Foreword

Neither of the autograph manuscripts for these sonatas has survived. The British Museum, London, possesses a copy of sketches for both sonatas that date from around 1795–96 (Add. Ms. 29801). The sketch for Op. 49, No. 2, has recently (1977) been shown (on the basis of watermark analysis) to date from 1796 and to be associated with Beethoven's visit to Prague during his trip to Berlin in that year.¹

Therefore, it appears that both sonatas probably date from around 1796–98, years that were especially productive for Beethoven. During this time he composed his first two piano concertos—the B-flat major (1795) and C major (1795, revised in 1800), the three sonatas of Op. 10 (1798) and the Sonata Pathétique, Op. 13.

Joseph Czerny included the minuet from Op. 49, No. 2, in the Übung- und Unterhaltungsstücke, which formed a supplement to his piano method Der Wiener Clavierlehrer, published in Vienna in 1825. Therefore, it seems likely that Beethoven intended these sonatas for teaching purposes. Thayer comments that both sonatas make only modest demands on the player and are appropriate vehicles for encouraging musical taste and an understanding of musical form.²

The Viennese "Bureau d'Arts et d'Industrie" published both sonatas as Op. 49 in January 1805 and they turned out to be best-sellers. (The date of publication explains the relatively high opus number.) The sonatas were immediately reprinted in Altona, Amsterdam, Augsburg, Berlin, Bonn, Leipzig, London, Mainz and Paris and have remained among Beethoven's most popular teaching pieces.


This edition is dedicated to Joyce Grill with appreciation and admiration.

Maurice Hinson
Sonata in G Minor
("Easy Sonata")
(1795-96)

Op. 49, No. 1

The title "Easy Sonata" is Beethoven's own.