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Foreword

Domenico Scarlatti, sixth son of the famous opera composer Alessandro, was born in Naples, Italy, in 1685. There is no evidence to indicate Domenico studied at a conservatory or was ever apprenticed to a master, but his father no doubt guided his early musical progress. He developed well enough to become an organist and choirmaster in Naples at the royal chapel. Alessandro then sent his son to Venice, where he met Francesco Gasparini, Thomas Roseingrave (the Irish musician who became his most ardent champion, particularly in England), and Handel, with whom he became close friends. Handel's first biographer Mainwaring tells us that:

> Handel often used to speak of Domenico with great satisfaction and indicated there was great reason for it, for besides his great talents as an artist he had the sweetest temper and the genteelest behavior. On the other hand, it was mentioned that Scarlatti, as oft he was admired for his great executions, would mention Handel and cross himself in admiration.

Strangely enough, while this warm admiration lasted to the end of their lives, after Handel left Italy there seems to have been no further contact between them; however, when Scarlatti's music was published in London by Roseingrave and Handel saw it, he borrowed some ideas for his Op. 6 concertos. Francesco Gasparini (1668-1727) was a well-known and much admired composer, and it appears that Scarlatti became his student. Gasparini's famous textbook *L'Armonico Pratico al Cimbalo* (Venice, 1708) was a strong influence on Scarlatti, who incorporated many of its rules in his own compositions.

Scarlatti served exiled Queen Maria Casimira of Poland in Rome from 1704–1714, composing chamber music and operas for her miniature opera theater. During this time in Rome, Scarlatti and Handel engaged in a keyboard tournament which resulted in a draw: Handel was judged superior on the organ, but Scarlatti was unbeatable on the harpsichord. These Roman years were professionally very profitable to Scarlatti, as he met leading musicians such as Corelli and Pasquini, and possibly even studied with Pasquini.

After Queen Casimira left Rome in 1714, Scarlatti became musical director for the Portuguese ambassador and held at the same time the post of *regens chori* (director) of the Cappella Giulia in the Vatican.

In 1720, Scarlatti became court musician to João V, King of Portugal. While in this position he taught the Infanta Maria Barbara, a talented harpsichordist for whom he composed most of his keyboard music. In 1729, when Maria Barbara married Ferdinand, the Prince of the Asturias and heir to the Spanish throne (the future Ferdinand VI), the princess took her favorite music teacher with her to Madrid, where he spent the rest of his life in her service.

One possible reason for Scarlatti's move to Portugal and later to Spain may have been his dislike of the Italian keyboard style; he had already gone his own way musically, which was quite different from the prevailing style of the time.

The Spanish court was very stiff and somewhat depressing, as King Philip V was a melancholy hypochondriac. The famous singer Farinelli was hired to sing the insomniac Philip to sleep. Farinelli soon acquired considerable power and, establishing a friendship with Scarlatti, he safeguarded Scarlatti's position at the court. Philip's problem was passed on to his son Ferdinand VI, as he was known after ascending to the throne. When Ferdinand became king in 1746, Farinelli was retained to sing him to sleep as well.

In 1738 a major event occurred in Scarlatti's career when his *Essercizi per Gravicembalo* (Studies for Harpsichord)

were published in London. Scarlatti wrote a rather whimsical preface to this collection of 30 sonatas:

> Whether you be Dilettante or Professor, in these Compositions do not expect any profound Learning, but rather an ingenious Jesting with Art, to accommodate you to the Mastery of the Harpsichord. Neither Considerations of Interest, or Visions of Ambition, but only Obedience moved me to publish them. Perhaps they will be agreeable to you; then all the more gladly will I obey other Commands to please you in an easier and more varied Style. Show yourself then more human than critical, and thereby increase your own Delight. To designate to you the Position of the Hands, be advised that by D is indicated the Right, and by M the Left: Live happily!

These remarks indicate the pedagogical nature of these pieces.

Scarlatti dedicated the *Essercizi* to King João V of Portugal, Maria Barbara's father and Scarlatti's former employer. The King bestowed a knighthood on Scarlatti in appreciation.

By removing himself from mainstream European musical culture and isolating himself in Spain, Scarlatti shook off the influences of the Italian keyboard style and began to respond to the vivid colors and vital rhythms of Iberian folk culture. This was a true artistic awakening rather than just a passing phase. Stylistically, the advances marked by the *Essercizi* continued to be expanded and refined in the 450 to 500 additional sonatas Scarlatti composed in the years remaining until his death in 1757.

Scarlatti as Performer

Scarlatti must have been a fabulous keyboard performer. Dr. Charles Burney, the famous English music historian, wrote of Scarlatti's meeting Thomas Roseingrave as recounted by Roseingrave:

> ...a grave young man dressed in black and in a black wig, who had stood in one corner of the room, very quietly and attentive while Roseingrave played, being asked to sit down to the harpsichord, when he began to play, Rosy said he thought ten thousand devils had been at the instrument; he never had heard such passages of execution and effect before. The performance so far surpassed his own, and every degree of perfection to which he thought it possible he should ever arrive, that, if he had been in sight of any instrument with which to have done the deed, he should have cut off his own fingers...

Roseingrave declared he did not touch an instrument himself for a month.

Scarlatti's virtuosity on the keyboard was fantastic, full of entirely new, yet idiomatic features such as the crossing of hands, wide leaps, and diabolical runs. Hasse and Quantz heard him play and were overwhelmed by the experience. Hasse told Dr. Burney that he recalled on one occasion in Vienna hearing both Scarlattis (father and son) play, and spoke of Domenico's "wonderful hand, as well as fecundity [prolificacy] of invention."

One story reports that while Scarlatti retained his fluent and mobile fingers, in his old age he became too fat to perform the spellbinding keyboard acrobatics of his youth. This was proved inaccurate by the discovery in 1956 of a portrait of him painted by Domenico Antonio de Velasco around 1740; it shows Scarlatti, in his newly acquired full knight's regalia, rather slender, with prominent cheekbones, long thin arms and strong, supple hands, especially well suited for the demands of his keyboard music.

Title page of Scarlatti's original edition of *Essercizi per Gravicembalo* (1738).

Scarlatti probably never in his life performed in a concert in the modern sense. As far as we know, he played only for friends and patrons. Outside the palaces in which he performed for his royal patrons and their friends, Scarlatti's virtuosity was known only by hearsay, or by way of those few of his pieces that were printed or circulated in manuscript copies.

Scarlatti must have been a superb improviser—many of his sonatas are written out improvisations. For every sonata written down there were probably many improvised and forgotten. In Scarlatti's time keyboard players were judged less as performers than as composers and improvisers. His virtuosity was but a part of his own creative musical resources

Scarlatti as Teacher

In addition to his duties as King João's chapelmaster, Scarlatti was in charge of the musical education of Don Antonio, the younger brother of the King, and of the King's daughter, Maria Barbara, later Queen of Spain. Princess Maria Barbara had a distinguished musical ancestry and was very talented. She must have been an extraordinary performer if she played Scarlatti's sonatas well. Her musical education included instruction not only in keyboard performance, but also in composition, and she is reported to have been a competent composer. Padre Martini, a well-known contemporary composer and teacher, dedicated the first volume of his *Storia della Musica* in 1757 to Maria Barbara and praised her as having learned from the "Cavaliere Domenico Scarlatti the most intimate knowledge of music and its profoundest artifices." Scarlatti remained in personal contact with Maria Barbara for the rest of his life. She showed gratitude for this lifelong association many years later in her will, in which she bequeathed a ring and 2,000 doubloons to "Domingo Escarlatti;

my music-master, who has followed me with great diligence and loyalty."

Scarlatti's other royal pupil, Don Antonio, was passionately fond of music and reportedly composed several stanzas of a *Stabat Mater*, although the manuscript is no longer in existence. Lodovico Giustini dedicated to Don Antonio in 1732 the first sonatas ever published for pianoforte.

Another of Scarlatti's students was reputed to have been Padre Antonio Soler, although this cannot be verified. Soler would have come in contact with Scarlatti during the years 1752 to 1756, when the Spanish court sojourned at the Escorial, the huge granite structure near Madrid, built in the 16th century. Soler was a member of the monastery of the Escorial.

In 1762 Soler published his treatise *Llave de la Modulacion* at Madrid. This treatise discussed the theoretical background of the modulation methods he and Scarlatti used in their sonatas. Like Scarlatti, Soler's music reaches forward into an extended exploration of the modulatory possibilities of the tonal system.

Even with this small amount of information about Scarlatti's students, we can tell that Scarlatti must have been a thorough and stimulating teacher.

Scarlatti as Composer

All the characteristics of Scarlatti's exciting and original keyboard style are contained in the 30 *Essercizi* published in 1738. He extended the boundaries of keyboard style and technique, and his innovations, already evident in this set of sonatas, were a major contribution to the development of keyboard style. His keyboard music is an art of miniatures whose effects are extraordinary. Scarlatti's sonatas were performed by him or Maria Barbara at court entertainments. The aristocratic audience attending these events did not want to hear works that required long attention or deep thought. So Scarlatti kept his sonatas short and brilliant and filled them with dramatic effects.

