

A T T H E P I A N O W I T H B E E T H O V E N

EDITED BY
MAURICE HINSON

FOREWORD

There were many composers, perhaps a majority, whose personal instrument was a keyboard, and there is no doubt that almost all nineteenth-century composers were pianists. Many of them—such as Liszt, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Brahms—felt really at home only at the piano, and their happiest moments of inspiration came while they were seated at the piano. And yet, to none did the piano mean the same as it did to Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827). For Beethoven, the piano was not only a trusted friend, it was a confessor to whom he could whisper his innermost secret, a messenger of love, a scapegoat on whom he took revenge and vented his anger, a dumb and unsuspecting bystander whom he could deride, an intimate into whose presence he could put on his slippers and take a rest after arduous work. For Beethoven, the piano was also his workshop, laboratory, and proving ground. It was the alchemist's secret chamber where he mixed the ingredients to obtain the pure gold he was after: a new style. As soon as he came nearer creating this new style, he transferred it to a large beaker—symphonic, choral, dramatic, pianistic.

This collection introduces Beethoven in his smaller forms in which, coming down from the heights of abstract speculation, one can see how quickly he engaged in easy conversation. This applies not only to the *Bagatelles*, but also to his earlier pieces, for even at that time Beethoven was occupied with serious thinking and experimentation.

Beethoven was the first composer in history who made himself independent of the commissions of princely patrons. True, he accepted some commissions now and then, and he sold his works not only to publishers but sometimes to patrons. And he did occasionally write compositions with a practical purpose in mind. But his piano compositions were intended almost without exception for himself. Therefore, these pieces show how great his command was of works of smaller dimensions, even though he composed only relatively rarely in small forms.

CONTENTS

Beethoven as Pianist	2
Beethoven as Teacher	3
Beethoven's Library	4
Beethoven's Method Book	5
Beethoven and the Metronome	6
Beethoven's Pianos	7
Guide to Performance Practices in Beethoven's Piano Works	9
Dynamics and Expression	9
Pedaling	10
Tempo and Character	10
Ornaments	11
Articulation	11
Czerny's Suggestions for Performing Beethoven's Piano Works	11
Performing Beethoven Today	12
Notation and Types of Touches Used by Beethoven	12
The Purpose of This Collection	12
About the Pieces	13
For Further Reading	15
Allegretto in C Minor, WoO 53	37
Andante in C Major	19
Bagatelle in F Major, Op. 33, No. 3	25
Bagatelle in G Major, Op. 126, No. 5	44
Bagatelle in G Minor, Op. 126, No. 2	41
Für Elise, WoO 59	33
German Song, WoO 1	16
Minuet in F Major	18
Piano Piece in B Minor, WoO 61	28
Piano Piece in G Minor, WoO 61a	17
Romanza, WoO 1	16
Rondo in C Major, WoO 48	29
Russian Folk Song, Op. 107, No. 7	17
Seven Variations on "God Save the King," WoO 78	57
Sonata in G Major, Op. 79	46
Sonatina in F Major, Anh. 5, No. 2	20

BEETHOVEN AS PIANIST

By 1798, Beethoven's fame as a first-rate pianist was beginning to spread. It was as a pianist, not as a composer, that he made his initial impact. During 1798 the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* remarked about Beethoven's brilliant, free improvisations and the wonderful way in which he was "able to perform impromptu on any given theme a graceful and, at the same time, closely knit development of ideas, not merely a variation of the figure, which so many virtuosi do so well—and so emptily."

Beethoven's playing had unprecedented power, personality, and emotional appeal. In many respects he can be considered the first romantic pianist, especially as the one who broke all the laws in the name of "expression." In the nineteenth century the word "expression" took the place of the eighteenth-century word "taste." Beethoven was the first who thought orchestrally and achieved orchestral effects on the piano. In this regard, he foreshadowed Franz Liszt.

Most of Beethoven's performances were in Vienna in the salons of the rich, and he probably received stipends for many of these. Observations at close hand by Beethoven's pupils, Ferdinand Ries (1784–1838) and Carl Czerny (1791–1859), give striking evidence of his mature ability and also his paradoxical nature. Ries thought:

... he played his own compositions very freakishly, holding firmly to the measure, however, as a rule and occasionally, but not often, hurrying the tempo. At times he would hold the tempo back in his *crescendo* with *ritardando*, which made a very beautiful and highly striking effect. In playing he would give a passage now in the right hand, now in the left, a lovely and absolutely inimitable expression; but he very seldom added notes or ornaments.

For Czerny, not even Hummel could match his virtuosity and speed in scales, double trills, and skips.

Even as early as 1791, the critic Carl Ludwig Junker pointed out that Beethoven's playing "differs greatly from the usual method of treating the piano, that it seems as if he had struck out on an entirely new path for himself." He also commented on Beethoven's "fiery expression."

Beethoven's improvisational ability must have been extraordinary. Indeed, his improvisations were better than his performances of published pieces, for after coming to Vienna Beethoven had little time to practice. In many of his improvisations he would get carried away, pound the piano, and break strings and hammers of the delicate Viennese pianos. Beethoven was a most lively figure at the keyboard.

At one public concert, he got into a rage about something and, at the first chords of his solo, broke a half dozen strings. And Anton Reicha relates one evening when Beethoven was playing a Mozart concerto at court:

"He asked me to turn pages for him. But I was mostly occupied in wrenching the strings of the pianoforte which snapped, while the hammers stuck among the broken strings. Beethoven insisted on finishing the concerto, and so back and forth I leaped, jerking out a string, disentangling a hammer, turning a page, and I worked harder than Beethoven."

This would have been about 1795 or 1796, since Beethoven for the most part played his own music in public, with only two known exceptions: on March 31, 1795, he played a Mozart concerto at a benefit concert for Mozart's widow, and he repeated it on January 8, 1796.

Beethoven broke more pianos in Vienna than anyone else, and only because he demanded far too much from the pianos then being made.

The opening of the *Choral Fantasy*, Op. 80, gives us an idea of Beethoven's improvisation. J. B. Cramer told his students that nobody could say he had ever heard improvisation if he had not heard Beethoven. Carl Czerny said that Beethoven's improvisations were so brilliant and amazing that members of the audience would sob loudly, "for apart from the beauty and originality of his ideas, and his ingenious manner of expressing them, there was something magical about his playing."

