

A Sketch Leaf from Ludwig van Beethoven's Piano Sonata, op. 28

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One of the more poignant assertions made on the subject of the history of Beethoven's sketchbooks is that the day of his death marked the beginning of the history of their destruction.¹ This statement is particularly apropos with regard to a single-leaf manuscript from the Moldenhauer Archives, which contains music from the second movement of the Piano Sonata, op. 28, and which is one of the twenty-two identified extant leaves from the "SAUER" sketchbook, perhaps the most ill-fated of Beethoven manuscripts.²

This sketchbook was purchased on November 5, 1827, at the auction of Beethoven's estate by the Viennese art and music dealer Ignaz Sauer. Information contained among the five extant auction catalogs identifies it, Sauer's sole acquisition at the sale, as *Notirbuch #17*; catalog annotations also indicate that this item commanded a substantially higher sum than the average sketchbook, selling at 2 florins 50 kreutzers. Two possible explanations have been proposed for this unusually steep price: first, that the contents, which included the popular Piano Sonata in C-sharp Minor, the second work of op. 27 ("Moonlight"), may have been identified before the auction; second, that the original sketchbook was substantial in size, having been classified with others consisting of about 100 leaves.³

Sauer's motive for purchasing the sketchbook was purely that of profit, with no perceptible concern to preserving its integrity. Soon after the auction, he dismembered either a significant portion of it, or possibly the entire book, and sold the individual leaves as souvenirs to friends and private collectors at prices ranging from 20 to 36 kreutzer.⁴ Sauer furnished the individual manuscripts with covers, upon which he had inscribed his personal attestation of authenticity as well as documentation regarding the legality of his procurement of the sketchbook itself. The inscription, which also cites the date of the auction and the lot number, appears to be virtually the same on each coverleaf. Today, several of the twenty-two extant leaves, including the leaf preserved in the Moldenhauer Archives,⁵ are still attached to their coverleaves which read:

Musikalisches Andenken

aus

Ludwig van Beethoven's

eigenhändigem

Notirbuche,

welches aus seiner Verlassenschaft in der am 5. Nov. 827 abgehaltenen wiener magistratischen
Lizitation laut gerichtlichem Protokoll No. 17 erstand

Ignaz Sauer

beeideter Schätzungskommissär

in Kunstsachen

20+ C.M.

Musical Souvenir

from

Ludwig van Beethoven's

Manuscript

Notebook

which has been obtained from his estate, as recorded in No. 17, meeting minutes of the Vienna
Municipal license Bureau, Nov. 5, 1827

