

Tilman Skowroneck

Beethoven and the Split Damper Pedal

This paper is about a construction of the damper mechanism found in a number of surviving pianos by Anton Walter from around Beethoven's first decade in Vienna. Instruments from that time, of course, have a special importance not only for the performance practice of Beethoven's earlier works for piano, but also because he would have used some variety of them in his public and private concerts. They are the tools that shaped his early experience and fame as a pianist.¹

Although the title calls this mechanism a 'split damper pedal', I am here addressing divided knee levers, not foot pedals. The act and practice of 'pedalling' refers to the operation necessary to operate whichever mechanism is present in a piano to allow the player to lift the dampers (called 'the pedal' for the sake of simplicity) as a whole, in sections, or to varying degrees in order to create an undamped sound.

I will begin with a description of the divided knee lever followed by a very short summary of what we know about contemporary pedalling practice. Next, I will discuss a comment about not using the split pedal that Beethoven wrote in the autograph of the *Waldstein Sonata* Op. 53, and I will conclude by discussing some repertoire examples to explain its possible use and general usefulness.

In most early pianos by Anton Walter (i. e., instruments with a keyboard range of five octaves), the damping is operated with levers with symmetrical arms that are let into the bottom board under the front edge of the instrument. These levers come from both sides, are mounted in an axle bearing about halfway along their length, and meet in the middle of the instrument, where their respective ends emerge just far enough below the level of the bottom board to be easily operated with the knee. Pressing the levers up in the middle results in lowering their outer ends. The outer ends are in turn attached to another pair of levers hidden in each side of the instrument that press upwards on the rail that holds all the dampers. The damper rail is of one piece (in contrast to some instruments from other schools or builders that have divided damper rails for bass and treble), but the design allows for tilting it slightly, making it possible to operate only a section of it.

The instruments in question date from between 1782 and 1796; their other characteristic is that their sound-altering stop – called the *moderator* – is not operated with the

1 I took an earlier stab at this topic in Tilman Skowroneck: *Beethoven the Pianist*, Cambridge 2010, pp. 208–215. My presentation in this paper avoids arguing from a position of musical textures that are 'asking' for the use of specific pedal constructions but rather highlights the possibilities an instrument has to offer, to be used by the player at will.

knee but by means of a hand-operated stop in the middle of the nameboard, just above the nameplate. The moderator works by inserting tabs of a soft material such as cloth between the hammers and the strings, resulting in a softer, more veiled tone.

The use of two knee levers for the damping was previously known from Johann Andreas Stein's pianos, but here, the levers were usually connected where they meet in the middle. No matter which knee a pianist chooses to use, all dampers in such an instrument would lift simultaneously, thus freeing all the strings at once and creating an undamped sound, like the right pedal in a modern piano.² In Walter's pianos of the kind considered here, however, the knee levers are not permanently connected; they merely overlap in the middle (Figure 1).

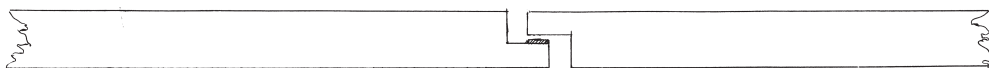


FIGURE 1 Sketch of Walter's knee-lever overlap, as seen from the player's position

When the left knee is used to push up the left lever, it makes contact with the top edge of the right lever arm, and the entire damper rail, from bass to treble, is pushed up. But the right arm – the treble arm, so to speak – can be operated alone. If it is pushed up, the damper rail is tilted and lifts only in the treble.

Looking at a list of surviving Walter pianos published by Michael Latcham, the four earliest pianos originally had hand stops for operating the dampers.³ The knee levers that today can be found in these instruments are later additions, even if they may well have been Walter's own work.⁴ Of these four instruments, the most famous one from 1782 that belonged to Mozart soon received knee levers of the overlapping "all-or-treble-only" kind, as described above. These were in place in the piano until 1955.⁵ To avoid confusion,

