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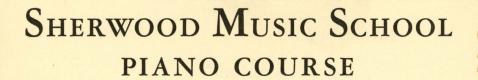


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Grade—Graduate A
Composition 701

Nocturne

Op. 15, No. 2

Chopin



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Chicago

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PIANO

Composition 701

Nocturne

Op. 15, No. 2 CHOPIN

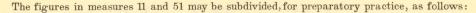
Chopin wrote nineteen nocturnes, and although these are possibly not his most important contribution to piano literature, they are nevertheless very valuable. It is a noteworthy fact that his extremely poetic temperament and fertile imagination found vent in a form where lyricism predominates; and also that he far excels all other writers in this style of composition. While the nocturne, as a rule, is of a quiet, pensive, dreamy nature, yet dramatic and passionate climaxes, so characteristic of Chopin's writing, are by no means entirely absent.

For sheer sensitiveness and soulfulness, this Nocturne in F# occupies a unique place. Chopin's artistic personality and individuality are indelibly imprinted upon every measure of it; and he has drawn upon his very best powers in response to that inner urge which comes to genius alone.

The first theme is a melody of heavenly beauty; tender, full of fervor, and yet most reposeful. Effectively contrasted with it is the second section, taken at double pace — *Doppio movimento*. This suddenly increased movement is coupled with a highly original figure in quintuplets. It begins softly, with both pedals, and makes a climax with a brief but powerful crescendo, picturing the clash of unfamiliar, soul-stirring emotions. It moves rapidly, and with ever increasing excitement, through several striking modulations; then dies away as if exhausted, and is followed by a recurrence of the first theme, the calm of which, says Kullak, "touches one like a benediction."

The flowery embellishments with which the melody is so lavishly bejeweled, are not merely ornaments. They are, in fact, an integral part of the melody, enriching and strengthening its emotional power to a wonderful extent.

The tendency of many players is either to drag the melody and distort the ornamentation, or to bring out the latter too prominently. If the student will first omit the ornamentation entirely, and play the main notes only, he will have a better conception of the thought and feeling. Then, when all the other indications of the text are worked out, he should add the embellishments, and yet see to it that they do not in any way mar or obliterate the fundamental melodic idea.





In measure 18, and again in measure 20, we have a passage very much resembling a sigh. The piano, being tuned to half-steps, can produce nothing less then that interval. But imagine a violinist playing this figure, with the intermediate (small) notes produced by sliding the finger on the string. The suggestion of a sigh is then unmistakable, and if these intermediate tones are played pianissimo, with soft pedal, the imitation will be apparent on the piano also.

Observe the difference in notation between the quintuplets found in measures 25-32, and the following and similar passage, measures 32-40. The earlier passage is soft (una corda), and the melody is mainly in the uppermost part; but at measure 33 it is much weightier, and the effect is to be that of octaves. The lower or thumb notes of the melody should be brought out.

An interesting dynamic effect is produced by holding the left hand octave in measure 47 over into the following measure, and then slowly releasing, first the upper key, then the lower one. The diminuendo is very striking.

The following reading of the bass part, measures 54-55, affords greater sonority:



The trill in measure 56 is to be executed as follows:

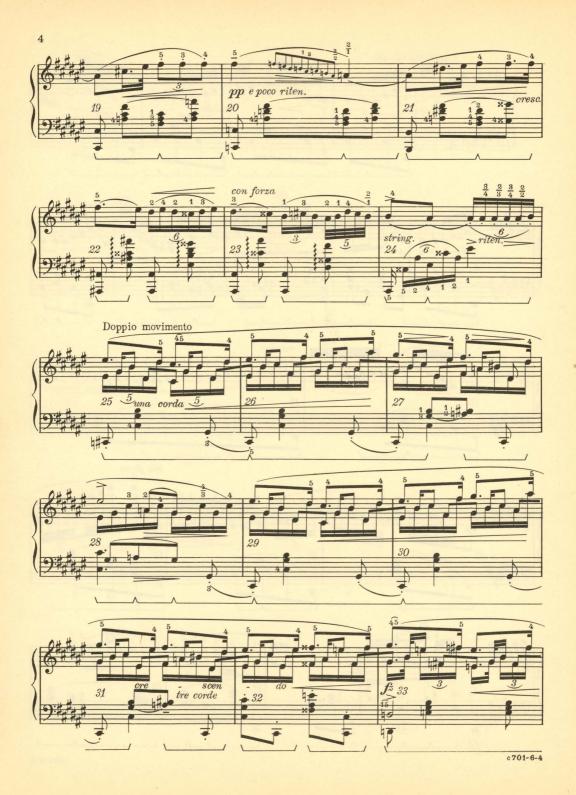


All markings, as to expression and the use of the pedals, are explicit.

