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**INSIGHTS FROM MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP: TEACHING AND PERFORMING
BEETHOVEN'S "GRAND SONATE PATHÉTIQUE"
NO. 8 IN C MINOR, OP. 13, 1798-9.**

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ABSTRACT

Music scholarship raises many issues for piano teachers and performers to consider in relation to iconic and frequently performed works. This paper will focus on two aspects of study in relation to Beethoven's *Sonata no. 8 in C minor*, op. 13 ("Pathétique"). Firstly, for teaching and performance on the modern piano, I propose to consider ways that practical decisions concerning many score details may be informed by historical/theoretical context, particularly, taking note of the consequences of the fact that the "Pathétique" was composed for the Viennese fortepiano. Secondly, accounts of the formal structure of the "Pathétique" in the publications of eminent musicologists including Tovey, Rosen, Dahlhaus, and Hepokoski point to different conceptions of the overall structural balance of the piece. In these accounts, a general tendency to invoke a standardised concept such as "sonata form" or the "sonata principle" has gradually been replaced by recognition of the work's radical structural innovations. These discussions open the way towards new "hearings" of the piece. This paper will suggest some ways that the vast resources of recent historical, analytical and performance scholarship for the study of Beethoven in general and for this popular sonata in particular might inform choices in teaching and performance.

Music scholarship raises many issues for piano teachers and performers to consider in relation to iconic and frequently performed works. This paper will focus on two aspects of study in relation to Beethoven's *Sonata no. 8 in C minor*, op. 13 ("Pathétique").¹ Firstly, for teaching and performance on the modern piano, I propose to consider some ways that practical decisions concerning many score details may be informed by late eighteenth century documents and particularly by recognising the consequences of the fact that the "Pathétique" was composed for the Viennese fortepiano. Secondly, accounts of the formal structure of the "Pathétique" in the publications by eminent musicologists including Tovey, Rosen, Dahlhaus, and Hepokoski² suggest different readings of the overall structure of the piece, especially of the first movement. In these accounts, a tendency to invoke standardised concepts such as "sonata form" or the "sonata principle" has gradually given way to recognition of the work's radical structural innovations opening the way towards "hearings" of the piece based on the specific and individual unfolding of the work.³ This paper aims to suggest some ways that the vast resources of recent historical, analytical and performance scholarship for the study of Beethoven in general and for this popular sonata in particular might contribute to informed choices in teaching and performance.⁴

As a framework for interpretation and teaching, numerous documents by music theorists, Beethoven, and his contemporaries present the eighteenth century view of the requirements of good execution, musical expressivity and more specific topics such the 'pathetic'.⁵

Friedrich Schiller's *Über das Pathetische* (On the Pathetic, 1793) is central, as it presents the

¹ The title "Pathétique" was given by Beethoven.

² See Donald Francis Tovey, *Companion to the Beethoven Piano Sonatas* (London, Associated Board, 1931); Barry Cooper and Donald Francis Tovey, *Companion to the Beethoven Piano Sonatas*, rev. ed. (London: ABRSM, 1999); Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style* (New York: Norton, 1971); Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style*, rev. ed. (New York: Norton, 1998); Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms* (New York: Norton, 1980); Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, rev. ed. (New York: Norton, 1988); Carl Dahlhaus, *Ludwig van Beethoven* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991); James Hepokoski, "Beyond the Sonata Principle," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (Spring, 2002), 91-154; Charles Rosen, *Beethoven's Piano Sonatas: A Short Companion*, Yale University Press, 2002.

³ In the sense discussed by Marion Guck, "Analysis as Interpretation: Interaction, Intentionality, Invention," *Music Theory Spectrum* 28/2 (Fall, 2006), 191-209.

⁴ The extensive resources of the digital archive of the Beethoven-Haus, Bonn contains manuscripts, first editions, first editions, letters, pictures and scholarly articles, see <http://beethoven-haus-bonn.de>.

⁵ Elaine Sisman, "Pathos and the Pathétique: Rhetorical Stance in Beethoven's C-minor Sonata, Op. 13." *Beethoven Forum* 3, 1994: 81-106.

idea that “the pathetic can only be aesthetic in so far as it is sublime”⁶ and relates to the juxtaposition of intensity and high drama with sublime lyricism in this sonata.

