



Beethoven

The Complete Sonatas
for Violin and Piano

Christopher White **VIOLIN**
Melanie Reinhard **PIANO**

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The Complete Sonatas for Violin and Piano

CD1	78:21
Violin Sonata No. 1 in D major, Op. 12 No. 1	22:48
1. Allegro con brio	9:30
2. Tema con Variazioni. Andante con moto	8:20
3. Rondo. Allegro	4:58
Violin Sonata No. 2 in A major, Op. 12 No. 2	16:32
4. Allegro vivace	6:48
5. Andante più tosto Allegretto	4:49
6. Allegro piacevole	4:55
Violin Sonata No. 3 in E flat major, Op. 12 No. 3	19:20
7. Allegro con spirito	8:14
8. Adagio con molta espressione	6:46
9. Rondo. Allegro molto	4:20
Violin Sonata No. 4 in A minor, Op. 23	19:39
10. Presto	7:49
11. Andante scherzoso più Allegretto	6:12
12. Allegro molto	5:38

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CD 2	79:20
Violin Sonata No. 5 in F major, Op. 24 'Spring'	23:49
1. Allegro	9:49
2. Adagio molto espressivo	5:49
3. Scherzo. Allegro molto	1:15
4. Rondo. Allegro ma non troppo	6:56
Violin Sonata No. 8 in G major, Op. 30 No. 3	18:10
5. Allegro assai	6:42
6. Tempo di Minuetto, ma molto moderato e grazioso	7:42
7. Allegro vivace	3:46
Violin Sonata No. 9 in A major, Op. 47 'Kreutzer'	37:19
8. Adagio sostenuto - Presto	11:45
9. Andante con Variazioni	16:29
10. Presto	9:05

CD 3	79:19
Violin Sonata No. 6 in A major, Op. 30 No. 1	24:51
1. Allegro	8:03
2. Adagio molto espressivo	8:18
3. Allegretto con Variazioni	8:30
Violin Sonata No. 7 in C minor, Op. 30 No. 2	26:41
4. Allegro con brio	8:10
5. Adagio cantabile	9:16
6. Scherzo. Allegro	3:38
7. Finale. Allegro	5:47
Violin Sonata No. 10 in G major, Op. 96	27:45
8. Allegro moderato	10:29
9. Adagio espressivo	6:14
10. Scherzo. Allegro	2:01
11. Poco Allegretto - Adagio espressivo - Tempo I - Allegro - Presto	9:01
TOTAL TIME:	237:02

We have been performing the Beethoven Violin Sonatas together for over thirty years when we first met in Toronto at the Royal Conservatory of Music. They have become a staple of our recitals in combination with other repertoire. Although the ten sonatas are mostly early works and not his most significant (compared to the string quartets for example) they are a charming and varied set of compositions. It is a shame that often one only hears the select (and famous) few such as the *Spring* or *Kreutzer* sonatas because some of the lesser-known sonatas (for instance Op. 12 No. 2 in A major or the glorious slow movement in the sixth sonata) deserve a much wider audience.

We were delighted when the opportunity presented itself in the summer of 2019 in partnership with Willowhayne Records to record the complete cycle as it had long been an ambition of ours. After so many years of playing them, we feel that we have some fresh insights and we hope you, our audience will agree! We would also like to extend our thanks to Anna Camille (violinist, artist and dear friend) for her portrait of Beethoven and, of course, Mark and Claire Hartt-Palmer for all their support over the entire project.

Christopher White and Melanie Reinhard

It scarcely feels necessary to introduce **Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770-1827) as a musical colossus. But, what is it about him that makes it all but impossible to name another composer who has exerted such a far-reaching influence on musicians and thinkers of German-speaking lands, and beyond? Beethoven paved the way for future composers to take on a position of authority not just as entertainers, but as statesmen - bringing with it profound social and political implications. He had cast a powerful aura over music which would free the composer from

the ordinary, everyday world: Beethoven elevated the musician from servant and craftsman, to the stature of a divinely-inspired genius. In doing so, the doors were flung open for musicians to claim a place in a new mythical plane of immortality.

All of Beethoven's ten 'Sonatas for the Fortepiano and a Violin' were composed by 1812, a full fifteen years before his death. Indeed, the first nine were written a decade before the last, by the age of thirty-two. They represent a body of work that Beethoven had himself just managed to perform in public whilst grappling with the affliction of his ever increasing deafness. As a cycle they chart his entire stylistic evolution: encompassing his blazing confidence as a young composer and pianist; then by Opus 30 his introspection, hurt and defiance at the impending tragedy of his deafness; and with Opus 96 bringing us to the cusp of his newly-found transcendence which reveals the profound spirituality that marks the zenith of his creative genius.

