

**INTRODUCTION TO THE
INTERPRETATION OF THE
BEETHOVEN PIANO
WORKS**

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Introduction to the Interpretation of the Beethoven Piano Works by Adolf Bernhard Marx

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TO THE INTERPRETATION
OF THE

BEETHOVEN PIANO WORKS

BY
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TRANSLATED BY
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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE value of Marx's Introduction to the Interpretation of Beethoven's Piano Works has been widely recognized, and this recognition has been accompanied by universal regret at its inaccessibility, except to the limited few who are sufficiently conversant with German for satisfactory perusal of the contents.

There has been a very apparent deficiency and superficiality in the study of Beethoven's pianoforte compositions, possibly because of their technical difficulties, but more because of a lack of appreciation of their real thought and content; perhaps, too, a fear of the technical may have prevented a clear insight into their soul life. Again, they have been mutilated by an attempt on the part of virtuosos to transform them into bravura pieces, which most certainly they are not, and their meaning, of necessity, became obliterated. We have numerous players and teachers who have devoted themselves to other composers, but very few have given their main thought to Beethoven; and yet it cannot be disputed that his compositions comprise the greatest variety, from deepest pathos to most sparkling humor, never failing, however, to manifest the one soul which pervades them all. Indeed, their study not only leads into higher realms of imagination, but it prepares for all that can be found in pianoforte literature.

That Marx was the most able commentator of Beethoven is beyond a doubt; and certainly his clear presentation of the larger works which have been "as sounding brass" to so many able musicians, as well as his classification of the smaller ones, must be invaluable to students of Beethoven. Added to this, is his exposition of playing in general, of the various legato and staccato qualities which have been a sealed book to the majority of music students. The oft-quoted phrase, "We play too much and think too little," is here so elucidated as to guide even a careless thinker.

To those from whom this book has been withheld, and who desire to avail themselves of Marx's guidance, this translation is dedicated. I have endeavored to retain as far as possible the original phraseology of the author, which is too strong to bear

much interpolation; but I have striven assiduously to avoid transposed German into English, and have therefore been compelled to use free translation now and then, especially in order not to interfere with the clearness of the thought.

I wish to express my most hearty thanks to Mr. Calvin B. Cady, both for his earnest efforts in leading me to a sufficient comprehension of Beethoven's work to desire to undertake this translation, and also for his invaluable assistance in editing the same during its publication in the *Music Review*, previous to its appearance in book form.

FANNIE LOUISE GWINNER.

Ann Arbor, Michigan, August, 1894.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE first edition of my Biography of Beethoven—"Beethoven, Life and Work"—was accompanied by an Appendix: "A few remarks concerning the study and interpretation of the Beethoven piano works." This Appendix was inspired by love for Beethoven, and the conviction that without a deep comprehension of his creations, a thorough comprehension of the tonal art is out of the question; but in the very writing of the same, it became evident that nothing satisfactory could be done within so limited a compass.

Now with the second edition of the Biography, opportunity is furnished for solving the problem more satisfactorily. The Biography, thanks to invaluable information which has come to me from many sources, has appeared in a larger form; and the Introduction to Interpretation could no longer remain in the background, nor could it continue to be casually thrown in as Appendix.

It appears as an individual work, and will be useful by itself. Furthermore, the inner relationship between the Introduction and the Biography will be recognized by those who have become convinced that works of art can only be fully comprehended through the thought and life of the composer. The Biography furnishes the necessary foundation for a comprehension of Beethoven and of his individual works, and also the essential proofs for the Introduction—in so far as these demonstrate the thought of the master.

The greatest benefit, of course, is derived from the student's own perseverance and poetic instinct, and this cannot be given either by the Introduction or by the Biography. The word of an instructor is like the voice of the herald; it is able to awaken, to excite, to guide, only when it resounds to open ears, and into ambitious, persevering minds.

Berlin, March 18, 1863.

ADOLF BERNHARD MARX.

The Preface to the second edition, from which this work is translated, is written by GUSTAV BEHNCKE, who edited the same in 1873. He states that a revision was necessary only because of his revision of the Biography from which a part of this work was taken. Notes had been supplied here and there, and in order to make the two works coincide, a few changes had to be made here. The changes were, however, so unimportant as to their intrinsic value, that this second edition could hardly be considered a revised edition. He closes with the following: "This book is most warmly commended to every intelligent piano player who, in reproducing a piano composition, is not satisfied with simply conquering technical difficulties, and who, on the other hand is not willing to be dependent upon the dictates of his own subjectivity and transitory mood, but who is desirous of developing his performance from a deep, objective comprehension of the work. Guidance is here given by the most able connoisseur of Beethoven's spirit."

THE TRANSLATOR.

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