

Trio

for Piano, Flute, and Bassoon

WoO 37

Written in Bonn, likely in 1786

Composed by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)

Wind solo parts edited by Klaus Smedegaard Bjerre 2015

After the editions of solo pieces by Saint-Saëns, Massenet, Elgar, and Nielsen allowing for performances by other instruments than the original solo instrument this project now returns to the young Beethoven. The editions of his duets for clarinet and bassoon were met with an interest well deserved by their sweet music. The music here still is sweet and the bassoon still is involved, but then the music is technically more demanding, especially the flute part, and the involvement of the piano expands the tonal scope.

Exactly the involvement of the piano influences the policy behind this edition. In the Beethoven duet editions I wrote out the full notation of many of the period performance indications like grace notes and appoggiaturas. The present piano part is so demanding that I assume a good deal of period acquaintance from the involved pianists. The actual interpretations of period practices are not cut in stone and they involve personal decisions by the performers. I rather will leave it to the performers to develop a unified performance than introduce potential clashes between the pianists' interpretations and my interpretations of the wind parts. Yet I will not hide that I lean toward most of the grace notes, especially those written as eighth-notes, being appoggiaturas played on the beat. One prominent sample is in bar #205 of the flute part. Here the grace note C# and the main note D should be played as straight and slurred eighths with an accent on the C#.

The source of this project, also the playing material for the pianist, is the piano score found, for free, at IMSLP:

<http://tinyurl.com/WoO37>

This page holds 3 different uploads of this score. I chose the one placed uppermost of these 3 for the utterly pragmatic reason that it is scanned in high resolution, so that the beams of the 32nd and the 64th notes stand out separately.

This source indicates harpsichord for the keyboard part, which may be supported by some unisons and octaves between the flute and the keyboardist's right hand. With a performance by a flute, a bassoon, and a modern grand piano, the latter maybe will tend to overshadow the flute in the lower range unisons, which hardly would have been Beethoven's intention. The keyboard often plays in thirds or tenths with the bassoon, but I don't remember seeing any unison passages between keyboard and bassoon.

Of course this edition also was inspired by repeated calls (on TubeNet) for repertory for flute or violin with low brass. If the high demands of technical abilities are met, performances by flute or violin together with piano and euphonium are immediately possible. Tubas of any pitch will have to take the bassoon part down an octave, which changes the chord inversions in some places where the bassoon does not play the formal bass notes. Purists wouldn't employ brass instruments in this music anyway, but I think this music may work with a tuba also. Especially if the pitches of the piano and of the tuba are so well matched that difference notes will occur.

If the bassoon part is taken down an octave, it also is possible to take the flute part down an octave. Of course the soundscape will differ very much from that of Beethoven's original instrumentation. Still this editor finds such low wind constellations very relevant pedagogical tools for instrumentalists with very little repertory from this period, when they want to get a first hand experience with the music of this era. There are relevant versions for violin, viola, cello, and double bass plus for a diversity of brasses and woodwinds. All are compatible as long as the flute part in an 8-bassa version isn't combined with the bassoon part in a version playing in the original octave. I have looked at the possibility of making versions for 2 bassoons or for 2 euphoniums, but I saw no chance getting to a useful solution without changing the relative octaves within each of the wind parts, maybe even redistributing passages between the wind parts. I am not ready to do this at the present time.