The three Opus 12 Sonatas appeared at the beginning of 1799, when Beethoven was twenty-nine. They were dedicated to Antonio Salieri, the much maligned 'rival' of Mozart who had in fact identified, nurtured and mentored so many of the budding talents of the age - not least Beethoven, Schubert and Liszt. The *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* complained:

"It is undeniable that Herr van Beethoven goes his own way; but what a bizarre, arduous way it is! They leave the feeling of someone wanting to take a pleasurable stroll with a good friend in a beautiful wood, and having been held up at every possible moment by hostile obstacles, emerges tired and utterly exhausted. Nothing natural, no melody!"

Punctuated *fortissimos* and off-beat accents, a stubborn avoidance of symmetry, and contradictory dynamic markings all point to an unmistakably Beethovenian impulsiveness and wry humour. Yet it teases both the performers and audience with its glimmers of elegance that could easily have come from Mozart's pen.

Opus 23 marks the fourth Sonata - an agitated and fiery work - which was composed in 1801 with the dedication to Count Moritz von Fries. Here, Beethoven's ambitions bring him to challenge the accepted order of sonata form, and he defiantly refuses to follow protocol by developing the main themes of the sonata - instead introducing new ones. Scarcely a year later, Beethoven would finally be ready to unveil his great 'calling card', his first Symphony. Beethoven had intended it to be published alongside the lyrical and optimistic fifth Sonata, Opus 24 - posthumously given the name *Spring Sonata*. For whatever reason, Beethoven's plan to pair these two sonatas, carefully crafted to complement each other in character and key - not too unlike the respective temperaments of the Greek Gods Dionysius and Apollo - was not to be.

Although the three Opus 30 Sonatas, dedicated to Tsar Alexander I of Russia, were published in 1803, their composition overlaps with the earlier Opus 24 and 25 works. By the seventh Sonata, Beethoven's confidence allowed him to forgo the tradition of repeating the exposition of the movement; relying instead on the listener's trust and memory.

The most mythologised of the Sonatas is the ninth, Opus 47, commonly known as the *Kreutzer Sonata* after its dedicatee, the virtuoso violinist

Rodolphe Kreutzer - who, rather ironically, disliked the work intensely. The work was originally dedicated to the violinist and 'great mad mulatto composer George Bridgetower': 'Sonata mulattica composto per il mulatto Brischdauer, gran pazzo e compositor mulattico'. Beethoven and Bridgetower premiered it at 8am on the 24 May 1803, with the latter sight-reading from the manuscript. Celebratory drinks turned sour and Beethoven, insulted and enraged, removed the dedication.

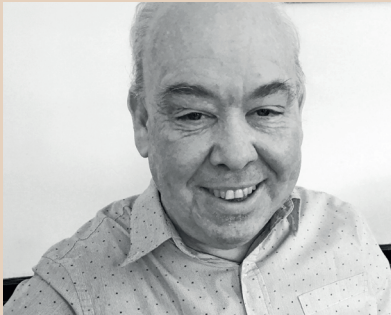
The *Kreutzer Sonata* is notorious for its technical difficulty and emotional power, the Sonata is around twice as long as its predecessors. The powerful rhetorical nature of its opening movement continues to scare audiences even today. Witnessing a performance of it, it is difficult not to be struck by a feeling of being in the presence of something monumental unfolding. Indeed, the ambitious scope of the musical material is reflected in Beethoven's sketchbook where the work is titled 'Sonata per il Pianoforte ed uno violin obligato in uno stile motto concertante come d'un concerto'. Yet, whether through wit or perhaps just tired of his grand scheme, Beethoven forgoes the grand conclusion one might be forgiven for expecting in such a project and instead recycles a much lighter movement as the Finale that had been intended instead for his sixth Sonata. Adding to the enigmatic allure of the work is Beethoven's omission of a key to the work: although it is usually given as A major, the main residing key is essentially that of A minor.

