



Beethoven

Piano Sonatas

No.17 'Tempest'
No.21 'Waldstein'
& No.10 G major

Radoslav
Kvapil

Musical
CONCEPTS

Beethoven's thirty-two piano sonatas represent one of the pillars of all piano literature. Beethoven, who was himself a pianist, very often introduced new ideas into his piano works, which he later developed in other works, such as symphonies, string quartets, concertos, etc. In his sonatas, we can clearly see how Beethoven developed his composition style. They also enable us to track the different periods of his works.

The Sonata, Op.14 No.2 in G-Major was written in 1798, and belongs to the end of his first period. It was dedicated to the Baroness Josefa von Braun and it belongs to the happiest, most joyful and most cheerful of Beethoven's works. We can also find the influence of his teacher, Joseph Haydn. This Sonata contains no dramatic moments, and some find it has a Mozartian mood, although its lyrical character appears to be aiming more towards Schubert's ideas. Beethoven is often described as a tragical, dramatic composer. But this is a one-sided point of view. This Sonata shows another Beethoven, full of joy. The same characteristics can be found in his other works written during this period, such as in the Piano Sonatas, Op.2, and in his *1st. Symphony*, Op.21 (of which the first sketches date from 1795), or yet again, in his *Piano Concerto, No 1*.

According to Beethoven's Secretary, Anton Schindler, Beethoven had stated that it corresponded to a dialogue between „a husband and wife“ This is why it is sometimes given the German name „*Ehestandsonate*“. In the Sonata's second movement, Beethoven used the variation form for the first time in his piano sonatas. Its theme is full of humour and the joking character one can find in the staccato, is combined with a lyrical mood in the legato.

The scherzo in the last movement has the same character. Here again, one discovers one of the many examples in which Beethoven is experimenting with the sonata form. The scherzo should not be a „finale“ movement. Actually, here Beethoven combined the dance movement (the Scherzo) and the finale. The Scherzo also possesses the function of a finale. The Sonata has an unexpected ending in which the music simply disappears into *pp* at the end.

The Piano Sonata, No. 17 in D minor, Op. 31, No. 2 „Tempest“, Beethoven composed in 1801-02. It is one of the most dramatic of the composer's works. Carl Czerny was convinced that this work starts a new period in his composition style. It is usually referred to as „*The Tempest*“ (or „*Der Sturm*“ in his native German), but the Sonata was not given this title by Beethoven himself,

or indeed ever referred to it as such during his lifetime. The name comes from a claim by Anton Schindler that the Sonata was inspired by Shakespeare's play of that name. This dramatic line of Beethoven's works is symbolised, for example in the „*Pathétique Sonata*“ Op.13, in the „*Moonlight Sonata*“, Op. 27, No.2, in „*The Tempest*“ and in the „*Appassionata*“, Op. 57, which all display similar ideas. The *Sonata for Violin and Piano in C-Minor*, Op.,30, No 2, which is once again full of dramatic tension, was also written during the same period (1801-2).

If we compare the Sonata „*The Tempest*“ with the „*Appassionata*“, we will notice that both have big dramatic differences in dynamics and expression in the first movement and majestic song in the second movement. In Op.57, there is a hymn with variations, and in both of the final parts of each of the two sonatas, there is a permanent movement evoking waves which, at the beginning, is expressed in pianissimo, but then develop into a storm, in the same way in both sonatas. The difference between the two occurs at the end. In „*The Tempest*“, everything subsides, whereas in „*The Appassionata*“, on the contrary, a violent storm develops, and then ends most dramatically.

„*The Tempest*“ is one of the rare sonatas, which uses the sonata form in all three movements. The first movement starts with a short largo, which continues with a stormy allegro. This first movement alternates brief moments of seeming peacefulness with extensive passages of turmoil, after some time expanding into a haunting „storm“ in which the peacefulness is lost. Some experts consider that the allegro corresponds to a developing storm, comparable to one which could be seen in „natural surroundings“, like at sea, with crashes and rolls of thunder. This first largo also appears again later, where it is further extended in the „reprise“, during which, there is considerable recitative.

The second movement in B-flat Major is slower and more dignified. It mirrors the opening of the first movement both through the use of a rolling recitative- like the arpeggio on the first chord-, and the rising melodic ideas in the opening six measures, which are reminiscent of the first movement's recitative. Other ideas in this movement mirror the first, for instance, a figure in the eighth measure, and parallel passages of the second movement are similar to a figure in the sixth measure of the first.