Each of the *Essercizi* is titled "Sonata," and binary (two-part) form is frequently used. These pieces share many similar characteristics with others composed by Scarlatti. Some of these characteristics are: a clear harmonic foundation; spontaneity; an improvisatory quality; vigorous and humorous rhythms; the extensive use of available tone colors; frequent imitations of other instruments (castanets, guitars, trumpets, etc.); repetitions of the same musical phrase in different registers; embellishment spread over a wide area so that the sense of line is not lost; sections of rapid passage work composed of scales, broken thirds and arpeggios; unexpected stopping for dramatic effects; and certainly the crossing of hands. Syncopation is a constant feature of the music and its phrase structure is subtle and intriguing—extensions, contractions and overlaps account for much of the freshness and appeal of these works. In Scarlatti's later sonatas, the ones dating from the last few years of his life, every vestige of Baroque pathos and gravity disappears, along with Baroque polyphony. Although there are pieces labeled "fugue," in reality these are elegant, tricky and virtuosic with an undetermined number of voices; these late sonatas are more like character pieces. Scarlatti was well schooled in counterpoint but obviously preferred a free, mixed style incorporating polyphonic elements; thus he established the kind of free instrumental polyphony that both Haydn and Mozart arrived at after considerable studies in strict counterpoint. Scarlatti's musical periods are more rich than rounded, and he frequently employs elisions or spin-offs without disturbing form and construction in the least. His compositions are

often almost exclusively monothematic, while at other times they juggle several motives with ease. Scarlatti is fond of using large, heavy chords, something one seldom encounters in 18th-century keyboard music; but whatever he does is always euphonious and completely idiomatic for the keyboard, and all this with a seemingly eternal youthfulness.

A number of the sonatas were perhaps planned as contrasting pairs, but Scarlatti did not make this arrangement clear. Sometimes it is easy to misjudge Scarlatti's formal plan because he follows no set patterns. Generally he prefers binary (two-part) form, but because his pleasure in thematic motive play often results in a quasi-development section, one expects a reprise, an essential part of the ternary sonata form. That one does not follow has perplexed many theorists weaned on 19th-century German form and structure books.

Other unique aspects of Scarlatti's sonatas come directly from elements of Spanish culture. Ralph Kirkpatrick said:

> There is hardly an aspect of Spanish life, of Spanish popular music and dance, that has not found itself a place in the microcosm that Scarlatti created with his sonatas . . . He has captured the click of castanets, the strumming of guitars, the thud of muffled drums, the harsh bitter wail of gypsy lament, the overwhelming gaiety of the village band, and above all, the wiry tension of the Spanish dance.

These works contain, for example, many abrupt cadences, or "freezes," reminiscent of those points in Spanish dance where the musicians and dancers stop abruptly and hold a particular chord and position. Likewise the many sequences of repeated notes and the dissonances of the *acciaccatura* (an auxiliary note struck simultaneously with its resolution) come from the same source—the guitar and dancers. Scarlatti, however, is never self-conscious, never lost, and as the pieces in this volume demonstrate, his sentences follow one another without coercion despite his ever-fruitful imagination.

Scarlatti's Influence and Reputation

Scarlatti's importance to posterity will always be connected with his keyboard sonatas. His immediate influence was confined to a small circle of students and admirers. It was the 19th century that really discovered Scarlatti, yet this virtuoso-oriented period at times misread his special kind of creative virtuosity. Hans von Bülow published 18 of the sonatas in the edition this editor grew up studying. But Bülow, as well as Alfredo Casella (20th-century composer and editor) and others, did not understand these wonderfully varied pieces. Johannes Brahms, on the other hand, who was quite a musicologist in his spare time, edited a collection of Scarlatti's sonatas with care and insight.[1] Even Carl Czerny edited 200 of the sonatas and was more respectful of the composer's intentions than Bülow. Czerny deserves credit for making many of the sonatas known at a time when only small selections were available.

Other 19th-century musicians admired these sonatas; Verdi loved them, and Chopin spoke eloquently of Scarlatti:

> My colleagues, the piano teachers, are dissatisfied that I am teaching Scarlatti to my pupils. But I am surprised that they are so blind. In his music there are exercises in plenty for the fingers and a good deal of lofty spiritual food. He sometimes reaches even Mozart. If I were not afraid of incurring disfavor of many fools, I would play Scarlatti in my concerts. I maintain that there will come a time when Scarlatti will often be played in concerts, and people will appreciate and enjoy him.[2]

Chopin's prophecy has indeed been fulfilled.

[1]It is of interest that Béla Bartók edited a collection of Scarlatti's sonatas.

[2]Stephen P. Mizwa. *Frédéric Chopin.* New York, 1949.

Guide to Performance Practice in the Scarlatti Sonatas

Dynamics

Scarlatti left only a few rudimentary echo dynamics marked in Sonatas K. 70, 73 and 88. The dynamic range available to him would have been that available on Spanish harpsichords of the period. These would have had essentially three colors: the sounds of the two keyboards alone plus the combination of the two. One keyboard would normally have had two stops at eight-foot pitch, with one of the stops voiced very delicately and the other voiced strongly. It appears that the majority of the late Scarlatti sonatas were composed for such an instrument as this.

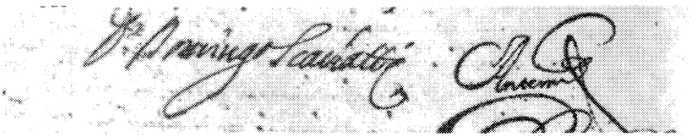
Crescendos could be achieved by increasing the number of notes sounded closely together or by thickening the texture. This increased the dramatic intensity as well as the volume of a passage and thus can be found at climax points of the sonatas. (These points occur near the middle of each half of the sonata, not at the end of each half as might be expected.) The opposite effect occurs when textures are thinned; often Scarlatti has only two voices sounding together. Sometimes he uses thick chords or sudden bass notes for accent. Echo effects may be used but do so sparingly. Repeated phrases should be varied through changes in phrasing and touch as well as dynamics. Many of Scarlatti's sonatas incorporate the idea of orchestral solo-tutti alternation and the varied 18th-century orchestra contrasted with the solo part should be kept in mind in these pieces.

Domenico Scarlatti
(1685–1757)
Lithograph by Alfred Lemoine

Expressive Character

These sonatas cover a broad expressive range, from the courtly to the savage, from an almost saccharine urbanity to a bitter violence. Their gaiety is made all the more intense by an undertone of tragedy. Their moments of meditative melancholy are at times overwhelmed by a surge of extroverted, operatic passion. In particular, Scarlatti has expressed in these works that part of his life that was lived in Spain.

Every mood and temperament seems to be spanned in these pieces, although most of them tend to display a single expressive character. If the performer can discern this character at the outset of learning a sonata, many problems will be solved almost automatically, particularly that of tempo. We can hear fanfare figures reminiscent of royal celebrations, and the guitar seems to have inspired gentle arpeggio strumming effects, internal pedal points, and percussive *acciaccaturas*. We are perhaps tempted to think that Scarlatti played the guitar, but there is no evidence to support this notion. He simply heard that instrument and was inspired by its possibilities and versatility.



Fingering

Correct employment of the fingers is inseparably related to the whole art of performance. C. P. E. Bach

1. Good fingering involves using as little motion as necessary to project the musical content and ensure security.
2. Scarlatti gives specific fingering directions for unusual situations. "Mutandi i deti" means "change the fingers."

Sonata in D, K. 96 (L. 465), measure 33:

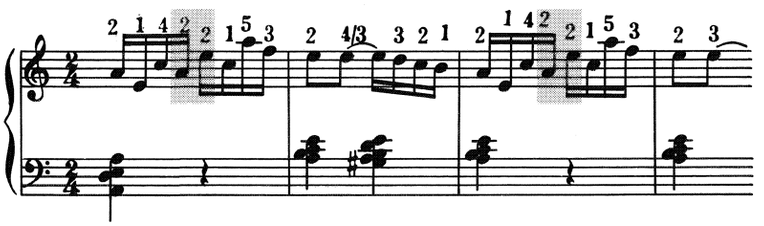
"Con dedo solo" means "with one finger" (i.e., glissando):

Sonata in F, K. 379 (L. 73), measure 33:

These directions are clearly to make the hand's behavior more acrobatic and less orthodox.

3. Scarlatti's only other fingering indications are restricted to directions for distributing the music between the hands (L. for left hand, R. for right hand) or for changing fingers on long trills.
4. Tempo must be considered when working out fingering. What will work at a slow tempo may not work at a fast tempo.
5. Try hands alone when fingering a fast passage—up to tempo.
6. Difficult fingerings can often be more easily solved by working backwards from a place in the music where the fingering is easy to determine.
7. Select fingering that agrees as much as possible with the music's articulation and phrasing.
8. Sudden hand shifts can produce certain articulation effects, as the next example shows:

Sonata in A minor, K. 175, measures 1–4:



9. Do not write in fingerings indiscriminately. This is sometimes a crutch and often a waste of time. Write in only the essential fingerings for technical and expressive requirements. The editor has indicated only what he considers to be essential fingering.