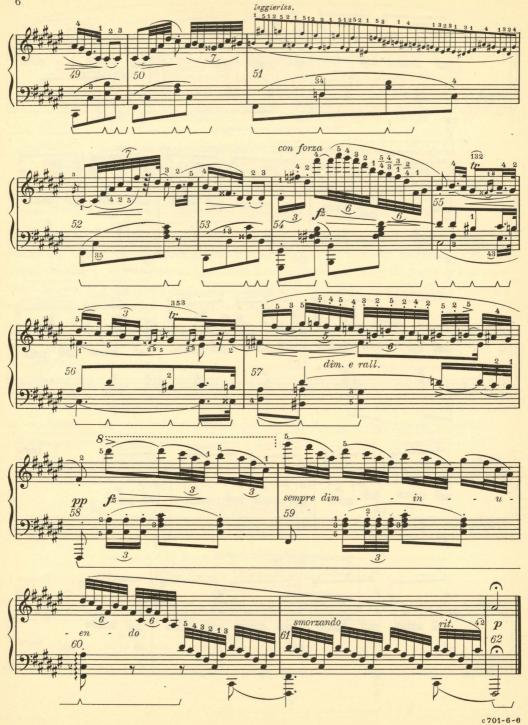
Biographical data concerning Francois Frédéric Chopin will be found in Lesson 84, HISTORY.

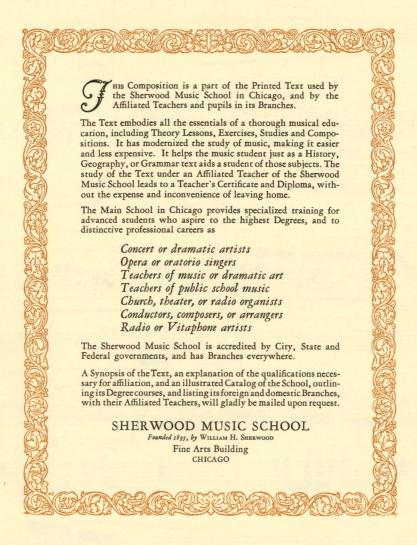


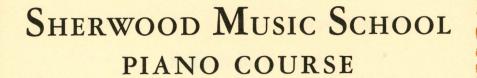












Grade—Graduate A
Composition 710

Sonata in E-flat

Op. 7

Beethoven



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PIANO

Composition 710

Sonata in E-flat

Op. 7 BEETHOVEN

This sonata belongs to the first period of Beethoven's creative activity. It was published in 1797, with a dedication to the Countess Babette von Keglevics. Critics of that day regarded it as "quite novel and unprecedented, indicating strong individuality and originality."

For purposes of reference, the measure number is given at the end of each line of the music.

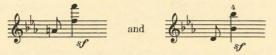
FIRST MOVEMENT

The first movement has a rush and a flight all its own. It is noble, harmonious and sustained. The short episode which confirms the perfect cadence at the end of the first section (measures 111-127), and that at the end of the second section (measure 291), which introduces an extended Coda (measure 313), were innovations in sonata writing that Beethoven developed further inlater works.

For a slight increase in sonority, suited alike to modern pianos and to modern ideas of interpretation, the following version is recommended in measures 101-104, and the correlative passage in measures 281-284 may be treated similarly:



The skips in measures 51 and 53, with their transposed repetitions in measures 231 and 233, present some difficulty, especially in fast tempo. It is well to practice them, at first, with the right hand alone, and to make the upper note into an octave, as follows:



Final performance will, of course, be according to the text.

SECOND MOVEMENT

This Largo con gran espressione is one of the first great slow movements for which Beethoven is justly famous. Its deep emotionalism and transcendent sublimity are very characteristic of his genius.

A sacred and exalted tone characterizes these strains. The master seems to have been caught up into higher spheres than those reached in the first movement. Yet, ere long, a yearning for still more exalted realms is felt. The tension becomes greater; blows resound (measures 20-21) that shatter heart and marrow, as if the soul were rudely reminded of the pain of living in its earthly environment. Then appears, in measure 25, the Ab theme, which contains the emotional climax of the whole movement, intensified in its repetition in Db (measure 33).

After this, the yearning becomes less ardent. Delicate, ethereal tones fall on the ear (measure 38). The soul reaches a quiet resignation, and, with the return of the first theme (measure 51), sinks for a while into its former state of deep reflection and reverent meditation.

In measure 74 (left hand) there is an ecstatic reminiscence of those earlier moments of exaltation. Then the sense of peace attained returns, and the movement closes in a happy calm.

The lyric element dominates this movement. In the many chord passages, all of the notes in each chord should be played with equal strength. Chord tones must also sound exactly together, as any roughness or unevenness will take away the dignity and nobility of a remarkably inspired movement.

THIRD MOVEMENT

Beethoven's Russian biographer, Oulibicheff, calls this third movement "a fanciful, plaintive melody, like that of an old German ballad." All of it bears a highly original stamp, and it is a worthy sequel to the first two movements. The *Minore* section suggests the moaning of wind through the trees.

FOURTH MOVEMENT (Rondo)

The last movement has a decidedly Haydn - Mozartean quality. It is plentifully adorned with the more or less conventional figures and passages of the day, and there is a lack of the mighty climaxes found in works of Beethoven's later periods.