The attainment of correct ‘expression’ was of paramount importance to Beethoven. This is confirmed in a famous note written by his friend Ferdinand Ries (1784-1838). Studying the *Six Variations on an Original Theme*, Op. 34 with Beethoven, Ries noted that Beethoven was very patient but demanded correct expression from his student without any possibility of compromise:

...When I left out something in a passage, a note or a skip, which in many cases he wanted to have specially emphasised, or struck a wrong key, he seldom said anything; yet when I was at fault with regard to the expression, the *crescendo* or matters 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 want of knowledge, feeling or attention.⁷

For the theorist Daniel Gottlieb Turk, achieving the inherent character of the work is the mark of “good execution.”

He who performs a composition so that its inherent effect (character etc.) is expressed (made perceptible) to the utmost even in every single passage, and that the tones become so to speak, a language [Sprache] of the feelings, of him one says he has a good execution. Good execution, therefore is the most important yet at the same time the most difficult aspect of music making.⁸

Inextricably linked to the idea of conveying the expressive content of the music was the idea of music as discourse. In *Allgemeine Theorie der “Schönen” Künste*, the theorist Johann Georg Sulzer made quite specific comments in reference to C.P.E. Bach’s Sonatas, reflecting the eighteenth century perception of music as discourse:

“...one perceives a comprehensible language which sets and maintains our imagination and sensitivity in motion.”⁹

⁶ Tom Beghin, liner notes to “The Complete Piano Sonatas on Period Instruments.” Claves: CD 50-9707/10, 1997:41.

⁷ Oscar G. Sonneck, *Beethoven: Impressions of Contemporaries* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1926. Facsimile, New York: Dover, 1967): 52.

⁸ Daniel Gottlieb Turk, *Klavierschule* (Leipzig & Halle, 1789, Trans., Eng. Raymond Haagh, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982).

⁹ Quoted Owen Jander, “The ‘Kreutzer’ Sonata as Dialogue.” *Early Music*, February, 1988: 35.

Scholars including Leonard Ratner, Kofi Agawu, Robert Hatten and Raymond Monelle¹⁰ have demonstrated how expressivity in late 18th century music is bound to ‘topics of musical discourse’. Kofi Agawu presented an eloquent account of Beethoven’s treatment of topical contrast in the opening of the ‘*Pathétique*’ Sonata arguing that:

“At least three topics are introduced in the opening measures of the movement: sensibility, cadenza and French overture. The broken rhetoric of the opening measures, together with the emphasis on diminished seventh harmony recalls CPE Bach specifically, or the sensibility style in general. The soloistic display on the last beat of measure 4 may be heard as a mini-cadenza, and therefore as an allusion to the concerto style. The allusion gains perceptive force later on in the introduction (measures 10-11) when the same gesture this time complete with the conventional pre-cadenza syntax (a six-four chord prolonging the dominant), secures closure for the introduction and launches the *Allegro* section of the movement. The sense of an overture is conveyed by the “Grave” tempo indication, the ordinal position of the passage and the characteristic dotted rhythms.

This description provides an expressive context for the interpretation that reaches beyond the surface details of the score, enabling the interpreter to attribute meaning by association to the dramatic contrasts that characterise the work. The orchestral style is introduced in the opening of the *Allegro di molto e con brio*, bars 44 ff. which resembles an orchestral reduction, with left hand *tremolo* passages recalling orchestral timpani against a texture of upper strings and woodwind in the right hand double note theme.¹¹ It was common practice and part of ‘topics of musical discourse’ in the classical period to refer to other genres in a keyboard composition.¹² The “*Pathétique*” affords many opportunities for reference to instrumental effects on the piano through highly contrasted textures, the pianistic writing frequently resembling an orchestral reduction. Agawu also notes that “...such contrasts begin to suggest departures from an objectified topical structuring toward a

¹⁰ Leonard Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form and Style*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980; Kofi Agawu, *Playing with Signs*; Raymond Monelle, *The Sense of Music*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000; Robert Hatten,

¹¹ Beethoven’s own arrangements of piano works such as the *Sonata in E Major* Op. 14, no. 1 for string quartet indicate his approach to instrumental thinking related to keyboard writing. Broyles, Michael. “Beethoven’s Piano Sonata Op. 14 No. 1: Originally for Strings?” *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol 23, no. 3, 1970: 405-419.

¹² See Leonard Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form and Style*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1980.

personal, idiosyncratic retreat into private codes.”¹³ This work exemplifies Beethoven’s increasingly personalised musical expression at this time.