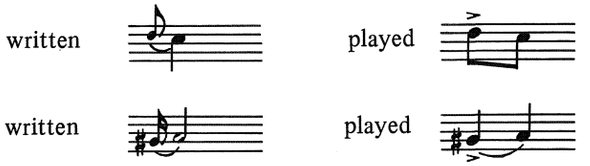
Ornamentation

Scarlatti, as well as his contemporary J. S. Bach, usually wrote out the actual notes of his ornaments. Scarlatti did not leave any tables or explanatory directions for ornaments. Some authorities feel that, except for the addition of an occasional *appoggiatura* or *trill*, Scarlatti did not expect the performer to add many florid embellishment as was the norm for most Italian singers and violinists when performing music of their time. Fortunately for us, C. P. E. Bach, in his treatise *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, dealt with most of the ornamentation problems found in Scarlatti's music.

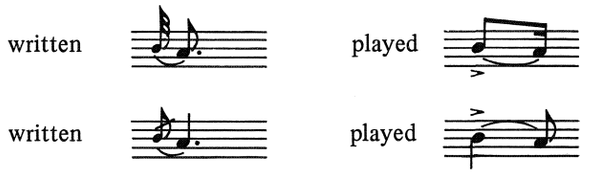
The Appoggiatura: The *appoggiatura*, appears in music as a small note tied to a normal-sized note and is commonly called a *grace note* today. *Appoggiatura* comes from the Italian word *appoggiare*, to lean or rest, and is thus a note that seems to lean on the note that follows it. The *appoggiatura* is an accented dissonance and should be played on the beat, taking its value from the note that follows. The value of this main note and its context, not the *appoggiatura*'s notation, determine the length of the *appoggiatura*. Scarlatti uses all of the following to indicate *appoggiaturas*:

The *appoggiatura* should be slurred quietly to the main note, whether indicated or not.

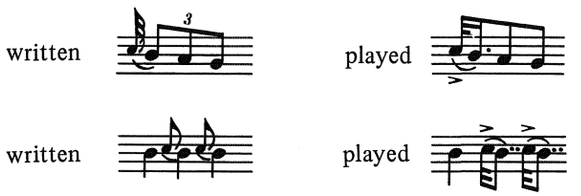
Long Appoggiatura: This is the most frequently used form; it takes half the time value of its main note:



Long *appoggiaturas* may take two-thirds of the value of the main note if this note is dotted (more easily divisible by three):

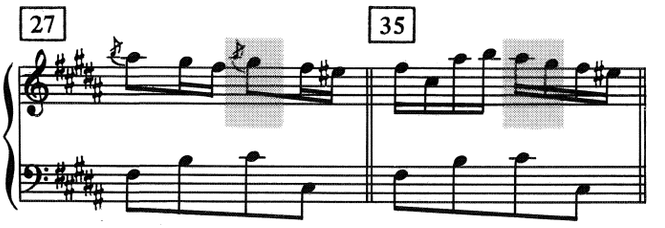


Short Appoggiatura: Short *appoggiaturas* take as little time as possible from the main note. They frequently occur before fast notes and must be played with great rapidity so the main rhythmic outline remains intact:

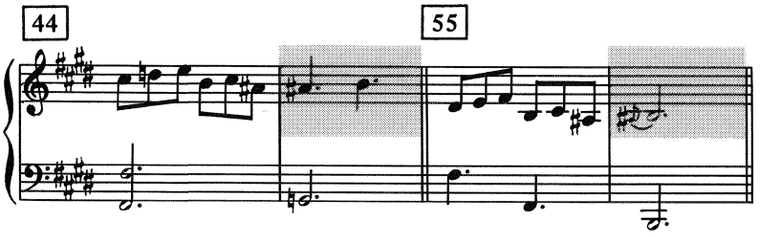


Occasionally Scarlatti is inconsistent with his notation and in parallel passages realizes the *appoggiaturas* (i.e., writes them out), thereby giving us clues as to how they should be performed:

Sonata K. 261 (L. 148), *Allegro*,
measure 27: measure 35:

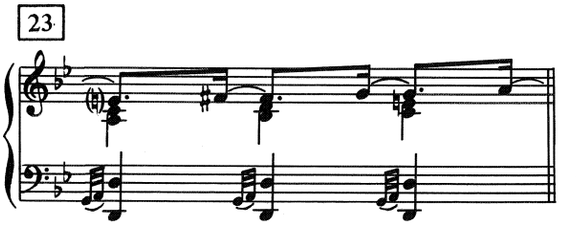


Sonata K. 531 (L. 430), *Allegro*,
measures 44–45: measures 55–56:

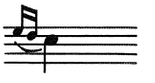


Occasionally groups of grace notes should be played before the beat when the physical layout of the keyboard and/or musical logic seem to suggest this realization:

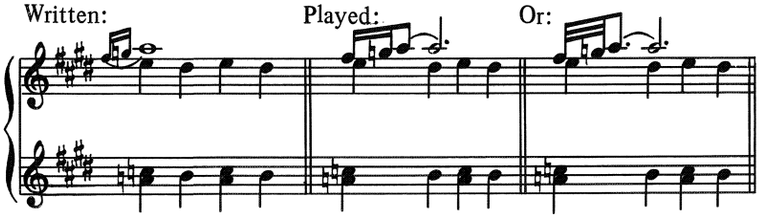
Sonata K. 8 (L. 488), *Allegro*, measure 23:



The Slide (Schleifer): Scarlatti writes this out using two, three or four small notes. It may begin below or above its main note. It should be played on the beat gracefully and quickly:

written  played 

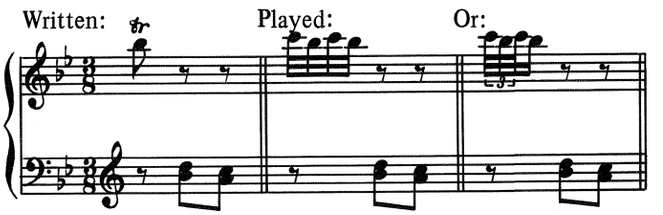
Sonata K. 495 (L. 426), *Allegro*, measure 53:

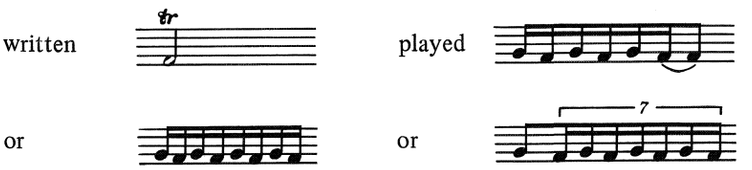


The Trill: Scarlatti uses trill signs ~~, tr, and tre interchangeably. They give no indication regarding the kind of trill to be played, its length or its speed. Only tr is used in this edition. Scarlatti's trills begin (almost without exception) on the same beat of the main (written) note and usually on the upper auxiliary (the note above the main note). They should contain at least four notes, with the performer deciding on the

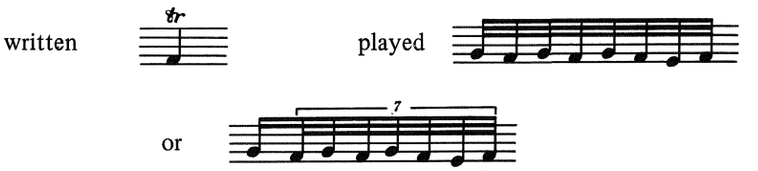
speed and duration of the trill and whether terminating notes should be added. The final note should be the trill's main note.