The final time Beethoven turned to the piano and violin partnership was nearly a decade later. Opus 96, the tenth Sonata, was composed in 1812 and published in 1816. It is dedicated to Beethoven's pupil and

patron Archduke Rudolph Johannes Joseph Rainier of Austria - the dedicatee of fourteen compositions including the *Archduke* Trio, the *Les Adieux* and *Hammerklavier* Piano Sonatas, the fifth *Emperor* Piano Concerto, and the *Missa Solemnis*. The composition of the Opus 96 Sonata coincides with the winter of Napoleon's retreat from Russia. Amidst a general atmosphere of rejoicing in Vienna, Beethoven's ill-health, personal familial and financial problems, and political disillusionment shrouded his days with despondency. Confiding in his diary, Beethoven would cry out: 'There is no longer any happiness - only within yourself, in your art.'

It is easy to assume that a work born in such circumstances would exude turmoil and despair. But, here lies the genius of Beethoven. From a playful opening, marked by a classical poise, an intimate conversation between violin and piano gives way to the sublime transcendence of the middle movement. From that introverted stillness and rarified atmosphere Beethoven returns the musicians and audience back to earth, the joy of life and the feeling that 'we amble along the thornless path, without a care in the world.'

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London-born **Christopher White** studied at the Royal College of Music, London, where he won many prizes and left with one of the most coveted awards, the Dove Prize. Further scholarships enabled him to continue his studies at the Banff Centre in Canada and the Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto. He has studied with many distinguished violinists (both in North America and England) including Josef Gingold, Jaime

Loredo, Thomas Brandis, Rodney Friend, Lorand Fenyves and Erich Gruenberg.

Christopher has been concertmaster with a number of orchestras both in England and Europe, alongside a varied performing career as soloist and chamber musician. His solo CD was released in 1999, featuring solo violin works by Bach, Bartok and Ysaÿe. A second CD (with pianist Melanie Reinhard) featured the Brahms Sonatas for Violin and Piano. Further recordings were made with Die Taschenphilharmonie where Christopher was the first violin in Mahler's Symphony No. 4 and *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (chamber version) and Saint-Saens' *Le Carnaval des animaux* which was distributed widely in Germany by Die Zeit. The ten Beethoven Violin Sonatas with Melanie Reinhard (released by Willowhayne Records in August 2022) will be followed by a recording of the Strauss and Respighi Violin Sonatas.

Since returning to the UK in 2003, Christopher has held posts as Resident Violinist at Rugby School and Head of Strings at Uppingham School and is currently running the string department at Rugby School. He now enjoys a varied career of teaching and performing, as well as being a well-respected piano technician. Since its formation in 1998, his piano trio OPUS 3 has received critical acclaim in Germany, Switzerland and the UK. OPUS 3 has performed in venues such as the Tonhalle Zurich, St James' Piccadilly, St Martin in the Fields and Charterhouse. Christopher is the Artistic Director of the Great Bowden Music Fest which was founded in 2014. He plays on a Joseph Guarneri violin, dated 1707.

"White's tone was superbly rich on the lower strings in Chausson's glorious *Poeme*." (The Strad)

"Szymanowsky's *La Fontaine d'Arethuse* emerging as a ravishing impressionistic tableau full of imaginative textural shading." (Musical Opinion)

Melanie Reinhard is a Canadian pianist who has many prizes and awards to her credit. Having performed extensively on both sides of the Atlantic, she has been recognised as a versatile and artistic musician who is sought after by noted instrumentalists and singers.

Melanie received her ARCT (Performance) and LPRCM (Concert Diploma) from the Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto, studying with James Anagnoson and Leon Fleisher. She has worked in masterclasses with John Perry, Richard Goode, Marek Jablonski and Monika Leonhard.



Having lived and worked in Germany and Switzerland for a decade, performing in many places including Frankfurt, Munich, Konstanz, Zürich and the Gewandhaus Leipzig, (where her concert was broadcast on Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk) Melanie moved to the UK in 2004 and is active here as a teacher and performer. As the pianist of the OPUS 3 piano trio with violinist

Christopher White and cellist Jonas Seeberg, she has performed in venues such as St. James' Picadilly, Charterhouse, St. George in the East and for the Beethoven Society of Europe to critical acclaim.

A passionate performer and teacher, Melanie has held the post as Head of Keyboard and Chamber Music at Loughborough Schools Foundation since 2011, being instrumental in the Music department becoming an All Steinway School in 2015 and is also a founding member of the Great Bowden Music Fest.

“Delicately and subtly Melanie Reinhard accompanied on the piano, so salient were the creative impulses she chose when she took over the lead melody onto the piano” (Badische Zeitung)