The expressive and dramatic profile of the “Pathétique” is reinforced by descriptions of the key associations for C minor. When the eighteenth century Italian violinist and composer Francesco Galeazzi (1758-1819) published an encyclopaedic music treatise titled *Elementi teorico-pratici musica* (The Theoretical and Practical Elements of Music) between 1791 and 1796, he summed up the associations of the key of C minor stating that it is “the tragic key, suitable for expressing great misfortunes like the deaths of Heroes.”¹⁴ Motivic, rhythmic and harmonic connections between works in c minor including Mozart’s *Sonata in C Minor*, K. 457 and the “Pathétique” have often been noted.¹⁵ Many other works in C minor including *Concerto*, K. 491, Haydn’s *Symphony no. 95* and *Sonata no. 20* also fit Galeazzi’s description. The musical character implied by C minor is conveyed with extensive use of diminished chords, dramatic rhetorical gestures, pauses and silences.¹⁶ Numerous other dramatic works in C minor by Beethoven with related musical characteristics also come to mind including the piano *Sonata Op. 10 No. 1* (1796-8), the piano *Concerto no. 3*, Op. 37 (1800), the *Marche funèbre* in the “Eroica” Symphony (1802-5); the *Symphony No. 5*, Op. 67 (1807-8) and the *Sonata*, Op. 111 (1821-22). Strikingly, the harmonic gesture at beat 3-4 of measure 1 of the “Pathétique” also appears at the opening of the piano sonata Op. 111. Connections can also be drawn between the “Pathétique” and the Largo opening of Clementi’s *Sonata in G Minor*, Op. 34 no. 2 (1795) while the many orchestral gestures in Dussek’s *Sonata in C Minor* Op. 35 no. 3 (1797) give rise to the suggestion that these two works may have been influential on Beethoven’s compositions at this time.

¹³ Kofi Agawu, *Playing with Signs*, 42-44.

¹⁴ Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music* (Oxford and New York, 2004), 2:702.

¹⁵ As early as 1931, Donald Tovey mentioned Mozart’s C minor sonata in relation to the “Pathétique” in *Companion to Beethoven’s Piano Sonatas*.

¹⁶ Leonard Ratner, *Classic Music: expression, form and style*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

According to his biographer Anton Schindler,¹⁷ Beethoven (allegedly) owned a copy of a well known essay by Christian Schubart on key characteristics,¹⁸ and discussed this subject with his associates. Schubart's description of the expressive characteristics of C minor was more personal than Galeazzi's formulation. For Schubart, C minor contrasts "a declaration of love and at the same time the lament of unhappy love. All languishing, longing, *sighing* of the love-sick soul lies in this key."¹⁹ Schubart's description concurs with the changing nature of the topics of musical discourse at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as noted by Kofi Agawu.

Providing significant advice for expressive execution in music of this period that can change perception of tonal colours and textures on the modern piano is the well known passage describing numerous fine distinctions between 'heavy' and 'light' execution in Daniel Gottlieb Turk's *Klavierschule*:

In a heavy execution each note must be played firmly (emphatically) and held out right to the end of its prescribed duration. *Light* refers to an execution in which each note is played with less firmness (emphasis) and the finger lifted from the key somewhat earlier than the duration of the note prescribes. In order to avoid a misunderstanding, I must also remark here that the terms heavy and light generally refer more to the sustaining and separating of the notes than to their loudness and softness. For in certain cases, for example in an *Allegro vivo*, *scherzando*, *Vivace con allegrezza* etc. the execution must be rather light (short) but at the same time still more or less loud; whereas a piece with a melancholy character, for example an *Adagio mesto*, *con afflizione*, etc. certainly slurred and therefore somewhat heavy, should nevertheless not be played too loudly. Still to be sure in most cases heavy and loud go together. Whether the execution is to be heavy or light can be determined from 1) the character and intended purpose of the piece... 2) from the designated tempo, 3) from the meter, 4) from the note values 5) from the way in which the notes progress etc. In addition, even national taste, the style

¹⁷ Although Schindler has been shown not to have been an especially truthful biographer, some of his comments are pertinent.

¹⁸ Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart, *Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst (Concepts for the Aesthetics of Composition)*. Ed. Ludwig Schubart, Vienna, 1806. Translated by Rita Steblin in *A History of Key Characteristics in the 18th and early 19th centuries*. UMI Research Press, 1983. Accessed April 13, 2011 <http://www.wmich.edu/mus-theo/courses/keys.html>

¹⁹ Rita Steblin, *A History of Key Characteristics in the 18th and early 19th centuries*. UMI Research Press, 1983. Accessed April 13, 2011 <http://www.wmich.edu/mus-theo/courses/keys.html>

of the composer and the instrument for which a piece is intended must be considered.²⁰