- 2 Michael Latcham: Mozart and the Pianos of Johann Andreas Stein, in: *The Galpin Society Journal* 51 (1998), pp. 114–153, here p. 128; id.: Zur Frage der Authentizität und Datierung der Klaviere von Anton Walter zwischen 1780 und 1800, in: *Mitteilungen der Internationalen Stiftung Mozarteum* 48 (2000), pp. 114–145, here p. 122; id.: *Pianos for Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Change and Contrast*, Munich 2016, pp. 80 f.
- 3 Leonardo Miucci has kindly informed me about a recently-found Walter sold by auction in July 2021 to the Bechstein Stiftung of Berlin. It is in its unaltered original condition and has one hand lever and one hand stop.
- 4 Latcham: *Pianos for Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven*, p. 453, and the table on p. 499. At least with respect to Mozart's piano, Latcham's description of "a single" knee lever replacing the hand stops is not correct.
- 5 Ulrich Rück: Mozarts Hammerflügel erbaute Anton Walter in Wien, in: *Mozart Jahrbuch* (1955), pp. 246–286, here p. 251 (thanks to Michael Latcham for pointing out this description).

I should mention that the knee levers presently found in this instrument, which are occasionally mentioned in the literature, are clearly a replacement from after 1955, as the overlap in their present state is inverted: today, either the entire damper rail can be lifted at once by pushing up the treble lever, or the bass alone can be lifted separately.⁶

At least two of three slightly later Walter pianos from or around 1789 (in Latcham's nomenclature: "Rosenburg", "Poznan" and "Austria"), have overlapping knee levers of the kind that I initially described: the levers either lift the full damping or the treble.⁷ Of three other instruments from between 1789 and 1796 that are listed as having hand moderators and knee-operated dampers, one has the same overlapping arrangement, as the remaining two likely have as well.⁸

On the basis of the surviving instruments, it seems that Anton Walter began to consistently construct the knee levers in his pianos in a new and different way from around 1796. Now one knee lever operated the moderator, and the other lever lifted the entire damping.⁹ This construction does not allow for tilting the rail and lifting only the treble. Walter's new arrangement seems to have quickly become the most common one in Viennese grands around 1800, and it is certainly the most common one we encounter in modern Walter copies.

Returning to the overlapping knee levers, the various positions of the dampers on the strings can be seen in Figure 2: In the third position depicted here, the treble is completely freed of the dampers, whereas the middle register receives a kind of 'half-pedal' effect, and the bass remains completely damped. The functionality of this construction is enhanced by the way the dampers are constructed in the triple-strung treble area of the instrument, which usually begins at *b*₄, going all the way to the top note *f*₆. These dampers are flat pads of soft leather, while further down, the dampers are leather-covered wooden wedges seated between the strings. Lifting the treble dampers only ever so slightly is enough to create a full pedal effect between *b*₄ and *f*₆.

- 6 David Rowland: *A History of Pianoforte Pedalling*, Cambridge 1993, p. 18. Rowland was at the time clearly unaware of other overlapping knee levers by Walter and called the (inverted, non-original) construction in Mozart's piano a "curiosity". See also Siegbert Rampe: *Mozarts Klaviermusik. Klangwelt und Aufführungspraxis*, Kassel 1995, p. 48.
- 7 See Latcham: *Pianos for Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven*, p. 461 for a correct description of the "Poznan" piano, and p. 462 for the incorrect description of the "Austria" piano's knee levers. "Austria" has overlapping knee levers (my personal observation).
- 8 *Ibid.*, pp. 468, 499. The piano identified as "Briosco I" has the overlapping knee levers. Michael Latcham (personal communication 23 February 2021) could not recall with certainty whether the knee levers from the remaining two instruments (from "Group IV") were perhaps instead linked together, in the style of Stein; however, since not a single description of linked knee levers can be found in the material about Walter, the chance seems rather slim.
- 9 *Ibid.*, tables p. 496 for dates and p. 499 for the construction.