* * * * * *

The following outline of practice is recommended for this and other large works:

After studying each movement silently, observing the indicated themes, divisions, etc., play the movement through very slowly, in strict time, and without pedals, in order to become acquainted with the general musical effect.

Then, take a definite portion and play, still slowly (1) with uniformly loud tone; (2) with uniformly soft tone; (3) strictly carrying out all of the indicated dynamics.

The complete movement, or large sections of it, may be practiced with all the fluctuations of tempo and all the special accents indicated, after individual portions of it have been practiced as above directed.

After this, work with variations of dynamics, in slow tempo; then accelerate the pace by slight degrees, until the required speed is attained.

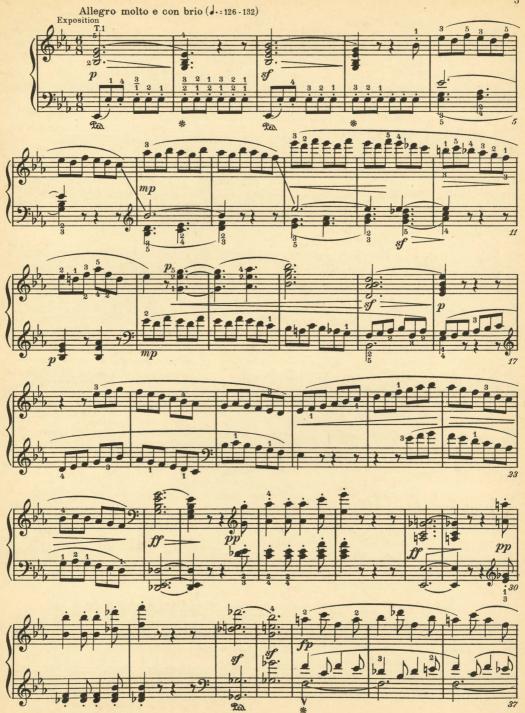
Finally, use the pedals. You should first get out of the keyboard all that is possible to the hands alone, and only then add the pedals, as needed, to give artistic finish.

The fingering used in this Sonata may sometimes appear strange and rather difficult. It is arranged not only to facilitate the playing, but also to serve other purposes. (See Lesson 151, INTERPRETATION.) One of the most important of these is to produce the required expression, as well as strict legato, without the help of the pedat, which, in Beethoven's compositions, should be used very conservatively.

The student who is qualified to undertake the study of this sonata will usually be able to develop a fairly satisfactory interpretation of it in a period of from four to six weeks' diligent study. It then becomes a permanent part of his repertory, to be played, studied and re-studied, over and over again, in the same way that the great artists repeat and re-study the numbers of their repertory, throughout their entire careers.

A biographical sketch of Ludwig van Beethoven will be found in Lesson 78, HISTORY.

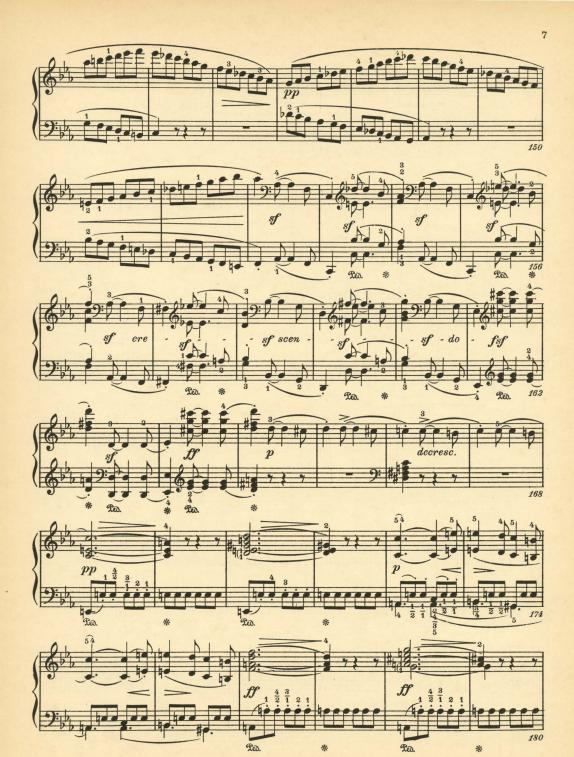












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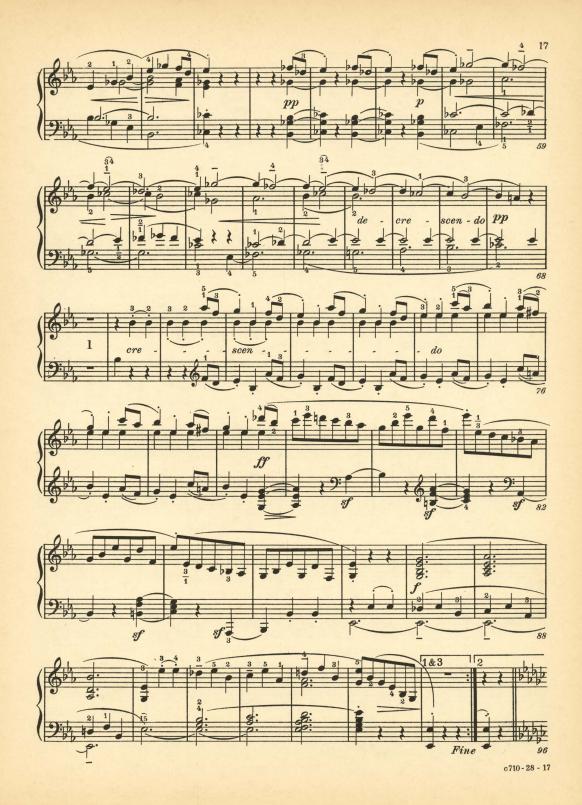