Czerny described Beethoven's hands as being densely covered with hair; his fingers, especially the tips, were very broad; his stretch was not large, hardly capable of a tenth.

In his playing, Beethoven produced new effects, broke all the rules, used an extraordinarily wide dynamic palette, and was highly expressive. All of these pianistic achievements made him a direct link to the romantic pianists. Unlike the highly disciplined Mozart or Cramer, Beethoven played as he felt (as Chopin later suggested to his students), unclassically, wrong notes and all. He "played like a composer." But his friend and student Anton Schindler (1795–1864) admitted that "all music produced by Beethoven's hands appeared to undergo a new creation. These wonderful effects were, in a great degree, produced by his uniform legato style, which was one of the most remarkable peculiarities of his playing."

Schindler discusses Beethoven's combinations of distant intervals and keys, heightened by idiosyncrasies of rhythm and staccatos, and set off by a smooth legato. "Unlike Steibelt, Dussek and some of their contemporaries in their effort to *draw* out the tone, Beethoven would often throw it out in detached notes, thus producing the effect of a fountain gushing forth and darting its spray on all sides, well contrasting with the melodious episodes which he still preserved." Nobody ever referred to Beethoven's "singing style," a description often applied to other pianists. He was far too dynamic. He also made far greater use of the pedal than was customary. Czerny says that in 1803 (when Beethoven could still hear, and was in practice) he held the pedal through *the entire slow movement* of his C minor Concerto. Granted that Beethoven was using a light Viennese piano, in which the sustaining tones quickly dissipated, this still sounds like an incredible statement. But he was lavish in the use of it, as witness

his own pedal markings at the opening of the D minor Sonata (Op. 31, No. 2). Czerny says that Beethoven used the pedal "far more than is indicated in his works."

One of the most fascinating sections in Schindler's biography of Beethoven concerns Ferdinand Ries's observations on how Beethoven played his own music. Ries was a piano student of Beethoven's from 1801 to 1804, later settling in London. Whether or not Ries himself was a good pianist—he had a fine reputation, as any Beethoven student would—his observations about Beethoven's style at the piano are extremely interesting, as already referred to.

Schindler observed that all the pieces he himself heard Beethoven play were, "with hardly any exceptions, thoroughly free and flexible. He adopted a *tempo rubato* in the proper sense of the term, according as subject and situation might demand, without the slightest approach to caricature."

BEETHOVEN AS TEACHER

It is difficult to imagine what a piano lesson with Beethoven might have been like. We know that throughout his teaching years Beethoven exerted a strong influence on his piano students, many of whom were members of the Viennese aristocracy. Beethoven was among the first to specialize in the teaching of piano, to impart technical facility as well as interpretive ability, and to leave instruction in the basic theoretical tools to others. He tried diligently to train his students according to classical ideals, even though his own playing was free. Do as I say, don't do as I do. "Place the hands over the keyboard in such a position that the fingers need not be raised more than necessary. That is the only method by which the player can learn to *generate* tone." He followed Clementi in performance style by insisting on legato playing, and called the old-fashioned Mozart style "finger-dancing" or "manual air-sawing."

The Countess Gallenberg recalled the stress he placed on the smallest interpretative detail and the light manner of playing which he encouraged, as did Countess Giulietta Guicciardi who also could not forget that "he was prone to excitement, flinging down music and tearing it up." But with Therese Brunswick none of this temperament was necessary:

He came assiduously, but instead of remaining for an hour, from 12 o'clock on, he would often stay until 4 or 5 and never wearied of holding down and bending my fingers, which I had learned to stretch

up and hold flatly. The great man must have been well content; for sixteen days in succession he did not once fail to appear.

With Ferdinand Ries, who did not possess a large talent, Beethoven showed extreme patience:

When Beethoven gave me a lesson he was, I might almost say, unnaturally patient. This, as well as his friendly treatment of me, which very seldom varied, I must ascribe principally to his attachment and love for my father. Thus he often would have me repeat a single number ten or more times . . . When I left out something in a passage, a note or a skip, which in many cases he wished to have specially emphasized, or struck a wrong key, he seldom said anything; yet when I was at fault with regard to the expression, the *crescendi* or matter of that kind, or in the character of the piece, he would grow angry. Mistakes of the other kind, he said, were due to chance; but these last resulted from lack of knowledge, feeling or attention. He himself often made mistakes of the first kind, even when playing in public.

In his early years Beethoven constantly recommended C. P. E. Bach's piano-instruction book *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, 1753–1762. Later he turned to Clementi's method book, *Introduction to the Art of Playing the Pianoforte*, 1801.

When Carl Czerny first began studying with Beethoven he had to acquire a copy of C.P.E. Bach's book and then he began a strong program of technical development connected with specific

pianistic problems. From his lessons Czerny recalls many interesting details that show Beethoven as a really excellent teacher. He later recalls:

During the first lessons Beethoven made me work solely on the scales in all keys and showed me many technical fundamentals, which were as yet unknown to most pianists, i.e. the only proper position of the hands and fingers and particularly the use of the thumb; only much later did I recognize fully the usefulness of these rules. He then went through the various keyboard studies in Bach's book and especially insisted on legato technique, which was one of the unforgettable features of his playing; at that time all other pianists considered that kind of legato unattainable, since the *hammered*, detached staccato technique of Mozart's time was still *fashionable*. (Some years later Beethoven told me that he had heard Mozart play on several occasions and that, since at that time the fortepiano was still in its infancy, Mozart, more accustomed to the then still prevalent *Flügel*, used a technique entirely unsuited for the fortepiano). I, too, subsequently made the acquaintance of several persons who had studied with Mozart, and found that Beethoven's observation was confirmed by their manner of playing.

Schindler also reminds us that "There are many passages in Beethoven's works, which, though not marked with slurs, require to be played *legato*. But this a cultivated taste will instinctively perceive."

Beethoven worked with his students to develop fullness of tone and was concerned that the power of the arm should back up the fingers. He concentrated upon sonority rather than brilliance, using fingers, hands, and arms in an entirely new manner applicable solely to the piano—what Czerny termed "the only proper position of the hands and fingers."

