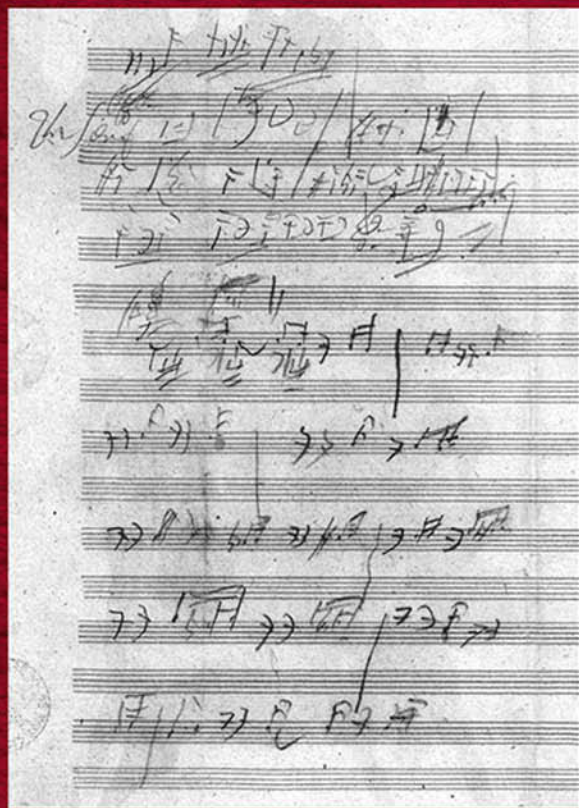




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Barry Cooper is Professor of Music at the University of Manchester. He has a wide range of research interests from medieval to 19th-century music, notably on English Baroque music and the music of Beethoven and his contemporaries. A world authority on Beethoven, his books on the composer include *Beethoven and the Creative Process* (1990; 2nd edn, 1992), *Beethoven's Folksong Settings* (1994), *Beethoven* (The Master Musicians, 2000; 2nd edn, 2008) and *Beethoven: An Extraordinary Life* (2013). He is also the General Editor and co-author of *The Beethoven Compendium* (1991; 2nd edn, 1996). His scholarly performing edition of *Beethoven's 35 Piano Sonatas* (London: ABRSM, 2007) won the award 'Best Classical Publication' of the year from the Music Industries Association.

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Contents

<i>List of music examples</i>	vi
<i>List of tables</i>	ix
<i>Abbreviations</i>	x
<i>Preface and acknowledgements</i>	xii
1 Approaching Beethoven's piano sonatas	1
2 The Bonn sonatas	15
3 The Opus 2 sonatas and Haydn	27
4 The sonatas of 1796–97	42
5 The sonatas of 1798–1800	57
6 New century, new approaches	76
7 A 'new path'?	99
8 The middle period opens up	117
9 A Clementi commission	140
10 Moving into the late period	153
11 The last three sonatas	177
<i>Bibliography</i>	207
<i>Index of original sources</i>	215
<i>Index of Beethoven's works</i>	219
<i>General index</i>	223

Music examples

2.1	WoO 47 No. 3.I, bars 31–2	20
2.2	WoO 47 No. 2.II, bars 53–7	20
2.3	WoO 47 No. 2.I, bars 8–9	21
2.4	WoO 47 No. 1.I, bars 1–2	21
2.5	WoO 47 No. 1.II, bars 53–4: (a) printed version; (b) revised version	22
2.6	Bars 1–6 of sketch for abandoned sonata in E minor (Bonn, Beethoven-Haus, Wegeler Collection W 3, f. 1r)	24
2.7	Bars 1–13 of sketch for abandoned sonata in E flat (Bonn, Beethoven-Haus, Wegeler Collection, W 3, f. 2v)	24
3.1	Sketch for Op. 2 No. 1.I (from N-II, p. 565)	29
3.2	(a) WoO 36 No. 3.II, bars 1–2; (b) Sketch for Op. 2 No. 1.I (from N-II, p. 564)	30
3.3	Sketch for Op. 2 No. 2 (Bsb, Autograph 28, f. 25r)	33
3.4	Op. 2 No. 3.I, bars 27–31	33
3.5	Early sketch for Op. 2 No. 3.I (Bsb, Autograph 28, f. 21r)	34
3.6	WoO 36 No. 3.I, opening	34
3.7	Op. 2 No. 3.I, opening	34
4.1	Early sketch for Op. 10 No. 1.II (Bsb, Autograph 28, f. 24r)	47
4.2	Alternative to Example 4.1 (Bsb, Autograph 28, f. 24r)	47
4.3	Sketch for theme of WoO 52 (Bsb, Autograph 28, f. 24r)	48
4.4	Sketch probably for early finale for Op. 10 No. 1 (Bsb, Autograph 28, f. 24v)	49
4.5	Sketch for Op. 49 No. 2.I. (Lbl, Add. 29801, f. 106r)	50
4.6	Sketch for Op. 7.III (Lbl, Add. 29801, f. 58v)	52
4.7	Sketch for Op. 10 No. 3.I (Lbl, Add. 29801, f. 102v)	53
4.8	Sketch for Op. 10 No. 3.II (Lbl, Add. 29801, f. 157r)	54
4.9	Op. 10 No. 3.II, bars 41–2	54
5.1	Sketch for ‘Allegretto’ (Lbl, Add. 29801, f. 101v)	57
5.2	Sketch for violin work? (Lbl, Add. 29801, f. 66r)	58
5.3	Preliminary idea for Op. 13.I? (Lbl, Add. 29801, f. 117r)	59
5.4	Sketch for Op. 13.I (Lbl, Add. 29801, f. 48r)	60
5.5	Embryonic Sonata in E flat (Lbl, Add. 29801, f. 149v)	62
5.6	Sketch for Op. 14 No. 1.III (Lbl, Add. 29801, f. 121r)	66