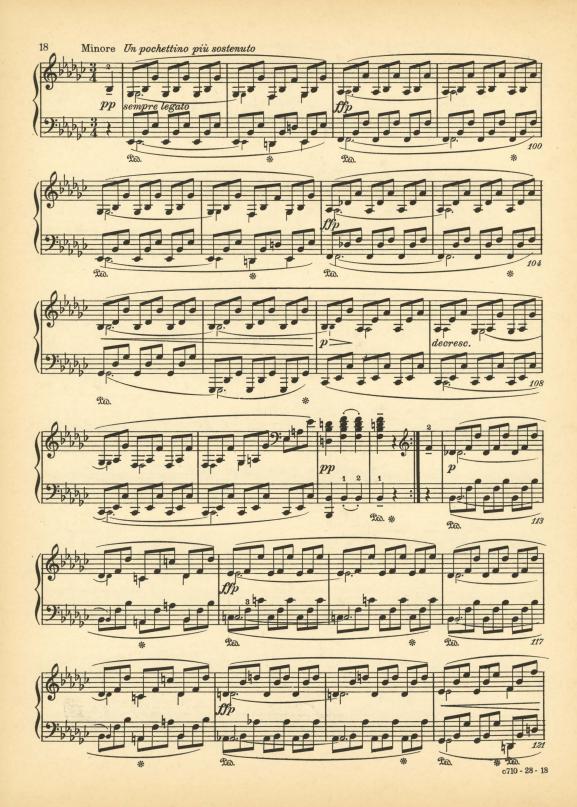






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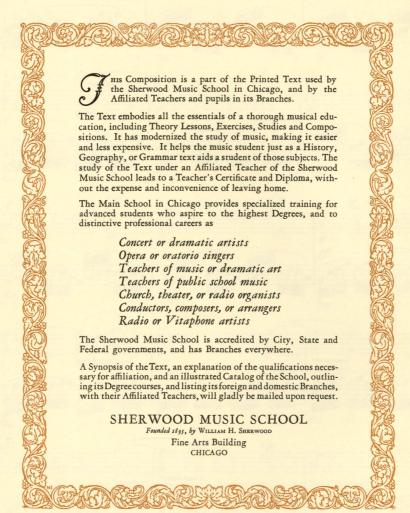


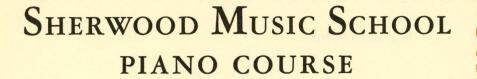












Grade—Graduate A
Composition 751

Rhapsody

Op. 79, No. 2

Brahms



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PIANO

Composition 751

Rhapsody
Op.79, No. 2
BRAHMS

Rhapsodies are ordinarily thought of as being irregular, ecstatic, and highly fantastic compositions, based upon folk melodies. Such, for instance, are the well-known Hungarian Rhapsodies of Liszt. Since there is, in this work by Brahms, very little of the "rhapsodic", in such a sense, we shall have to look elsewhere for a justification of its title. According to ancient Greek usage, a rhapsody signified a poem, or ballade, sung by a "rhapsode", to the accompaniment of a lyre. The narrative, or epic element, then, was the important feature; and this conception of the word pos—sibly appealed to Brahms, with his methodical and classic style of writing.

Neither specific program nor traditional melodies are here utilized. Lyric strains are sharply contrasted with those of a martial character. The holds, as in measure 13, which are encountered in various places, produce the effect of suspense and surprise, and lend to the composition a strongly declamatory style. They are invariably to be followed by short periods of complete silence, although the notation may not indicate this by any rest. Pauses without rests in the notation are occasionally indicated by the composer, as in measure 8. Musical instinct and taste are the only safe guides as to the duration of such punctuations of the tempo.

By virtue of its very definite architectural outline and up-building, the effect of this composition is always one of poise, yet with cumulative growth. It is spontaneous music—vivid, vital and virile at every stage, yet, at times, tender.

Painstaking attention to all of the indications of the text is necessary in order to assimilate the numerous and varied impressions conveyed to the eye. These must then be transmuted into living, coherent, logical—and pleasing—sound masses. After you have minutely studied the composition, and have obtained a thorough understanding of it, you are confronted with the problem of making your listeners understand it; and to accomplish this, you must draw upon your entire fund of pianistic and musical resources. The work affords opportunity for display of great technical and interpretative mastery, and at the same time exemplifies the highest in musical worth.