Sonata K. 442 (L. 319), *Allegro,* measure 1:

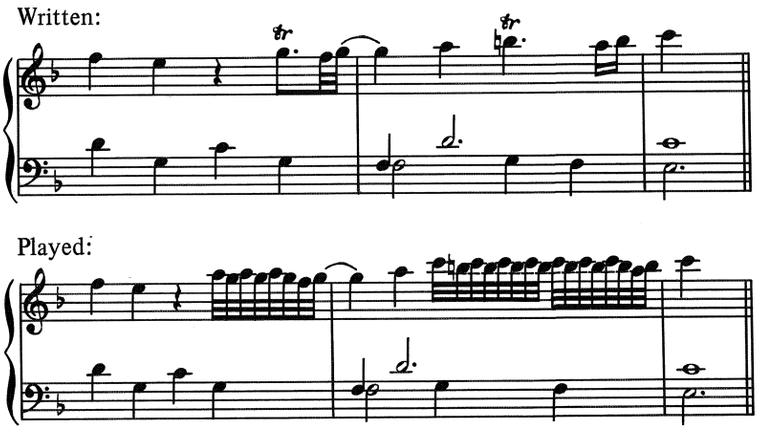




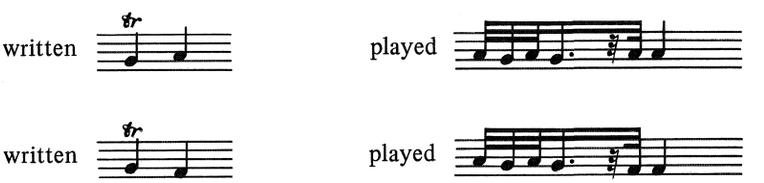
Trills with Termination (Suffix) or Finishing Notes: Scarlatti sometimes indicates a termination or ending to a trill in normal-sized notes. These terminating or finishing notes should be played at the same speed as the trill, thereby fusing with the body of the trill. The terminated trill requires at least six notes. The performer may add a termination consisting of the lower auxiliary and main note to any trill that is followed by the next higher or lower scale note:



Sonata L. 540 (L.S. 17), *Allegretto,* measures 18–20:

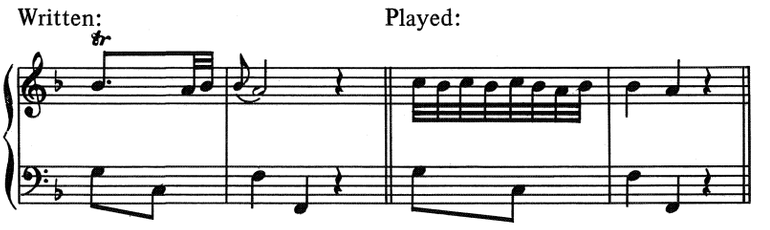


A termination which anticipates the next note may be added to a trill. Let the trill come to a stop before its full time value, pause very briefly, and then play the following note quickly in anticipation of the next note:



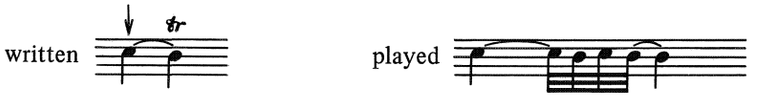
Scarlatti frequently follows the last note of a trill with an *appoggiatura*:

Sonata K. 256 (L. 228), *Andante*, measures 8–9:



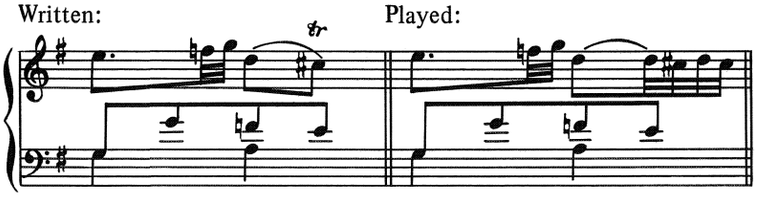
Generally the performer should not add terminating trill notes when the trill is followed by a rest, a double bar or a main note that is further away than the next stepwise scale tone.

Tied Trill: Scarlatti uses this ornament infrequently; it consists of a trill which is preceded by the same note as its upper auxiliary. Do not repeat the beginning note of the trill, but instead tie the preceding note to the first note of the trill. A slur extends from the preceding note to the trill, which is the determining factor in the notation:



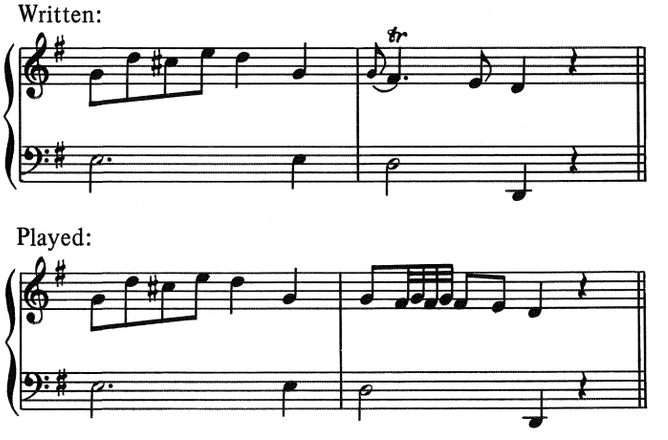
Do not interpret this slur (indicated by an arrow) as being only an indication of *legato*; it is much more than that. This ornament sounds the most musical when incorporated into a smooth diatonic line where no accent is necessary.

Sonata K. 412 (L. 182), *Allegro*, measure 35:



Sometimes Scarlatti will write an *appoggiatura* which repeats the previous note, mainly as a precaution against using a tied trill.

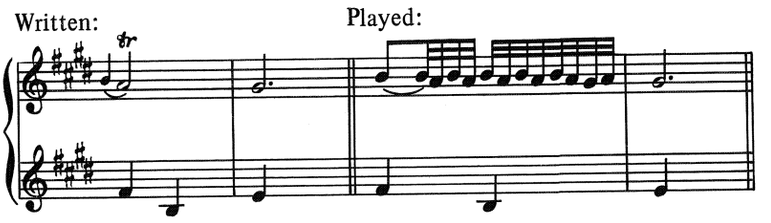
Sonata K. 291 (L. 61), *Andante*, measures 15–16:



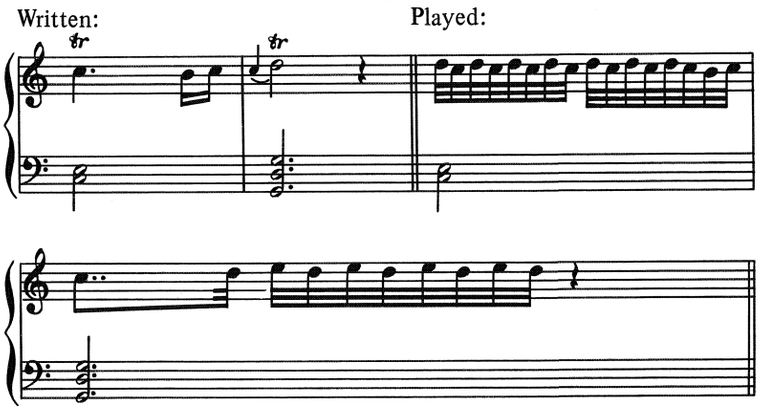
Trill Preceded by an Appoggiatura: A small note preceding a trill indicates an appoggiatura (from above or below). This generally can be interpreted as a long appoggiatura followed by an unprepared trill (i.e., one in which the trill begins on

the main note rather than the upper neighbor). In the case of a trill preceded by an upper appoggiatura, the appoggiatura function of the upper trill note is emphasized.

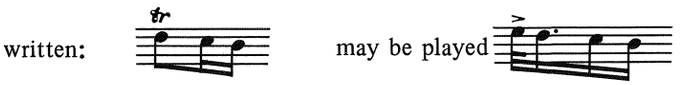
Sonata K. 206 (L. 257), *Andante*, measures 6–7:



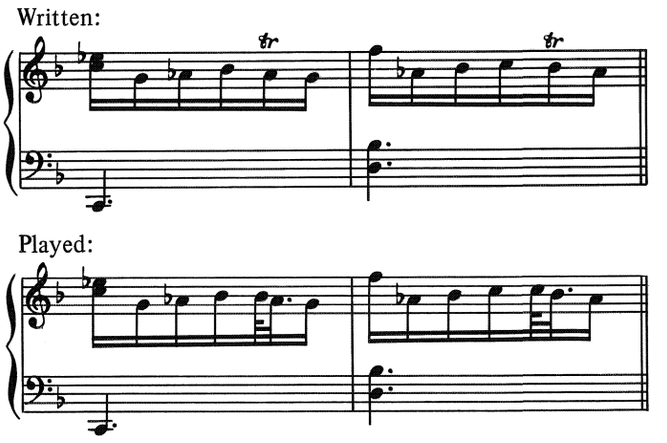
Sonata K. 527 (L. 458), *Allegro assai*, measures 11–12:



Trill Substitutes on Quick Notes: If the performer cannot play the full four notes for a trill on a quick note, an upper *appoggiatura* may be substituted in its place.

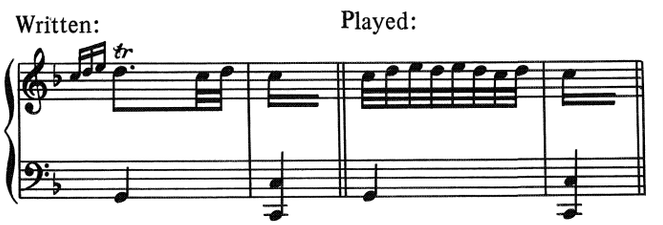


Sonata K. 349 (L. 170), *Allegro*, measures 108–109:

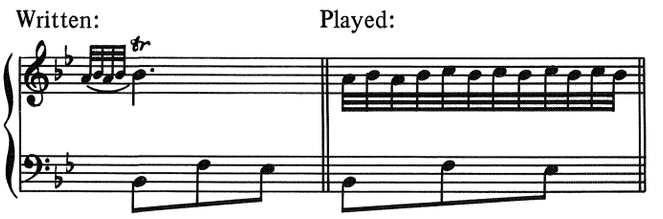


Trill with Prefix: Small notes before a trill indicate the trill with prefix. The small notes should be played on the beat. Their speed is determined by the context of the trill.