5.7	Sketch for Op. 14 No. 1.III (Lbl, Add. 29801, f. 121v)	66
5.8	Sketch for Sonata in D ('Summer 1800', f. 18v)	68
5.9	Sketch for Sonata in A, finale? (Pn, Ms 71)	68
5.10	Sketch for Sonata in A, 'Alla Marcia' (Pn, Ms 71)	69
5.11	Sketch for Op. 22.I (Pn, Ms 71)	69
5.12	Sketch for Op. 22.IV ('Summer 1800', f. 32v)	71
5.13	Op. 22.IV, bar 59 (first edition)	73
6.1	Trio sketch for Op. 26 (Bsb, Landsberg 7, p. 180)	79
6.2	Finale sketch for Op. 26 (Bsb, Landsberg 7, p. 56)	80
6.3	Cramer, Sonata Op. 6 No. 1, finale	81
6.4	(a) Sketch for <i>Prometheus</i> (Bsb, Landsberg 7, p. 103); (b) <i>Prometheus</i> , No. 10, bar 22; (c) Sonata Op. 27 No. 1, bars 36–8	84
6.5	Isolated sketch in B minor (Lbl, Add. 29801, f. 139r)	85
6.6	Sonata Op. 27 No. 2, bars 15–19	85
6.7	Sonata Op. 27 No. 2, early version of bars 55–7 (BNba, BH 60)	86
6.8	Sketch for Op. 27 No. 2.III (BNba, HCB Mh 66, f. 1r)	87
6.9	Unused sketch for Sonata in D (BNba, HCB Mh 68)	90
6.10	Sonata Op. 28, early version of bars 161–2 and repeat of 1–2	93
6.11	Sonata Op. 27 No. 2.III, early version of bars 38–9	94
6.12	Sonata Op. 27 No. 2.III, final version of bars 38–9	94
6.13	Sonata Op. 26.IV: (a) bars 5–6; (b) bars 19–20	95
7.1	Quartet sketch preceding Op. 31 (Wgm, A 34, f. 88r)	101
7.2	Slow-movement sketch for Op. 31 No. 1 (Wgm, A 34, f. 92v)	103
7.3	Sketch for second sonata for Op. 31 (Wgm, A 34, f. 93r)	104
7.4	Op. 31 No. 3.II, bars 50–1	105
7.5	Sketch in A minor for second sonata for Op. 31 (Wgm, A 34, f. 95r)	105
7.6	Sketch in D minor for second sonata for Op. 31 (Wgm, A 34, f. 90v)	107
7.7	Sketch for Op. 31 No. 3.II (Mcm, F. 155 No. 1, f. 5r)	109
7.8	Later sketch for Op. 31 No. 3.II (Mcm, F. 155 No. 1, f. 5r)	109
7.9	Op. 31 No. 1, four inserted bars in Nägeli edition	111
7.10	Op. 31 No. 1, bars 1–2, Cappi edition	112
7.11	Op. 31 No. 3, bar 16, Clementi edition	114
8.1	Preliminary sketch for Op. 53 (Kj, Landsberg 6, p. 119)	119
8.2	(a) First sketch for Op. 53.I, second subject (Kj, Landsberg 6, p. 120); (b) First sketch for Andante (ibid., p. 121); (c) Later sketch for Andante (ibid.); (d) Later sketch for Op. 53.I, second subject (ibid., p. 122); (e) Op. 53.I, second subject, final version (bars 35–8)	121–122
8.3	(a) Sketch for Op. 53 finale (Kj, Landsberg 6, p. 126); (b) Sketch for Op. 53.I, bars 136–9 (ibid., p. 127)	122
8.4	Opening bars of WoO 56, 1803–04 version (Pn, Ms 29)	123
8.5	Sketch for opening of Op. 54 (Bsb, Mendelssohn 15, p. 8)	127

8.6	Sketch for accompanying motif in <i>Fidelio</i> (Bsb, Mendelssohn 15, p. 22)	128
8.7	Early sketch apparently for finale of Op. 57 (Meyer leaf)	129
8.8	Sketch for Op. 57.I (Bsb, Mendelssohn 15, p. 192)	130
8.9	Op. 57.III, bar 352 (published version)	136
9.1	Preliminary sketch for Op. 79 (Bsb, Landsberg 5, p. 75)	143
9.2	Preliminary sketch for Op. 81a.III (Bsb, Landsberg 5, p. 86)	144
9.3	Op. 81a.III, bars 9–10: (a) early version (BNba, NE 274); (b) published version	145
9.4	Early sketch for Op. 79 (Bsb, Landsberg 5, p. 97)	147
9.5	Op. 79.I, bars 199–201: (a) Clementi version; (b) final version	149
9.6	Op. 78.II, bars 79–81: (a) Clementi version; (b) final version	150
10.1	Preliminary sketch for Op. 90.II (from N-II, p. 299)	154
10.2	(a) Sketch for Op. 90.II (Bsb, Landsberg 12, p. 30); (b) Op. 90.II, bars 41–8	156
10.3	Preliminary sketch for Op. 101.II (PRu, Scheide MA130, p. 74)	161
10.4	Sketch for Op. 101.III (Bsb, Autograph 11/1, f. 3v)	163
10.5	Sketch for Op. 101.III (Kj, Mendelssohn 2, p. 69)	163
10.6	Sketch for Op. 106.II (Wgm, A 45, f. 25, from N-II, pp. 131–2)	168
10.7	Sketch for Op. 106.IV (Bsb, Landsberg 9, p. 1)	170
11.1	Sketch for abandoned F minor movement (Bsb, Grasnick 20b, f. 3r)	178
11.2	Early sketch for Op. 109.II (Bsb, Artaria 195, p. 35)	182
11.3	Op. 109.III, bar 110: (a) autograph score; (b) original edition	186
11.4	(a) and (b) Early sketches for Op. 110.III (Bsb, Artaria 197, p. 65)	188
11.5	Sketch for reprise of <i>minore</i> section of Op. 110.II ('Late 1821', p. 20: Pn, Ms 51/3B, recto)	190
11.6	Sketch for diminution of fugue theme of Op. 110.III ('Late 1821', p. 21: Pn, Ms 80, f. 1r)	192
11.7	Sketch for sonata to follow Op. 110 ('Paris Ms 51', p. 4: Pn Ms 51/5, verso)	194
11.8	Early sketch for Op. 111.II (Bsb, Artaria 197, p. 79)	195