* It is a practical plan, here as elswhere advocated, to play the melody through with simple and unadorned chordal background in order to gain a general effect of the music; as, for example:



This is the element which should first impress the listener. All secondary elements, such as the breaking up of chords, etc., should form a discreet background, or possibly middle distance. Like a good picture, music must have perspective, and perspective is acquired by arranging the elements composing it in suitable relation, as background, middle-ground and foreground. In music, this is done by means of varieties of touch, gradations of pressure and weight, by dynamics, and other factors of interpretation. No matter how excellent the playing may be, if it persists for any length of time at the same level, it cannot be musical. Real music is always kinetic, never static. The indications in the music form the clue to its dynamic and rhythmic vitality, and should be followed carefully.

The manipulation of the pedals requires especial care, as these make or mar musical effectiveness. You should be well acquainted with the general considerations of pedal usage, as treated in many of the INTERPRETATION Lessons of this Text, before taking up the study of this composition. Whenever the tonal texture is placed in the lower register of the piano (a typical trait of Brahms' music), you must be most careful about the release of the damper pedal. In fact, the release, in such cases, is more important than the depression of the pedal; and quick changes nearly always blur, since the vibrations of the long strings are too strong to be readily stopped. The best guide in such matters is, after all, close attention—listening.

An excellent opportunity for half-pedaling or pedal dips (see Lesson 133, INTERPRETATION) is presented in measures 21-27, and later in measures 53-55, 65-76 and 106-108.

The pedal shake, or trill (see Lesson 131, INTERPRETATION) may be used to excellent advantage in the diminuendo of measures 117-120.

Take note of the staccato pedaling (see Lesson 125, INTERPRETATION) indicated in measures 10-12, and elsewhere.

The Una Corda pedal (see Lesson 145, Interpretation is indicated in various parts of the composition; and the Sostenuto pedal (see Lesson 143, Interpretation) may be used to sustain the bass tone, G, from measure 116 to measure 122.

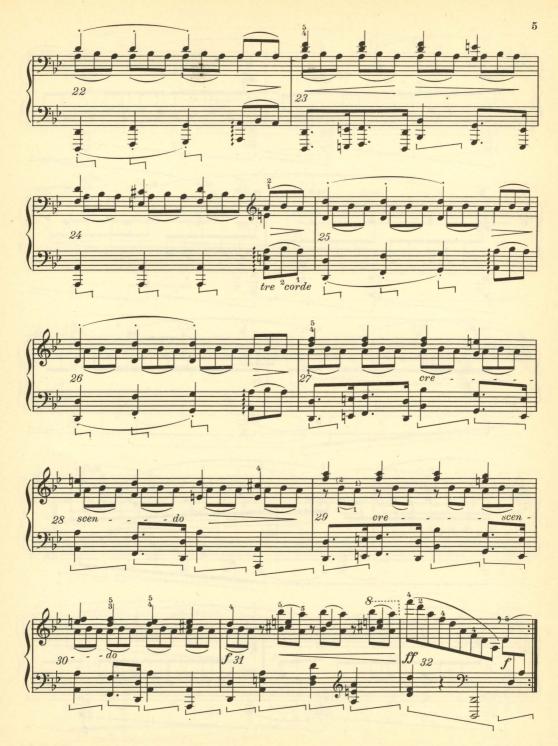
Be sure to play the concluding eight measures strictly in time. As indicated, there is a well-defined diminuendo, but any slackening of the tempo would be weak and ineffectual. The two very abrupt and loud chords at the close are more impressive when played in strict tempo.

A biographical sketch of Johannes Brahms will be found in Lesson 86, HISTORY. See also other references in Lessons 75 and 101, HISTORY, under "Oratorio" and "Germany and Austria", respectively.



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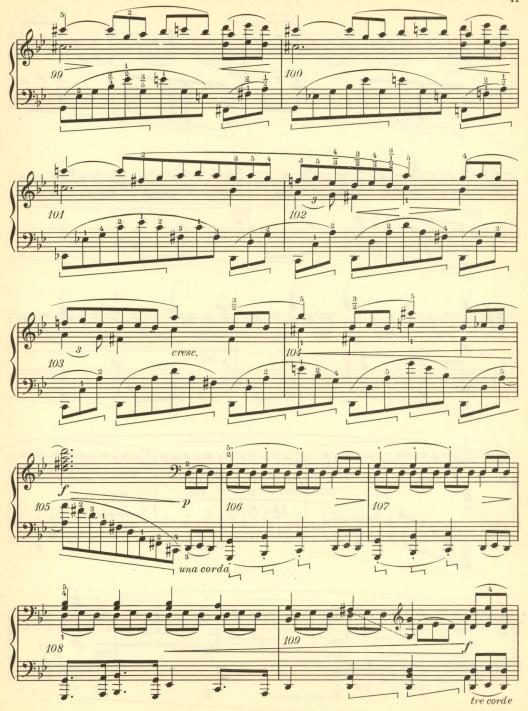