In this passage, Turk points to the range of textures and colours available within various dynamic levels, advice that may be applied to the modern piano just as effectively as to the instruments of his time.²¹ Of particular note is the essential concept of light playing in *forte* dynamic. In late eighteenth century repertoire, *forte* playing can easily lead to heaviness due to the increased volume, long decay of sound and strength of the bass register on the modern piano²² compared to the eighteenth century instrument which is not very loud and has a clear sound and rapidly fading sound. In the Preface to the recordings of *'The Complete [Beethoven] Piano Sonatas on Period Instruments'*²³ Malcolm Bilson states:

These early instruments can suggest very different gestures from those proffered by the modern piano and can lead the player down quite different paths of expression...one's interpretation of ...sources can change when the touch and timbre of the contemporary instrument are in one's ears and under one's fingers.²⁴

The possibility of applying eighteenth century concepts to performance on modern instruments is also acknowledged by Sandra Rosenblum in *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music*.²⁵ She refers to Robert Donnington's discussion²⁶ of the difference between historical authenticity and essential authenticity:

Historical authenticity is the use of all available knowledge for any performance, which for Classic keyboard music would require a fortepiano of the type available to the composer, tuned at low pitch. Essential authenticity is the use of such knowledge and musicianship as are necessary to reveal the inherent character of a piece and to produce an aesthetically appealing performance with or without an

²⁰ Turk, §143.

²¹ There has been increasing discussion of applying eighteenth century concepts to performance on modern instruments. Roger Norrington works with modern orchestras strives for greater transparency and in *Bach's Solo Violin Works: A Performer's Guide*, Yale, 2007, Jaap Schroeder suggests that the modern player can strike an effective compromise by adapting his or her technique to that of Bach's era" (p. vii).

²² Mark Laporta, "An Interview with Malcolm Bilson," *Piano Quarterly* no. 146 (Summer, 1989): 19-24.

²³ Ludwig van Beethoven, *The Complete Piano Sonatas on Period Instruments*, Claves CD 50-9707/10, 1997.

²⁴ Malcolm Bilson, Liner notes, Ludwig van Beethoven, *The Complete Piano Sonatas on Period Instruments*, Claves CD 50-9707/10, 1997: 34.

²⁵ Sandra Rosenblum, *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988: 56.

²⁶ Robert Donnington, *The Interpretation of Early Music*. New Version. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974: 61.

authentic instrument. The criteria of essential authenticity seem to me the more important. The cause is not authenticity *per se* but effectiveness. A reading that brings out the finesse and detail of the Classic repertoire can be musicianly and ultimately effective. Play Mozart on a modern piano but do not modernize it. Project dynamic relationships, tempos, articulation, pedalling, and ornamentation that are congruous with the composer's concept.²⁷

Pianos from Beethoven's time (and historical reproductions), now familiar on recordings and in music instrument collections, provide great insight into many score details including Beethoven's dynamics, articulation, accents and other diacritical markings suggesting ways to experiment for effective results on the modern piano. Pedalling, in particular, requires careful consideration of musical context and sensitivity to the effect on instruments of Beethoven's time. Performance on early instruments suggests less pedal in general. On this point, Malcolm Bilson has remarked:

“Also different is the balance between bass and treble and pedal usage. All of this can lead a sensitive pianist to quite new idioms.”²⁸

While pedalling is always somewhat experimental being dependent on many acoustical factors, knowing that the first piano Beethoven owned that had a damper pedal was the Erard he received in 1803, a piano that Beethoven found to be “too heavy,”²⁹ in the “Pathétique,” with a knowledge of the 5-octave Walther style fortepiano, we may choose to lighten pedalling and make use of Beethoven's many indications for finger pedalling, in the first movement at mm. 89ff, 114 ff. and similar places. While there were knee levers on both the Streicher and Walter pianos that Beethoven worked on, they are quite clumsy to engage and

²⁷ Sandra Rosenblum, *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music*: 56.

²⁸ Darryl Geddes, “Bilson and former students put the sound of fortepiano on CD,” : <http://www.news.cornell.edu/Chronicle/97/10.16.97/Bilson.html> Accessed April 24, 2011.

²⁹ Newman, “Beethoven's Pianos,” 488

we know they were used sparingly.³⁰ Finger pedalling is often notated by Beethoven to give the impression of damper pedalling and increased sonority.