One student that Beethoven refused to teach was his nephew Karl. He turned him over to Czerny but kept close watch on his progress. Beethoven wrote a letter to Czerny telling him how he should work with Karl during the lesson:

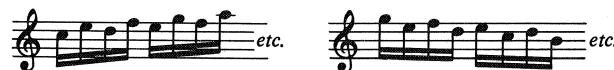
[Vienna, 1817]

My Dear Czerny!

Please be as patient as possible with our Karl, even though at present he may not be making as much progress as you and I would like. If you are not patient, he will do even less well, because (although he must not know this) owing to the unsatisfactory timetable for his lessons he is being unduly strained. Unfortunately nothing can be done about that for the time being. Treat him therefore so far as possible with affection, but *be firm with him*. Then *there will be* a greater chance of success in spite of these really unfavourable circumstances where K[arl] is concerned—In regard to his playing for you, as soon as he has learned the right fingering and can play a piece in correct time and the notes too more or less accurately, then please check him only about his interpretation; and when he has reached *that point* don't let him stop playing *for the sake of minor mistakes*, but point them out to him when he has finished playing the piece. Although I have done very little teaching, yet I have always followed this method. It soon produces *musicians* which, after all, is one of the chief aims of the art, and it is less tiring for both master and pupil—In certain passages, such as



I should like him to use all his fingers now and then, and in such passages too as



so that he may slip one finger over another. Admittedly such passages sound, so to speak, as if they were 'played like pearls (i.e., with only a few fingers) or like a pearl'—but occasionally we like to have a different kind of jewelry.—More of this some other time—I hope that you will take note of all these suggestions in the affectionate spirit in which I have ventured to make them and would like to have them interpreted—As it is, I am and must still remain your debtor—In any case may my sincerity serve as a guarantee to you that so far as possible I shall soon discharge that debt.—

Your true friend
BEETHOVEN

BEETHOVEN'S LIBRARY

Beethoven's library contained a number of works by J. S. Bach: a worn copy of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, three volumes of exercises, all of the *Two and Three Part Inventions*, and a Toccata in D Minor. The sonatas of Clementi and the etudes of Cramer also occupied major places. Twenty of the latter he had annotated for his nephew's study.

Great emphasis was placed upon a complete and thorough legato. At one point, Beethoven gave these directions for the execution of a figured sixteenth note sequence: "To obtain the strictest legato, the finger must not be lifted off the first note of each group until the fourth note is to be struck." He also stressed varying rhythmic accent patterns.

BEETHOVEN'S METHOD BOOK

Although he approved the C. P. E. Bach and Clementi method books, Schindler said that Beethoven had "pronounced aversion to all long-winded expounding of theory," and he shook his head over Johann N. Hummel's bulky volume, *Pianoforte School*, 1828. Dr. Gerhard von Breuning's firsthand experience with Beethoven and method books is quoted by Schindler:

I had a copy of the Pleyel *Method of Piano Playing*. He (Beethoven) was dissatisfied with this as with all the other methods. He once said to me as I sat by his bed, 'I wanted to write a textbook for piano students myself, but I never had the time. I would have written something very different.' Then he promised my father he would see about a text for me. Some time later he sent me the Clementi sonatas he had ordered for me, which were not available here (in Vienna). The following note accompanied the music:

"Dear friend:

At last I am able to break away from my negligence. I send herewith Clementi's *School of Piano Playing* for Gerhard. If he uses it in the way that I will show him, it will certainly produce good results."

Beethoven's proposed "method book" unfortunately never materialized, but he did write out a number of exercises for specific musical and physical purposes that might have gone into such a method book. Here are a few of them.

for dynamic range



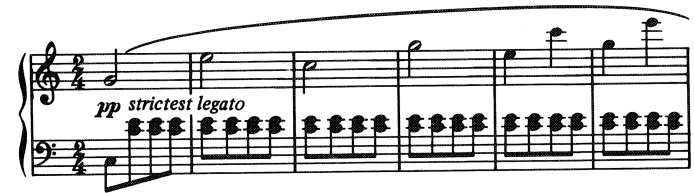
ending as *pianissimo* as possible

for great agility



for Beethoven's special kind of legato and legatissimo

(the hand should be contracted as much as possible)



Andante



Here the 3rd finger must cross over the 4th and remain above it until the 4th withdraws and the 3rd assumes its place.

for contraction of the hand

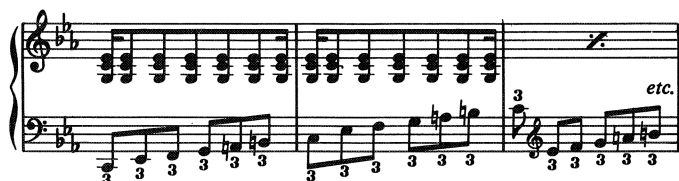


D.C.

for a certain sound effect



for arm carry



(all these notes with the 3rd finger only)



all these notes with the 3rd and 4th fingers kept together

for legato double notes



for leaps in the left hand



for double-note trills



Beethoven indicated the 5-1 4-2 fingering for the double-note trill in Var. IV of Op. 111. He preferred this fingering at all times, even when it was difficult.

BEETHOVEN AND THE METRONOME

Maelzel's metronome, invented in 1816, produced some interesting reactions from Beethoven. He wrote Ignaz von Mosel in 1817 that he would never again use "these senseless designations: *allegro*, *andante*, *adagio*, *presto*," and proceeded to discuss ways of promoting the new invention. Shortly afterwards Beethoven and Salieri signed the following declaration, which appeared in the *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung* on the 14th of February 1818:

"Mälzel's metronome is here! The usefulness of his invention will prove itself; moreover, all the composers of Germany, England and France, have endorsed it. But we do not consider it unnecessary to voice our conviction that it should be recommended as helpful (indeed indispensable) to all beginners and students of singing, the pianoforte or any other instrument. By using it they will learn to understand and to give the value of a note in the easiest way and soon they will be able to perform with accompaniment without difficulty. For while a pupil who studies properly and is instructed by a teacher will not play or sing at random and out of time even in the absence of the metronome, it will so aid and increase his feeling for time that the useful invention by Mälzel should be illuminated from this angle also, for it has not yet been sufficiently appreciated in this respect.

Signed: Ludwig van Beethoven. Anton Salieri."