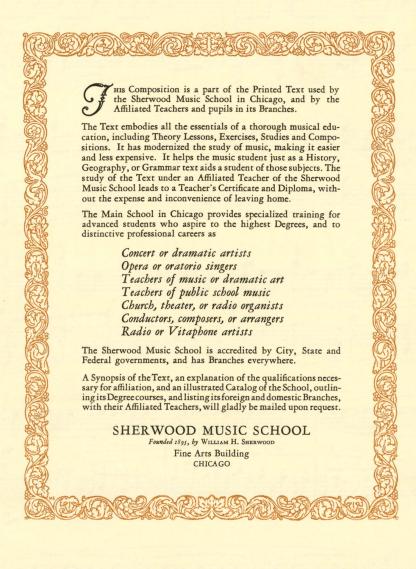


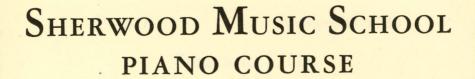


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Grade—Graduate A
Composition 760

Sonata in E-flat

Op. 31, No. 3

Beethoven



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PIANO

Composition 760

Sonata in E-flat

Op. 31, No.3 BEETHOVEN

This work, written in 1803, is one of the most cheerful of Beethoven's sonatas. Free from any expression of pain or grief, it fairly sparkles with the delight of living. Playfulness may be called its outstanding characteristic, and in order to express this, the interpreter must be in command of a varied touch, with control of tonal intensity and rhythmic elasticity. The necessity for mastery of the pedals is, of course, self-evident; for, without this, even the best keyboard work counts for little.

FIRST MOVEMENT

This movement may be thought of as a dialogue between two lovers. The first subject, an interrogatory motive which recurs frequently, is playful and humorous. As it is elaborated, its facetious character predominates more and more, especially at the beginning of the second part, where, now in the treble, now in the bass, it skips about in an altogether charming and elfish manner. Despite the originality of this motive, it nevertheless bears an unmistakable Mozartean tinge.

The questioning first motive, so frequently repeated, is followed ere long by an arch and coquettish episode (measure 17, etc.), leading to the second subject in Bb (measure 45), likewise happy in character, with a rollicking lilt. The all-pervading mood of cheerfulness is further borne out by the tender cooing of successions of shakes. (See measures 67-71 and 193-201).

SECOND MOVEMENT (Scherzo)

This is undoubtedly one of the most delicate and ethereal movements Beethoven ever penned. We find ourselves transported, as it were, into the fantastic and humorously elfin mood that is so well expressed by Mendelssohn in his music to "A Midsummer Night's Dream." It may, indeed, be termed magical music. The charm of the coloring and the surprising effect of the f in measures 34, 39, etc. are utterly indescribable, and will call for the player's best powers of interpretation.

The Scherzo is, in fact, a sort of mystic ballad, or ghost story. Gnomes and goblins seem to be disporting themselves in a tale which might have been inspired by phases of Shakespeare's "Tempest." The sonata or "first movement" form is used in this second movement, as well as in the first one, but with an effect very much modified by the entirely different quality of the music. The features indicative of the sonata form are evident, but a deviation from regularity may be seen in the fact that only the closing section of the second theme is in the conventionally proper keys, at its two appearances (measures 50 and 157).

THIRD MOVEMENT (Menuetto)

The Menuetto (or Minuet) is somewhat Haydn-like in quality and content, though altogether typical of Beethoven in its treatment. It is truly a splendid foil to the other movements, while the contrast of the harmonic Trio serves to offset its charmingly lyric qualities. Play the turn in measure 9, and its later repetition, thus:



In speaking of this movement, Carl Reinecke, eminent pianist of the classic school, wrote to one of his friends, "May you live cheerfully and happily, as the *Finale* breathes cheerfulness and happiness." Here, the climax of the humorous spirit pervading the entire sonata is reached. It is carried out in a truly surprising and diversified manner, as humor in music should be treated: namely, by inducing suspense and surprise. These two factors of musical expression are here treated in a dynamic, as well as in a rhythmic, sense.

Once more the sonata form is employed, with some digressions from type. (The second theme, measure 34, reappears in the Recapitulation in the key of Gb, instead of in the tonic, Eb.)

The climax of it all is reached in the second part, where, by means of an enharmonic change (Gb to F; major, measure 93), modulations are carried through various keys, arriving in measure 122 at the key of C major.

This *Presto* movement forms a most fitting finale. Visions of fairylike flitting have by now quite disappeared, and all goes "merry as a marriage bell." The leading motive is repeated in numerous ways and forms, in various keys and with characteristically unexpected modulations; and it arrives, finally, at a most brilliant conclusion.

