

# BEETHOVEN

Sonate in F  
für Klavier

Sonata in F major  
for Pianoforte

op. 54

Urtext

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Bärenreiter Kassel · Basel · London · New York · Praha  
BA 11806

# INTRODUCTION

Beethoven's sketches for the second movement of this highly condensed sonata (no preliminary material for the opening movement has survived) date from the early summer of 1804. On 26 August of that year, Beethoven offered the work to Breitkopf & Härtel, together with the 'Waldstein' Sonata op.53 and as a yet unwritten sonata which, he said, could either be another solo piano work or, if the publishers preferred it, a duo. (It became the 'Appassionata' sonata op.57.) At the same time, Beethoven offered Breitkopf the oratorio *Christus am Ölberge*, the 'Eroica' Symphony and the Triple Concerto op.56. His hope was that all these pieces would appear within a short space of time:

Some publishers delay so terribly long with my compositions before they see the light of day. The reason for it is blamed by one of them on this, and by another on that cause. I distinctly remember that you once told me you were in a position to produce a huge number of copies within a few weeks. I now have several works, and because I have decided to let you have all of them, my wish to have them see the light of day shortly may be fulfilled all the sooner.<sup>1</sup>

Some six weeks later Kaspar Karl van Beethoven, who was handling his brother's business affairs at the time, wrote to Breitkopf, suggesting that they could have all the works the composer had mentioned to them, with the exception of the oratorio, in which they had expressed no interest, for 1,100 florins.<sup>2</sup> This was accepted, and Beethoven dispatched the sonatas opp.53 & 54 to them, together with the 'Eroica' Symphony, some time in January 1805. The delay, he explained, had been caused by the lack of a reliable copyist.<sup>3</sup> However, in a now lost letter of 30 January Breitkopf must have proposed a reduced fee, because at some stage in May Beethoven angrily demanded the return of his manuscripts.<sup>4</sup> As things turned out, all the pieces with the exception of *Christus am Ölberge* (which, ironically enough, was eventually issued by Breitkopf) were published in Vienna between 1805 and 1807 by the Kunst- und Industrie-Comptoir.

Coming as it does between two such grandly conceived works as the 'Waldstein' and the 'Appassionata', op.54 has always been something of a neglected step-child among Beethoven's piano sonatas. Many com-

mentators have been perplexed by its unorthodox form and its two-movement design. To the influential 19<sup>th</sup>-century Russian writer Wilhelm von Lenz, the two movements were no more than fragments, and the sonata as a whole merely bizarre. It was, he declared a "torso", a work "that had been published before it was completed to meet a publisher's needs, or under pressure from a publisher."

We have not yet met anyone who has acquired a taste for the torso that is op.54. That we are here presented with a cartoon, not a picture, that we are dealing only with a study in curious forms, follows from the absence of any content arising out of melodic invention. We see unknown material by an unknown painter lying around, we distinguish bold brushstrokes, uncertain contours, but the picture does not emerge.<sup>5</sup>

Donald Francis Tovey, on the other hand, praised the sonata as a "very unique and subtle work", and one that is "profoundly humorous, with a humour that lies with the composer rather than with the childlike character portrayed by the music."<sup>6</sup> And to Alfred Brendel, it is a "little-loved, highly original work".<sup>7</sup>

Op.54 is the most Haydnesque among Beethoven's piano sonatas, and – if we disregard the early pair of 'sonatinas' op.49, which the composer almost certainly never prepared for publication – his first work of the kind to be cast in only two movements. Its models are to be found among the several two-movement sonatas of Haydn, such the D major Hob. XVI:51, whose opening movement, like that of Beethoven's op.54, has no repeat, while the start of its recapitulation presents what is in effect a variation of the main subject. Beethoven's first movement plays on the contrast between two strongly opposed ideas: an elegant minuet, and a forceful toccata-like passage beginning in double octaves, forming a quasi-trio. The latter's second half is unruly enough for the music to lose itself in a bewildering variety of keys, descending in bars 44–46 via thirds, to pass through A $\flat$ , F minor, D $\flat$ , and B $\flat$  minor.

The notion of an actual minuet and trio is suggested by the nature of the opening section, which falls into two halves, each with a written-out repeat. Following the quasi-trio, the minuet makes a return in full, its

5 Wilhelm von Lenz: *Beethoven. Eine Kunst-Studie* (Hamburg, 1860), part 3, section 1: part 2, pp.279–80.

6 Beethoven: *Sonatas for Pianoforte*, ed. Harold Craxton, Commentaries and Notes by Donald Francis Tovey (London, 1931), vol.2, p.232.

7 Alfred Brendel: "Musical Character(s) in Beethoven's Piano Sonatas", *Music, Sense and Nonsense* (London, 2015), p.67.

1 *Ludwig van Beethoven: Briefwechsel. Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Sieghard Brandenburg (Munich, 1996), No.188.