by Ignaz Sauer

certified Appraiser

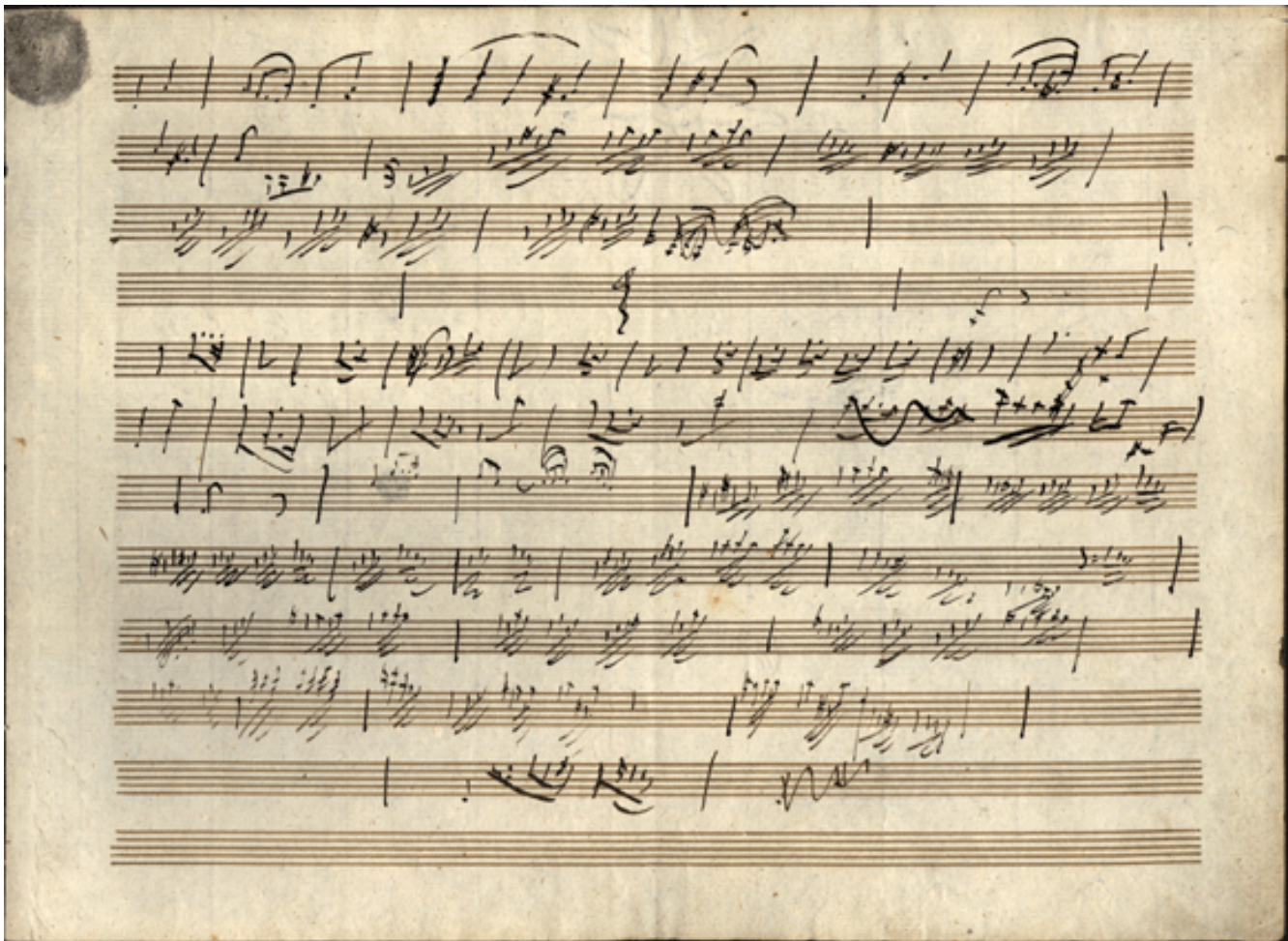
of *objects d'art*

20+ C.M.

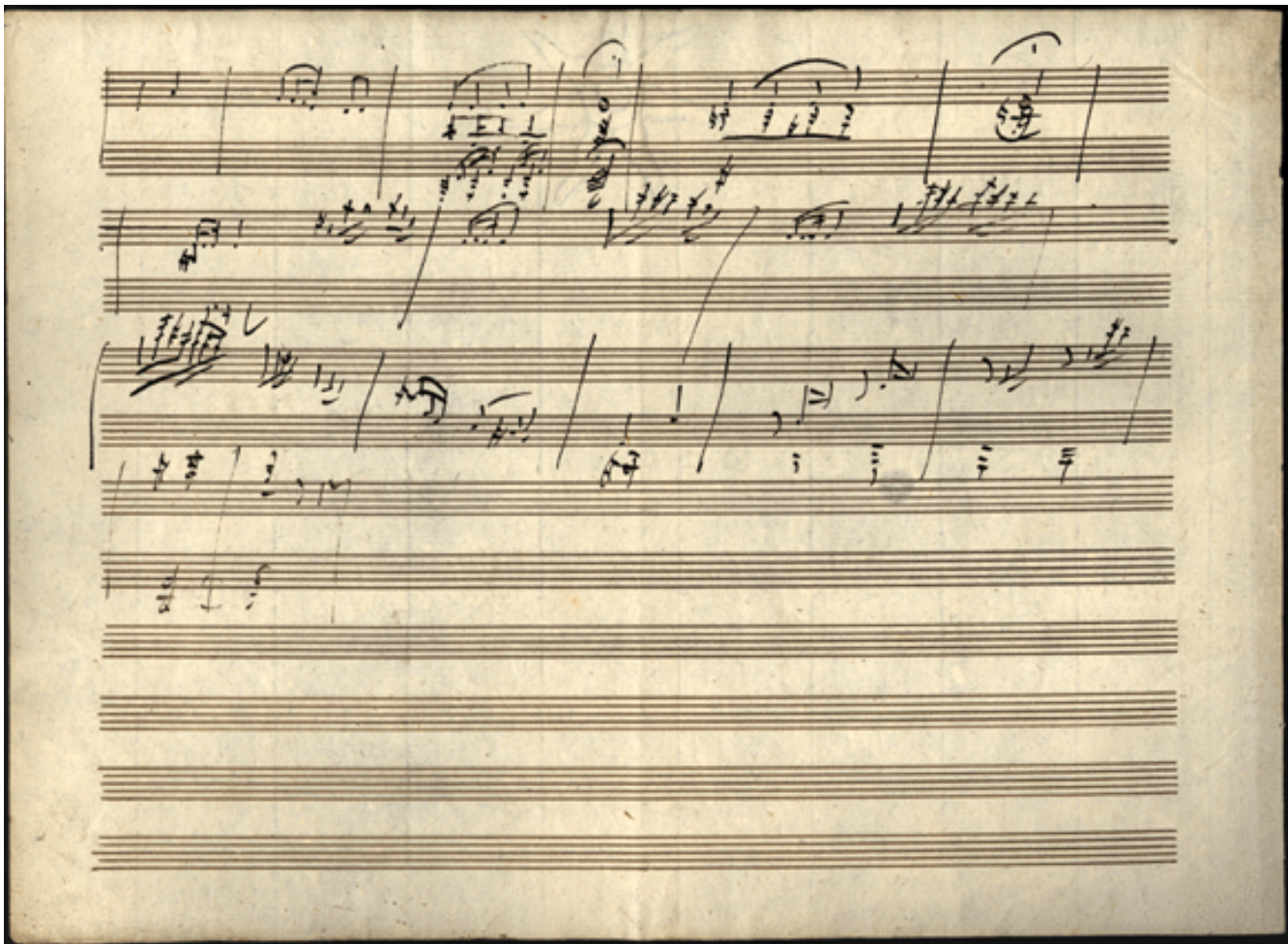
(The sale price of the leaf is an abbreviation for 20 kreutzer, Conventionsmünze [normal currency].)

