

“Die Abwesenheit”

Andante espressivo. (♩ = 72)

In gehender Bewegung, doch mit Ausdruck.

a) This is the first instance in which Beethoven, to express his intention more clearly, has recourse to German terms as tempo-marks. In his last works he returns to the Italian terminology, concerning the meaning of which musicians are far more nearly agreed to this day. The direction “flowing movement, *but* with expression” implies that very many passages should take on a languishing, adagio-like character, one of them being the reminiscence (meas. 2) of the introduction to the first movement:  Consequently, the tempo must neither drag, nor fall into

the other oft-censured extreme of rigidity. — A player who finds it difficult to stretch the first tenth and sustain it while the intermediate fingers are in action, should take the E $\flat$ (and the A $\flat$ in the fifth meas.) with the right hand.

b) The technical name given by Ph. Em. Bach to this (now rare) grace is “Anschlag”; it is of course treated like all other graces, i. e., within its principal note’s time-value, and therefore played: 

Quieto.

p cantabile.

cresc.

Poco slentando.

p

a) *grazioso.*

b) *cresc.*

accel. al

Tempo I.

rit.

dimin.

dimin.

c) *a tempo.*

dimin.

p

mf

cresc.

sostenuto.

a) A retardation is decidedly necessary here, to prevent these graceful melismas from sounding frivolous.

b) The faithful performance of this measure according to the marking is impossible, for the reason, that it would cause an "ungrammatic" accentuation of the G on the weak beat. The Editor recommends the alteration:



in which the intensification perhaps aimed at by the Author (in contrast to the turn two measures earlier) is brought out.

c) The pause indicated here by the Editor (it may assume the length of an eighth-rest) is absolutely essential in order that the ear may feel the "anacoluthon" arising from the discontinuity of the two measures, the second of which conveys an interjection of pain which must be played with an abrupt *forte*

A counterpart to this is found in the sixth measure before the last in the movement, its abruptness being, however, materially mitigated by the regular melodic descent of the soprano $D^{\flat 2}-C^2-B^{\flat 1}$, which is not the case here.

poco ritard. cresc.

a tempo. p cantabile. cresc.

p poco rall. grazioso. ritard. al cresc.

Tempo I. sf dimin. f dimin. rit.

a) p pp semplice. poco rall. attacca subito.

a) These last six measures of transition to the Finale rank among the most ingenious and emotional of the composer's "fancies". The grief of the sorrower at the absence of the loved one has been uttered in a plaintive monologue, then a moment of unconsciousness supervenes, wherewith is interwoven a mute, subtle premonition of the other's near return. It is as if one could see the lonely one wandering with eyes fixed on the ground, when the features are suddenly illumined; a lifting of the eyes, an exclamation of ecstasy, an impatient hastening to meet the new-found one! Another composer might perhaps paint with more striking and variegated colors, but certainly not more plastically, warmly and delicately. In this last movement the monologue is supplanted by one of the most ecstatic of musical dialogues, rivalled only by that in Richard Wagner's "Tristan und Isolde" (Act II, scene 2). We recommend the poem and music of this scene for comparative study, from which many a useful application for the performance of this sonata can be gained. Such, at least, has been the Editor's personal experience. From the study of this same scene, singers will derive equal benefit for the delivery of the love-duet in Act II of Beethoven's "Fidelio".