Malcolm Bilson has stated that “the modern piano with its rich, slowly developing tone, has no real *sforzando* at all as Beethoven would have recognised it – it has only loud notes.”³¹ The opening chord of the *Pathétique Sonata* is a case in point as the *fp* indication can be achieved more readily with the rapidly fading sound on the 18th century instrument. With the sound of the early piano in mind however, it is easier to attempt to recreate the dramatic effect on the modern piano. Speedy elimination of the resonance of the first chord by partly releasing the fingers and re-depressing the pedal is one way to simulate the effect. Difficult as this may be to execute, it can be striking — surely what is intended by Beethoven.³² Many other chordal, *fp* instructions in the first movement may benefit from a similar treatment.

Beethoven’s letters to the fortepiano maker Johann Andreas Streicher underscore the increasing importance of ‘singing tone’ in the late eighteenth/ early nineteenth century sense of “notes that speak.” On 19th November, 1796, Beethoven wrote that the Streicher piano he had received two days earlier was: “too good for me.... because it takes away my freedom to create the tone for myself.”³³ Andreas Streicher aimed for an instrument with “a light, singing, polished and expressive manner that should resemble the sound of the best wind instruments.”³⁴ Beethoven also remarked that Streicher was one of the few makers who understood that “one may sing on the pianoforte too.”³⁵ On this point, Sandra Rosenblum reminds us that the reference to ‘singing tone’ does not imply the tone quality of the

³⁰ Beethoven’s earliest published indications for damper control pedalling appear in 1801 in the first 2 piano Concertos, Op. 15, and Op 19 and in the Quintet for Piano and Winds, Op 16.

³¹ Malcolm Bilson, Liner notes, Ludwig van Beethoven, *The Complete Piano Sonatas on Period Instruments*, Claves CD 50-9707/10, 1997: 34.

³² Andras Schiff discusses Beethoven Piano Sonatas, and suggests way to achieve implied dramatic effects on the modern piano see <http://music.guardian.co.uk/classical/page/0,,1943867,00.html> Accessed March 15, 2011.

³³ Anderson, Emily. *The Letters of Beethoven*, London: Macmillan, 1966, I, 24.

³⁴ Sandra Rosenblum, *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988, 37-8.

³⁵ Anderson, Emily. *The Letters of Beethoven*, London: Macmillan, 1966, 24. Quoted Rosenblum, 152.

nineteenth century singer but rather the speaking, rhetorical manner of the late eighteenth century. This approach is confirmed by Simon Lohlein when he advised in *Clavierschule*, (1765):

In respect to expression, the keyboard is not as complete as the stringed and wind instruments. Nonetheless, the same notes can be performed in different ways, and one can imitate several kinds of bowing.³⁶

It is well known that Beethoven's preference was for the instruments of the Viennese maker Anton Walter and all the sonatas up to Op. 31 no. 1 were composed while Beethoven possessed a five-octave Viennese instrument.

An increasing variety of articulation and touch directions is a notable feature in the "Pathétique" Sonata with *non-legato*, *tenuto*, *portato*, *legatissimo*, *the prolonged touch* and *leggeriamente* the main requirements³⁷ Subtle distinctions of emphasis between *rinforzando*, *rinforzato* and *sforzando* are described by Türk as "*rf or rinf.—rinforzando, rinforzato, strengthened [verstärkt]*"³⁸ while Rosenblum notes that the English theorist, J.F. Danneley distinguished two different forms of the Italian word: "*rinforzando*, strengthening of sound and *rinforzato*, strengthened: it is thus abbreviated, R.F. and is placed over such notes as should be forcibly accented."³⁹

Differentiating between the discrete range of touches required in the *Pathétique* in line with the advice of eighteenth century music theorists, and particularly 'heavy' and 'light' playing at various dynamic levels, can make an immediate impact on choices in technique and sound colour on the modern piano. For example, at measures 89-92 in the first movement, composed very much like a string texture, Beethoven has written 'pedal notes' which result in 'finger pedals' in the bass register. These provide for resonance and clarity in

³⁶ Quoted in Sandra Rosenblum, *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 174.

³⁷ See Rosenblum, *Performance Practices*, 149-158.

³⁸ Türk, *Klavierschule*, 116.

