

# Trio

## for 2 Oboes & English Horn

### Opus 87

#### Written in Wien 1794

**Composed by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)**

**Edited by Klaus Smedegaard Bjerre 2015**

I have worked, on & off, with this trio since 5 or 6 years. I uploaded a few versions 5 years ago, but the several versions planned for didn't materialize because I hadn't found a good way to handle the important graphic aspects of doing many transpositions. The transpositions themselves are very easily done with modern computing, but making these transposed versions look reasonably good is quite a different matter. More on the graphic aspects in an addendum to this introduction.

In the context of my first upload I wrote this: What I found was formally a full symphony in 4 movements. Very well written. Only the last passages of the Menuetto and of the Presto are very formalistic without much interesting music. I have a suspicion that Ludwig had accepted an order for 30 minutes of music and hence stretched the endings a bit just to fill the order.

However this trio was written before the first symphony, and the assigned opus # is misleadingly high. While preparing this introduction, I found a very good text on this opus here:

<http://www.laphil.com/philpedia/music/trio-for-two-oboes-and-english-horn-op-87-ludwig-van-beethoven>

The existence of many arrangements was new to me, as I have seen no references to printed versions. I have heard a tuba version of the last movement on YouTube, but since I downloaded my source at IMSLP some have been uploaded there. As I get it, at least some of my versions are new to the respective instrument communities.

After completing a project about the LvB-WoO37 trio I wanted the original plan about the opus 87 realized, so I discarded the old parts and worked the score over again while applying a more efficient method of proofing, that I have developed since the last attempt. Very few notes were wrong, but there have been many corrections and additions regarding dynamics and articulations. With the latter I have added quite a few. Beethoven's own hints of articulations have been applied more consistently between the parts, and I have added articulations that I would have penciled in with students to achieve an at the same time dancing and dramatic approach that I read from the score. So as always my editions have no bearing as source texts.

All trills and turns are original. Beethoven had written some turns out in grace notes. I have done so with the rest of them. Only in bar #76 the turns have been interpreted in a simpler way to make them realistic within an already fast passage.

The Da Capo form of the Menuetto has been written out in full.

The term of *calando* means diminishing tempo and dynamic level at the same time. It is Ludwig's term, not mine.

From bars #555 and #730 the 1<sup>st</sup> oboe part has passages that really are triplets or 6/8 over 2/4. In accordance with the original print there are no triplet indications, as Ludwig apparently thought these were self-evident from period performance practices.

In bar #803 the 1<sup>st</sup> oboe has the indication of *ad libitum*, which with its placement on a cadential 6-4 chord opens up for a free cadenza in the style of a solo concerto. To be decided by the performers.

With a few instruments (alto recorder, tenor saxophone, bass saxophone, and, in G major, also bass flute & viola) playing a transposed version of the English horn line the lowest note (the third of the given tonic) is not possible. This note occurs

5 times and octave notes have been cued in. In the first 4 of these 5 situations the preceding note also has been cued an octave up with the purpose of providing a better voicing. This solution isn't ideal, but the gain of making versions for otherwise impossible constellations of instruments available hopefully outweighs the stylistic shortcomings.

All three parts have important solos. The 1<sup>st</sup> oboe has the most notes and the widest range of two octaves and a major second. The English horn is the secondary soloist, and it has, as has the 2<sup>nd</sup> oboe, a range of two octaves.

The parts have been laid out so that the pages may be placed in 5 layers on the stand:

The rear layer has the 3 pages of the last movement, Finale - Presto.

The next layer has the 2 pages of the Menuetto.

Then come the 1 or 2 pages of the Adagio.

The next layer again has the 3 pages of the second section of the first movement, Allegro.

The top layer has the 2 pages of the first section of the opening Allegro.

Layers then are removed, when the music has been played.

Only the shift between the two top layers has to be very fast, which is hardly possible with the 2<sup>nd</sup> oboe part, no matter by which instrument it is represented. This part opens the second section of the opening Allegro with an unaccompanied solo that has to be delivered on time and in tempo. My solution has been to print, at the bottom of page #2, a cued preview of the first 18 bars of the second section. The last 2 bars of these 18 bars are rests that allow the players to remove the top layer and continue playing at the 19<sup>th</sup> bar after the repeat sign.

Now with 62 versions covering 8 keys and most instrument sections of orchestras and bands, including some instrument constellations with very little repertory, this project still isn't complete. All versions within the same key and within the same octave are fully compatible as long as good balance is maintained (a few permutations mixing dedicated versions have been mentioned in the below listing). But some reading modes and some obvious real life trio constellations are still not served, again for graphic reasons. Hopefully this will be remedied at a later point of time.

So far these versions have been uploaded:

***C major – in the super octave:***

**2 soprano recorders & alto recorder** – the 1<sup>st</sup> soprano part is difficult and takes a modern soprano or some juggling with a sopranino to get the 3<sup>rd</sup> C# in tune.

***C major – in the soprano octave:***

**2 oboes & English horn** – the original constellation

**2 flutes & bass flute** – difficult for the latter with a range from e' through e''

**2 flutes & viola**

**2 flutes & guitar**

**2 violins & viola**

***C major – in the tenor octave:***

**2 bass flutes & guitar**

**3 horns in C basso**

**3 guitars**

***D major – in the alto octave:***

**3 horns in D**

**2 horns in D & bassoon**

**2 violas & cello**

Among the possible constellations are viola, horn, & bassoon or 2 horns & cello.