2 Letter of 10 October 1804. *Briefwechsel*, No.194.

3 See letter of 18 April 1805. *Briefwechsel* No.218.

4 *Briefwechsel* No.223.

# PREFACE

This is the last of the piano sonatas for which essentially only the following single source survives:

**E** First edition (April 1806), published by Kunst- und Industrie-Comptoir, Vienna.

## Specific Editorial Problems

Wherever possible, the original notation, clefs, spelling of dynamic and tempo markings, note-groupings, and layout have been retained precisely as they appear in **E**. However, abbreviated forms require special consideration, appearing more often in **E** than is acceptable in a modern score, and the  $\text{f}$  in I 150 has obviously been written out. However, the figure  $\text{ff}$ , though unsuitable where it appears in **E** in II 65–6, later (in several passages from II 115–8 on) more closely resembles a drum roll, and may with advantage be retained.

Editorial insertions and emendations are distinguished by the use of either square brackets or (in the case of slurs, ties and hairpins) by broken type.

## Ties and Slurs

According to the modern convention slurred chords need only a single slur, but tied chords need as many ties as there are notes in the chord. Contemporary Beethoven sources, however, are considerably more lax in their application of any such conventions, and where one or more ties are absent in the sources, but are obvious from the context, they are supplied in the present edition according to the modern convention, and editorial notation is deemed unnecessary (only once in op.54: II 50).

In Beethoven's piano music the absence of any slurs is quite common; and it would be neither possible nor desirable to continue every slurred pattern editorially. Often it is obvious that the legato style continues (e.g. II 131), but sometimes we cannot be so sure (II 75–98 not necessarily legato despite 47–8 etc.). It must therefore be clearly declared that the absence of printed slurs by no means always indicates that a detached style was intended or expected. On the other hand, there is one category of 'slurs' that can be deceptive: when a slur is notated round a group of notes merely in order to indicate a triplet or quintuplet etc., as (in **E**) in I 121/3, 148. Where it is clear from the context (e.g. I 121, no slur in the group of 32nds, and none in 124–5) that these are 'group slurs' and not real legato slurs, they are omitted, and discussed in the Critical Commentary in any cases of possible doubt.

## Dynamics

It is an occasional feature of Beethoven's notation that he treats the two hands as separate entities, giving a dynamic marking to one or other, or both. Where Beethoven appears to intend a dynamic to apply to just one hand, we have reproduced this precisely, as is of course crucial in respect of *sf* markings (e.g. II 37–44). But it is sometimes harder to justify where the same dynamic is given to both hands at precisely the same point. It may assist clarity, for example in II 162<sup>1</sup> where the additional *pp* below RH removes any lingering doubt (cf. 105!). In especially emphatic places such as II 131 one would not wish in any way to detract from the sheer degree of drama in Beethoven's dynamics. But where merely a general dynamic such as *pp* happens to be placed in both staves, we can honestly judge that this adds nothing even psychological to the music, and reduce it to one simple marking between the staves. All such instances are given in Appendix 4.

## Accents

In 1805 the modern, sharp accent as we know it today was in its infancy. The sharp, quick accent would more commonly appear as a staccato Strich (as, for example, on the first of each group of a succession of  $\text{fff}$ ). Gentler stresses were notated as hairpins, rather longer than the modern  $>$ , and may resemble a diminuendo, as in I 153; these are to be read as long accents (or 'Schubert hairpins').

## Range of Beethoven's Pianoforte

In the present edition we have retained strictly the integrity of Beethoven's piano, with its range, at the time op.54 was written, of  $f_3$ – $c^3$ . Many modern editions of Beethoven's piano music have guessed (sometimes in brackets) at higher or lower notes which Beethoven might have written had they been available to him at the time the piece was composed (in op.54 this concerns II 41–3); yet a sideways glance at his orchestral music tells us immediately that it would be unthinkable to summon the identical criterion in order to rewrite all his woodwind and brass parts similarly. We even possess precise evidence that Beethoven later objected to his earlier works being retouched in this respect; see his letter of 12 February 1816 to Carl Czerny (Emily Anderson, *The Letters of Beethoven* (1961), No.610).

# VORWORT

Dies ist die letzte der Klaviersonaten, für die sich im Wesentlichen nur die folgende Einzelquelle erhalten hat:

E Erstaussgabe (April 1806), veröffentlicht vom Kunst- und Industrie-Comptoir, Wien.

