

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)

Disc 1 5186 512

Piano Sonata No.11 in B flat, Op. 22

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1 Allegro con brio	7. 22
2 Adagio con molto espression	e 6. 59
3 Menuetto	3. 17
4 Rondo (Allegretto)	6. 24
Piano Sonata No.12 in A	flat, Op.26
5 Andante con Variazioni	7. 58
6 Scherzo (Allegro molto)	2.42
7 Marcia funebre (sulla morte d	'un eroe) 6. 09
8 Allegro	3.37
Piano Sonata No.13 in E f	lat, Op. 27/1
"Sonata quasi una fantas	sia"
9 Andante – Allegro – Tempo	I5. 01
10 Allegro molto e vivace -	1.55
11 Adagio con espressione -	2. 58
12 Allegro vivace – Tempo I – Pre	esto 5. 43

Total playing time: 60.26

Disc 2 5186 513 Piano Sonata No.22 in F. Op. 54

1	In tempo d'un menuetto		5.37
2	Allegretto		5. 37

Piano Sonata No.27 in E minor, Op. 90

3 Mit Lebhaftigkeit und durchaus mit Empfindung und Ausdruck 5. 35

4 Nicht zu geschwind und sehr singbar vorgetragen 7.35 **Piano Sonata No.15 in D, Op. 28 "Pastorale"**

5	Allegro	10.11
6	Andante	6. 10
7	Scherzo (Allegro vivace)	2. 22
8	Rondo (Allegro, ma non troppo)	4. 34

Total playing time: 48.02

Mari Kodama - piano

Recording venue: Concertboerderij Valthermond, The Netherlands, 8/2012. Recording producer: Wilhelm Hellweg Balance engineer: Jean-Marie Geijsen Recording engineer: Jean-Marie Geijsen Editing: Matthijs Ruijter, lentje Mooij

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Emergence and re-orientation

Sonata in B flat, Op. 22

"This sonata has had a wash ..." With these words, Beethoven gives a very clear description of his Sonata in B flat dating from 1799-1800 in a letter to his publisher. But how are these words justified? By means of which innovations or developments? At first glance, Op. 22 is nothing more than a well-organized and structurally flawless sonata. But precisely therein could lie the key to Beethoven's words. After the rather more experimental work in his Op. 10 and Op. 13, here the composer again finds his way back to the original model of the genre. However, this should not be considered a step backwards, precisely because formal and sonic experiments in the form and sound fail to materialize. A close proximity to Mozart in general – and to his Sonata K. 333 in particular – has been established, especially in the development of the themes. The absence of a coda in the otherwise brilliantly formulated first movement is also typical of Mozart. The Adagio "con molta espressione" calls for expressive playing; however, the character of the movement is determined by a painfully opulent sound. The Minuetto is thematically linked to the Adagio, after which the trio, with its insistent semiguavers, offers a shrewd contrast. In the final rondo, harmonic surprises and graceful thematic associations await the listener.

The eighth release in Mari Kodama's Beethoven Piano Sonata cycle presents works from the composer's middle period. Despite the highly distinctive individual character of each sonata, the historical coherence of the works is clearly apparent in this synopsis. Primarily, Beethoven bids farewell to the traditional sonata cycle, as is already demonstrated in the first movement of Op. 26. On the score of the sonata model he was apparently attempting to improve upon, the composer developed his profound modifications that finally left behind the classical model of the sonata as such. But in the works recorded here, not only the structural foundations undergo a basic expansion; the spheres of expression in the movements themselves are dramatically intensified, indeed, profoundly individualized. Beethoven even brings extra-musical, aesthetic categories into the arena: for instance, when he actually celebrates the "intrusion of the Fantastic" (Mauser) in Op. 27, intrinsically links the pastoral nature of Op. 28 to the moods of the Symphony No. 6, or makes a direct reference in the Sonata Op. 31, No. 2 to Shakespeare's Tempest. Even though one cannot speak of programme music in the true sense of the word here, this orientation towards non-musical parameters appears to go hand in hand with the extended form concepts.