³⁹ J.F. Danneley, ed., *Dictionary of Music* (London: Printed for the Editor, 1825) n.p. quoted by Rosenblum, *Performance Practices*:89.

the middle parts if the pedal is minimised. Of the articulation marks in following passage, at bars 93-99, shown as wedges in the first edition by Hoffmeister but standardised as *staccato* dots in the most frequently used Henle edition, Rosenblum has explained that this indication was Beethoven's sign for metrical accents⁴⁰ and thus the surrounding texture needs to be light to maximise the implied contrast both in the texture and between these two passages. It is notable that in the first edition, at the parallel place in the recapitulation, *staccato* dots appear. No wonder that the editor of the Henle edition chose to make *staccato* dots and wedges uniformly *staccato* dots! Nevertheless, it is a matter of great interest for teachers and performers to see where Beethoven has marked wedges. Sometimes, they seem to be rather meaningful.⁴¹

It is well known that Beethoven enjoyed a considerable reputation as a pianist around the time of the composition of the *Pathétique*. He was praised frequently for his virtuosity and expressivity, fine *legato* and “unique handling of the instrument.”⁴² The increasing requirement for use of *legato* indicated by longer slurs than usually found in the late eighteenth century, coupled with signs for “over the barline” slurring is clearly evident in the *Pathétique* sonata, for example in the 1st movement, bars 113 ff., 135-136 and parallel places, as well as throughout the 2nd movement.

As is so characteristic in late eighteenth century music, Beethoven's time signatures in relation to tempo markings imply metrical accents. Choosing a tempo to create an underlying, proportionally-related pulse between various parts of the work may contribute to a sense of cohesion and continuity. Indeed, some writers and performers suggest that the tempi in the movements should be proportionally related. In the Preface to the Wiener Urtext edition, Maurice Hinson recommends that the quaver in the *Grave* should equal the semibreve in the *Allegro* that should equal the quaver in the 2nd movement, *Adagio cantabile*

⁴⁰ Rosenblum, 96.

⁴¹ Ludwig van Beethoven. *The 32 Piano Sonatas*. London: Tecla Editions, 1989.

⁴² Rosenblum, *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music*, 28.

that should equal the minim in the 3rd movement, *Allegro*. No metronome speeds are suggested.⁴³

Figure 1: Time signatures and tempo markings in the “Pathétique”

Grave: C	Allegro di molto e con brio - cut C	Adagio cantabile 2/4	Rondo - Allegro cut C
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No metronome guidelines were given in the first edition of this work by Hoffmeister in Vienna,⁴⁴ but there are considerable variations in metronome markings provided in editions and audible in notable performances. Tempo has been a point of considerable debate amongst scholars.

Rosenblum tabled the metronome indications found in early editions of the “Pathétique” Sonata.⁴⁵ No definitive conclusions can be drawn.⁴⁶

TABLE 1: Tempo indications in early editions of Beethoven Sonata no. 8, Op. 13⁴⁷

		Haslinger Czerny I First state 1828-c.1833 or 1837	Haslinger Second state Czerny II? 183?-1842	Czerny Proper Performance 1846	Simrock Czerny By 1857	Cramer Moscheles 1834-38/9 ⁴⁸	Moscheles Hallberger 1858?-1867
<i>Grave</i>	C 	58	58	46	63	60	60
<i>Allegro di molto e con brio</i>		152	152	144	144	144	144
<i>Adagio cantabile</i>	2/4 	54	60	54	60	60	60
<i>Allegro</i>		112	100	96	104	104	104

The striking contrasts between tempi for the different movements in Haslinger I are noteworthy. This table indicates broad agreement on the tempo for the 2nd movement, at

⁴³ Grave – C – in 4; Allegro – in 2, pulse one in the bar; Adagio cantabile 2/4 – in 2 unequal beats; Rondo – Allegro – cut C – pulse one in the bar.

⁴⁴ The publication was the first issue of the work, first advertised in the Wiener Zeitung on 18 December, 1799. No autograph of the Pathétique is known. This was reproduced from the copy in the Austrian National Library Hoboken Collection, S.-H. Beethoven 56.

⁴⁵ Reproduced and adapted from Rosenblum: 356.

⁴⁶ Rosenblum, Gordon, Timothy Jones and Georges Barth are some.

⁴⁷ Rosenblum considers a discrepancy of three or more metronome steps to be significant and noticeable.

⁴⁸ See Rosenblum: 333-335.

quaver = 60 although a slower tempo is recommended by Czerny in both Haslinger 1 and *Proper Performance*. For the 3rd movement, the tempo from minim = MM. 100-104 is most commonly preferred. There is a range in tempi for the Allegro, from minim = 144-152, with the faster *tempi* of Haslinger 1 and 2 perhaps reflecting Beethoven's well known preference for faster speeds. *Tempi* for the Grave range from quaver = MM. 46 – 60 however without including “Proper Performance” and Czerny, 1857, the range is quite small, from MM 58 - 60.