Tables

1.1	Principal sketch sources for Beethoven's piano sonatas	7
3.1	Comparison of two drafts and final version of exposition of Op. 2 No. 1	31
4.1	Drafts for bars 77–117 of Op. 10/2.I on f. 101r of 'Kafka'	52
5.1	Drafts for exposition of Op. 14 No. 1	64
6.1	Sketches for Op. 26 in Landsberg 7	77

Abbreviations

Literature

- A- Letter no. in: Emily Anderson, tr. and ed., *The Letters of Beethoven*, 3 vols (London: Macmillan, 1961).
- Alb- Letter no. in: Theodore Albrecht, tr. and ed., *Letters to Beethoven and Other Correspondence*, 3 vols (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1996).
- AMZ *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1798–1848).
- BB- Item no. in: Sieghard Brandenburg, ed., *Ludwig van Beethoven: Briefwechsel Gesamtausgabe*, 7 vols (Munich: Henle, 1996–98).
- JTW Johnson, Douglas, Alan Tyson and Robert Winter, *The Beethoven Sketchbooks*, ed. Douglas Johnson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).
- KC Kopitz, Klaus Martin, and Rainer Cadenbach, eds., *Beethoven aus der Sicht seiner Zeitgenossen*, 2 vols (Munich: Henle, 2009).
- KH Kinsky, Georg (completed Hans Halm), *Das Werk Beethovens* (Munich: Henle, 1955).
- LvBWV Dorf Müller, Kurt, Norbert Gertsch, and Julia Ronge, *Ludwig van Beethoven: Thematisch-bibliographisches Werkverzeichnis*, 2 vols (Munich: Henle, 2014).
- N-II Nottebohm, Gustav, *Zweite Beethoveniana* (Leipzig: Peters, 1887).
- TF Forbes, Elliot, ed., *Thayer's Life of Beethoven* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2nd edn, 1967).
- WR Wegeler, Franz, and Ferdinand Ries, *Remembering Beethoven* [originally published 1838 as *Biographische Notizen über Ludwig van Beethoven*], tr. Frederick Noonan (London: André Deutsch, 1988).

Library sigla

- BNba Bonn, Beethoven-Haus
- Bsb Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung
- Kj Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska

Lbl	London, British Library
Mcm	Moscow, Glinka Museum
Pn	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France
PRu	Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Library
Wc	Washington, Library of Congress
Wgm	Wien (Vienna), Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde
Wn	Wien (Vienna), Oesterreichische Nationalbibliothek

Other abbreviations

Hess	Item no. in James F. Green, tr. and ed., <i>The New Hess Catalog</i> (see Bibliography)
r	recto (right-hand page)
Unv	Item no. in LvBWV
v	verso (left-hand page)
WoO	Item no. in LvBWV

Pitch: *CC-BB*, *C-B*, *c-b*, *c1-b1*, *c2-b2*, *c3-b3*, *c4-f4*;
c1 = middle C

Preface and acknowledgements

This book arose as a kind of supplement to the edition of Beethoven's piano sonatas that I published in 2007 (*Beethoven: The 35 Piano Sonatas*, London: ABRSM) and that I have continued to update since then. The idea of exploring the genesis of each sonata in much more detail than was possible in the introductory material in that edition proved greatly attractive, and the aim has been to embody the fruits of this exploration in the present study. Since the book has limited room for music examples, readers may find it useful to have my edition or some other recent edition of the 35 sonatas at hand, so as to follow up references to particular passages in the sonatas.

I am greatly indebted to numerous people who have provided me with useful ideas, information or practical help over the many years that I have been studying these sonatas or during the time that I have been preparing this volume; without their assistance it could not possibly have been written. They include Theodore Albrecht, Otto Biba, the late Sieghard Brandenburg, Clive Brown, Erica Buurman, Jonathan Del Mar, Siân Derry, William Drabkin, Susan Kagan, the late Joseph Kerman, William Kinderman, Lewis Lockwood, Nicholas Marston, William Meredith, Marten Noorduyn, Julia Ronge, the late Alan Tyson, Katharina Uhde, Jos van der Zanden and David Ward. Also to be thanked are the staff of ABRSM Publishing, especially Philip Croydon and Jonathan Lee, for their assistance in the preparation of the above-mentioned edition; David Smith and Andrew Woolley, the series editors for the present book, for their many insightful suggestions; and the staff of libraries and institutions that have been so helpful in providing me with copies of source materials and/or working space for consulting original documents – in particular the Beethoven-Haus, Bonn; the Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies, San Jose; the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Vienna; the Musikabteilung of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz; the Oesterreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna; the British Library, London; and the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. Finally I must particularly thank my wife Susan for all her support, interest and practical help throughout the time I have been studying these sonatas and their background.

