fingering in parentheses indicates alternative fingering. When a single fingering number attends a chord or two vertical notes, the number indicates the uppermost or lowermost note. Octaves on black keys are usually fingered 1–4, but it is acknowledged that such fingering may prove too much of a stretch for some hands. Thus, (4) in parenthesis indicates that players with small hands may want to substitute 1–5.

Ornaments such as trills, turns, and mordents are discussed in footnotes. When a single rapid appoggiatura or grace note is not footnoted, the performer should choose whether to execute it before the beat or on the beat. However, in some cases this editor indicates a preference for on-the-beat execution in the music by using a dotted line that connects the ornamental note with the base note with which it is to be played.

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Dedicated to the Prince Karl von Lichnowsky

Sonata No. 8 in C Minor

(Grande Sonate pathétique)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Op. 13

Grave

- (a) The stylistic and rhythmic challenges of the introduction are addressed by Bülow and Tovey. Bülow recommends detaching the 32nd notes slightly from the following longer notes, referring to an unidentified style used by “old masters,” and then citing examples of French Overture style from keyboard works of J. S. Bach and Handel. Bülow furthermore adds staccato marks to the 32nd notes, as well as lines above the following longer notes in both hands, using similar articulation for the remainder of the introduction. Schnabel adds portato marking in both hands to the three-note figure leading to the quarter note on the third beat of the measure, continuing such additions in similar places throughout the introduction. This editor has eschewed such additions, but agrees that a moderate degree of articulation between the 32nd notes and their following neighbors is appropriate, albeit the repetition of the lowermost note in the RH will point the performer in this direction.

Present day performance practice supports playing the 32nd notes exactly in time. Tovey recommends counting 16th notes. Many teachers, including this editor, count 32nd notes. Only English music historian Thurston Dart (1921–1971) hints at an alternative to strict execution (Thurston Dart, *The Interpretation of Music*, Harper and Row, New York, 1954, pp. 82–83). He suggests that the single dotted note served for all increments of dotted rhythm well into the early-19th century, before double-dotting was widespread among composers, and that French Overture style should maintain the quickest possible relationship between the short antecedent and the following stronger beat. Dart cites the music of Beethoven for a possible application of this principle without mentioning this work specifically.

- (b) Bülow and Schenker suggest the nine 128th notes be thought of as three sets of three. Bülow, Casella and Tovey suggest a slight broadening during this cadenza. This editor deems both suggestions helpful and musically sound.
- (c) The first edition shows the slur over the cadenza ending on the last 128th note of measure 4. Bülow, Casella, Köhler, Schnabel and Tovey extend the slur to the downbeat of measure 5.

Adagio cantabile

The musical score is for the first movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 10, Op. 10, No. 1, 'Adagio cantabile'. It shows measures 1 through 13. The key signature has two flats (B-flat major), and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo/mood is 'Adagio cantabile'. The dynamic is piano (p). The score includes various musical markings such as slurs, fingerings (e.g., 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 3, 4, 5), and articulation marks. A circled 'a' is placed above the first measure. Measure numbers 5, 9, and 13 are enclosed in boxes. The notation is for piano, with treble and bass staves.

- Ⓐ The main theme of this movement (measures 1–8) has provided a well-known focal point for scholarly speculation with regard to Beethoven's articulation. The slur marks reproduced here appear in the first edition, as well as all other early sources, and they remain consistent throughout the movement each time this theme appears. The unusual grouping has troubled several editors. Of the referenced editions Bülow, Casella, Köhler and Tovey replace Beethoven's articulation with various patterns of longer slurs. Martienssen does so, but uses dotted lines, leaving Beethoven's slurring in solid ones. Schnabel alters the phrasing only in that he extends the slur on the second beat of measure 5 to the downbeat of measure 6. For suggestions in dealing with the performance aspect of Beethoven's markings, consult the Phrasing and/or Slurring section (under the heading Articulation, Dynamics and Accents, and Ornamentation in Beethoven's Music) at the beginning of this edition as well as William S. Newman's discussion of the articulation of this theme in his book *Beethoven on Beethoven: Playing His Piano Music His Way* (W. W. Norton, New York, 1988), pp. 129–130. In the context of this theme, the slur seems for the most part to indicate groups that can be played legato without help from the damper pedal, breaks in slurring occurring consistently where the performer might or must reposition the hand. Aside from this practical aspect, however, Beethoven's slurring shapes the theme in ways that are both unusual and expressively interesting.

RONDO

Allegro

- (a) Whether these rapid grace notes are to be played on the beat or before the beat is a question to which Beethoven research scholars have provided no definitive answer. The "old" style, elucidated by C.P.E. Bach (1714–1788) in his famous treatise, would prescribe on-the-beat execution. However, the manner of playing ornaments was undergoing change during Beethoven's time, and Beethoven often broke with tradition for artistic reasons. Moreover, Beethoven's notation is not consistent in indicating either the rhythmic value of grace notes or placing slashes across their stems. Thus current scholarship tends to rely on musical context for making the decision. The grace notes on the second half of measure 2 and on the downbeat of measure 3 may be executed either on or before the beat, the difference being but barely audible when the movement is played at tempo. Those on the downbeats of measures 5 and 6 seem to fold into the flow of the movement more easily if executed rapidly on the downbeats:



- (b) Eight of the twelve referenced editors indicate the starting note for this ornament through suggested fingering, six starting on the main note (d'Albert, Bülow, Köhler, Schenker, Schnabel and Tovey), and only two holding strictly to tradition by starting on the upper note (Arrau and Wallner). Starting on the upper note forces the player to make a choice between a four-note figure, which seems simplistic, and a six-note figure, which may seem crowded at tempo. The five-note figure that results by starting on the main note provides enough flourish and is technically comfortable. Moreover, it suggests an aural link with the line that opens the movement, as well as a stronger authentic cadence profile:

