



Op. 7 title page from the first edition, reproduced by kind permission from the copy in the Austrian National Library, Hoboken Collection, S. H. Beethoven 39

About Op. 7

The fact that the Op. 7 is given an opus number unto itself suggests the importance of the work. Published as a “Grande Sonate” by Artaria in 1797, it is dedicated to the young Countess Babette (a.k.a. Anna Luise Barbara) von Keglevics (d. 1813), a gifted

piano student of Beethoven who lived near the composer at that time. She married the Prince Odescalchi in 1801, remaining a friend and patron of Beethoven. The composer, in turn, dedicated his Opp. 7, 15, 34 and WoO73 to her.

Sonata No. 4 in E-flat Major (Grande Sonate), Op. 7

Autograph/facsimile: lost
 Sketches/loose pages: movement 3
 First edition: Artaria: Vienna, 1797

The opening movement, marked *Allegro molto e con brio*, bears out the promise implied by the use of the word “grand” in the title, for its exposition presents a wealth of material. The chords of the first four measures are accompanied by eighth notes divided into sets of threes, which become the melodic idea at measure 5. The chord idea returns for a transition at measure 25 that leads to the second theme area at measure 41 where, once again, groups of three eighth notes are featured. A chorale-like alternate second theme enters at measure 59. These elements are developed and extended by 16th-note

ushers in a coda that makes use of both first and second theme materials. The movement ends with brilliant chords.

The serious, contemplative nature of the second movement is foreshadowed by its marking of *Largo, con gran espressione*. Cast in an **A B A coda** structure, the first theme uses rests to achieve a feeling of serenity. A middle section (measures 25–50) features staccato 16th notes in the LH to suggest a string *pizzicato* accompaniment. After the first section returns at measure 51, the coda is ushered in by the middle-section theme at measure 74.

The third movement, marked simply *Allegro*, is a minuet and trio type, both structurally and in its use of a 3/4 meter. Driving triplets and the use of the parallel minor in the trio (Minore) section create a somber mood (upbeat to measure 97–150). It is interesting to note that the second half of the trio section is not marked to be repeated and the composer provides a transitional passage (measures 140–150) that leads to the *da capo*.

The final movement, marked *Poco allegretto e grazioso*, is a rondo cast as **A B A C A B A coda**. The last two statements of **A** (upbeat to measure 97 through the downbeat of 112, and the upbeat to measure 146–157) present the theme in a more embellished form. The **C** section (measures 64–96) presents a two-part structure, each part marked to be repeated and features challenging 32nd-note passagework alternately in each hand. The coda (measures 158–186) is announced with a surprising modulation of the **A** theme to the key of E major, one-half step higher than the key of the movement. The movement ends quietly.

3

3 2 1
5 3 1
5 2 1

fp *sf* *sf* *sf*

1 2 1 1 2 3 1 2 4

5

p *ff* *p* *ff*

4 (4) (4) (4) (4)

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