Barry Cooper
University of Manchester
June 2016

1 Approaching Beethoven's piano sonatas

Sonata biography

Beethoven's piano sonatas are such a major cornerstone of the pianist's repertoire that it is hardly surprising that numerous books have already been written devoted specifically to them. They are also discussed in a large number of shorter articles and in sections of books that cover a wider range of material. William S. Newman's *The Sonata in the Classic Era*, which devotes a substantial section to Beethoven's piano sonatas, notes that 'more than fifty authors have devoted whole books exclusively to Beethoven's piano sonatas or certain aspects of them'.¹ Some of these were described as 'comprehensive surveys', others as 'structural analyses' or 'random subjective comments'. Since Newman's book was first published, many more studies of Beethoven's piano sonatas have appeared. Noteworthy examples include those by Rudolph Reti, Denis Matthews, Jürgen Uhde, Kenneth Drake, Siegfried Mauser, Charles Rosen, Robert Taub, Dmitri Smirnov and Moo Kyoung Song.² There are also whole books devoted to the study of individual sonatas, including Op. 31 No. 2, Op. 57, Op. 106, Op. 109 and Op. 111.³

None of these many books, however, gives an adequate account of the processes by which Beethoven's piano sonatas were composed and published, except in a few cases for individual sonatas. Thus the present book aims to answer questions such as: Why did Beethoven write his sonatas when he did, and why did they turn out as they did? How did they start out and how did they reach their final form? These questions were addressed briefly in the present writer's edition of the 35 sonatas,⁴ where each sonata was provided with a short historical introduction. But these introductions, which were on average about a single page each, merely served to highlight the absence of more detailed investigation that covered the entire corpus. A much more extensive survey would be needed than could be accommodated within the commentaries of a performing edition.

Seeking links between the notes or symbols found in the musical texts of the sonatas, and the environment that brought them about, is hazardous. It is well-nigh impossible to forge convincing connections between life in Beethoven's day and individual passages within these sonatas, or even between his personal life and such passages, apart from in one or two very exceptional situations (notably

2 *Approaching Beethoven's piano sonatas*

his 'Lebewohl' movement addressed as a farewell to Archduke Rudolph in the Sonata Op. 81a). Yet biographical and musical connections can be found very clearly at the interface between the work and its historical context, when one examines the manuscripts on which the sonatas were first written down, the publishing history of their original editions, and other documents surrounding their creation, such as correspondence with patrons and publishers. It is this material that forms the substance on which the present account is based. The result is not a biography of the composer (though biographical elements are often integrated into the narrative) but more a biography of the sonatas themselves, from the moment when the written record of a sonata begins, with brief ideas in the form of preliminary sketches, or even just a note of a commission, through its growth as revealed in the advanced sketch record and the writing out of the final score, right up to its final printed form. The written record is often tantalizingly incomplete, with important documents missing, as with any biography; but enough survives for many new insights to be obtainable. Such a biography should provide a clearer understanding of the subject, with each sonata or group of sonatas observed through a historical lens that is so often absent in other accounts of these works. As with most biographies, the order in which events unfolded provides the main guideline for the discussion, both of individual sonatas and the output as a whole.

Beethoven and the eighteenth-century keyboard sonata

The sonata as a genre emerged in Italy in the late sixteenth century, and initially the word simply denoted music to be played, as distinct from a cantata – music to be sung. Throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, sonatas were almost invariably composed for more than one instrument, but sonatas for solo keyboard instrument became established towards the middle of the eighteenth century by composers such as Domenico Alberti, Domenico Scarlatti and Baldassare Galuppi. These might have one, two or three movements and the titles of the works sometimes varied. In Germany the leading figure was Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, who from 1742 onwards published an important series of sets of keyboard sonatas. Beethoven may have become acquainted with some of these during his early years in Bonn, but there is no direct indication. In 1809 he wrote that he had only a few of C.P.E. Bach's keyboard works and expressed admiration for them; three times between then and 1812 he asked Breitkopf & Härtel to send him scores by the composer,⁵ though they seem not to have done so. Beethoven also apparently possessed a copy of a set of sonatas by C.P.E. Bach's brother Johann Christian,⁶ though it is uncertain when he acquired it, and he is not known to have expressed any admiration for this composer.

The main models for Beethoven's sonata composition appear to have been the sonatas of Haydn, Mozart and Clementi, and it is noteworthy that Beethoven seems to have singled out three composers who are still today regarded as the leading figures in this genre in the late eighteenth century. All of Mozart's keyboard sonatas are in three movements, as are most of Haydn's and Clementi's, with the pattern fast–slow–fast being the most common structure and therefore the

most likely to be followed by Beethoven, at least in the initial stages. Beethoven encountered the music of all three composers at an early age, for the music dealer Nikolaus Simrock in Bonn, a friend of Beethoven's father, possessed a large store of recent publications. From this collection he lent Beethoven's father, for Beethoven's use, 'all Haydn's keyboard works, much by Clementi and later by Mozart, of which the boy at the age of 8 could play much very well'.⁷ It is not difficult to find similarities between their sonatas and Beethoven's, although the extent of direct influence must remain a matter of conjecture.

The theoretical context for Beethoven's sonatas was provided by a number of writers. For performance issues such as fingering and ornamentation, he seems to have relied most on C.P.E. Bach's *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen*, which gives much useful advice on these subjects, as well as on figured bass.⁸ For aspects of harmony and counterpoint he consulted writings by Johann Philipp Kirnberger and Johann Mattheson,⁹ and later Johann Georg Albrechtsberger. More pertinent, however, is a discussion of 'Sonata' in Johann Georg Sulzer's *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* [General Theory of the Fine Arts], 1771–74. The article was apparently written by Johann Adolph Peter Schulz,¹⁰ and was probably read by Beethoven, perhaps at quite an early age. It asserts that there is no instrumental genre more capable than the sonata of depicting sentiments, and that the sonata can portray any and every character or emotion. The sonatas of C.P.E. Bach are singled out as outstanding models, and such compositions are deemed to require a combination of genius, knowledge and sensibility.