While some writers including Timothy Jones have acknowledged Czerny as closest to Beethoven in providing a first-hand account of Beethoven's intentions,⁴⁹ George Barth has questioned Czerny's memory for *tempi* as three or four different sets of metronome markings are attributable to him. Barth points out that while Czerny stated about tempo that:

“...in these matters there can be only one perfectly correct mode of execution and we have tried according to the best of our remembrance to indicate the tempo as the most important part of proper interpretation, according to Beethoven's own view...”⁵⁰

In *Proper Performance (Uber den richtigen Vortrag)*, 1842, he reduced the tempo of the Grave from ♩=58 to ♩=92, slowing not only the tempo but also the note value of the pulse stating:

“The introduction is played so slowly and solemnly that we could only indicate the metronome mark with sixteenths. The chords all very weighty and in the 5th to 8th measure the left hand accompaniment very legato. The closing chromatic run very fast and light until the hold.”⁵¹

Barth raised two other points that cast doubt on the accuracy of Czerny's memory. His inaccurate memory in performance had on occasion aroused Beethoven's anger,⁵² and additionally, we know that Czerny saw fit to make changes to Beethoven's slurs in early editions. Barth concludes that Czerny was “much more a nineteenth century musician than

⁴⁹ See Timothy Jones, *Beethoven, the Moonlight and other Sonatas*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999: 47

⁵⁰ George Barth, *The Pianist as Orator*. Ithaca & London, Cornell University Press, 1992: 61

⁵¹ George Barth, *The Pianist as Orator*: 96

⁵² George Barth, *The Pianist as Orator*: 96

Beethoven.”⁵³ It is possible that as the nineteenth century approach to slurring and tempo was consolidated, Czerny’s memory for Beethoven’s intentions became coloured.

Modern performance editions include further *tempi* suggestions. There is considerable concurrence between Arrau’s edition for Peters in 1973 and Badura Skoda’s recommendations.

Figure 2 – Claudio Arrau’s tempo suggestions for Beethoven Sonata in C minor, op. 13

Grave - ♩ = 96	Allegro di molto e con brio ♩ = 152	Adagio cantabile - ♩ = 60	Allegro - ♩ = 100
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Paul Badura-Skoda suggests the following tempi in his commentary to the Czerny’s *On the Proper Performance of all Beethoven’s Works for the Piano*:⁵⁴

Figure 3 – Paul Badura-Skoda’s tempo suggestions for Beethoven *Sonata in C minor*, op. 13

Grave - ♩ = 50	Allegro di molto e con brio ♩ = 152	Adagio cantabile - ♩ = 60	Allegro - ♩ = 104
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While the approach to musical details is quite varied, recordings of work by performers from several generations of music recording history reflect fairly similar ranges in metronome readings. The following is merely a sample.

⁵³ Barth, 103

⁵⁴ Czerny, Carl. *On the Proper Performance of all Beethoven’s Works for the Piano*. Chapters 2 and 3 of *The Art of Playing the Ancient and Modern Piano Forte Works*. Facsimile, edited by Paul Badura-Skoda, Vienna: Universal, 1970: 2.

Figure 4 – Sampling performers’ tempi in Op. 13

Pianist	Grave	<i>Allegro di molto e con brio</i>	Adagio cantabile	Allegro
Annie Fischer ⁵⁵	♩ = 96	♩ = 80	♩ = 60	♩ = 100
Daniel Barenboim ⁵⁶	♩ = MM = c. 84.	♩ = MM c.84	♩ = MM = c.60	♩ = c. 100
Andras Schiff ⁵⁷	♩ = MM c. 96	♩ = MM. c.76-80	♩ = MM = 66	♩ = MM =96
Tom Beghin ⁵⁸	♩ = MM = 96.	♩ = 84 approx.	♩ = MM = c.60	♩ = MM = c. 100

Striking differences occur in respect to *rubato*, rhythmic interpretation⁵⁹ and the interpretation of structure. Notes on Beethoven’s playing from Ferdinand Ries, Beethoven’s best pupil are of interest in respect to rhythmic freedom:

In general, Beethoven played his compositions very moodily, but he did remain for the most part strictly in tempo, pushing the tempo only on rare occasions. Now and again he would hold the tempo back during a *crescendo* with *ritardando* which had a very beautiful and most striking effect.”⁶⁰

Consideration of the structure and repeats in the 1st movement of Op. 13 has occasioned voluminous discussion from scholars and performers. Some recurring themes are i) should the repeat in the first movement should be from the opening Grave or the Allegro?⁶¹ ii) with

⁵⁵ Annie Fischer: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hg-xF6oYJ3g> Accessed May 8, 2011

Fischer’s reading of the work is very eloquent and quite free.

