The Career of an Eighteenth-Century Kapellmeister: The Life and Music of Antonio Rosetti

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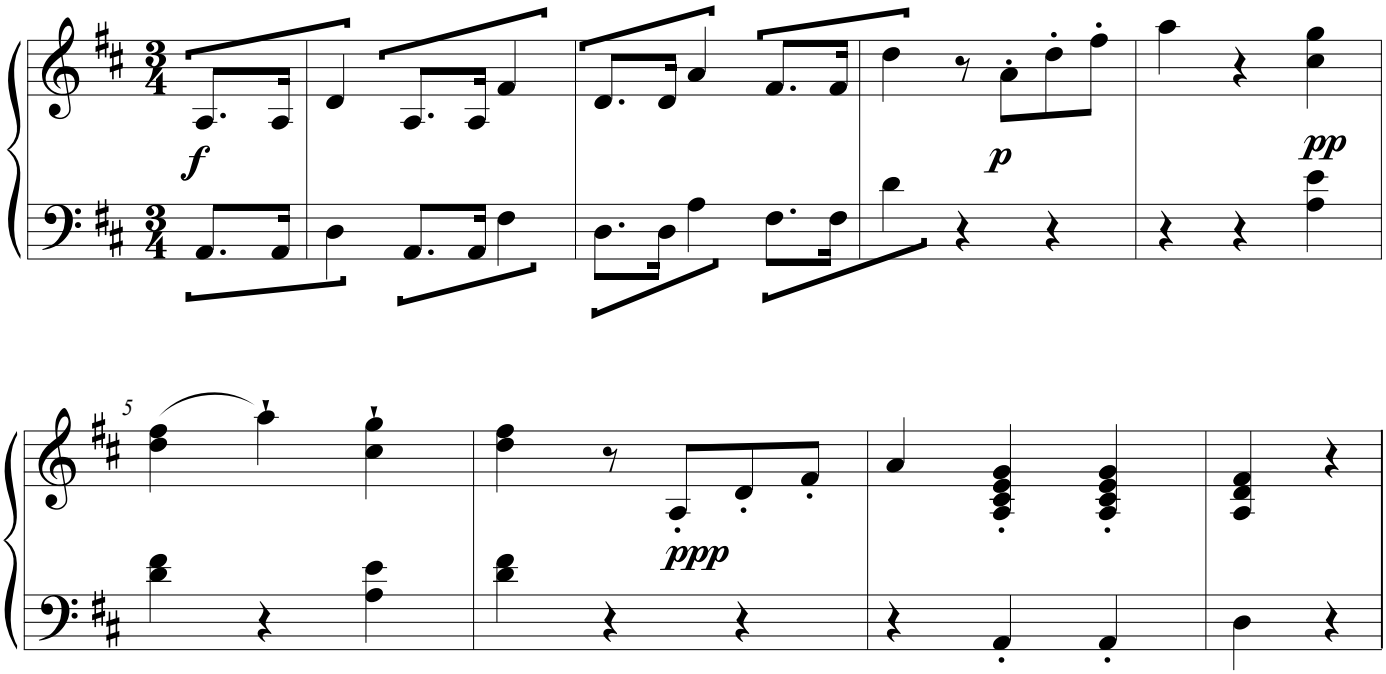
Musical Examples in Supplement
Chapter 17: Keyboard Pieces and Lieder

✣ Example 17C

Another brief suggestion of musical ambiguity occurs in the Menuet in D Major (E13). As a dance type, minuets were expected to conform to the phrase regularity essential to the steps of the dance whether intended for the ballroom or not. This might be one of the last places one might expect the composer deliberately to disrupt a smooth metric flow, but that is precisely what happens in the opening measures of this little minuet. Rosetti begins the dance with an unexpected gesture. Instead of the anticipated triple meter of the dance, Rosetti overlays the phrase with a duple metric organization achieved by drawing upon a rhythmic pattern of a dotted eighth note following by a sixteenth note. This rhythm spans two beats rather than three, and by stating it four times without inserting a separating rest, Rosetti succeeds in temporarily confusing the anticipated meter of the movement. It is not until the fifth measure that the music settles into the expected meter, but then only to dissipate into a *diminuendo* from *p* to *ppp*. This metric indecisiveness set up in the minuet's opening measures persists through the rest of the piece.

Menuet in D Major (E13), Allegro, mm. 1-8

Example 17C: Menuet in D Major (E13), mm. 1-8
Allegro