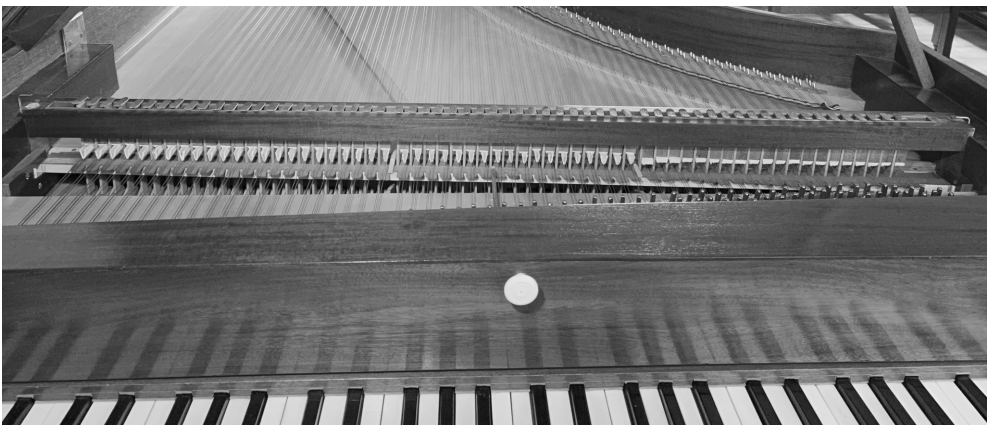


FIGURE 2 Above: Front view of the damper rail in a copy of a piano by Anton Walter, knee levers disengaged, all dampers lowered on the strings. Middle: Both sides of the damper rail raised. Below: Only the treble end of the damper rail raised. The changeover from damper wedges in the lower region to damper pads in the triple-strung treble is clearly visible.

How does this information relate to Beethoven? Beethoven's pedalling practice has attracted a fair amount of attention. One reason is that he did not indicate the pedal at all in any of his published works before 1801, in spite of the fact that he – in Carl Czerny's famous words – “used the pedals very often, far more frequently than indicated in his works.”¹⁰ Assuming that this includes the early works, we have to rely on secondary information and informed reasoning as to when and how to use the pedal in these works.

Luckily, since the basic effect created by lifting the dampers has not changed since the first appearance of the pedal in early pianos, some of its original applications will not have been too earth-shatteringly different from modern ones. Take the sustain of a bass note, for instance: the earliest surviving evidence for Beethoven's pedal use is a sketch showing his preparations for a church service during Holy Week, likely in 1792 (the organ was silent during Holy Week, hence the use of a piano). It indicates specifically the use of a knee, by implication in order to operate the knee lever, for raising the entire damping and sustaining the bass. This example supposedly mirrors Beethoven's experience with the pianos by Johann Andreas Stein, such as those the Bonn court at the time reportedly owned. As mentioned above, Stein's knee levers were linked together so that it does not matter which knee is used to create the intended effect. Figure 3 shows the transcription from the Kafka Sketchbook edition.¹¹

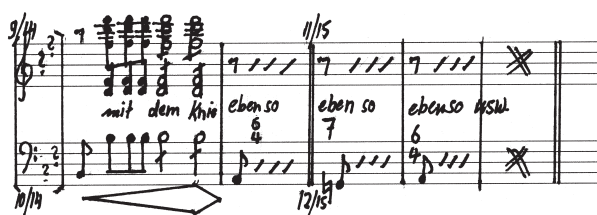


FIGURE 3 Beethoven's handwritten instructions to use the knee lever for bass sustain, circa 1792; transcription from the facsimile

This example consists of an extended ‘oom-pah-pah’ texture where the bass note is sustained during a series of identical chords. The harmony changes in every bar, as indicated by the continuo figures 6-4 and 7. The knee lever is pushed up “mit dem Knie” (with the knee) to make this effect possible. This is repeated “ebenso” (in the same way) in the following bars.

Another example of Beethoven's use of the knee levers comes from a sketch from 1796: under a *pianissimo* restatement of a motif in thirds in the right hand, he wrote the

- 10 “Der Gebrauch der Pedale war bey ihm sehr häufig, weit mehr, als man in seinen Werken angezeigt findet.” Carl Czerny: Anekdoten und Notizen über Beethoven 1852, in: *Über den richtigen Vortrag der sämtlichen Beethoven'schen Klavierwerke*, ed. by Paul Badura-Skoda, Vienna 1963, pp. 13–22, here p. 22. English translations are mine.
- 11 Ludwig van Beethoven's Autograph Miscellany from ca. 1786 to 1799 (*The “Kafka” Sketchbook*), ed. by Joseph Kerman, London 1970, Vol. 1, fol. 96r.