But his enthusiasm soon cooled. Schindler explained his later reaction:

Why did Beethoven neglect to use the metronome? Actually, he himself assigned metronome marks to only two of his works: The great sonata opus 106, at the explicit request of Ries for the London edition, and the ninth symphony at the request of the publishing house of Schott in Mainz and the Philharmonic Society of London. In connection with the latter transaction, there occurred an event that illustrates the master's low opinion of the metronome. He asked me to make a copy for London of the metronome notations he had a few days before made for Mainz, but the list had been mislaid and we could not find it. London was waiting and there was no time to lose, so the master had to undertake the unpleasant task all over again. But lo! no sooner had he finished than I found the first version. A comparison between the two showed a difference in all the movements. Then the master, losing patience, exclaimed: "No more metronome! Anyone who can feel the music right does not need it, and for anyone who can't, nothing is of any use; he runs away with the whole orchestra anyway!"

BEETHOVEN'S PIANOS

The pianos of his day constantly plagued Beethoven. For most of his life he used Viennese pianos, at first with a five-octave range, then—beginning with the *Waldstein Sonata*, Op. 53 (1803–04)—a six-octave instrument. But he was never happy with them, and kept urging the piano manufacturers to develop a more rugged, sonorous instrument. He wrote the piano manufacturer Johann Streicher as early as 1796:

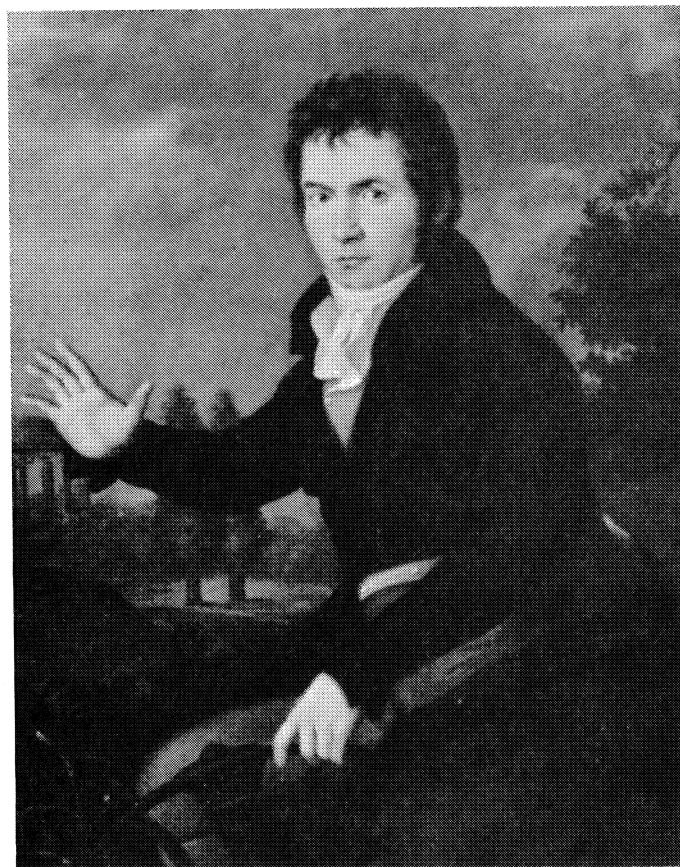
There is no doubt that as far as the manner of playing is concerned, the pianoforte is still the least studied and least developed of all instruments: often one thinks that one is merely listening to a harp. And I am delighted, my dear fellow, that you are one of the few who realize and perceive that, providing one can feel the music, one can also make the pianoforte sing. I hope that the time will come when the harp and the pianoforte will be treated as entirely different instruments.

The day did not come soon enough for Beethoven to take advantage of it. In 1818 John Broadwood sent Beethoven a magnificent grand piano, with a range of over six octaves—a sonorous giant, as unharplike as any piano at that time could be. Beethoven was ecstatic, and kept the instrument the rest of his life.

But by 1818 Beethoven was almost totally deaf and so he never really heard or enjoyed this fine instrument.

Five pianos are identified with Beethoven. In the order they were used by him, they are the Stein and the Streicher, both manufactured in Vienna; the Érard, made in Paris; the Broadwood, made in London; and the Graf made in Vienna. He also used two others, the Späth and the Walter, made in Regensburg and Vienna, early in his career. Three of these, Beethoven's own instruments, are preserved today: the Érard is in Vienna, the Broadwood is in Budapest, and the Graf is in Bonn. All of these piano builders surely made pianos that were as beautiful in sound as the best of today's pianos; they were different in sound and aesthetic, but they were not inferior in quality. His correspondence and related documents do make clear that he still preferred the Viennese instruments, from his early to his last years.

Beethoven's piano works pointed far into the future of piano building. Decades had to pass after his death before there were pianos—and pianists—equal to the demands of his *Hammerklavier Sonata*, Op. 106.



Oil portrait of Beethoven
by W.J. Mahler (1804)

Certain problematic Beethoven markings in his scores make immediate sense in the sonorous world of the actual instrument he played when he wrote them. On a modern instrument they are much more awkward to realize. We must realize that whenever we hear Beethoven played on a present-day instrument, we are listening to a kind of transcription. If you doubt this, go visit a collection of old instruments. Even so, our modern concert grand does better justice to most of Beethoven's piano works than his pianos. The tone is far more colorful, orchestral, and rich in contrast, and these qualities do matter in Beethoven. Some of the peculiarities of Beethoven's pianos can be approximated on a modern grand, but that is more important for those performers specializing in playing this music on a Hammerklavier, an instrument from Beethoven's time. If you have an opportunity to play on a piano from Beethoven's time, either an original restored instrument or a replica, do so. It will provide a provocative musical experience.

GUIDE TO PERFORMANCE PRACTICES IN BEETHOVEN'S PIANO WORKS

The study of performance practices is the study of how to play a particular piece in accordance with the styles of its time. Investigation of past performing traditions has produced a number of genuine insights, which should affect the style of Beethoven interpretation. This investigation has made us realize that to understand Beethoven's intentions means to translate them into one's own understanding. The notion that an interpreter can simply switch off his personal feelings and instead receive those of the composer "from above," as it were, is simply unrealistic. What Beethoven actually meant when he composed can only be unravelled with the help of the performer's own engaged emotions. But these emotions must be tempered with an understanding of historical performance style as it relates to the composer's intention. The performer's emotions plus the composer's intentions provide the necessary foundation for the interpreter to give the music the strongest possible effect appropriate to the music. The music is best served by matching our modern interpretations as closely as possible to what we believe (on historical grounds transmitted by surviving contemporary evidence) to have been the original interpretations. Therefore, interpretation is on the one hand serving the intentions of the composer and on the other hand putting the interpreter's own emotions and personality into the realization of the text. These two areas must be balanced carefully.

