

A Kalmus Classic Edition

Ludwig van

BEETHOVEN

SONATAS

VOLUME IB

NOS. 8-15

URTEXT EDITION

FOR PIANO

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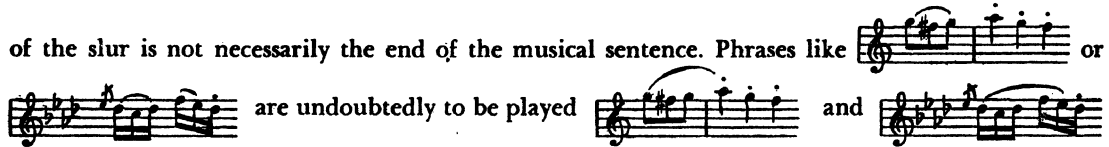


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REMARKS ON BEETHOVEN'S PIANO SONATAS

Almost everything that E. Rudorff has said in his Preface to Mozart's Piano Sonatas can also be said for Beethoven's piano compositions. The slur serves only partly as a phrase marking; the end of the slur is not necessarily the end of the musical sentence. Phrases like




are undoubtedly to be played and are often in a longer legato passage the slur will break off after one or two measures; and the slur between a grace note and a main note is arbitrary, sometimes it is used and sometimes it is missing. Occasionally, in a continuous Staccato or Legato passage, only the first measure has dots or slurs, or sometimes one passage is carefully phrased and its nuances marked whereas in the repetitions of the passage there are no markings whatsoever, assuming that the musical player will understand and carry out the previous marking. All these and other small peculiarities, such as the indication of a double triplet as a sextuplet, are characteristic of the outward appearance of Beethoven's compositions and have therefore been retained in this edition. Where additions were necessary in order to avoid misunderstanding, they have been put in parentheses.

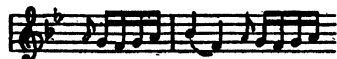
The irregular indications of appoggiaturas have been faithfully recorded. It is to be hoped that the study of these different notations will help destroy the still prevalent idea that the line through the flag of an eighth grace note should make it a short appoggiatura. As Fr. Wüllner¹⁾, Max Friedlander²⁾, and Ernst Rudorff³⁾ have previously stated, this was a Viennese manner of notation indicating a single sixteenth note as ♭- and a single thirtysecond note as ♯. Therefore, an eighth grace note with a line through the flag is nothing but a sixteenth note and, as such, can be either a long or a short grace note according to the situation.

In music of the end of the 18th century and at the beginning of the 19th century, it is difficult to decide whether the grace note should be short or long. Beethoven, however, always indicated a short grace note by writing a small-sized note, whereas a regular sized note indicated a suspension. The following passage from the F minor Sonata, Opus 2, may serve as an example. In the minuet, Beethoven writes:



The small eighth note D_b in the first and third measures are naturally meant to be short grace notes, since in the fourth and fifth measures, where he wanted the D_b stressed, Beethoven has written them in normal size and in proper time.

In both the first edition and the original manuscript of Opus 26, every repetition of the following figure uses the old fashioned eighth grace note: ; in like manner, both the corrected copy and the original manuscript of the B_b major Sonata, Opus 22, show the following in the minuet:



There can be no doubt that all these are meant to be short grace notes. Because of the fact that all small grace notes indicated short grace notes, Beethoven was somewhat careless in the use of eighth, sixteenth and thirtysecond notes, with no special difference between them. This carelessness went so far that in the manuscript of the first movement of the C major Piano Concerto, Opus 15 he wrote eighth grace notes for the flute and violin, and sixteenth grace notes for the bassoon. In later years, Beethoven was more exact in this respect, as is shown in a letter to Schott in L. Nohl's "Neue Briefe Beethovens", Stuttgart, Cotta, 1867, page 264.

The stress given the short grace note is a disputed point. The north Germans, Agricola, K. P. E. Bach and Marpurg wanted them accented like the long grace notes; the south Germans, Leopold Mozart, Hummel, Cramer and Czerny, claimed, on the contrary, that the accent should fall on the main note, and the critic Türk agreed with the latter. The stress on the main note must certainly apply to Beethoven since it is most probable that he, living in the south of Germany, would follow the south German custom. However, all the old masters agree that the short grace note must fall simultaneously with the main note. In actual practice it is less important whether the grace note is

1) Revisionsbericht zu Serie V von W. A. Mozart's Werken. Page 3f.

2) Supplement zum Schubert-Album. Page IV ff.

3) Bemerkungen zur Urtext-Ausgabe von W. A. Mozart's Claviersonaten.