Sonata in A major, Op. 26

Beethoven made his first sketches for the Sonata in A major, Op. 26

in 1795, although he did not complete the work until 1800-1801. And as if he wanted to enter the new century with a bang, for the first time, he did not even use a single sonata form in a sonata! The first movement is more a series of variations, with five variations on a rather guiet, songlike theme that reminds the listener of Mozart's Piano Sonata K. 333. The central variation – and thus the epicentre of the movement – is the third variation (in A flat minor) on this theme. A harbinger of the funeral march in the third movement, which in turn forms the centre of the sonata. The following scherzo is a kind of intermezzo that leads into this "Marcia funebre sulla morte d'un eroe", full of forward-driving energy and with intensifications increasing to fortissimo. The funeral march automatically reminds one of the Eroica; logically, as both pieces deal with the "dirge at the death of a hero". Here, Beethoven makes room for the pathetic - one should perhaps rather say, the heroic -, the movement strides ahead, yet hardly departs from its position. It is hard to identify a real melody; fanfares and tremolos in the middle section ("heavy artillery," according to William Kinderman) generate true orchestral sound-worlds. Admittedly, the final rondo finale allows subtle motivic references to the funeral march to peek through; however, at the same time, it more or less dissolves itself into its perpetuum mobile form. Nevertheless, this movement is not a simple "School of Velocity". Against a background of weaving semiguaver notes and an etude-like tone, exciting developments are emerging. However, it is not a "real" finale, or in other words, an idealization of the first movement. Another step in addressing the problem of the finales, which is increasingly evident throughout Beethoven's entire sonata oeuvre, begins to emerge in Op. 27, No. 1, one of the two "Ouasi una fantasia" sonatas.

Sonata in E flat major, Op. 27, No. 1

Beethoven's Op. 27, No. 1, composed in 1800-1801 and dedicated to Princess Josephine of Liechtenstein, also goes against the classical, traditional sonata cycle model – for here, as in his Op. 26, he does not use the sonata form in any of the movements. Rather, a slow movement introduces the work, with strong fantasy-like elements. Here, the reorganization of the drama inherent to the sonata undergoes an even more extensive reorientation: the destination of the sonata is now – without any ifs and buts – the energetic and ambitious finale, towards which Beethoven directs the development process. This impression is reinforced by the *attacca subito* transitions between the individual movements. Nevertheless, the work still exhibits a basically three-movement structure: the first and second movements being independent "chapters",

whereas the Adagio and the Finale are interrelated and connected. The three-part first movement, which consists of an Andante with loving tones, a stormy Allegro in C major, and a condensed repetition of the beginning, is followed by a Scherzo. This acts as a rapidly-increasing bundle of energy, with pronounced motivic passage-work. The Adagio con espressione proves itself (as already mentioned above) on closer inspection to be a constituent part of the extended final rondo. Beethoven places various reminders of structural transitions that go beyond the function of a mere "quote", thus pointing out to the listener the connection between both "movements".

Sonata in D major, Op. 28

After the at times spectacular innovations in form and content applied by Beethoven to his Op. 26 and Op. 27, in his D major Sonata, Op. 28, he appears to return to familiar territory and to rely on wellproven traditions. This four-movement sonata is in keeping with the traditional structural lay-out: the first movement in sonata form, followed by the slow movement in three-part song form, a casually simple scherzo, and a sonata rondo as finale. There is no longer any sign of the orientation towards the finale, as in Op. 27. But inwardly, more or less under the guise of the familiar traditional structure, this sonata is guietly seething; Beethoven is weaving his subtle golden threads throughout the composition. Thus, especially in the first movement, the structural boundaries are skilfully "softened", and – thus in anticipation of Schubert - real soundscapes are developed. Not only the title "Sonata pastorale," formulated by his publisher Cranz, alludes to Beethoven's Symphony No. 6, Pastorale: in the music itself, one can easily detect nature-based, rural allusions (such as the bagpipe-like fifths in the first movement and the Finale) in the structuring of the themes. A gently oscillating theme develops above ostinati in the low register, and then, in the truest sense of the word, various ideas "blossom" into the scene. The two-dimensionality of the sound mentioned – or, to quote Kinderman, the "static sound images" - can again be found in the finale, which is closely related to the first movement. Here, the listener will notice only a few contrasts, the echoes of Schubert are all too clear. For Beethoven, the first movement and the Finale are elements of equal importance within the cycle, which also possesses a lyrical Andante with slight hints of tragedy, and a humorous Scherzo. However, Beethoven does not simply leave it at a rural idyll: he duly increases the intensity of the motivic-thematic passage work compared to the previous works.

Sonata in F major, Op. 54

The Sonata in F major was written in 1804 and published in 1806. It was - and still remains - overshadowed by its direct siblings, the Waldstein Sonata Op. 53 and the Appassionata Sonata, Op. 57, those pianistic "summits" dating from the start of the new century. To quote Kinderman, the first movement of Op. 54 is "a study of contrasts". One has to accept that this rather general, non-specific descriptive term is proof of a certain perplexity among musicologists with regard to this work. But in fact, there are no other programmatic aids here; no traditional, structural standards appear to apply as yet. In addition, one perceives a tendency to "extract the musical language from the realm of the sensuous and to allow the intellectual significance of the structural processes to appear more clearly" (Ratz). These are thoughts that one is normally willing to entertain only in connection with the absolutely "absolute music" of the late sonatas. Beethoven combines two structural characteristics in the first movement: the scherzo form and the sequence of minuet / trio / minuet. In this case, Siegfried Mauser mentioned "stylistic allusions" and a strong connection with the "Baroque idiom". The "feminine" theme of the minuet is of a more lingering, procrastinating character, whereas the "male" theme with its series of triplets in octave continually drives the music forward. These are the contrasts to which Kinderman refers, which converge during the course of the movement (in the form of both themes). The ensuing Allegretto has, above all else, one unambiguous feature: the permanent semiguaver motor - which keeps running from beginning to end – that makes the listener back the wrong horse, believing it to be an "etude". Rather, one discovers a highly varied, yet perfectly balanced sonata form, with a hugely reduced exposition, concise recapitulation (94 bars in all), and radically expanded development (also totalling 94 bars). Full of frantic, rhythmic energy, the movement drives on restlessly in the coda towards its goal.