The following areas of performance practice concern those contemporary stylistic considerations and all those decisions that still must be made before the most faithful version available of the composer's score can be translated into the sounds of actual performance.

DYNAMICS AND EXPRESSION

Beethoven included more details of expression (i.e., dynamics, tempo indications) desired from the performer than any other earlier composer.

Dynamics may be varied by the performer according to his personal taste and the general acoustical conditions. Since there are no absolute standards for dynamics, the exact degree of loudness is usually left to the discretion of the individual performer. This discretion makes the same piece as performed by different artists appear different and thus gives a new interpretation. The various degrees of individual dynamic concept should be adjusted proportionally to the dimensions of the pieces. A few dynamics have been added by the editor to help clarify musical ideas.

Beethoven marked his scores more in detail as the years went by, yet even with this unprecedented wealth of editorial help, one may assume, with corroboration from both Czerny and Schindler, that still much more is implied and was intended in the music. More independent responsibility is left to the performer than the score would suggest on first inspection—but then the performer must be able to read between and behind the lines into Beethoven's artistic intentions. How can this be achieved? Here are a few suggestions concerning Beethoven's expression marks.

1. *Sforzando*, indicated by *sf*, or *sfz*, is a musical accent—it has become habitual to "stab" at them. A *sf* may have a *cantabile* character. With many of Beethoven's *sforzandi*, accompanying voices, moving in shorter note values, will often support the intensity over its whole duration or over the greater part of it. The *sf* used in the first movement of the *Sonata in G*, Op. 79, measures 53 and 124 (pages 47 and 49) affects both the right and left hands for one whole count, so the second eighth-note in the left hand should show this. Here we have a clear case for breaking the general rule that one *sf* applies only to one single note.

2. *Dolce*. This term is used at bars 67 and 192 in the first movement of the *Sonata in G*, Op. 79 (pages 48 and 51), and in bar 1 of the last movement of this work (page 54). Beethoven's *dolce* has its own emotional characteristic. I translate it as "elegantly," or "tenderly committed." *Dolce* tells the performer: "Identify yourself with this phrase or section; do not control it from the outside." It begs for loving attention and flinches from mechanical coldness. Usually the heartfelt gentleness of *dolce* stays away from minor keys and normally addresses the inner world.

3. *Espressivo*. This term, found in the *Andante* movement, bar 1, of the *Sonata in G*, Op. 79 (page 52), addresses the outer world. It demands a perceptible increase in emotional emphasis over the previous passage closing the first movement. The performance justification for drawing out the tempo a little under the pressure of this emphasis is provided by the character and tempo indications of this movement, *Andante*. When *espressivo* is used, Beethoven wants special attention to be focussed on that particular passage or section.

Beethoven leaves no room for the utterly passive pianist in his indications, much less in the music itself.

PEDALING

Beethoven is considered a pioneer in pedal practice, but he used pedal more often than he indicated in his scores. He did not include pedal markings in many of the pieces in this collection, but numerous places need pedal and the editor has added these. There are also many passages in these pieces in which pedaling is not marked, but can be used.

Listed below are a few accepted damper (right) pedaling practices that apply not only to Beethoven but to much of the piano literature from the Classical period:

1. The pedal must be changed at least as often as the harmony changes.
2. The damper pedal is used when a legato sound is desired. Slower, longer melodic notes in Classical styles can be pedaled.
3. Arpeggio and broken chord passages provide opportunities for pedal use.
4. Damper pedal use is associated with dynamics. This pedal enriches the sounds through sympathetic vibration of the overtones. Beethoven frequently suggested pedaling to assist both crescendo and decrescendo.
5. The pedal may be used to increase the pungency of certain accented harmony, especially dissonant ones such as found in the *Andante* in C (page 19), measures 9-11.
6. Pedal may also be used for staccato passages. Staccato pedal is for color and effect. The hand and foot drop together and the performer must listen carefully to get the exact desired duration. Some of these pieces end with an authentic cadence of short, loud chords. Use staccato pedaling at these places whenever the music demands it.
7. Use the damper pedal when all the notes of a chord or arpeggio are to be sustained, but this cannot be accomplished by the hands alone, as in measures 77-83 of *Für Elise* (page 36).
8. Beethoven notates pedal usage when he wishes to avoid misunderstandings, or when aiming at unusual effects.

TEMPO AND CHARACTER

Tempo and character indications are frequently provided by Beethoven in these pieces. Tempo is considered of primary importance in the final performance of a composition, although there are no satisfactorily defined measurements for the Italian tempo indications. The tempo at which a piece is performed may vary from one performer to another, and there is some evidence indicating that present-day performers prefer faster tempos than those of

previous historical periods. There is wide latitude in determining the tempo. A good tempo at one performance may not be desirable for every performance. Beethoven was very much annoyed by his own metronome markings when he returned to reconsider them at a later date.

The editor has added metronome marks that represent an average measurement of appropriate tempo for each piece. These marks are only a general guide and a point of comparison, but no more than that because they reflect only one person's judgment of the correct tempo at the specific moment.

The Italian tempo terms indicate the character and mood of the musical contents. The correct tempo of any piece should be deduced from overall mood. The appropriate rate of pulse should be governed by the rhythmic organization, relative speed of the various sections, and other characteristics of the piece. A serious and weighty piece should take a slower pace than a playful and dance-like piece. Unity of tempo is more important in the Classical era than in later periods. C.P.E. Bach generalized tempo indications in his *Essay* as follows:

The pace of a composition, which is usually indicated by several well-known Italian expressions, is based on its general content as well as on the fastest notes and passage contained in it. Due consideration of these factors will prevent an allegro from being rushed and an adagio being dragged.¹

Intelligent use of the available musical clues from notation is an important consideration in determining the tempo. The proper tempo is the one which takes all musical and technical considerations into account.