The provenance of the Moldenhauer leaf, identified by Kramer as item "j" and by Johnson et al., as leaf no. 10^{6.7} is both colorful and unique. Its date is likely to be 1801, based on two considerations: the complete autograph, located in Bonn at the Beethoven-Haus, bears the inscription "*gran Sonata op: 28 1801 da L v. Beethonen.*," and Beethoven apparently made use of the SAUER sketchbook between March of 1801, and November or December of the same year.⁸

Severed from the sketchbook, trimmed on all four sides, and inserted into its coverleaf, the manuscript was sold to the Mödlinger merchant Ignaz Arlet. He and Beethoven most likely became acquainted during the summer of 1818, when Arlet assumed co-ownership of the well-established tavern known as *Zum schwarzen Kamel*, located in Mödling. This was the first of three consecutive summers that Beethoven spent in Mödling, then a quiet country resort recommended by his doctor for its baths; it was here that Beethoven took his legendary walks in the woods with sketchbook in hand, gathering ideas for such works as the *Missa solemnis*, the Ninth Symphony, and the Piano Sonatas, op. 109-111. During these summers Beethoven became a regular patron of the *Schwarze Kamel*, where he purchased supplies from the Arlet family,⁹ and enjoyed sitting at his usual window seat.¹⁰



(recto)



(verso)

In 1832, Arlet retired and sold his share of the business; upon his death in 1850, his daughter-in-law, Anna Neubauer Arlet, assumed ownership of the manuscript. It remained in the Arlet family for approximately 120 years. Finally, in 1970, the manuscript was acquired by the Viennese antiquarian Wolfdietrich Hassfurth,¹¹ who sold it soon thereafter to Moldenhauer.¹²

Besides Sauer's cover of authentication, a number of physical characteristics function as confirming references that link the Moldenhauer leaf to SAUER. The manuscript of oblong format measures 22 cm. high by 30 cm. wide and is ruled with twelve staves on both recto and verso. The total span of the staves from the topmost to bottommost lines measures 187.5 mm.; the width varies between 255 mm. to 258 mm.¹³

The slightly irregular staff-ruling pattern that makes up the left margin profile, particularly the imperfections involving staves eleven and twelve, has been cited as an important identifying element

among all twenty-two extant leaves. This common trait, which is evident on the Moldenhauer leaf,¹⁴ suggests that the staves were ruled mechanically with a machine-operated rastrum, a kind frequently used in the production of late-eighteenth-century manuscript paper. The rulers or rastra used on these devices often created recurrent and, therefore, distinguishing characteristics at the left or right margins, wherever the pen nibs would lift from the page. The original dark grey ink used to rule the staves has, in the case of the Moldenhauer leaf, taken on a brownish appearance. The ink used for the musical notation varies somewhat in color, ranging from dark brown to black.