Sonata in E minor, Op. 90

The Sonata in E minor, Op 90 was composed in 1814, and borders on Beethoven's late style. (Although, in fact, Beethoven's 32 highly idiosyncratic and individual sonatas defy a strict classification into early, middle, and late works.) A novel feature of this two-movement work dedicated to Count Moritz von Lichnowsky are the descriptions given in German (!) of the various movements, characters, and tempi. Here, Beethoven is making an interesting attempt to transgress the usual conventions – in order to guide listeners and performers more intensively: however, he discarded this peculiarity after his Op. 106. Remarkably, some of the indications tend to be more or less mutually exclusive: for instance, the music should sound "lively and at the same time sensitive". A huge challenge for the performer. The first movement, with its terse and dramatic

musical language is characterized by a high level of organic uniformity, the different sections are easily recognizable, yet characterized by motivic references to one another. The rondo finale is to be performed in a "highly lyrical manner": no wonder, after all, the song-like melody is strongly reminiscent of the piano world of Franz Schubert. Thus one could interpret the application – throughout both movements – of the principle of dialectic contrast, which is inherent in the sonata form, as the basic idea of the work as regards content.

Mari Kodama

Pianist Mari Kodama has established an international reputation for her musical sensitivity and outstanding virtuosity. In performances throughout Europe, USA and Japan she has consistently proven the profound aesthetics of her very personal and unique style.

Recent concert highlights include, Beethoven concerto performances with orchestras in Berlin, Montreal, Baden-Baden, Bad Kissingen, Singapore, Osnabrück, and in appearances at the Schleswig-Holstein and Bad Kissingen Festivals.

Ms. Kodama's recent performances of Mozart concerti with the Philharmonia Baroque San Fransciso, Detroit Symphony, and Gulbenkian Orchestra in Portugal recently brought glowing reviews. She also has recently appeared with the American Symphony Orchestra, the Vienna Symphony, on tour in the Netherlands with Radio Chamber Orchestra and with Jonathan Nott and the Bamberg Symphony,. In Japan, Ms. Kodama is a regular guest of major Japanese orchestras, most recently the Tokyo Metropolitan Orchestra and the Yomiuri Nippon Orchestra in Tokyo.

A brilliantly well-received performance of the complete Beethoven Sonata cycle in Los Angeles launched Ms. Kodama's United States of America reputation, and was followed by acclaimed recital appearances in New York, Paris, London, as well as throughout Japan, Spain and Germany, and much of the rest of the U.S.A. The Los Angeles Times pronounced her performances of the Prokofiev Third Piano Concerto "commanding and electrifying."

Ms. Kodama is a founding artistic director of the Musical Days at Forest Hill, a festival of chamber music presented by Ms. Kodama and Kent Nagano near their home in San Francisco. Overwhelmingly enthusiastic responses prompted the evolution of the intitial single event into its current ongoing regular series. In recent seasons Ms. Kodama has invited friends and colleagues from the Vienna Philharmonic, the Berlin Philharmonic, Orchestre de Paris to participate in the Forest Hill festival, as well as prominent soloists from France, Austria and the United States. Included are established performers who reflect the generation of young international artist including baritone Dietrich Henschel and composerpianist Ichiro Nodaïra, composer Unsuk Chin, pianist Momo Kodama, and violinist Viviane Hagner.

Ms. Kodama has played with such orchestras as the Berlin Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, Philharmonia Orchestra, Hallé Orchestra, the Montreal Symphony, the NDR Symphony Orchestra, Vienna Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Berkeley Symphony, the American Symphony Orchestra, and the NHK Orchestra in Japan. She made her New York recital debut at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall in 1995.

Her U.S. festival appearances include Mostly Mozart, Bard Music Festival, the Hollywood Bowl, California's Midsummer Mozart Festival, Ravinia, and Aspen. In Europe she has appeared at festivals in Lockenhaus, Montpelier, Salzburg, Aix-en-Provence, Aldeburgh, Verbier and Évian, among others.

Born in Osaka, Ms. Kodama left Japan as a child and was raised in Germany, Switzerland, France, and England. At the Conservatoire National de Paris, she studied piano with Germaine Mounier and chamber music with Geneviève Joy-Dutilleux. Following conservatory she studied with Tatiana Nikolaeva at the Salzburg Mozarteum and became a private pupil of Alfred Brendel.