Yet, absolutely strict tempo is mechanical and usually is not musically satisfying. Music demands a certain degree of flexibility. The musical pulse is similar to the human pulse. If a person is happy, sad, tired, or excited, the pulse varies to a certain degree. However, both musical and human pulse cannot deviate too much from steadiness. The basic pulse of the music should be maintained because it serves as a basis for rhythmic flexibility.

This flexibility is referred to as *rubato*. Manipulating this musical pulse (*rubato*) is considered one of the highly sophisticated ways of interpreting music and it should be taught as early as possible.

¹C. P. E. Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, translated and edited by William J. Mitchell (New York: W. W. Norton, 1949), p. 151.

ORNAMENTS

Ornaments serve to decorate the note with which they are associated, enrich the harmony, heighten melodic attractiveness, and serve as an indispensable element for expression to the style. C. P. E. Bach described them in his *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments* thus:

They connect and enliven tones and impact stress and accents; they make music pleasing and awaken our close attention. Expression is heightened by them; let a piece be sad, joyful, or otherwise, and they will lend a fitting assistance. Embellishments provide opportunities for fine performance as well as much of its subject matter. They improve mediocre compositions. Without them the best melody is empty and ineffective, the clearest content clouded. (p. 79)

All ornaments stand in proportional relationship to the length of the main note, tempo, and the characteristics of the piece. Also, most ornaments notated in small grace notes belong to the following principal note.

The short appoggiatura is the ornament most frequently used by Beethoven. It is to be played as a short, rapid note regardless of the duration of the principal note (C. P. E. Bach, p. 91). Frequently it appears as a small grace note with a slash (♪) in the score which is referred to as *acciaccatura* (crushed note).

Beethoven's trills generally begin on the upper note unless he gives us evidence to the contrary. J. N. Hummel, in his method *The Art of Playing Pianoforte* (1828), preferred starting trills on the main note, and Beethoven could well have known Hummel's preference in the matter of trills, for the two men were intimate friends. All ornaments in *At the Piano with Beethoven* are realized in the score.

ARTICULATION

Articulation denotes all of those factors other than dynamics contributing to the meaningful shaping of melody. It includes the areas of correct breathing,

phrasing, attack, legato, and staccato. Good articulation involves the separation of the continuous melodic line into logical small units, with accentuation, dynamic rise and fall, and rhythmic acceleration and retardation as people do in speech. However, Beethoven frequently did not indicate articulation and phrasing. The editor has reconstructed much of this area in these pieces according to his musical insight, experience, and knowledge.

In practice, the pianist should determine the climax and the end of a phrase according to his interpretation. A good way of making a judgment is to sing the melody. C.P.E. Bach in his *Essay* stated:

Indeed, it is a good practice to sing instrumental melodies in order to reach an understanding of their correct performance. This way of learning is of far greater value than the reading of voluminous tomes or listening to learned discourses. In these one meets such terms as Nature, Taste, Song, and Melody, although their authors are often incapable of putting together as many as two natural, tasteful, singing melodic tones, for they dispense their aims and endowments with a completely unhappy arbitrariness. (p. 152)

Beethoven frequently uses short slurs between two notes, which are known as couplets. The proper execution of couplets requires the last note to be slightly shorter than its normal duration. The beginning note of each couplet is stressed slightly for articulation.

Sonatina in F, Anh. 5, No. 2, (page 20)
Allegro assai, measure 8

Written: 

Played: 

CZERNY'S SUGGESTIONS FOR PERFORMING BEETHOVEN'S PIANO WORKS

Carl Czerny (1791–1857) had the good fortune of studying with Beethoven from 1801 on. In his book *On the Proper Performance of All Beethoven's Works for the Piano*, Czerny discusses most of Beethoven's piano compositions. The following is a quote from that book:

The general character of Beethoven's works is fervent, grand, energetic, noble, and replete with feeling; often also humorous and sportive, occasionally even eccentric, but always intellectual; and though sometimes gloomy, yet never effeminately elegant, or whiningly sentimental.

Each of his pieces expresses some particular and well supported idea or object, to which, even in the smallest embellishment, he always remains true. *The melody everywhere pervades the musical thought*; all rapid passages and figures are only employed as a *means*, never as the *end*; and if (particularly in his earlier works) many passages are found which demand *the so-called brilliant style of playing, this must never be rendered principal*. He who should only display his agility of finger therein,

would entirely miss the intellectual and aesthetic, and prove that he *did not understand* these works.

The editor has been aware of this final sentence of Czerny (italicized by the editor) for a long time, and I have had that idea in mind throughout the compilation and writing of *At the Piano with Beethoven*. Any efforts will be rewarded if I have helped just one pianist understand these works more clearly.

PERFORMING BEETHOVEN TODAY

To attain a true understanding of a work as Beethoven conceived it, it is not enough to turn to an *Urtext* edition so that the interpretations of editions may be avoided. Changes in technical methods and in the significance of such conventions as the indication of slurs require that the performer integrate

his/her interpretation methods that are completely different from those involved in the performance of romantic or modern music. The ideal to be sought in any performance of any piece of music is that the work should seem to be growing spontaneously from itself.

NOTATION AND TYPES OF TOUCHES USED BY BEETHOVEN

1. A slur indicated *legato*, which meant that notes under it were to be held for their full value.
2. Absence of a slur indicated *non legato*, which meant those notes were held for less than their full value.
3. A wedge (▴) indicated the notes should be played *staccato* and released instantly.
4. A dot (•) indicated the notes should be played a little less *staccato*. The brevity of the *staccato* depends upon the length of the note, the tempo, and the dynamic level, so said C. P. E. Bach in his *Essay*

on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments. But Beethoven's manuscripts are generally more difficult to decipher than those of any other great master, so it is frequently almost impossible to tell when Beethoven uses a dot or a wedge. The editor has made an effort to make that distinction in the present collection.

We can be sure that Beethoven constantly tried to produce as many gradations of touch as possible. He also wanted his indications to be well defined in performance.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS COLLECTION

The purpose of this collection is to introduce to piano students and piano teachers some of the wonderful piano music of Beethoven and to provide assistance in the areas of performance practice and historical background as they relate to these pieces. This music is presented from a practicing musician's point of view, who is always interested in helping the pianist achieve an ever-better and stylistically correct interpretation.

The pieces in this collection are especially appropriate for the intermediate student's technical

and musical development. Each piece has been approached from a performance practice and analytical viewpoint so that the student will be better able to understand some of Beethoven's creative processes.