Sonata K. 256 (L. 228), *Andante*, measures 21–22:



Sonata K. 489 (L.S. 41), *Allegro*, measure 95:

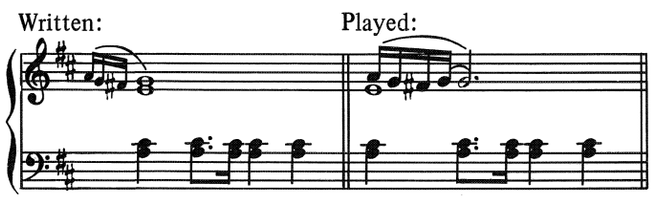


Other Ornaments and Performance Directions in Scarlatti's Sonatas

Mordent: Scarlatti writes out this ornament in normal-sized notation. He does not use the conventional sign 𝆝.

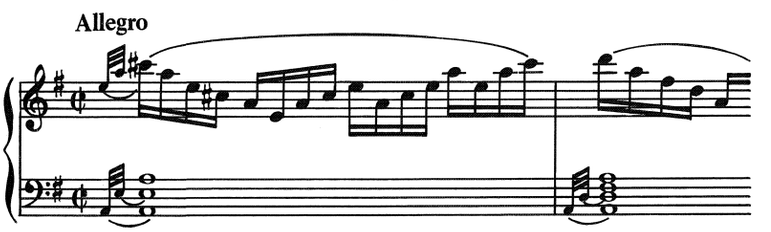
Turn: Scarlatti writes out the turn, usually in small notes, rather than using the ∾ sign.

Sonata K. 490 (L. 206), *Cantabile*, measure 26:



Arpeggiation of Chords: Scarlatti did not use an arpeggio sign to indicate when a chord should be broken. But the rolling of chords either upwards or downwards, from the top or bottom towards the middle, etc., was an expressive device frequently used in Baroque keyboard music. Scarlatti surely had arpeggio usage in mind in the following example (small notes *on the beat*, not before it).

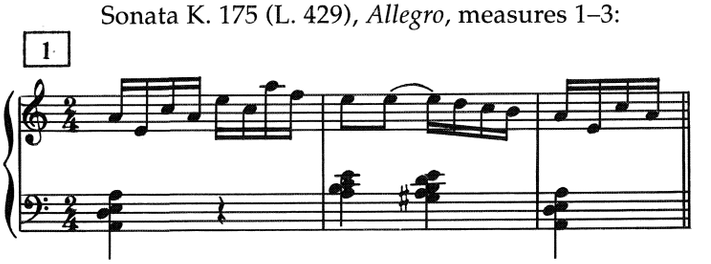
Sonata K. 394, *Allegro*, measure 64:



Since both fast and slow arpeggiated chords are such an essential part of harpsichord technique, there is no doubt that Scarlatti used them frequently.

Acciaccatura: This word means "crushing" and refers to an auxiliary note struck simultaneously with its resolution. Scarlatti never indicated the use of an *acciaccatura* in his sonatas by a sign, but rather included them in chords as nonharmonic dissonances. In fact, this is one of the most distinctive features of Scarlatti's style. He clearly relishes these discords for their percussive effect, and these note clusters can be best explained, perhaps, by analogy with guitar music.

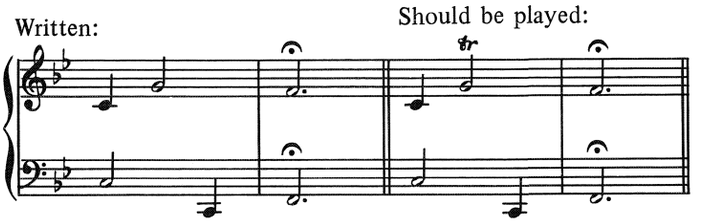
Sonata K. 175 (L. 429), *Allegro*, measures 1–3:



Adding Ornaments: Numerous situations in these sonatas suggest the addition of ornaments, especially on repeats. Add them at the following places:

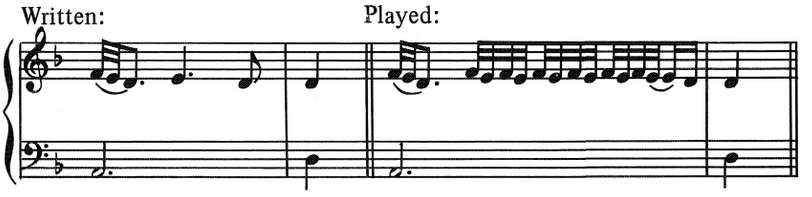
1. When a strong dominant-tonic progression takes place, usually at the end of a large section.

Sonata in B-flat Major, K. 393 (L. 74), *Minuet*, measures 33–34:



2. When a dotted pattern occurs at a cadence, such as a dotted quarter followed by an eighth, a trill can be interpolated. The short note (eighth) should be made even shorter.

Sonata K. 89b (L. 211), *Grave*, measures 17–19:



Ornaments are missing sometimes when consistency would lead the performer to expect them. In such places, the performer must decide whether to insert them or whether there is perhaps some reason for the omission.

Phrasing and Articulation

Scarlatti left few phrasing marks, slurs or staccato indications in the sonatas. But frequently he uses only a few slurs to indicate a pattern which is to be continued. Notes that form a broken chord with slurs over or under it indicate the keys are to be held down and sounded as a chord.

Smaller patterns underlie much of Scarlatti's figuration, and the performer must be aware of their importance. Stepwise movement tends to be more connected (*legato*) while skips tend to be more distinctly articulated (*staccato*). The normal touch for pieces in a fast or moderate tempo was the "ordinary movement," which meant a slight detaching of the notes that was proportionate to their time values. This is an excellent device for producing clarity. Slower movements used more sustained notes.

Small breaths of articulated silence should normally be made before all *appoggiaturas*, before wide skips, before long tied notes and often before a change in prevailing note values in a passage.

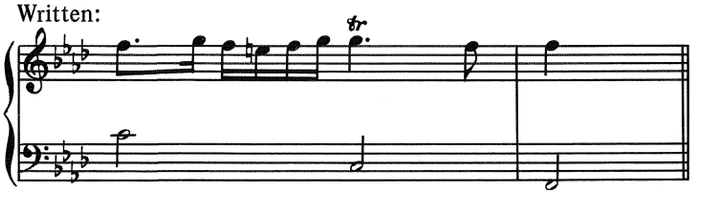
C. P. E. Bach in his "Essay" gives a clue as how to arrive at correct phrasing: "above all, lose no opportunity to hear accomplished singing. Indeed, it is a good practice to sing instrumental melodies, so as to be able to reach an understanding of their correct performance." The human voice is the natural medium of musical expression. Vocal phrases are supported by a single breath, and phrase divisions are set off by breath intake. In Scarlatti's keyboard music there are breathing places as there are in song and speech, and the sensitive pianist can bring vitality and expressiveness to the music by imitating singers just as C. P. E. Bach suggested. Scarlatti's music tends to use more upbeat phrasing than on-the-beat phrasing. Dance gestures or vocal style underlie most of Scarlatti's musical phrasing.

Rhythmic Freedom in Scarlatti's Notation

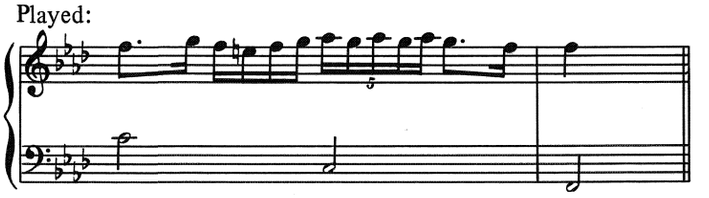
Scarlatti's rhythmic treatment reflected the performance practice of his time, when much more was left to the performer's discretion than today. Certain alterations and unwritten freedoms were taken for granted.

Dotted Rhythms: Short notes following dotted notes were shorter than notated. This "overdotting" adds a strongly projected rhythm and is used by Scarlatti in a number of his sonatas.