Heinrich Koch, developing some ideas from Sulzer's book, gives a detailed explanation of how someone might set about creating a composition, in Volume 2 of his *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition*, mentioning three different stages: plan, realization and elaboration.¹¹ The explanations here, however, would surely have seemed rather elementary to Beethoven by the time they were published in 1787. The concept of the sonata was also discussed briefly by Daniel Gottlob Türk in 1789. Echoing Schulz, he asserts that in no other genre is the composer so free to express sentiments and passions. 'The more a sonata has expression, the more one hears the composer speak in tones, the more the composer knows to avoid the commonplace, the more excellent is the sonata.'¹² Thus the sonata was widely perceived in the 1780s as the most elevated instrumental genre, with the possible exception of the symphony and concerto, and was therefore inevitably going to attract Beethoven's attention from an early stage. Theories of form, however, and particularly sonata form, were seriously under-developed in his earlier years, and he had to absorb the possibilities inherent in sonata form direct from the models of Haydn, Mozart and others.¹³ He even developed his own terminology for sonata form: in his sketches he used '1ter Theil' [first part] to denote the exposition, with the letters 'm.g.' (*mitte Gedanke* or middle idea) for the second subject; '2ter Theil' [second part] marked the beginning of the development section; 'd.c.' the start of the recapitulation, or any other type of reprise of the main subject; and 'Schluss', 'Ende' or 'Coda' to indicate the final section.

His aim seems always to have been to compose music at the highest artistic level. He expressed this explicitly later in life: 'I have always wished just to master

the art of music', and 'My supreme aim is that my art should be welcomed by the noblest and most cultured people.'¹⁴ In 1807 he wrote in like manner: 'I hope even in my early years to achieve the worth of a true artist.'¹⁵ Thus he would inevitably attempt to excel in the most advanced genres, where the 'commonplace' was to be avoided. During the 1790s he seems to have shared the prevailing view that the sonata was one of the most elevated genres, and he wrote quite a large number in fulfilment of his aims. By the end of 1802, however, he had already composed 23 piano sonatas and was looking for fresh and greater challenges. From that time onwards he wrote far fewer sonatas, and on several occasions expressed reservations about the genre. As early as 23 November 1802, apparently in response to a request from the publisher Johann André of Offenbach for a set of three sonatas, his brother Carl wrote on Beethoven's behalf: 'Should you want three piano sonatas ... you cannot receive these all at once, but one every five or six weeks, because my brother no longer bothers much with such trifles and writes only oratorios, operas etc.'¹⁶ Piano sonatas were now no longer an elevated genre but mere 'trifles', at least compared with operas and oratorios, and none were currently in progress, which is why it would take five or six weeks before one could be sent. It may well be that Beethoven's emotional crisis as reflected in the Heiligenstadt Testament of 6–10 October that year induced him to reassess his artistic direction, which included a turn away from sonatas. Certainly, having recently sold a set of three sonatas (Op. 31) to the Swiss publisher Nägeli, he was less than eager to compose another set so soon afterwards.

A similar attitude is evident in a letter to Breitkopf & Härtel in 1809: 'I am not keen on writing solo piano sonatas, but I promise you a few.'¹⁷ Around June 1818 he complained of having to scrawl for bread and money, to enable him to write a great work; and the following year he stated: 'It is hard to compose almost entirely for bread.'¹⁸ On both occasions the work in question was none other than the 'Hammerklavier' Sonata, which he evidently regarded as being on a lower plane than a great symphony or opera. Similarly, he complained in November 1821 that he could not attend to his *Missa solemnis* as he had to finish some 'Brot-Arbeiten' [potboilers].¹⁹ The 'potboilers' he was composing on this occasion were his last two piano sonatas, Opp. 110 and 111, regarded today as incomparable masterpieces. Whatever he thought of the genre in general, however, he always aimed for the highest standards in all his sonatas, and many are now considered among his finest works, including those he dismissed so readily in 1818 and 1821. All his piano sonatas received opus numbers (except the three written in Bonn), which he generally reserved for his more important works.

The 35 sonatas span almost his entire creative life, from 1783 to 1822,²⁰ and reflect his changing style perhaps more than any other genre. His output is often divided into three periods, and although his sonatas do not fit as well into such a clear pattern as, say, his string quartets, one can discern a dividing line before the 'Waldstein' Sonata of 1803–04, and again before Op. 101 of 1815–16, as has often been noted. The resulting three periods for the sonatas match those in other genres, with a significant sense of expansion of concept in the middle period, and increased sophistication and complexity in the third period. The three periods,

however, are very unequal in terms of numbers, with 23 sonatas in the first period, but only seven in the middle period and five in the late period. Nevertheless each sonata is completely different from any of the others, and develops his art in a new direction, and so the periodization could be divided some other way or abandoned altogether as too simplistic.

For Beethoven, each sonata was a unique work of art, and the art was embodied in the written musical text. Whereas in the eighteenth century it was common for performers to add ornamentation of various kinds, including trills and turns, connecting runs ('divisions'), and perhaps octave doubling, Beethoven was strongly resistant to this approach, which treated the written text more as a recipe for embellishment or adaptation than as a concrete artwork. Carl Czerny relates that in a performance of Beethoven's Quintet Op. 16 in 1816 he made many changes to add extra difficulties, and received a stinging rebuke from Beethoven, who wrote to him the next day, apologizing for his outburst but explaining: 'You must forgive this in an author who would rather have heard his work exactly as he wrote it.'²¹ Ferdinand Ries reports that even Beethoven himself only 'very rarely indeed' altered his written text with additions or embellishments.²² This concept of the written artwork was not completely new, for one can discern it in works such as Bach's *Das wohltemperirte Clavier* (which Beethoven knew as a child), where the musical text appears paramount, and any performance might seem a less-than-perfect realization. But such attitudes were rare until Beethoven's day. It is perhaps with Beethoven more than any earlier composer that one senses the primacy of the written text as the norm. In such circumstances the written text could be altered only to create an artistic improvement, with the new text then superseding the old. Such changes could, however, persist to a very late stage in the composition, and could theoretically have continued indefinitely. It was only the law of diminishing returns, plus the necessity to call a halt, publish the work and move on to the next one, that dissuaded Beethoven from making further refinements beyond a certain stage, in the knowledge that absolute perfection was unattainable.²³