Students who understand these pieces in terms of musicianship, technique, and interpretation, may be led gradually to more involved or unusual repertoire with ease and understanding.

The pieces in this collection are organized in order of progressive difficulty, beginning with a number of comparatively easy works, easy not only in a technical sense, but more important, in interpretative demands.

This collection is a teaching/performance oriented edition based on the most reliable sources I could locate. Beethoven left no fingering for the pieces and so I have added fingering where I felt it would help the pianist. I have retained and identified Beethoven's pedal indications and have added others where needed to help clarify the musical idea or effect. My pedal indications must be taken as only a suggestion and approximation of the actual pedaling required for musical performance. Even though Beethoven thought highly of Maelzel's metronome for a time, he left no metronome markings for any of the pieces in this collection. Therefore, all metronome marks are editorial and are only suggestions of an approximate tempo that works for the editor. Ornaments are realized either in the score or

in footnotes. Above all, the objective of the editor has been to reflect on the printed page the true intention of the composer so far as it can be determined.

Another purpose has been the editor's attempt to assist the interpreter to understand Beethoven's intentions so that he/she could seek to give each work the strongest possible effect.

Works without opus number (WoO) are numbered in accordance with Georg Kinsky, *Das Werk Beethovens, thematisch-bibliographisches Verzeichnis seiner sämtlichen vollendeten Kompositionen*, completed by Hans Halm, Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 1955. *Anhang* refers to the appendix of this book. Kinsky includes 138 works with opus numbers and 205 works "WoO." This "WoO" section includes both music published by Beethoven during his lifetime as well as a number of items found in manuscript and published after his death.

ABOUT THE PIECES

Allegretto in C Minor, WoO 53 Page 37

Composed in 1796, this movement was found in the same notebook as the last movement of the *Sonata*, Op. 10, No. 1, and may have been originally planned to be one of the movements of one of the three sonatas in that set. The character and form would indicate a *scherzo*, with the opening and closing A sections full of sudden dynamic changes and a strong rhythmic drive. The B section, *Maggiore*, with its contrapuntal emphasis, reflects the fact that Beethoven was studying counterpoint with Albrechtsberger at that time.

Andante in C Major Page 19

This piece also dates from around 1792–95. Octave use within a *sempre pianissimo* context is somewhat unusual, and the figured bass, suggested by Beethoven in measure 16, thickens the texture considerably. Take enough time to roll the chord involving a tenth, in this measure.

Bagatelle in F Major, Op. 33, No. 3 Page 25

This piece is from a larger set of seven, that were worked out in 1802, in part from previous sketches or earlier compositions. The term "bagatelle" seems to have entered the realm of musical lexicography with the publication of François Couperin's harpsichord piece, "Les Bagatelles," in the early eighteenth century. In the dictionary sense, it means "trifle," but this definition should not be taken too

seriously when discussing piano music of the nineteenth century. Beethoven named his sets of piano pieces, Opp. 33, 119, and 126, *Bagatelles*. With this form, sometimes called "character piece," Beethoven opened the door to a new form of expression. The *bagatelle* is a brief, concentrated work, usually in the ternary form of A-B-A, used to express contrasting subjects, i.e., the dramatic and the lyrical. It would be ridiculous to call most of these pieces "trivial" simply because they are so brief. Beethoven used the term as a convention rather than a meaning. This is especially true of this *Bagatelle* which is so simple-sounding, yet is filled with enough surprises to provide the basis for an entire sonata movement.

Bagatelles, Op. 126: No. 2 in G Minor Page 41 *No. 5 in G Major* Page 44

The *Six Bagatelles* of Op. 126 were written at various times during 1823, and completed that year, when Beethoven was finishing the Ninth Symphony and "Missa solemnis." These six short pieces are, in their own way, as original and representative as anything Beethoven wrote in the last three or four years of his life. They are, if anything in music can be, self-portraits, as they express his moods and frame of mind on the day he wrote them.

The No. 2 *Bagatelle, Allegro*, shows Beethoven in an impish and capricious mood, as seen in the impetuous rush of sixteenth notes that open the

piece. At measure 27 the second part opens with a new melodic theme. But by bar 42 the opening figure bursts in alone, as in angry remonstrance and with pauses between. But the pauses grow shorter and its comments more fluent. The tirade that follows seems to subdue its anger by its own eloquence, so that the music grows almost tender and playful at the end.

Bagatelle No. 5, *Quasi allegretto*, in G Major (page 44) has its own character, a kind of urban, sunny peacefulness that makes me think of a Sunday afternoon in the Vienna of Beethoven's time—perhaps a scene of a family's walk in the park. The middle episode in C major, with its suggestion of drums and fifes, hints that soldiers on parade are not far away. The placid G major section returns, played an octave higher and with a different ending.

Für Elise, WoO 59

Page 33

This short Album Leaf contains on the autograph "for Elise on April 27, 1810, as a remembrance of L. v. Beethoven." According to the recent research of Max Unger, the dedication was to Therese Malfatti, daughter of Beethoven's physician. "Elise" is probably a misreading of the autograph. In this little rondo with two episodes, it is appropriate to play the left hand much quieter than the right hand, since the right hand has the melody and the left hand mainly accompanies. The right hand should stay close to the keys with a *legato* touch, dropping and lifting the arm as phrases begin and end. The left hand should be light as a feather, brushing over the keys in graceful sweeps. For sustaining effect, the pedal should catch the notes being swept across. The pedal marks in bars 2-4, and 9-11 are Beethoven's and may reasonably be assumed to be applicable to all parallel passages. Each broken chord supplies the necessary "filling in" to support the melody. One basic tempo should be maintained throughout the piece.

German Song and Romanza, WoO 1

Page 16

In his youth Beethoven put together a series of pieces written by Count Ferdinand of Waldstein for a *Ritterballet* (Equestrian Ballet) which was performed on a carnival Sunday in 1791, in Bonn, Germany, his home. This ballet dealt with the favorite pastimes of those who lived in earlier times: the hunt, the battle, carousing and love. It was a late descendant of the old ballet tournaments of former centuries. The music is extremely popular in form, adapted to the requirements of the aristocratic society. The *Romanza* is particularly interesting as one of Beethoven's infrequent excursions into a modal style, to which he returned occasionally later, as in the slow movements of the piano *Sonata*, Opus 14, No. 1, and the A minor string quartet, Opus 132.