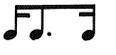
Written:



Played:

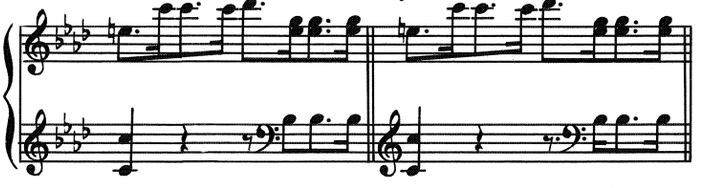


A rhythmic pattern written as: 

was often altered to be performed like: 

Sonata K. 238 (L. 27), *Andante*, measure 40:

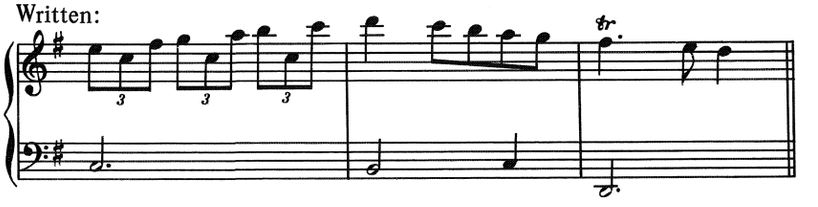
Written: Played:



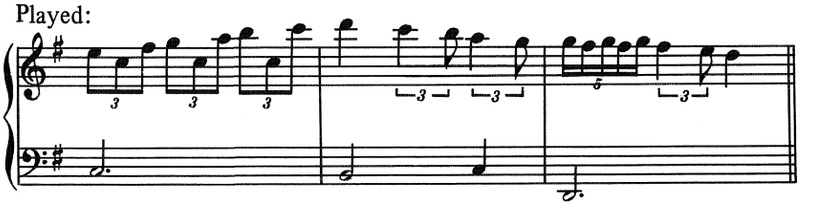
Triplet Rhythms Where triplet rhythm predominates, notated pairs of eighths should be adjusted to fit the triplet pattern. Notice the following example where the "overdotted" trill should be adjusted to fit the triplet pattern. To clarify the rhythm, the trill should be stopped on the dot.

Sonata in G Major, K. 391 (L. 79), *Allegro*, measures 34–36:

Written:



Played:



When Scarlatti uses the word *Arbitri*, he means for the passage to be played somewhat freely.

Tempo

Scarlatti left Italian terms like *Allegro, Presto,* or *Andante,* etc., at the beginning of his sonatas, but unfortunately these words do not tell us much about tempo. They serve more to indicate rhythmic character, context and mood. Most of us play Scarlatti too fast. A *Presto* with Scarlatti may be more accurately interpreted as "alert and lively" than as a license for a virtuosic display of dexterity. Even though Scarlatti was a spectacular virtuoso, his keyboard technique, as reflected in these sonatas, must always be counterbalanced by considerations of harmonic nuance, vocal line, and sharp rhythmic detail that should be reflected in the performer's choice of tempo.

Remember, a fast tempo sounds even faster to the listener than to the performer. All great music surely can be performed expressively at more than one tempo. Many of Scarlatti's sonatas require more than one rate of speed, especially the ones containing contrasting sections.

Some of the sonatas are dance movements, and considerable tempo guidance can be derived from a basic knowledge of what these dances were and how they moved. The section *About Each Sonata* provides some assistance in this area.

Ornamentation often provides insights regarding tempo. Ornaments that sound strident, bumpy and forced into the musical texture are often an indication that the natural movement of the sonata is too fast.

The performer must decide on a tempo that permits clarity in the melodic figuration and harmonic changes. The editorial suggested metronome marks are just that: suggestions. Each performer must ultimately select a tempo suggested by the music that will allow him/her best to realize the mood and character of the music.

Playing Scarlatti on the Piano

The pianist should not attempt to imitate a harpsichord. He/she should not try to use all the resources of the piano, for that could destroy the character of the music, but rather should use the piano coloristically and with much imagination. Ralph Kirkpatrick says it best in his monumental book on Scarlatti:

> Nothing is more fatal than allowing the musical imagination to be restricted by the limits of two or three colors or by the limitations of any instrument one is using . . . Scarlatti's harpsichord music is full of effects of color conceived in extra-harpsichord terms. The player of Scarlatti, no matter what the restrictions of his instrument, must be ready at all times to think in terms of imaginary orchestration, of the voice, of the sounds concomitant with the Spanish dance, of the not-strictly musical or of the frankly extra-musical sound effects of which I have spoken in connection with the real-life stimulus that lies, barely concealed or transformed almost beyond recognition, behind so much of Scarlatti's music. Scarlatti's harpsichord, while supremely itself, is continually menacing a transformation into something else. It can never be taken literally.

If the reader has heard Vladimir Horowitz perform Scarlatti, then he/she has some idea of the amazing possibilities that are available when playing Scarlatti on our wonderful instrument, the piano. Indeed, Scarlatti's work has come to be considered the lawful property of the pianist, as well as, of course, the harpsichordist.

These sonatas present a physical challenge to the pianist, who must train his/her hands to move rapidly over the keyboard and his/her fingers to dance nimbly "on the spot" (for fast repeated notes).

Although not present on Scarlatti's harpsichord, the damper pedal can be used for adding color. But it should not be used in a way that would cause muddiness or detract from the clarity of the writing. Learn the sonatas first without pedal, then add pedaling for occasional accents or shadings of nuance. The *una corda* (soft or left) pedal may be used to change tone color, as well as to play quietly.

The pianist with special feeling for specific musical values, for line, rhythm, and tapestry-like harmonic texture, is the one who will succeed in making these sonatas sound best on the piano, even if only slightly acquainted with the harpsichord.

Explanation of K. and L. Numbers

L. numbers come from the catalog of Italian pianist, composer and editor Alessandro Longo (1864–1945), who in 1906 published a complete edition (11 volumes) of the Scarlatti sonatas. L.S. refers to the supplemental volume Longo compiled (volume 11).

K. numbers come from harpsichordist Ralph Kirkpatrick (1911–1984), who catalogued 555 sonatas in his book *Domenico Scarlatti*, published originally in 1953. Both K. and L. numbers are used for identifying purposes in this edition.

About this Edition

The purpose of this edition is to introduce to piano students and teachers some of the wonderful keyboard music of Domenico Scarlatti and to provide assistance in the areas of performance practice and historical background as they relate to these pieces. This music is presented from a practicing musician's point of view, one who is always interested in helping the pianist achieve an ever-better and stylistically correct interpretation.

This edition is designed for performance on the modern piano, and the pieces have been selected primarily for the intermediate student. Editorial additions, such as dynamics, fingering, articulation and phrasing, realization of ornaments and metronome indications, are included in parentheses. Pedaling has not been indicated, but there is no reason it should not be used for color. Some pedaling suggestions are included in the discussion of the pieces in the section *About Each Sonata* (page 22). The editor has retained all of Scarlatti's indications for distributions between the hands. Scarlatti's use of the letters M for *manca* (left hand) and D for *destra* (right hand) have been translated to L and R.

Today, over 200 years after his death, hundreds of Scarlatti's sonatas are still practically unknown. *At the Piano with Scarlatti* includes two sonatas from the *Essercizi* (K. 2 and 3) plus some familiar and less familiar sonatas, with the Venice, Parma and Vienna manuscript collections being used as the basis for the text. K. 34 is an exception and its source is listed in the discussion of the sonata in *About Each Sonata.*

To assist the teacher and student, three categories of grading (Early Intermediate, Intermediate and Late Intermediate) are used that generally correspond to the accepted divisions of difficulty. No gradings can be absolute, and the assignment of a grade category does not mean that all pieces of the same category are equally interchangeable. A choice must be made according to the musical

development, technical ability and maturity of the student.

History, performance problems and suggestions related to each sonata are also discussed in *About Each Sonata.*

I wish to thank the staffs of the following libraries who helped me by replying to questions and supplying photographs of source material: Conservatorio di Musica Benedetto Marcello, Venice; Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid; Fabrica da Sé Patriarcal, Lisbon; and the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Vienna. To all of these, and to the several friends and colleagues who have shared their experience with Scarlatti's music with me, I extend my warmest thanks.

At the conclusion of his introduction to the *Essercizi*, Scarlatti closed by saying "VIVI FELICE"—and with Scarlatti let us say,

"Live happily!"

Sources Consulted

This list comprises works consulted in the preparation of this volume:

C. P. E. Bach. *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen.* Berlin, 1759–1762. (William J. Mitchell, tr. and ed., New York, 1949).

Charles Burney. *A General History of Music . . .* London, 1771–1789.

Seunghyun Choi. *New Found Eighteenth-Century Manuscripts of Domenico Scarlatti's Sonatas and their Relationship to Other Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century Sources.* Ph.D. dissertation, Madison, Wisconsin, 1974.

Ralph Kirkpatrick. *Domenico Scarlatti.* Princeton, New Jersey, 1953.

John Mainwaring. *Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Frederic Handel.* London, 1760.

Carolyn Maxwell, ed. *Scarlatti Solo Piano Literature.* Boulder, Colorado, 1985.

Stephen P. Mizwa. *Frédéric Chopin.* New York, 1949.

For Further Reading

Malcolm Boyd. *Domenico Scarlatti — Master of Music.* New York, 1986.

Mark Linley. "Keyboard Technique and Articulation: Evidence for the Performance Practices of Bach, Handel and Scarlatti," in *Bach, Handel, Scarlatti: Tercentenary Essays.* ed. P. Williams, Cambridge, 1985, pp. 207–43.