This does not mean, however, that Beethoven accepted only one way of performing his sonatas, in which every detail was fixed. The written text could be interpreted in different ways to suit particular performance contexts and individual performers. The instrument being used, and the surrounding acoustic, might affect speed or articulation, and the degree of tempo flexibility and dynamic nuance were also matters more for the performer than the composer. But such adaptation does not actually alter the text itself – only what the performer adds to the text, which could vary along with the circumstances.

Sketching the sonatas

Before reaching the stage where further refinement was supererogatory, Beethoven invariably made numerous preparations for a sonata, in the form of rough drafts and sketches. The idea of making preliminary drafts and sketches was far from new, and was even the subject of an article in the above-mentioned

Allgemeine Theorie by Sulzer.²⁴ The article relates mainly to drafts for speeches and sketches for paintings, but the principles would equally have applied to a musical composition. Though these principles were already in existence, what was unprecedented was the extent and intensity of Beethoven's sketching of almost all his works: it is estimated that there are around 10,000 pages of his sketches altogether that still survive.²⁵ For most of the sonatas there are extensive sketches that have not yet been fully explored; and even where there have been detailed studies of them, the sketches have a habit of revealing fresh insights at each new investigation. Where few sketches survive for a sonata, or even none at all, one must presume that sketches have been lost, since sketches are known even for some of his most minor works.

Also lost irretrievably are any preliminary ideas tried out at the piano but not written down, and one must take into account the possible existence of such unwritten sketches, as well as those written but now lost, in attempting to trace the creation of individual sonatas. By all accounts Beethoven excelled in extemporization, and some of the best ideas that emerged during such sessions could well have been memorized or noted down and perhaps incorporated into later sonatas. That he sometimes operated in this way is implicit in an instruction sent to his pupil Archduke Rudolph in 1823:

Just continue to practise writing down briefly your ideas at the keyboard; for this you need a little table beside the keyboard; through this, not only is imagination strengthened, but one learns to pin down immediately even the most remote ideas.²⁶

This clearly reflects Beethoven's own *modus operandi*, and the table that he kept beside his piano is mentioned by several writers.²⁷ Thus a few of his ideas for sonatas probably emerged through chance discoveries at the keyboard during extemporization. Others were the result of more systematic trials of ideas specifically intended for a particular sonata. This type of approach to composition was observed by Ferdinand Ries in the case of the 'Appassionata' Sonata (see Chapter 8).

In his early years Beethoven wrote all his sketches on loose leaves of manuscript paper. Nearly all those that survive were gathered together into what are now two large collections of sketch leaves – the Kafka Miscellany and the Fischhof Miscellany.²⁸ From mid-1798 onwards, however, most of his sketches were written in manuscript books, acquired or stitched together specifically for the purpose. From 1815 he also used a series of pocket sketchbooks that ran concurrently with the series of desk sketchbooks. They were apparently used outdoors and are written almost entirely in pencil, whereas the desk sketchbooks are mainly in ink, though pencil appears increasingly often in later years. He also continued to use loose leaves at times, especially between the end of one desk sketchbook and the beginning of the next.

The pages within his sketchbooks have subsequently been numbered, but in some cases this applies only to the leaves or folios rather than individual sides. These sketchbooks, like the two early miscellanies, are mostly known by the

names of former owners (with an additional number if the owner possessed several books), though some are referred to by their date or manuscript number. The names adopted here for individual sketchbooks are generally those used in the magisterial study of them by Douglas Johnson, Alan Tyson and Robert Winter.²⁹ A summary list of the main sketch sources for the sonatas appears in Table 1.1; precise locations of the individual manuscripts are given in the discussions in the relevant chapters below.³⁰

Table 1.1 Principal sketch sources for Beethoven's piano sonatas

Up to Op. 14: Kafka and Fischhof Miscellanies
Op. 22: 'Summer 1800'
Op. 26, 27/1: Landsberg 7
Opp. 27/2, 28: Sauer
Op. 31/1–2: Kessler
Op. 31/3: Wielhorsky
Op. 53: Landsberg 6
Op. 54, 57: Mendelssohn 15
Opp. 78, 79: (largely lost)
Op. 81a: Landsberg 5
Op. 90: Dessauer
Op. 101: Scheide, Autograph 11/1, Paris Ms 78 / Ms 103
Op. 106: loose leaves
Op. 109: Wittgenstein, Artaria 195, BH 107
Op. 110: Artaria 197, 'Late 1821', Paris Ms 51
Op. 111: Artaria 201, 'Early 1822', Paris Ms 51

The sketches present many obstacles to detailed study, and as a result many have still not been published in transcription. One problem is their near-illegibility, with noteheads often placed only approximately. In places where the melody is recognizable, it is normally possible to guess the intended pitch, even where this is different from the apparent pitch in the sketch. With less familiar material, a combination of appearance and musical sense has to be applied, and the results are not always certain. In the examples in the present book the aim has been to transmit the notes that Beethoven is thought to have intended when he made the particular marks on the paper, but sometimes an element of guesswork is involved. Editorial additions are shown in the conventional manner by means of square brackets or dotted ties and barlines, but they have in general been kept to a minimum, and the version presented may not make complete sense rhythmically, where Beethoven omitted some symbols.

