

Dedicated to the Countess Giulietta Guiccardi

## Sonata No. 14 in C-sharp Minor

(Sonata quasi una fantasia)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Op. 27, No. 2

## a Adagio sostenuto

Si deve suonare tutto questo pezzo delicatissimamente e senza sordino

a Beethoven's directions in Italian state that "this piece should be played throughout with the greatest delicacy and without dampers" (i.e., with pedal). He repeats the "*senza sordino*" (without dampers) direction in measure 1. These directions have been the source of much speculation. Some performers have assumed that the composer meant to direct using the pedal throughout the piece, but with the usual pedal changes whenever the harmony changed. Czerny suggests this as the "prescribed pedal." Others believe Beethoven's directions indicate his interest in creating a special pedal effect. The composer's taste for using harmonic blurring as a coloristic device shows up fairly often in his piano writing: Op. 31, No. 2, first movement; Op. 53, last movement, to mention two famous examples, as well as in the second, third, and fifth piano concertos. It is probable that such effects were possible and attractive on the piano of Beethoven's time. Many performers using today's piano experiment with half-damping, delayed damping, or holding notes down longer than their written value attempting to simulate the effect they believe Beethoven had in mind. British musician Howard Ferguson (1908–1999) suggested depressing the lowest seven keys on the piano keyboard before the movement is to be played, catching them with the *sostenuto* (middle) pedal, and holding it throughout the movement while pedaling normally with the damper (right) pedal. (Howard Ferguson: *Keyboard Interpretation*, Oxford University Press, New York and London, 1975, p. 163.)

b The tradition of separating the sixteenth note from the triplet figure is so well established in this movement that no one would suggest applying the early performance practice of assimilating the sixteenth into the last note of the triplet. Moreover, present-day performance practice is mostly supported by the configuration of notes in the first edition, wherein all the sixteenth notes are placed after the last note of the triplet, except for measures 42, 43, 46, and 47, where the sixteenth erroneously appears before the last note of the triplet figure. Beethoven's autograph agrees for the most part. (It should be noted that the first and last pages of the autograph of this work are missing.) Since the composer often used repeat signs for the triplet figure, the triplet/sixteenth-note configuration is represented fully only in measures 23, 42, 46, 62, 63, and 64. The sixteenth appears after the triplet in all these cases except in measure 46, where the sixteenth and the triplet might be read as the interval of a third, and in measure 63, where the composer, perhaps in haste, compresses the group of notes in beat 4 and the sixteenth ends up between the second and third notes of the triplet. Thus, in this sonata the composer's intentions are relatively clear.

measure 23:

**Allegretto**  
La prima parte solamente una volta

The musical score is written for piano and bass. It begins with a treble clef and a bass clef, both in 3/4 time. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The tempo is marked **Allegretto**, and the instruction "La prima parte solamente una volta" indicates that the first part should be played only once.

The score is divided into five systems, each starting with a measure number in a box: 8, 15, 22, and 29. The first system starts at measure 1. The notation includes various note values (quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes), rests, and slurs. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1 through 5 above or below notes. Dynamics include *p* (piano) and *sf* (sforzando). A *cresc.* (crescendo) marking appears in the third system. The piece concludes with a *Fine* marking at the end of the fifth system.

**TRIO** 37

45

53

*cresc.* *p*

*Allegretto D. C.*

**Presto agitato**

- <sup>a</sup> Throughout this movement, the composer's autograph and the first edition consistently indicate *senza sordino* (without dampers, i.e., with pedal) each time the two chords close this passage, as well as writing *con sordino* (with dampers, i.e., without pedal) at each new onset of arpeggiated sixteenth notes. Moreover, these chords often exhibit articulation signs that look to be stronger signs than staccato marks. Articulation symbols are shown in only about two-thirds of the measures that contain these motivic chords, but whenever they appear they resemble wedges or vertical lines rather than dots. These signs appear in measures 4, 6, 8, 67, 69, 70, 71, 104, 106, 108, and 110. They are absent from measures 2, 7, 16, 18, 109, 161, and 163, presumably oversights resulting from the composer's hasty notation. In the first edition these motivic chords are marked with dots of varying thickness throughout the movement.