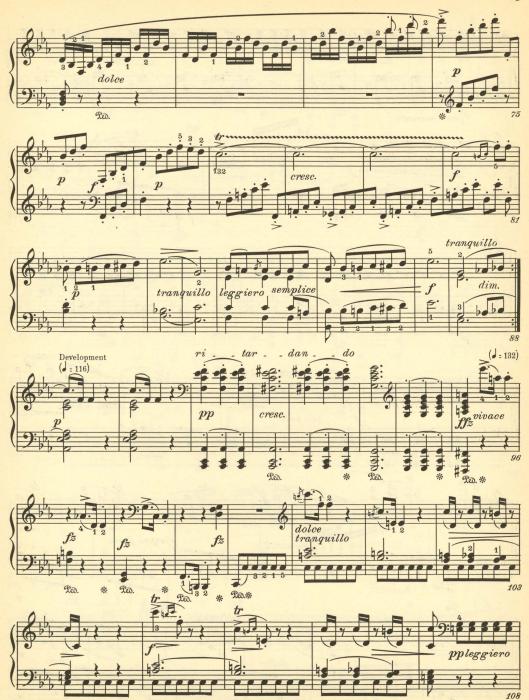
A biographical sketch of Ludwig van Beethoven will be found in Lesson 78, HISTORY,





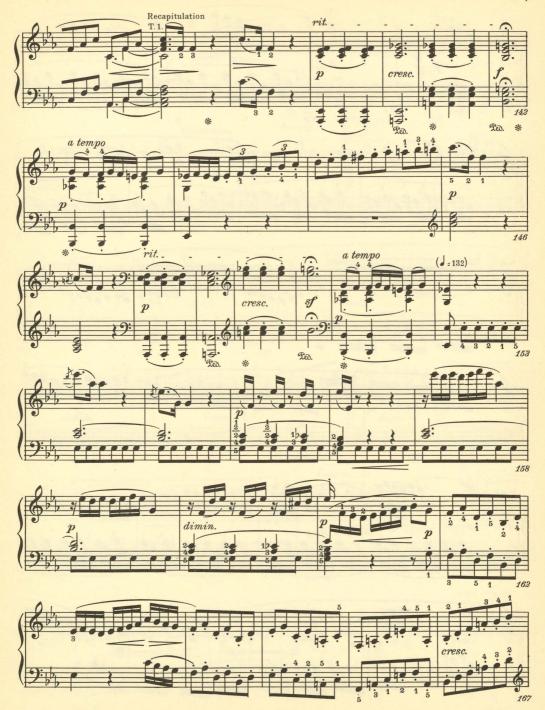




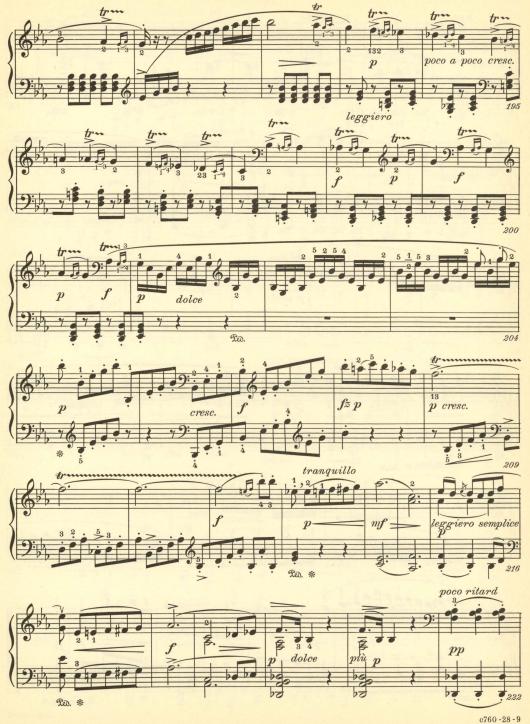




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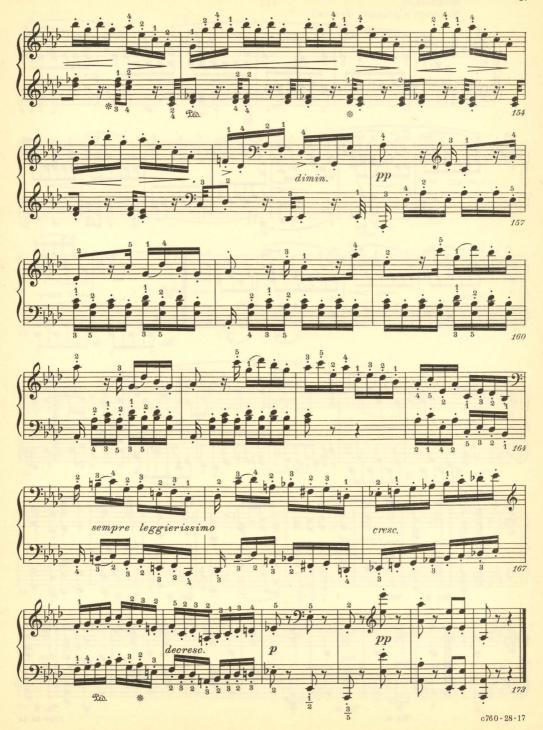