Minuet in F Major

Page 18

This minuet and trio can be placed approximately in the years 1792–95. A majestic quality permeates the work. Scales, in the Trio, especially the ones in contrary motion, provide an interesting contrast to the more stately Minuet.

Piano Piece in B Minor, WoO 61

Page 28

This piece was written for Ferdinand Piringer (1780–1829) who belonged to the circle of Beethoven's friends. Piringer was a violinist and had a good bass voice; occasionally he functioned as Beethoven's proofreader. The A section, bars 1–19, is based on the motif heard in the first measure. The B section, bars 20–27, in the parallel major key of B major is built on an idea of a descending third. Beethoven requests *legato* to be used throughout.

Piano Piece in G Minor, WoO 61a

Page 17

This work was quickly written on September 27, 1825, for Sarah Burney Payne, the granddaughter of Charles Burney, the well-known music historian. Subtle imitation and worked-out sequences add interest.

Rondo in C Major, WoO 48

Page 29

This *Rondo* dates from 1783 when Beethoven was about thirteen years old. It contains a number of interesting and characteristic features. Notice especially bars 79–80, in which the sudden dynamic contrasts show, even at this early age, Beethoven's characteristic sense of humor. The fussy original phrasing, more characteristic of strings than piano, shows strong string influence, since at that time Beethoven was studying the violin.

Russian Folk Song

(Beautiful Minka) Op. 107, No. 7

Page 17

This theme is from a set of variations composed around 1818 for piano and flute. The flute part often seems like an extraneous element, a subsequent addition rather than part of the origin of conception. The theme is sheer piano music, first and foremost. Vary the dynamics on the repeat.

Seven Variations on "God Save the King,"

WoO 78

Page 57

Beethoven delighted in the variation form and composed many sets for solo piano and for two or more instruments. His piano variations range from inconsequential sets based on themes by now-forgotten composers to what has been called the "greatest set of variations ever written," the *Thirty-three Variations on a Waltz by Diabelli*.

The *Seven Variations on "God Save the King"* were composed in 1803 and published the following year,

and are thus approximately contemporary with the “Kreutzer” violin sonata and the “Eroica” symphony. The tune of the British national anthem must long have been the most widely known anthem melody in the world, having been borrowed at various times by some twenty countries for use with their official national song. In addition to Beethoven, composers who have used the tune include Handel, J. C. Bach, Weber, Brahms, Ives and Dvořák. In Beethoven’s pleasant set, both the first six bars and the remaining eight are repeated in the theme and in the variations. Two of Beethoven’s most interesting variations are the supple minor setting (No. V) and the stirring march (No. VI). In the witty, roguish finale (No. VII) we get a good glimpse of Beethoven’s art of improvisation.

This set of variations teaches the pianist promptness of reaction, exactness and delicacy of characterization, and the ability to regard each variation as having its own separate identity. What the performer learns in this set of variations will be of advantage when he/she approaches Beethoven’s sonatas.

Sonata in G Major, Op. 79

Page 46

Composed in 1809, this sonata is a light-hearted romp in its two outer movements; but these enclose a romantic and warm-hearted *Andante*. In its rhythmic flow, the sonata-allegro designed first movement, *Presto alla tedesca*, unmistakably suggests the Austrian peasant-type dances that were the forerunners of the Viennese waltz: which is to say it is ebullient and bouncy. Be sure the passages marked *leggiermente* are played in a very clear, pearly, and equal touch (measures 12-23, and 191 to the end of the movement). The *sforzando* markings in the development seem designed to cancel out the

waltz effect, since they emphasize the second beat instead of the first. However, in the recapitulation of the main theme the emphasis is suddenly returned with characteristic zest to the first beat. In measures 86-93 Beethoven heightened the contrast of texture by indicating the pedal in the *piano* passages but omitting it in the *forte* passages with its jabbing *sforzandi*. The movement has a delightful dancing coda, heightened with appoggiaturas, when the main theme is answered by a consequent (measure 191 forward) which it has implied all along, with much merry interplay between treble and bass. Hand crossings assist the lilt of this Austrian dance.

A melodious *Andante* barcarolle in A-B-A design serves as a middle movement which in its short span manages to become quite expansive in its lyrical expression.

The finale, *Vivace*, synthesizes material from the first two movements—the opening theme of the first movement and the melody of the *Andante* movement. This fun movement is worked out briefly and contains no overly difficult problems.

Sonatina in F, Anh. 5, No. 2

Page 20

This sonatina was not published until after Beethoven’s death when his name on the title page certainly ensured its sale. Its authenticity has been questioned, but it is a pleasing little melodic composition and there is no reason why Beethoven should not have written it. This piece is strong enough to deserve the benefit of the doubt and especially since the motives hold it together strongly and give it a unique identity. It is clean, neat, and tuneful, and contains within its modest framework some interesting modulating passages.

FOR FURTHER READING

1. Carl Czerny. *On the Proper Performance of All Beethoven’s Works for the Piano*. Vienna: Universal Edition, 1963.

2. Kenneth Drake. *The Sonatas of Beethoven as He Played and Taught Them*. Cincinnati: Music Teachers National Association, 1972. Reprint, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981.

3. Joseph Kerman, Alan Tyson. *The New Grove Beethoven*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1985.

4. Franz Kullak. *Beethoven’s Piano Playing*. New York: G. Schirmer, 1901. Reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1973.

5. William S. Newman. *Performance Practices in Beethoven’s Piano Sonatas—An Introduction*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1971.

*This edition is dedicated to David Karp
with appreciation and admiration.*

Maurice Hinson

FÜR ELISE

1810

WoO 59

Poco moto (a) ♩ = ca. 138

The musical score for 'Für Elise' is presented in five systems. The first system begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The second system features first and second endings. The third system starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and concludes with a *dim.* (diminuendo) marking. The fourth system returns to a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The fifth system includes first and second endings. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and fingerings (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) to guide the performer.

- (a) One sketch of this work contains the expression mark *molto grazioso*, which the editor feels is more characteristic than the *poco moto* of the Collected Edition.
- (b) In this measure and in subsequent similar passages, some editions have a D rather than E. The Breitkopf and Härtel first edition has the E.