There is a watermark, which consists of a seven-pronged starfish measuring 46 mm. long by 53 mm. wide and 56 mm. in diameter, centered approximately along the top edge of the leaf. Also evident across the page are nine evenly spaced, vertical chain lines, appearing at 32-mm. intervals. In Appendix A of Johnson et al., the leaf's watermark is classified as number 6, quadrant 2a.¹⁵

The uniformity of the physical characteristics that exists among the extant leaves of the original sketchbook leads one to conclude that SAUER was a preassembled or *integral* sketchbook. Experts speculate that it originally contained ninety-six leaves, the same size as LANDSBERG 7, a homemade book that directly preceded it, as well as the three professionally made books that directly followed SAUER; besides the Piano Sonata, op. 28, the extant leaves include music from the Piano Sonata in C-sharp Minor, op. 27, the String Quintet in C Major, op. 29, and a single sketch for the Bagatelle No. 5, op. 33.¹⁶

Like many of Beethoven's sketchbook entries, this manuscript of the second half of the Andante in D Minor from op. 28--often called the "Pastoral" or "Sonnenfels" sonata--may be categorized as a continuity draft.¹⁷ It includes approximately fifty-seven measures of music: staves one through ten recto contain measures 39-50 (in the finished work) with an interruption of three empty measures, followed by measures 54-82. There is one measure of unidentified music located on staff 11. Measures 83-93 and 95-99 occupy the top eight staves of the leaf's verso. The draft confirms that Beethoven had already negotiated both the thematic content as well as the overall harmonic direction of the movement; in fact, relative to the published version, there are only occasional, minor variations of pitch or rhythm. One such example occurs on beat two of measure 92 through the beginning of measure 95, where the flourish outlining the diminished seventh approximates the appearance of a sketch, although the registral parameters of the descending gesture (from e³ in measure 92 to C-sharpA in measure 95) are established; measure 94 of the published work does not appear.

An explanation for the single-staff format of this draft emerges when we consider some of Beethoven's sketching techniques and assess the leaf's content and purpose. As is well known, Beethoven developed a highly abbreviated notation in both his fragmentary and extended sketches, reflecting his desire for economy of time, space, and effort.

The Andante, then, consists of an opening section (A) in D minor (measures 1-22) followed by a

contrasting section (B) in the parallel major (measures 23-38); measure 39 marks the return (A1) of the introductory A section in D minor. The movement concludes with a brief reiteration of the opening thematic material (measures 83-88), revoiced and modified to serve as predominant preparation for the closing cadential flourish. A comparison of sections A and A1 reveals that the bass line from measures 39-82 virtually duplicates that from the initial 44 measures of the A section, whereas the treble from A1 introduces new material in the form of melodic variations located in measures 47-54 and measures 69-82. Without access to SAUER in its original format, we can only speculate that Beethoven had worked out both treble and bass lines for sections A and B, and that the primary purpose of this draft of section A1 was to set the final proportions of the movement and provide a work space for the melodic variations in the treble.¹⁸ To rewrite the bass line would have been redundant.

According to Czerny, this Andante "was long [Beethoven's] favorite and he played it often for his own pleasure."¹⁹ Czerny later referred to this work as one of the final pieces to be completed before Beethoven's self-proclaimed "new way."²⁰

Frimmel was the first Beethoven scholar to mention the leaf in the musicological literature in 1891, when he offered a fairly accurate annotated transcription;²¹ he was also the first to draw attention to the SAUER sketchbook, in 1908, when he quoted the cover inscription and included a facsimile of one leaf containing sketches of the String Quintet, op. 29.²² It was only much later, in 1952, that an attempt was made by Wilhelm Virneisel to compile a list of the then-known extant leaves from SAUER; the Moldenhauer leaf, however, does not appear to be among the eight items cited in this discussion.²³ A proposed inventory and discussion of the twenty-two identified leaves was published in 1974 by Richard Kramer;²⁴ subsequent and more substantial treatment of SAUER was presented by Douglas Johnson et al.²⁵ The most comprehensive commentary on the Moldenhauer leaf, accompanied by a facsimile reproduction, was published by Walter Szmolyan in 1971.²⁶

¹ See the introductory paragraph from Douglas Johnson and Alan Tyson's article, "Reconstructing Beethoven's Sketchbooks," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XXV (Summer 1972, no. 2), 137.