Another obstacle to sketch study has been Beethoven's tendency to sketch more than one work on the same page, and conversely to sketch a single work on several unrelated pages. Consecutive sketches for a work might even appear in different books, and so in many cases sketches from more than one source need to be assembled before being assessed. With the main series of sketchbooks from 1798 there is no clear indication of any overlap in the use of consecutive sketchbooks; but even then there can be chronological problems, since some of Beethoven's homemade sketchbooks were compiled from loose leaves, some of which had

already been partly filled. Thus Artaria 197, from 1821, includes a few sketches made as early as 1813. Conversely Landsberg 7, of 1800–01, contains a sketch for *Egmont* from 1810.³¹ A further difficulty is the wide dispersal of the sketch material after Beethoven's death. This applies not only to whole books but also to individual pages within a book, which in some cases were removed during the nineteenth century, perhaps to be presented to some friend or collector, or sold off individually. In the late twentieth century the efforts of Johnson, Tyson and Winter enabled the sketchbooks to be reassembled conceptually in something like their original state, but even then there are numerous uncertainties and missing leaves. Thus it is hardly surprising that past attempts to trace the genesis of the piano sonatas have largely been limited to individual cases, while discussions of the entire corpus, whether they are 'comprehensive surveys', 'structural analyses' or 'subjective comments', to use Newman's classification mentioned above, have tended to say little about the sketches.

The sketches most often show just the melodic outline of the right-hand part, though sometimes they show a fuller texture on two staves, especially in the sketches for the later sonatas, where two-stave sketching can be even more common than single-stave. Many of the sketches are only a few bars long, and can be classified as 'concept sketches' (initial ideas for a movement), developmental sketches (developing new ideas away from the initial concept), or variant sketches (alternatives to earlier sketches). Sometimes two sketches are linked by the word 'Vide' (Latin for 'see'), with 'Vi=' at the end of the first and '=de' at the beginning of the second. Other cross-reference signs are also sometimes found. Longer drafts often appear, especially in the sketches for the earlier works. Such drafts may cover up to half a movement or even occasionally a whole one, and are sometimes known as continuity drafts, where Beethoven attempts to connect together the ideas he had previously invented. A special though relatively rare type of sketch is a synopsis, whether of a whole work or just a movement, where he summarizes the main cornerstones as in the synopsis of a play. Such synopsis sketches often combine notes with words such as names of keys or movement titles, and are particularly revealing in the way they outline Beethoven's overall plans for a work.³²

Further evidence about the genesis of Beethoven's piano sonatas can be gleaned from autograph scores and corrected copies, which in many cases still survive. The autograph scores often contain interesting early versions of passages, as well as last-minute changes that are of considerable interest for the history of the works. After completing the autograph score, Beethoven sometimes arranged for it to be copied out by a professional copyist in preparation for publication, and he occasionally made further revisions while checking these through. Even when the manuscript (his own or the copyist's) had been sent to the publishers, changes were still possible, and several examples will be noted in the following chapters. The exact process by which the music was transmitted from manuscript to publication represents the final stage in the genesis of each sonata, and was by no means always as straightforward as one might imagine.

Although sketches and other preliminary work cannot directly indicate anything in a finished sonata that is not already there, except in rare cases where

they help resolve a textual issue (see Example 7.11 in Chapter 7 for an example of this), they can draw attention to hitherto unnoticed thematic or tonal connections or structural features, and enable us to see the work in a new light, where we can appreciate something of the compositional context that Beethoven himself experienced. Moreover, as Sieghard Brandenburg has observed, citing Carl Dahlhaus and Theodor Adorno, some might argue that one branch of music history is the history of the problem of composing, and that the hearing of a work should become in some senses a recreation of the composing process. If this is accepted, then it is 'almost criminal and unpardonable' if the relevant sources for this composing process, namely the sketches, are largely ignored.³³ Although much of the composing process was never written down, and some of what was written has been lost, the sketches offer numerous insights that would otherwise be unobtainable.

The final stage in the genesis of the sonatas was the preparation of the first editions. These editions, which all appeared during Beethoven's lifetime and generally not long after the relevant sonatas were composed, are of inestimable importance where the manuscript sources are lost, as is the case for all his early piano sonatas and some of the later ones.³⁴ They were generally proofread, probably more than once, and have fairly accurate texts; but there are inevitably occasional misprints and possible errors, and when the autograph manuscript survives it is generally easy to identify them. On the other hand, the latest revisions in the printed text might not appear in any manuscript, as noted above. An additional problem arises where Beethoven sent manuscripts to two different publishers, with the result that each edition has some authority. Trying to establish an ideal *urtext* in such cases is an impossible task. Even today there are occasional debates about which of the surviving authentic versions is superior, and different modern scholarly editions have slightly different readings. Thus in one sense the genesis of Beethoven's piano sonatas can never be complete.

Performance situations and instruments

Two other elements that amplify the context in which Beethoven's sonatas were created are the situations in which the sonatas were initially requested and performed, and the instruments that were available to him. Both elements potentially affected his approach to how he set about composing sonatas. Most of the earlier sonatas were commissioned by private patrons who would pay for exclusive use of them for six months or more (see Chapter 4), for their own entertainment and that of their friends, to be played either by Beethoven himself or some member of their family or other local pianist. Beethoven also sometimes played his sonatas on his own piano, especially when he was still putting the finishing touches to them, for Czerny reports that their friend Wenzel Krumpholz, a violinist, heard some of these performances and was able to play the themes to Czerny on the violin before the works had become known.³⁵ The main context for performances of the sonatas, however, was the numerous semi-private matinees and soirees run by the nobility. Few details survive for these, while private domestic

performances for individuals or by individuals, which must also have happened, have left almost no trace at all. Public piano recitals were unknown at the time; even public concerts were quite rare in Vienna (where Beethoven settled in 1792), and did not normally include a piano sonata.