words “mit dem Knie-Schieber” (with the knee-pusher).¹² In this example, lifting the dampers serves to create a specific sound colour; we will have to keep this function in mind because it bears on one of the possible uses of the treble-only pedal that I am considering here.¹³

If there can be little doubt that the pedal can be used, or rather, should be used in all of Beethoven’s repertory, no matter whether it is indicated or not, the question remains *when* and *how* we apply the pedal – the ‘when’ addressing the kind of passages that require some kind of sustain, or that seem in need of the pedalled sound colour, and the ‘how’ the frequency of changing and re-taking the pedal and the question of rhythmical pedalling versus syncopated pedalling.

Following research on historical pedalling practices by David Rowland, we believe today that keyboardists of the early second half of the eighteenth century may occasionally have treated the damper pedal not unlike one would use stops in an organ or a harpsichord. Instead of changing the pedal at every change of harmony, one distinguished between some sections of music that were pedalled, imitating the undamped ‘pantalon’, or hammered dulcimer, and other sections that were not pedalled, as one would have played them on harpsichord, clavichord or organ. This seems to be supported by the fact that, as mentioned before, some pianos initially only had hand stops to operate the dampers. One only can engage and disengage these stops when one is not playing; quick changes of pedal at every shift of harmony are out of the question.¹⁴

It is, however, not so much this knowledge about mid-eighteenth-century practice than our growing awareness of the possibilities of French and English pianos with foot pedals towards the end of the century that helps explain a central feature of Beethoven’s written pedal indications, namely the rather sparing use of pedal changes, especially in his earliest works with notated pedal. The newest French style of playing, and especially the rather liberal use of these pedals in the music by composers like Daniel Steibelt, seem to have been Beethoven’s model here. For instance, both the first movement of the *Moonlight Sonata* Op. 27/2 from 1801 and the last movement of the *Waldstein Sonata* Op. 53 from 1804 feature long pedalled stretches over changing harmonies without re-taking the pedal. These passages used to be seen as idiosyncratic effects, which are for the modern pianist somewhat uncomfortable. As it appears, however, they are Beet-

12 Ibid., Vol. 1, fol. 82r, line 6/10. For dating these examples, see Barry Cooper: *The Ink in Beethoven’s ‘Kafka’ Sketch Miscellany*, in: *Music and Letters* 68 (1987), pp. 315–332, here pp. 322, 331. There is another indication “dämpf[u]ng” in a sketch for the *Concerto* Op. 15, see *Ludwig van Beethoven’s Autograph Miscellany*, Vol. 1, fol. 138v, line 3.

13 For more early examples, see Leonardo Miucci: *Beethoven’s Pianoforte Damper Pedalling. A Case of Double Notational Style*, in: *Early Music* 47 (2019), pp. 371–392, here pp. 380f.

14 Rowland: *A History of Pianoforte Pedalling*, pp. 5–102.

hovenian representations of typical late eighteenth-century French-inspired pedalling practice.¹⁵

Thus equipped, we can address Beethoven's works that lack pedal indications and try to find passages that might call for using the damper pedal. One example from David Breitman's recent book about playing on period pianos illustrates this point. This is the opening of the Sonata Op. 2/3 (Figure 4). Breitman writes about this passage:

"I play the opening, with its Mozartean mix of slurs and dots, as 'classically' as possible, without any pedal. [...] Measure 13 makes a clean break, with maximum contrast in dynamic, register, rhythm, and texture. The new material is also typical pedal music: tremolos and arpeggios prolonging a single harmony [...]; I pedal it as heavily as possible – on some fortepianos, in the right acoustic, from measure 12 to measure 20 without changing."¹⁶

32 Allegro con Brio

SONATA III

FIGURE 4 Beethoven: Sonata Op. 2/3, movement 1, bars 1–20

So, following Breitman's example, and depending somewhat on the concert hall and the instrument, the pianist could push up the knee lever (or, on a later piano, press down the foot pedal) in the middle of the second line and simply keep the dampers up all the way to the end of this example. Of course, such solutions always remain personal to some degree, even within a historically informed framework. Regardless, the consensus today seems to be that the pedal can be used freely in Beethoven's works, but not in a too finicky or small-scale way, no matter whether it is indicated or not.