## Spezielle Editionsprobleme

Wo immer möglich, wurden die originale Notation, Schlüssel, die Schreibweise von Dynamik und Tempobezeichnungen, Notengruppierungen und die äußere Anlage so beibehalten, wie sie in E enthalten sind. Abkürzungen verlangen jedoch nach einem differenzierten Umgang; sie erscheinen in E häufiger als es für einen modernen Notentext vertretbar ist, und natürlich wurden die  $\text{♩}$  in I 150 ausgeschrieben. Demgegenüber erinnert die Figur  $\text{♩}$ , obgleich sie in E II 65–66 unpassend erscheint, später (in mehreren Passagen ab II 115–118) deutlicher an einen Trommelwirbel und kann mit Gewinn beibehalten werden.

Die durch den Herausgeber vorgenommenen Ergänzungen und Emendationen sind durch eckige Klammern oder (bei Legato- und Haltebögen sowie Gabeln) durch gestrichelte Linien gekennzeichnet.

## Halte- und Legatobögen

Nach den modernen Notationsregeln wird bei Akkorden immer nur ein Legatobogen gesetzt, dagegen so viele Haltebögen, wie die Akkorde Töne aufweisen. Dies ist jedoch in den zeitgenössischen Beethoven-Quellen nur inkonsequent befolgt. Wenn also ein oder mehrere musikalisch notwendige Haltebögen in den Quellen fehlen, so wurden sie in der vorliegenden Edition den modernen Regeln entsprechend ergänzt, wobei auf gestrichelte Notation verzichtet wurde (Einzelfall in op. 54: II 50).

In Beethovens Klaviermusik ist das Fehlen jeglicher Bögen nicht ungewöhnlich, es wäre allerdings weder möglich noch wünschenswert, an allen entsprechenden Stellen Ergänzungen vorzunehmen. Häufig ist die Fortsetzung des Legatospiels offensichtlich (z. B. II 131), doch manchmal ist es unklar (II 75–98 nicht unbedingt legato trotz 47–48 etc.). Es sei deshalb mit Nachdruck betont, dass das Fehlen gedruckter Bögen nicht in jedem Falle bedeutet, dass Non-legato-Spiel gemeint ist oder erwartet wird. Daneben gibt es eine Kategorie von „Bögen“, die irreführend sein kann: wenn ein Bogen lediglich zu einer Notengruppe gesetzt ist, um eine Triole oder Quintole etc. anzuzeigen wie (in E) in I 121/123, 148. Wo es durch den Kontext (z. B. I 121,

kein Legatobogen zur 32tel-Gruppe und keiner in 124–125) klar ist, dass es sich eindeutig um „Gruppierungsbögen“ und keine echten Legatobögen handelt, wurden sie weggelassen und möglichen Zweifelsfälle im Critical Commentary erörtert.

## Dynamik

Es gehört zu den gelegentlich begegnenden Eigentümlichkeiten von Beethovens Notation, dass er beide Hände als getrennte Einheiten behandelt und dynamische Angaben der einen oder der anderen Hand oder beiden gemeinsam zuordnet. Wo Beethoven offensichtlich die Dynamik nur auf eine Hand angewendet wissen wollte, haben wir das genau so wiedergegeben, zumal es im Hinblick auf *sf* natürlich entscheidend ist (z. B. II 37–44). Diese Vorgehensweise zu rechtfertigen fällt freilich dort, wo die gleichen dynamischen Angaben zu beiden Händen an exakt derselben Stelle notiert sind, manchmal nicht leicht. Zur Klarheit kann aber beispielsweise II 162<sup>1</sup> beitragen, wo das zusätzliche *pp* unter der RH jedweden Zweifel beseitigt (vgl. 105!). An besonders emphatischen Stellen wie II 131 ist es keinesfalls wünschenswert, den hohen dramatischen Gehalt abzuschwächen, der Beethovens dynamische Vorschriften auszeichnet. Wo jedoch nur eine Grunddynamik wie zum Beispiel *pp* in beiden Systemen erscheint, können wir mit gutem Gewissen davon ausgehen, dass dadurch der Musik nicht das mindeste psychologische Moment hinzugefügt werden sollte; wir können es also auf eine einzelne Angabe zwischen den Systemen reduzieren. Alle Fälle dieser Art werden im Appendix 4 aufgelistet.

## Akzente

1805 steckte der heute geläufige scharfe Akzent noch in den Kinderschuhen. Der scharfe kurze Akzent erschien stattdessen gewöhnlich als Staccato-Strich (typischerweise jeweils auf der ersten Note einer Reihe aufeinander folgender  $\text{♩}$ -Gruppen). Weniger starke Betonungen wurden als Gabeln wiedergegeben, die etwas länger waren als das moderne Zeichen > und an Diminuendo-Gabeln erinnern, wie in I 153: Diese sind als lange Akzente (oder „Schubert-Gabeln“) zu verstehen.

## Der Tonumfang von Beethovens Klavier

Die vorliegende Ausgabe orientiert sich strikt am Tonumfang von Beethovens Klavier, der, als op. 54 geschrieben wurde, von  $f_3$  bis  $c^3$  reichte. Bei vielen mo-

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