There are several reports of Beethoven playing a sonata of his at music meetings. In the 1790s musical performances took place every Friday morning at Prince Lichnowsky's, and on one such occasion Beethoven first played for Haydn the three sonatas (Op. 2) that he dedicated to him.³⁶ On another occasion he played the Sonata Op. 31 No. 2 at a soiree at Count Browne's, but with so many mistakes that a princess in the audience playfully rapped him on the head several times.³⁷ Czerny tells us that Beethoven often played the slow movement of the Sonata in D (Op. 28) and the *Andante favori* (WoO 57), which was the original slow movement of the 'Waldstein' Sonata; and Czerny heard him play the two sonatas of Op. 14 in 1801 or 1802, not long after their publication.³⁸ On another occasion Beethoven played the first movement of the 'Moonlight' Sonata in a room draped in black, at the funeral of a departed friend.³⁹ In later life he is reported to have played Op. 101 very well at a music meeting, but to have confessed afterwards that because of his deafness he had not heard a single note.⁴⁰ These are just a few known occasions when he performed a sonata in private, and there were doubtless many more that have not been recorded. There are also references to other performers such as Baroness Dorothea Ertmann playing Beethoven's sonatas in private circles.⁴¹

Public performances of a sonata were far fewer, though not quite as rare as some have suggested. In 1798 Beethoven gave a concert in Prague where he played the second and fourth movements from his Sonata Op. 2 No. 2, and he played just the finale at another concert there.⁴² In January 1801 he performed a 'grand sonata' of his, probably Op. 22 (since this was newly written), at a charity concert for wounded soldiers, in the Grosse Redoutensaal in Vienna.⁴³ Another public performance was given by Stainer von Felsburg in February 1816, at which he played a 'new' piano sonata by Beethoven, presumably Op. 90, which had been published the previous June but evidently not yet heard in public.⁴⁴ Such performances, however, whether by Beethoven or someone else, were very much the exception.⁴⁵

In his early years keyboard sonatas might be played on harpsichord, clavi-chord or early piano (often known today as a *fortepiano*). His first set of sonatas, WoO 47, was designated as being for 'Klavier', with the first one headed 'Cembalo solo'. Neither 'Klavier' nor 'Cembalo' determined precisely what instrument should be used, however, since both terms were often applied loosely to different types of keyboard instrument. His early Viennese sonata publications, Opp. 2, 7, 10 and 13, all had French title pages that specified 'clavecin ou piano-forte', and the same applied to Op. 26, while Op. 27 used the Italian 'clavicembalo o piano-forte'. His later sonatas, however, specified just 'piano-forte' (apart from those that used the German 'Hammerklavier'), as did Opp. 14 and 22. In the case of the Viennese sonatas it seems unlikely that Beethoven had a harpsichord in mind, since so many effects such as crescendos and *sforzando* marks would not work well on them, and 'clavecin', implying harpsichord, was evidently little

more than a sales device by the publisher. But the earliest set could be accommodated on harpsichord or clavichord with little loss of effect.

There has been much debate about the different types of pianoforte (fortepiano) that were available to Beethoven, and how far he exploited them.⁴⁶ In particular, attempts have been made to link stylistic changes to his acquisition of an Erard piano in 1803 and a Broadwood piano in 1818, but such attempts have had limited success. Even extensions to the compass do not exactly coincide with these pianos: the Erard had a compass up to *c*4 (three octaves above middle C), but Beethoven's first sonata after acquiring it, the 'Waldstein', never goes beyond *a*3. Conversely he used a low E (*EE*) in Op. 101 in 1816, well before he acquired the Broadwood that had this note. It must be remembered that his sonatas were not written for his own private domestic use but for his sponsor and for the public at large, and might be played on a great variety of instruments. Pianos then were much more variable than modern ones, and there were major differences between French, English and Viennese types. Even Viennese pianos varied somewhat between different makers and different dates. Thus any attempt to exploit very specific sonorities of a particular type of piano would founder if the sonata were played on a different one. He was well aware of the variety available, and crafted his sonatas so that they would suit most or all instruments (which is one reason why they are still so effective on modern pianos).

A useful analogy is his Piano Trio, Op. 11, where the main melodic instrument is either a clarinet or a violin. Almost throughout the work, the part is designed without effects that work on only one of the two instruments; thus Beethoven avoided very low notes in the chalumeau register of the clarinet, and also pizzicato and double-stop effects that he used in other string music but would be impossible on a clarinet. The result was therefore suitable for either instrument. A similar situation occurs with his variations for flute or violin, Opp. 105 and 107. The success of these works depended on such elements as motivic argument, tonal relationships and structure, rather than very precise sonorities, and the same applies to his piano sonatas. There are, of course, occasional special effects such as the use of pedals, including the gradual change from *una corda* to *tre corde* in his late sonatas, and these would be less successful on certain instruments. But such situations are very much the exception. Thus the differences between the different types of piano did not significantly affect the creation of the sonatas. This is in contrast to Daniel Steibelt, who is noted for his contest with Beethoven in 1800. He reportedly played only English pianos, for which he specifically intended his works at one stage.⁴⁷

These, then, were the immediate circumstances in which Beethoven wrote his piano sonatas. Although most were composed for a specific sponsor, he also had his eye on the wider public and indeed posterity – far more than did most composers of the time – and he aimed to create monuments of musical art that could benefit 'the noblest and most cultured people' of all times. This desire led to the need for artistic progress and exceptional levels of excellence, which necessitated the extensive sketching that allows us some glimpses into how the sonatas were conceived and developed, and why they eventually emerged in the form that they did.