***Eb major – in the Soprano octave:***

**2 Eb clarinets & Bb clarinet**

**2 Eb clarinets & alto clarinet**

*Eb major – in the alto octave:*

**2 alto clarinets & bass clarinet**

**2 alto saxophones & tenor saxophone**

**2 alto saxophones & baritone saxophone**

**3 horns in Eb**

**3 horns – 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> in Eb – 3<sup>rd</sup> in Bb basso**

**2 Eb horns & Bb baritone – brass band type constellation**

*Eb major – in the bass octave:*

**2 contralto clarinets & contrabass clarinet**

**2 bassoons & contrabassoon**

**2 baritone saxophones & bass saxophone**

**3 tubas – 2 bass tubas and 1 contrabass tuba would be a good distribution**

**3 Eb tubas – all treble clef, brass band style**

**2 Eb tubas & BBb tuba – all treble clef, brass band style**

**2 celli & double bass**

Among the possible constellations is bassoon, baritone saxophone, and tuba (Eb or BBb).

*E major – in the bass octave:*

**2 celli & double bass**

*F major – in the alto octave:*

**2 English horns & bassoon**

**English horn, horn in F, & Bb euphonium**

**3 basset horns**

**2 basset horns & bass clarinet**

*G major – in the mezzo octave:*

**2 alto flutes in G & bass flute**

**2 alto flutes in G & viola**

**2 alto flutes in G & guitar**

*A major – in the mezzo octave:*

**2 oboes d'amore & viola**

**2 oboes d'amore & horn in D**

**2 clarinets in A & viola**

**3 clarinets in A**

Among the possible constellations are oboe d'amore, clarinet in A, & horn in D or 2 oboes d'amore & clarinet in A

*Bb major – in the soprano octave:*

**3 Bb clarinets**

**2 Bb clarinets & basset horn**

**2 Bb clarinets & alto clarinet**

**2 Bb clarinets & bass clarinet**

**2 soprano saxophones & alto saxophone**

**2 soprano saxophones & tenor saxophone**

**2 Bb trumpets & horn in F**

**2 Bb cornets & Eb horn - brass band type constellation**

*Bb major – in the tenor octave:*

**3 bass clarinets**

**2 bass clarinets & contralto clarinet**

**3 bassoons** – 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> in tenor clef – 3<sup>rd</sup> in bass clef

**2 tenor saxophones & baritone saxophone**

**3 horns in Bb basso**

**2 Bb baritones & Bb euphonium** – all treble clef, brass band style

**3 Bb euphoniums** – all treble clef, brass band style

**3 euphoniums** – 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> in Bb treble clef – 3<sup>rd</sup> in bass clef concert

**2 Bb euphoniums & bass tuba** – euphoniums in Bb treble clef – tuba in bass clef concert

**2 Bb euphoniums & Eb tuba** – all treble clef, brass band style

**3 celli** – 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> in tenor clef – 3<sup>rd</sup> in bass clef

*Bb major – in the contrabass octave*

**3 contrabass clarinets**

**2 Bb Bass Saxophones & Eb Contrabass Saxophone**

**2 Bb Bass Sarrusophones & Eb Contrabass Sarrusophone**

**3 BBb tubas** – all treble clef, brass band style

Korsør - April 28<sup>th</sup> & December 4<sup>th</sup> - 2015

Klaus Smedegaard Bjerre

[yorkmasterbbb@yahoo.com](mailto:yorkmasterbbb@yahoo.com)

#### **Addendum on some graphic aspects:**

The source is a score with 2 oboes in C and 1 English horn in F written on 3 staves. When these parts have been entered in the new score for this project and playing directions (tempos, dynamics, expressions, articulations, slurs, hairpins, rehearsal marks) have been entered and aligned for a reasonable degree of readability, then the score is immediately useable for transpositions involving constellations where the instrument playing the 3<sup>rd</sup> part is pitched a fifth below the instruments playing the upper parts. The bass clef (graphically similar to instruments in Eb basso) is a fifth below the tenor clef (which is similar treble clef Bb in the tenor range). The alto clef has its notes in the same position as horn in D. Which all made 21 of the present versions very easy choices.

If the notes on the upper staves are moved, all alignments of details and even the score layout have to be redone to avoid collisions of elements. It is easier to just move the notes on the bottom staff, which then within certain limits can be moved up or down in relation to the two top staves,

The downwards interval between Eb and Bb instruments is a fourth, so that pairs of Eb instruments only can be matched with a Bb instrument, if the latter part is transposed down a major second. Along with 1 version in G and 2 versions in Bb, this graphic move allows for 11 of the present versions.

Some instruments have extended low ranges allowing for versions for 3 instruments of identical pitches. This calls of the 3<sup>rd</sup> part being transposed down a fifth. This graphic move allows for 16 of the present versions.

A version for 2 violins and viola would be obvious not alone for reasons of the historical reference in the text linked to above here. As there is a seventh between the treble and alto clefs, then the 3<sup>rd</sup> part has to be moved upwards a third. As the distance between the alto and bass clefs also are a seventh, this graphic change allows for 4 of the present versions.

With the 2 upper parts and the 3<sup>rd</sup> part reading from the same clef at an octave distance (like with cello and double bass) the lower part has to be moved up a fourth. The graphic change allows for 10 of the present versions. This change has caused some problems, as the upper notes in a few cases more or less covered some breathing marks. Hopefully all of the errors have been found and corrected. Anyway users of whatever version within this project are most welcome to mail me if they find errors. With 248 files and 3906 pages of music the avoidance of any error would be unlikely despite intensive proofing.

Several versions involving the upper parts being moved up or down on their respective staves could be imagined. Some of them likely will surface at some point of time, but no promises will be issued for now. *KSB*