About Each Sonata

Sonata in G Major,
K. 2 (L. 388) *Page 26*

This sonata, with its simple figuration of broken intervals and chords, provides an excellent introduction to Scarlatti's technique. Feel the lively 3/8 meter in one pulse to the measure. Each hand participates equally with the tossed around figures and rhythms. Echo dynamics are effective if not overused. This is an excellent study for evenness in broken chord technique, especially for the left hand, and for the cultivation of that light, short, yet firm staccato so characteristic of Scarlatti's keyboard style. Pay special attention to the left-hand *staccati* and be sure to have the two hands play with equal clarity and tone quality throughout.

Late Intermediate.

Sonata in A Minor,
K. 3 (L. 378) *Page 28*

Harmonic and rhythmic surprises pervade this sonata. It also contains syncopated suspensions, chromatic scales and arpeggiated diminished seventh chords. The fast 16th-note opening and closing figures are not difficult and serve to capture the audience's immediate attention. Much use of imitation requires independence of the hands. Thematic ideas should be contrasted with carefully selected phrasing and articulation.

Late Intermediate.

Sonata in D Minor
K. 34 (L. S. 7) *Page 30*

This charming sonata closely resembles the music that Scarlatti was writing in Rome between 1708 and 1714 for the Queen of Poland. It is basically lyrical, short, and easy to read. Harmonic interest is provided by the unusual spelling of the modulating minor scales (e.g., B-flat, B natural in measures 1–12, E-flat, E natural in measures 13–28). Moderate use of echo dynamics will add interest. This work is not included in the Venice or Parma manuscripts. Its source is the first edition, *XLII Suites de Pieces pour le Clavecin*. Thos. Roseingrave, London, 1739.

Early Intermediate.

Sonata in G Major
(Capriccio), K. 63 (L. 84) *Page 31*

This early work shows the influences of both Handel and dance music. It is an attractive and delightful sonata that contains numerous thematic ideas and accessible patterns. Scarlatti used the word "Capriccio" as a subtitle for this piece, since a fanciful and humorous mood seems to permeate the music. It is extremely keyboard oriented with many familiar 18th-century figuration techniques. There should never be a break or the slightest hesitancy in the basic pulse throughout this sonata. Keep the rhythm clearly punctuated by brisk phrase or group accents. Staccatos should be dry, short and sharp and should be played with firm fingertips. All should be well articulated.

Intermediate.

Sonata in F Major,
K. 78 (L. 75) *Page 34*

This sonata is contained only in the Venice Manuscript collection. It does not have a tempo indication, but "Giga" and "Minuet" are used as subtitles. The consistent texture features a lively melody over mainly broken and fragmented chords in the bass. The extended left-hand trill at measures 9–14 should be quieter than the right hand. The right hand at measure 48 reads C E G in the manuscript but this seems to be an error. In this edition it has been changed to C E F. The Giga may be repeated at the conclusion of the Minuet as in *Da Capo* form.

Intermediate.

Sonata in C Major,
K. 95 (L. 358) *Page 36*

A major feature of this sonata is the buoyant right hand continually crossing over the left-hand broken chord figuration. To acquire a brilliant, yet graceful and smooth performance, concentrated attention should be focused on two points: (1) The quick crossing of the right hand over the left hand should be executed close to the keys and with firm and pointed fingertips. (2) The left-hand triplet figure should be played

with perfect evenness and without accents. Quick use of the pedal on the right-hand low notes (when crossing over) will gently increase the sonority. Memorization will assist the required accuracy.

Late Intermediate.

Sonata in D Major,
K. 178 (L. 162) *Page 38*

At measure 6 the Venice manuscript has a quarter note D followed by an eighth note A in the right hand. At measure 40 the Parma manuscript has a quarter note A followed by an eighth rest in the right hand. In measures 43 and 45 of the Venice manuscript the right-hand rhythm is an eighth-note chord followed by two eighth rests. Scarlatti develops the contrasting thematic material in his unique way. The opening idea is constructed of eighth notes within an octave imitated in each hand and sometimes coupled with one- or two-octave scales. A second idea (measure 18 forward) features a broken chord within an octave treated in various rhythmic patterns. The use of sequence and fresh harmonic progressions add special charm to this effective sonata.

Late Intermediate.

Sonata in D Major,
K. 277 (L. 183) *Page 40*

At measure 14 the Parma manuscript gives a G-sharp as the first *appoggiatura* instead of an A natural. This must be an error. At measure 22 both the Venice and Parma manuscripts have a B on the last quarter note in the top part of the right hand. Since this is almost unplayable with the trill and is harmonically unlikely, the editor has used a G-sharp in the present volume, which is also found in the Vienna manuscript VII. 28011, vols. A-G. In measure 39 both the Parma and Venice manuscripts give E C for the right-hand third and fourth notes. The reading given comes from the Vienna manuscript. This beautiful sonata is very song-like and requires subtle phrasing to present its lyrical style. Frequent two-note slurs gradually develop into triplets, and the melodic line smooths out, making the necessary *cantabile* (singing) style easier to project. Proper fingering with the ornamentation is essential if the line is to flow easily and uninterrupted.

Intermediate.

Sonata in A Major,
K. 323 (L. 95) *Page 42*

The first and second endings at measure 33 have been added to complete the correct number of beats when the repeat is taken. This short, fast, toccata-like sonata has a bouncy character and is somewhat reminiscent of a gigue without the dotted rhythms. It sounds good played either with echo effects or forte throughout. The editor has combined elements of both approaches. The line should have a good sense of direction or the repetitive rhythms may sound tedious. Clear eighth-note and detached articulation on short patterns are essential for a fine performance.

Late Intermediate.

Sonata in C Major,
K. 330 (L. 55) *Page 44*

First and second endings at measure 49 are enclosed by Scarlatti's "great circles" (phraselike lines) and have been left in the text, even though most editions omit them. This energetic sonata is written mainly in two voices and reflects the instrumental style so often found in Scarlatti's keyboard works. A strong, dance-like quality is implied by the phrasing and accents. Sequential patterns are pianistic but require fast-changing positions, occasionally at wide intervals. The glittering trills should end with a turn.

Late Intermediate.

Sonata in G Major,
(Minuet) K. 391 (L. 79) *Page 47*

This sonata is subtitled *Minuet* in the Parma manuscript only. At measure 15 there is no slur for the *appoggiatura* in

the Parma manuscript. In both the Parma and Venice manuscripts the word *Tacet* is written in measures 17–19, 23–25, 45–47, 51–53 to indicate there are intentionally no notes in the bass part. Whole rests have been added in this edition. This sonata requires smooth, even legato finger work. Do not neglect the simple left-hand part, as the single bass notes must always be played with enough emphasis to clearly show the harmonic structure. Use pedal for the horn call effects at measures 17–19, 23–25, 45–47, and 51–53.

Intermediate.

Sonata in B-Flat Major,
(Minuet) K. 393 (L. 74) *Page 50*

The slower tempo of this Minuet makes some of the technical problems easier. The two-note slur has much motivic importance, and it is carefully varied by the addition of dotted rhythms at the close of each section. Sensitive phrasing and legato touch are important throughout this piece. Scarlatti did not indicate a mood or tempo for this sonata. The right-hand figures at measures 50, 52, 54, 58, 60, 62 are fine examples of the free rhythmic notation common to the style of the period.

Intermediate.

Sonata in G Major,
K. 431 (L. 83) *Page 53*

At measure 8, the left-hand half-note D does not appear in the Parma manuscript. The easy beginning conceals the wide, broken chords that appear later in the right hand against left hand material that becomes increasingly more complex. The left hand occasionally takes on melodic interest coupled with a subtle countermelody. Much use is made of hand expansion and contraction. A major requirement is to produce an evenly flowing legato: play each of the four-bar phrases as if singing them in one breath. To help achieve this, be sure your wrist is supple with lateral movements and fingers that always stay close to the keys, gliding from one position to the next. The massive sounds in the left hand at measures 13–16 should be played sonorously but not too loudly. This piece is easy to read and memorize.

Intermediate.

Sonata in B-Flat Major,
(Minuet) K. 440 (L. 97) *Page 54*

Scarlatti left no tempo or character indication for this sonata. In both the Venice and Parma manuscripts the final E in measures 17 and 21 reads E natural. Judging from the dissonance, this is probably an error. The Parma manuscript does not contain a repeat sign at the double bar at measure 60. Stress the first pulse of each measure, as this will help achieve the swaying, gentle yet steady dance rhythm. This should be accomplished by gently increasing finger pressure, and using supple wrist motion; this will produce a slightly heavier tone quality that will only emphasize, not accent, the beat. Fairly strict time should be kept throughout. Sudden changes in note values (measures 17–18, 21–22) and syncopation (measures 18–19, 22–23, 42–43, 46–47) provide challenges.

Intermediate.