- 15 David Rowland: *Beethoven's Pianoforte Pedalling*, in: *Performing Beethoven*, ed. by Robin Stowell, Cambridge 1994, pp. 49–69, here pp. 60, 64; for a new practice-oriented angle, see David Breitman: *Piano-Playing Revisited. What Modern Players Can Learn from Period Instruments*, Rochester 2021, pp. 98–101.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 113.

There are no indications at all in Beethoven's music that suggest the use of any kind of split pedal. But we have one example where Beethoven specifies that the split pedal should not be used. This example is important, because it comes from a point in time when Beethoven's use of the pedal changed from knee levers to foot pedals, and it is from the first sonata in which he provided extensive pedal indications – the *Waldstein* Sonata Op. 53. In the right margin of the first page of the autograph, Beethoven wrote the following words: “Nb. Where ped. is indicated, the whole damping of the bass as well as of the treble is lifted. O means that it is to be dropped again.”¹⁷ This note is comparable in style to Beethoven's instruction printed on the first page of the *Moonlight* Sonata, to lift the dampers throughout the first movement. Obviously, to mention the intended use of the damper pedal in the *Waldstein* Sonata in this specific manner mattered to Beethoven at the moment when he prepared the autograph, so it is beside the point that his note did not make it into the published version of the sonata, unlike the instruction for the *Moonlight* Sonata.

Beethoven's *Waldstein* split-pedal note has been known for a long time and a number of Beethoven scholars have attempted to explain it, occasionally accompanied, however, with some chronological fuzziness. One instrument that we, for example, do not need to invoke to make sense of this note is Beethoven's Broadwood grand piano from 1817. The Broadwood does, in fact, have a split foot pedal that operates a split damper rail, but, of course, it has nothing whatsoever to do with the situation of 1804. In acknowledgement of this circumstance, William Newman writes that the *Waldstein* note shows that Beethoven knew about the concept of the split damper pedal “at least fifteen years before he got the Broadwood piano”.¹⁸ But this way of putting it somehow suggests that the split pedal would have been particularly modern in 1803. As we know, this is not the case: apart from the split knee lever about which I am talking here, split pedals that operated split damper rails are known, for instance, from many square pianos back from the time when hand stops were the only means of operating the dampers.

One could believe that Beethoven's *Waldstein* pedal note means that he simply disliked the split pedal. There is no reason to believe this to be true, at least if we understand the note as a specific indication reflecting both the properties of the piano he was actually using at the time and the character of the musical textures in the *Waldstein* Sonata for which he prescribes the use of the pedal. The sonata was composed between the autumn

17 “Nb: wo ped. steht wird die ganze Dämpfung sowohl vom Bass als Diskant aufgehoben, O bedeutet daß man sie wieder fallen laße.“ Beethoven-Haus Bonn, Sammlung H. C. Bodmer, HCB Mh 7. www.beethoven.de/en/media/view/5660448623951872/scan/o (last consulted 25 March 2021).

18 William S. Newman: Beethoven's Pianos Versus His Piano Ideals, in: *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 13 (1970), pp. 484–504, here p. 494.

of 1803 and the spring of 1804. Beethoven was exploring the possibilities of his newly arrived Érard piano while sketching the sonata.¹⁹ This instrument has no knee levers but a total of four foot pedals, one each for the moderator and bassoon stops, the una corda, and the damping. The damper pedal is the second one from the left. It can most easily be reached with the left foot, preferably in a rather pointed shoe. On the Érard, lifting the “whole damping of the bass as well as of the treble” by depressing this pedal is the only available option.

Apart from reflecting the state of affairs in late 1803 in Beethoven’s study, the note also makes musical sense: all the indicated pedalling effects in the Waldstein Sonata – they all appear in the last movement – are meant to support single bass notes on downbeats and to collect the harmony (or clashing successive harmonies) present in the following treble textures (Figures 5, 6 and 7). A pedal that only lifts part of the dampers, no matter which way, would always make the other one of these two intended effects impossible.

