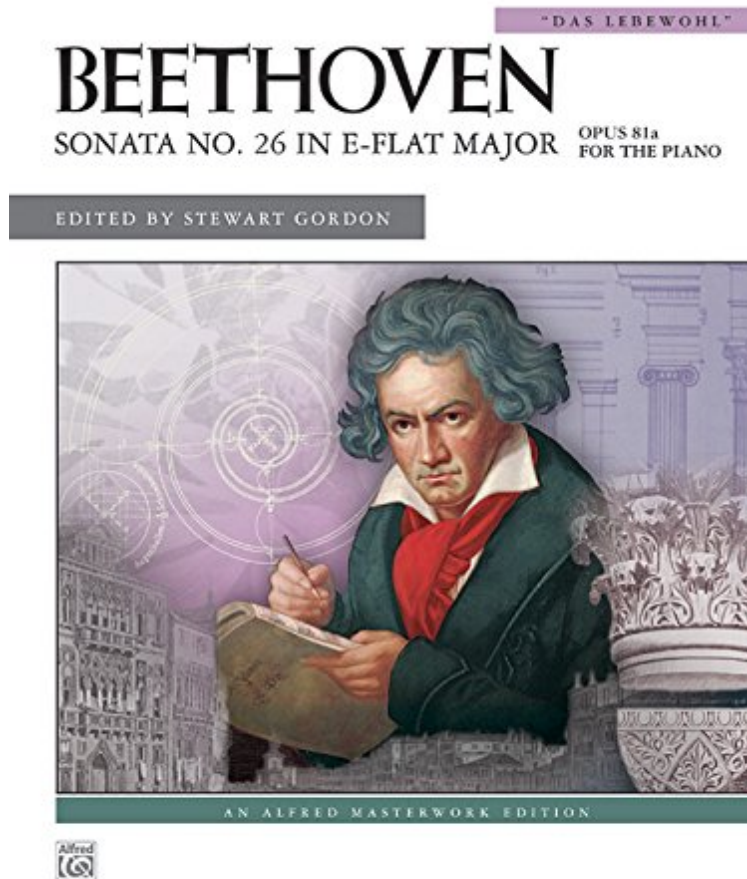


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The three movements of Op. 81a are entitled "The Departure," "The Absence," and "The Return," dedicated to the Archduke Rudolf, an excellent pianist, friend, and patron of the composer. Rudolf's departure was part of an

evacuation plan for Viennese aristocracy to escape the imminent occupation of Vienna by Napoleon's armies. An autograph of the first movement believed to have been presented to the Archduke Rudolf in 1809 is in the collection of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna. Dr. Stewart Gordon's editions of Beethoven's most popular piano sonatas provide the key to a stylistic performance. Thorough research of the earliest available sources has enabled Dr. Gordon to produce the most accurate reflection of the composer's intent. Each sonata contains helpful fingering suggestions and performance recommendations.