Sonata in A Major,
K. 453 (no L. listing) *Page 57*

The even eighths in measures 18, 51 and 52 should be changed to conform to the prevailing triplet rhythm, as notated in the footnotes. The appoggiatura at measure 26 has been added to correspond with measure 60. Scarlatti uses broken triadic figuration as the unifying motive of this sonata. He treats it variously as triplets, as quarter notes, in ascending and descending patterns, and in different tonalities. A slight ritard at measure 63 is appropriate.

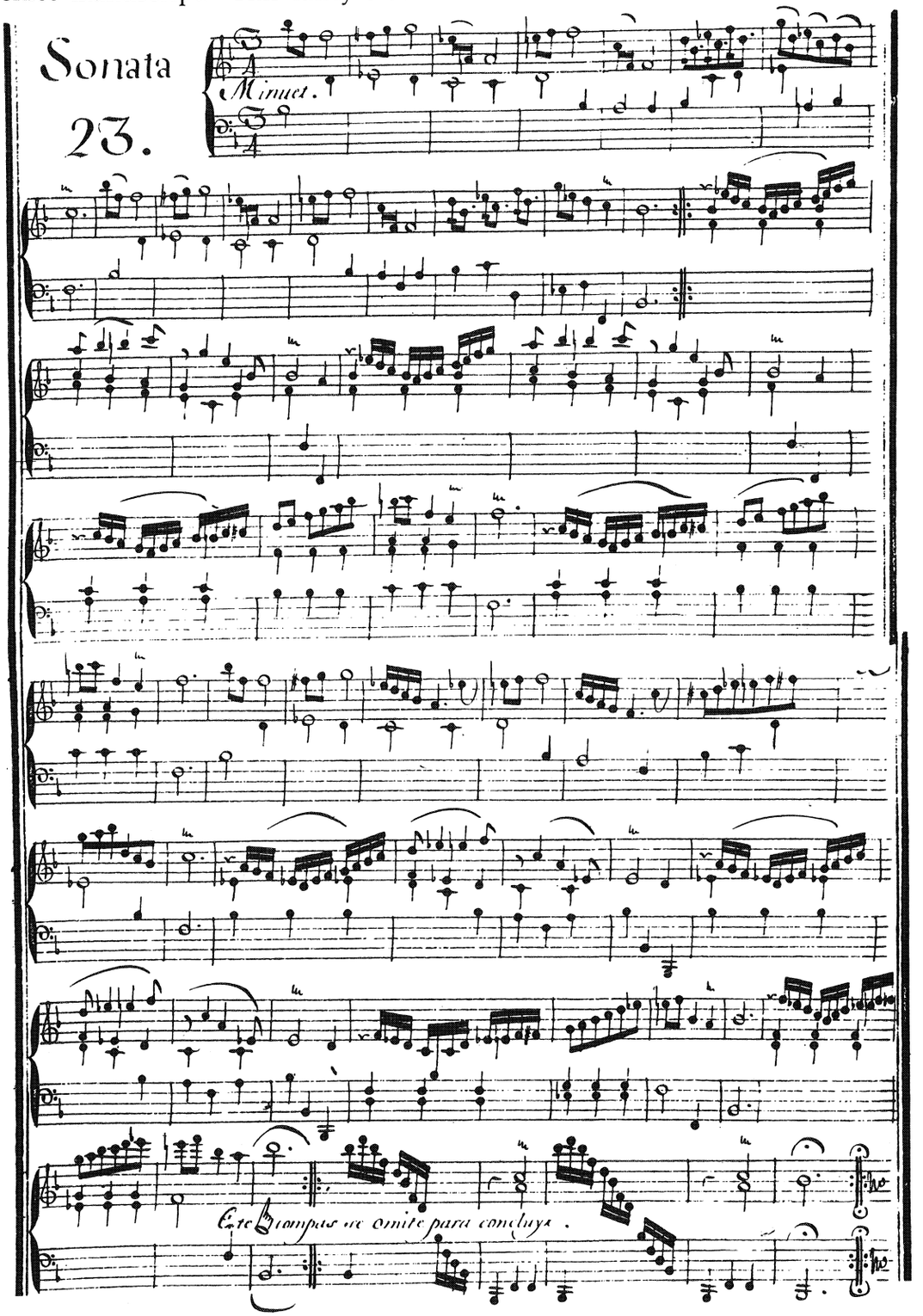
Intermediate.

Sonata in F Minor,
K. 481 (L. 187) *Page 60*

The *fermata* at measure 8 is also implied at measures 44 and 51, where they have

been added by the editor. The trill at measure 13 appears only in the Parma manuscript. Both the Parma and Venice manuscripts have an A-flat in the right hand on the second half of the last quarter in measure 43. This is an obvious error and should be A natural. The trill is missing at measure 64 in the Venice manuscript. This fairly slow sonata depends on careful phrasing and *cantabile* style for a successful performance. Technical problems involve tonal balance, clef changes, syncopation, and sustained and moving notes. The second section contains some very interesting modulations.

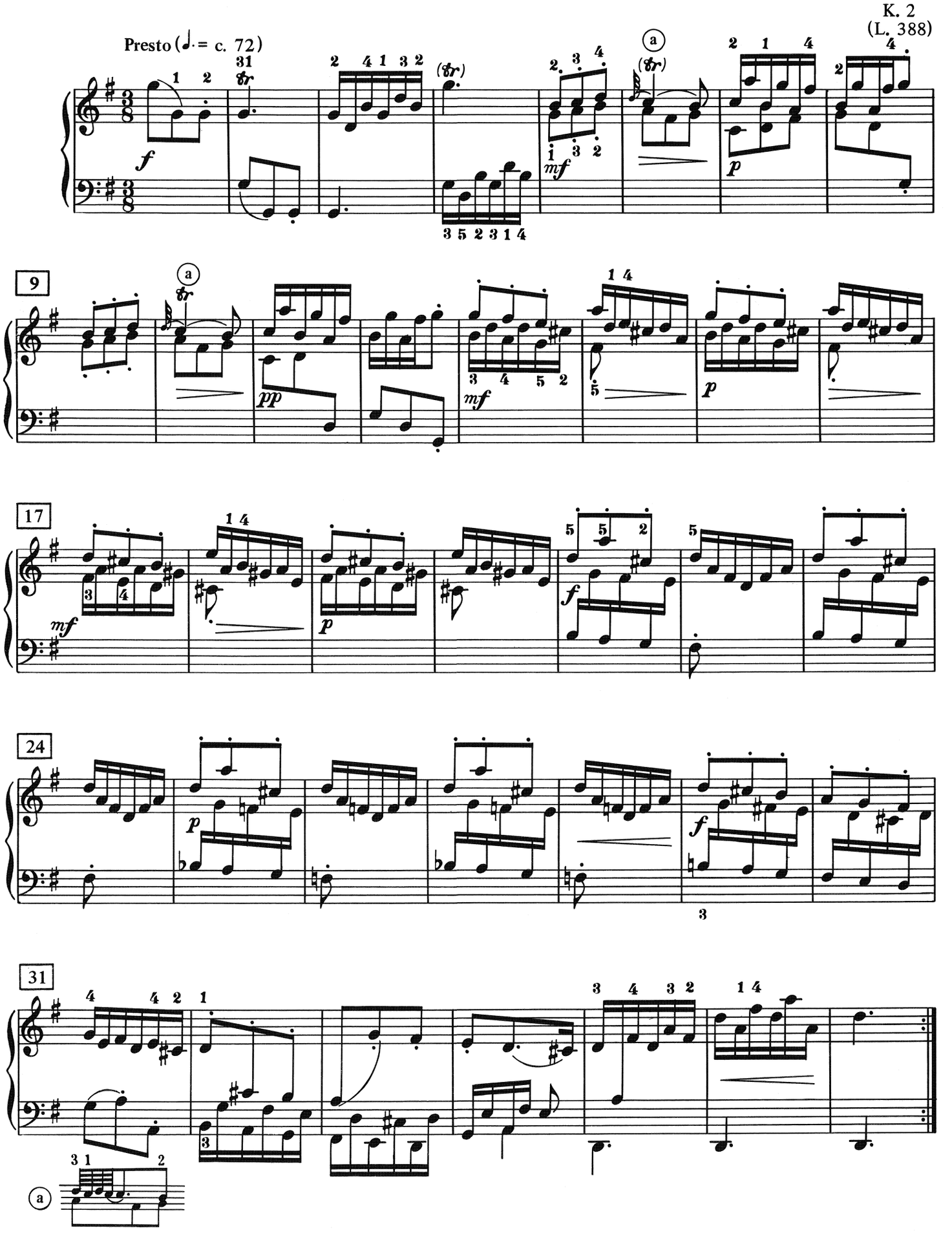
Intermediate.



Facsimile of *Sonata in B-flat Major,* K. 440, L. 97.

Sonata in G Major

K. 2
(L. 388)



Sonata in A Minor

K. 3
(L. 378)

Presto (𝅗𝅥 = c. 116)