⁵⁶ Daniel Barenboim, Beethoven “Pathétique” Sonata <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mp6-bLEgcw> Accessed May 8, 2011.

⁵⁷ Andras Schiff discusses the Beethoven Sonatas, <http://music.guardian.co.uk/classical/page/0.,1943867,00.html>. Accessed April 8, 2011.

⁵⁸ *Ludwig van Beethoven: The Complete Piano Sonatas on Period Instruments*. Claves Records CD 50-9707/10. Op. 13 is performed by Tom Beghin.

⁵⁹ The dotted rhythms of the opening are a case in point. Some performers choose to double dot, suggesting the French Overture style, others including Badura-Skoda advise that this is not a Baroque work.

⁶⁰ Wegeler, Franz, Ferdinand Ries. *Remembering Beethoven: the Biographical notes of Franz Wegeler and Ferdinand Ries*. Arlington: Great Ocean Publishers, 1987: 61.

⁶¹ Heibert, Elfrieda. 1986. “Beethoven’s *Pathétique* Sonata: Should the *Grave* be repeated?” *Piano Quarterly* 133: 33-37.

material from the opening returning at the beginning of the development and also before the coda, should the Grave be considered an introduction or the main material of the movement?

iii) How does the structure of the first movement relate to concepts of sonata form?

Both Rudolph Serkin and Andras Schiff choose to take the repeat in the first movement from the opening of the work however the consensus is that the traditional way is more satisfactory. The first print by Hoffmeister shows the repeat from the *Allegro* as is customarily performed. Canadian pianist, Robert Silverman has commented regarding the choice to repeat from the opening of the piece that:

...the overwhelming momentum of the *Allegro* suffers by the resulting interruption, and the devastating return to the introduction in G minor at the outset of the Development is completely lost.⁶²

Recalling material from a slow introduction is a hallmark of Beethoven's style in his late work but the idea first appeared as early as the first movement of the *Piano Sonata in F minor*, WoO 47, no. 2 composed when Beethoven was about twelve.⁶³ In the *Pathétique*, structural surprise and the thwarting of expectation invite hearing the musical unfolding in terms of eighteenth century concepts rather than according to any normative sonata principle.⁶⁴ Noting the structural ambiguities of the middle section of the exposition of the first movement, which cannot be neatly described in conventional terms, Carl Dahlhaus stated that:

...from the transition, with its modulation and sequential working (bar 36), to the closing group which is at first cadential, and then reverts to the 1st subject (bar 114) are formally ambiguous. Measures 51-88, which modulate from the mediant minor, E flat minor to the relative major, E flat major can be interpreted as either a lyrical episode or the 2nd subject; and bars 89-113, while they are a tonally closed passage in the relative major, present

⁶² Robert Silverman notes to Beethoven Sonatas,
http://musiconmain.ca/uploads/Robert_Silverman_32_Beethoven_Notes.pdf
Accessed May 8, 2011

⁶³ Wayne Senner, Ed., Trans. *The Critical Reception of Beethoven's Composition by His German Contemporaries*. Vol. 1. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 149.

⁶⁴ See the work of Hepokoski and Darcy.

themselves motivically as a ‘display episode’ of an emotionally charged character. It could be argued that the E-flat minor episode is the 2nd subject because, although it modulates, at least it returns to the initial key towards the end, at measure (76-9); and if it is not the second subject, then the movement lacks the continuation of the 2nd subject which is one of the normal components of a Beethovenian 5-part exposition.⁶⁵

In his recent book, *Beethoven*, William Kinderman has given one of the most lucid (and detailed) accounts of how the “Pathétique” unfolds according to Schiller’s concept of pathos, with the tensions and contrasts of the topic of the “pathetic” worked out structurally. He states:

More germane to the *Sonate Pathétique* is Schiller’s basic concept of tragic pathos as a resistance to suffering...the development of musical tension seems to convey an existential conflict encoded in the very structure of the sound.⁶⁶

Applying and integrating the findings of musical scholarship can pave the way for constant renewal of interpretative ideas, both for teachers and performers. Through scholarship, we have the opportunity to review and question all aspects of a work we think we “know” and to develop new and lively readings of iconic works.

⁶⁵Carl Dahlhaus, *Ludwig van Beethoven: Approaches to his Music*, trans. Mary Whittall, Oxford: Clarendon, 1991: 104-105.

⁶⁶William Kinderman, *Beethoven*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009: 46-7.

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