² Previously referred to as the "Virneisel" sketchbook.

³ Richard Kramer, *The Sketches for Beethoven's Violin Sonatas, opus 30: History, Transcription, Analysis* (Ph. D. diss., Princeton University, 1974), vol. 1, p. 35.

⁴ Douglas Johnson, Alan Tyson, and Robert Winter, *The Beethoven Sketchbooks: History, Reconstruction, Inventory* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), p. 113.

⁵ This is contrary to information stated by Johnson et al., op. cit., p. 120.

⁶ Kramer, op. cit., p. 39.

⁷ Johnson et al., pp. 120-121.

⁸ Ibid., p. 116.

⁹ See Emily Anderson, *The Letters of Beethoven*, II (New York: St. Martin's Press Inc., 1961), no. 1047, p. 911.

¹⁰ Theodor von Frimmel, "Neue Beethovenstudien," *Deutsche Kunst- und Musik-Zeitung XVIII* (January 1, 1891), p. 2. Additional documentation of Beethoven's patronage at the "Kamel" appears in *Ludwig van Beethovens Konversationshefte*, ed. Georg Schünemann (Berlin: Max Hesses Verlag, 1941). See Band I, heft 8, fol. 31b, 49a, 68b and 89a.

¹¹ Walter Szmolyan, "Beethoven-Funde in Mödling," *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift XXVI* (1971), p. 10. Szmolyan points out that the Moldenhauer leaf was one of three autographs to be rediscovered while preparations were being made for Mödling's commemorative celebration of Beethoven's 200th birthday; despite the fact that Frimmel made the existence of this leaf public in his 1891 article (see previous note), it was not cited in the literature (e.g., it is not included in Hans Schmidt's "Verzeichnis die Skizzen Beethovens" of 1969) until 1971. One exception is a note included in Jacques-Gabriel Prod'homme's 1948 book *Die Klaviersonaten Beethovens*, p. 134, where he incorrectly cites the 1891 article by Frimmel.

¹² Kramer, op cit., p. 39.

¹³ According to Johnson et al., op cit., p. 114, these measurements are consistent with those of the other extant leaves from SAUER.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 114; Kramer, op cit., p. 36. When comparing Kramer's rough drawing of staff twelve's profile with the same on the Moldenhauer leaf, the resemblance becomes tenuous because of a slight variation in the G line (assuming a treble clef).

¹⁵ Johnson et al, op. cit., p.545.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 11548; Kramer, op. cit., pp. 35, 41.

¹⁷ The latter title alludes to the dedicatee, Monsieur Joseph Noble de Sonnenfels. See Alexander Wheelock Thayer, *The Life of Beethoven*, ed. and rev. Henry Edward Krehbiel, vol. 1 (New York: The Beethoven Association, 1921), pp. 292-93.

¹⁸ There are sketches containing both the treble and bass lines from selected measures of the first half of the Andante located on another extant leaf from SAUER, identified as SV 163, fol. IV; Bonn Bsk 10 (SBH 613). A third leaf with music from the Andante, located at the Vienna Stadtbibliothek (SV 394; MH4169), was not consulted for this essay.

¹⁹ Thayer, op. cit., p. 289.

²⁰ *In Beethoven: Impressions of Contemporaries* (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1926), p. 31.

²¹ Frimmel, op. cit., pp. 23.

²² Theodor von Frimmel, *Beethoven-Jahrbuch*, I (1908): 112-13, 185-86.

²³ Wilhelm Virneisel, "Aus Beethovens Skizzenbuch zum Streichquintett op. 29," *Zeitschrift für Musik*, CXIII (1952): 142-46.

²⁴ Kramer, op. cit.

²⁵ Johnson et al., op cit.

²⁶ Szmolyan, op cit., pp. 9-16.