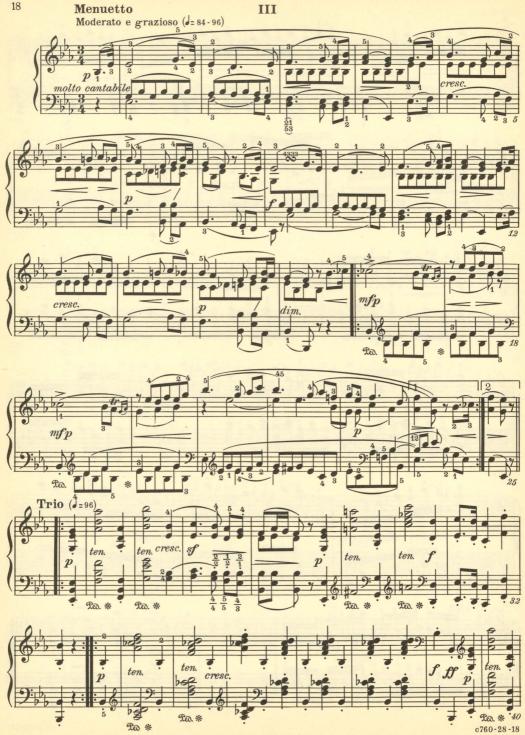
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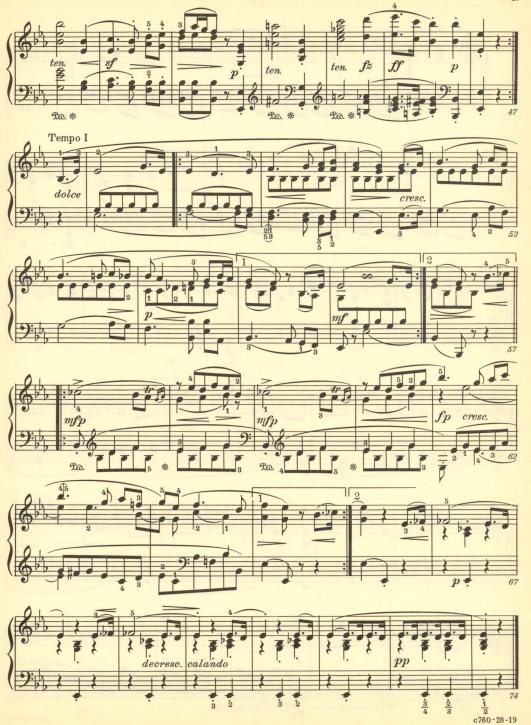


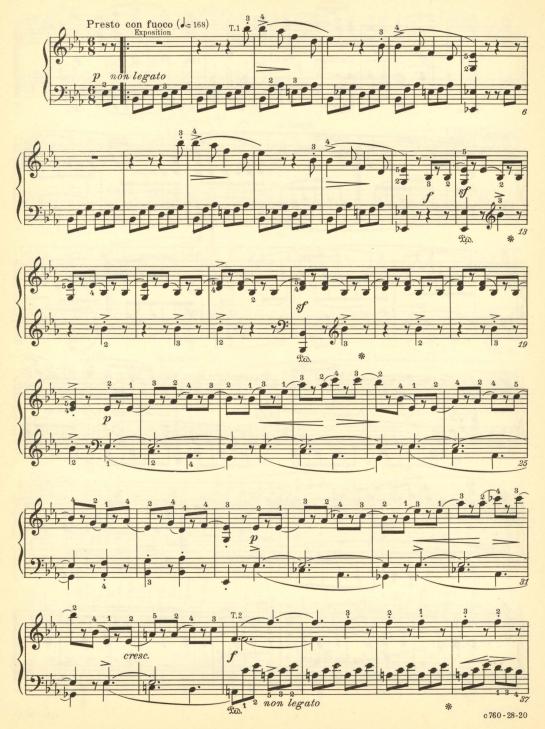






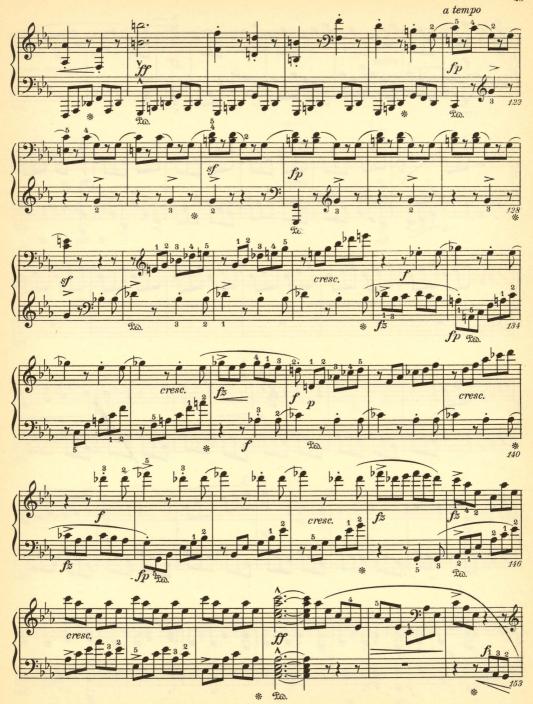












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