The image displays three musical excerpts from Beethoven's Sonata Op. 53, movement 3. Each excerpt consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The first excerpt (bars 1-14) is marked 'RONDO. Allegretto Moderato.' and 'Sempre pp'. It features a complex treble texture with many notes and a simpler bass line. Pedal markings 'Ped.' are placed below the bass staff. The second excerpt (bars 102-113) shows dynamic markings such as *ff*, *f*, *p*, and *decres.* in the treble staff, and 'Ped.' in the bass staff. The third excerpt (bars 250-257) includes 'Sempre pp' and 'espress.' in the treble staff, and 'Ped.' in the bass staff. The excerpts illustrate various damper pedal techniques used to support bass notes and collect harmonies.

FIGURES 5–7 Beethoven: Sonata Op. 53, movement 3, bars 1–14, 102–113, and 250–257

19 Skowronek: Beethoven the Pianist, pp. 85–116.

Apart from spelling out the mutual match between his writing and the damping option of his piano, Beethoven's note warns pianists against using a feature their piano might have (but his Érard does not have), namely a damping device that would allow for operating parts of the damping separately (no matter its exact design).²⁰ This is to say, the note has everything to do with the specific musical texture of the *Waldstein* Sonata, but it tells us nothing about how Beethoven would have played anything else on a piano that actually did have split knee levers, say, five years earlier.

This leads us back to Czerny's statement that Beethoven used the pedals "far more frequently than indicated in his works": if we do not know exactly when he used the pedals in these works, we also have little idea of how he took advantage of the variety of ways some of these pedals could be used, depending on the piano at hand. We do, however, know of the existence of instruments that Beethoven would have played, like Walter's pianos; instruments that had certain features, like the split knee lever. The order of his words in the *Waldstein* note, to lift "the bass as well as the treble" (i. e., to lift not merely the treble but the bass, too), does suggest that he had a typical order of events in mind when operating divided dampers – the most natural order, in fact, of operating Walter's overlapping split knee lever.

We can imagine the instrument presenting itself to Beethoven, inviting him to explore and make use of its various features. This is not the traditional image where musical inspiration forces the pianist-composer to search for musically sensible solutions and where the piano is expected to serve him like a kind of toolbox of possibilities. Rather, the piano, with all its features, is already there, offering its possibilities: "Try this; use that lever; listen to this effect!"

My image of how the instrument offers its possibilities to the player is, in fact, based on my own experience as a harpsichordist with one historical Walter piano from around 1790 and two modern Walter copies with split knee levers.²¹ There are two things that jump out at the clavichord and harpsichord player who is new to such an instrument: first, the even lighter and shallower touch and the different kind of dynamic control; and second, the question, "How do these gadgets work?" Trying out the hand stop-operated moderator and the knee levers is really one of the very first things one does on such an instrument.

20 We should remember that the split knee lever as I described was built into Walter's early pianos, whose keyboard range would have been too small for the *Waldstein* Sonata in any case.

21 Latcham: *Pianos for Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven*, p. 462. I grew up playing the "Austria" piano from Latcham's list. It was originally owned by the Austrian archduke Johann (Beethoven's pupil Rudolph's brother). The family moved from Florence to Vienna in 1790 when Johann was eight years old, so it was likely his learning instrument.

The split knee lever is an especially perfect candidate for exploring this idea of the instrument showing the way. Teachers like Andreas Streicher recommended operating the knee lever for the damping close to the middle of the instrument, where “the merest contact causes it to lift”.²² The treble part of the split knee lever is operated with the right knee; lifting the entire damper rail would have to be done with the knee of the left leg, which is not the dominant leg for most people. The treble half of the damper rail is easier to lift than the whole rail; it is responsive and easy to operate with precision. Other than that, however, the use of only the treble part of the damper pedal is not in any way different from using the whole pedal. There is, in fact, no indication that Beethoven, if he indeed used the damper pedal more often than indicated, did not use the split knee levers whenever he encountered them in an instrument – that is, used them in the manner they were intended, by either fully or partially lifting the damper rail to achieve one or the other musical effect.

So what effect are we talking about? The treble-only-pedal enhances the sound of the treble through sympathetic vibrations; it maintains a reasonable degree of distinction in the middle register and full clarity in the bass. An improvising musician who, for example, wants to add a halo to the treble textures without making everything else muddled and indistinguishable would benefit from using this pedal. So would someone who wanted to give a singing character to the cantilenas in composed music and who perhaps owned an instrument with a dry or weak treble.

The act of enhancing the treble of a dry piano by using a device that could be found in some – but not all – instruments does not lend itself to coverage in performance-practical textbooks, and so the split pedal was bound to fall through the cracks of the performance-practical record. Yet, the examples above do depict literal performance practices, things that can be done every time someone sits down at an instrument and decides to engage with its entire interface, not just its keyboard.

It is now that we can turn to Beethoven’s works and try to identify some passages that might benefit from using the split pedal. One example is treble melodies in octaves over a rather busy left hand (Figure 8).

This kind of texture is fairly common in Beethoven’s works for five-octave pianos from the mid-1790s onward, from Op. 7 until Op. 22 and then somewhat less frequently until Op. 31/2. As soon as there are leaps in the octave line, of course, such passages become difficult to perform literally *legato*, as notated, even when using finger substitutions. This problem could be solved by using a modern pedalling approach, that is, using

22 “[...] weil das leichteste Anrühren ihn schon in die Höhe hebt.” Andreas Streicher: *Kurze Bemerkungen über das Spielen, Stimmen und Erhalten der Fortepiano, welche von Nannette Streicher geborne Stein in Wien verfertigt werden*, Vienna 1801, p. 11.



FIGURE 8 Beethoven: Sonata Op. 10/1, movement 1, bars 115–137

the entire pedal with frequent syncopated changes. If we instead use the full pedal for the entire phrase in a would-be historical manner, as described earlier, the left hand in my example would become muddled and incomprehensible. Such phrase-long pedalling would, however, be perfectly possible in this example if we lifted the damper rail only in the treble. One would only need to change the pedal at the end of each phrase (Figure 8, the first rest towards the end of the first line, and in the middle of the second line). Depending on how well the damping is set up and regulated, the left-hand notes might still receive a slight blur, but they would remain distinct and would not overwhelm the melody. The majority of legato passages with melodies in octaves in Beethoven's works from the aforementioned period can be realised more literally, as notated, and with less effort with regard to fingering by lifting only the treble part of the damping. And as we have seen, the split-damper-pedal effect is not only most compellingly helpful in these passages, but it is also in agreement with our ideas about historical pedalling insofar as it allows for longer stretches of unchanged pedal.

Some practical tests of the split pedal in a variety of passages unlock its surprising versatility. In the second subject of the Allegro of Op. 10/2, for example, the melody in octaves and chords, which begins rather low, leads to a *crescendo* with *sforzatos* notated on the *c* in bar 21 and the top *f* in bar 24 (Figure 9).

When trying to play these dynamics literally on a Viennese piano, we often risk forcing the tone unless we use the pedal. Lacking a split pedal, one would have to re-take the pedal rather often to prevent the left hand from becoming blurred. When played with the split pedal, treble part lifted, the melody would sound legato as indicated, the *crescendo* would be available, and there might be a half-damped effect in the middle register, but the left hand would be clear, and no frequent pedal changes would be necessary. There are myriad other passages where the use of the split pedal may perhaps not seem essential but where it invites its use almost in a casual way. My personal favourite is the pianissimo passage that begins on the upbeat of bar 115 in the opening Presto of Beethoven's Op. 10/3

1st

SONATA
II.
Allegro.

The image shows the first 29 bars of the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata Op. 10/2. The score is written for piano and includes a piano introduction. The notation features a half-note bass line and a piano introduction. The piece is in a minor key and begins with a half-note bass line and a piano introduction. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *mf*, and *ff*, and articulation like accents and slurs.

FIGURE 9 Beethoven: Sonata Op. 10/2, movement 1, bars 1–29

(upbeat to bar 300 in the recapitulation). The possibility provided by the split-pedal instrument to create a momentary change in atmosphere by playing the passage “mit dem Knie-Schieber”, but without having to change the tonal character across the entire range of the piano, is utterly compelling.

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