The third movement is very moving, first flowing with emotion and then reaching a climax, before moving into an extended development section which mainly focuses on the opening figure of the

movement. In its development there is a great contrast between the quiet, moving chords in the pp, which then transform into the ending *FF* section. The recapitulation, which is preceded by an extensive cadenza-like the passage of sixteen notes for the right hand, is followed by another retransition and then another statement of the primary theme. The Coda is imitating the beginning of the development section, but after a climax, the music disappears like in the Sonata Op.14/2. In the opening figure, we might well find similarities with Beethoven's popular work „*Für Elise*“, written later in 1810.

Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 21 in C major, Op. 53, known as „*The Waldstein*“, is one of the most notable sonatas of his middle period. Completed in summer 1804, and surpassing Beethoven's previous piano sonatas in its dimension, the „*Waldstein*“ is a key early work of Beethoven's ‚Heroic‘ decade (1803-12) and sets a standard for piano composition in a „grand manner“. The key works of this period are his *Third Symphony*, Op.55, called „*The Eroica*“ (1803), the „*Kreutzer Sonata*“, Op.47, for Violin and Piano, the Oratorio „*Christ on the Mount of Olives*“ (1803) and his only opera, „*Fidelio*“, Op.72 (finished in 1804-5).

The Sonata's name derives from Beethoven's dedication to his close friend and patron, from Vienna, Count Ferdinand Ernst Gabriel von Waldstein. He was an amateur pianist and composer. Beethoven also composed a 4-hand variation of his theme. The first movement of the Waldstein Sonata provides a powerful image of the composer's enormous personality.

It is based on a striking rhythm of repeated notes in the main theme, which evokes a great dramatic tension and masterly creates a really heroic picture. He considered the first version of the slow movement was too huge. Beethoven later published this music separately, with the title „*Andante grazioso con moto*“ in F-sharp. The final version of the second movement is therefore much shorter and is, in fact, presented as „*Introduzione Adagio molto*“ which continues as „*Attacca*“ until up to the last movement. It has a nocturno- like mood, that of night, which is preparing for the arrival of a new day.

Sometimes, the Sonata, Opus 53 is also called „*L'Aurora*“ (which means „*Dawn*“ in Italian), on account of the sonority in the opening chords of the third movement, which conjures up an image of daybreak.

The whole movement has a hybrid form—between a rondo and sonata—and conjures up very dramatic and virtuosic episodes. Some musicologists see the influence of a „Turkish theme“ comparable to the one Mozart expresses in his Concerto in A-Major for Violin and Orchestra.

This Sonata is one of his greatest and most technically challenging piano sonatas, using, for example, in the Coda, a permanent trill, which accompanies the melody. Beethoven also used the same technique in his last Sonata, Opus 111.

The Sonata in C-Major is an outstanding concert piece for a piano virtuoso, a piano composition in which virtuosity is not only tangible, but also visible. The *Waldstein Sonata* is an indispensable work to be played on a concert stage. At the time he composed this Sonata, Beethoven had recently acquired an Erard, which provided him with a few more top notes.

It's instrumental technique closely follows Beethoven's observation of all progress at that time in piano development.

Notes 2013: Jill Nizard, Radoslav Kvapil

Radoslav Kvapil is considered by many international critics to be the finest exponent of Czech piano music. He has specialised in the performance of the Czech repertoire world-wide all through his life. His knowledge and understanding of these works remains unrivalled (cf. the Grove Dictionary, the International „Who's Who in Music“, the „Musicians' Directory“, the annual British „Music Year Book“, The American Biographical Institute (USA), the European Biographical Directory (Belgium).

Kvapil was born in Brno, Moravia and was taught privately from childhood by Dr. Ludvik Kundera, Janáček's successor and Director of the Janáček Academy, where Kvapil later became a graduate. In 1967-69, Radoslav Kvapil recorded Antonín Dvořák's complete piano works for the first time in history. The complete piano works by Leoš Janáček followed and those by J.V. Voříšek in 1975. A second complete Janáček came in 1989, and in 1990, the first two volumes of Bohuslav Martinů's complete piano works (reissue of these to follow).

Between 1993-6, Unicorn-Kanchana released eight volumes of Radoslav Kvapil's comprehensive Anthology of Czech Piano Music containing works by A. Dvořák, B. Smetana (2), B. Martinů,

J.V. Voříšek, Z. Fibich, L. Janáček and J. Suk. These will all be reissued 2010/2011 in new boxed editions via Musical Concepts/alto.

He recorded piano and chamber music works by V.Novák for ASV. Also, in 1999, he recorded two CDs on Dvořák's 1879 Bösendorfer piano, containing that composer's piano works (both here, also separately on ALC 1044 & 1171. In 2002, he recorded the last three Piano Sonatas by V. Ullmann, and all the Sonatas for Czech Radio. His 2010 newly recorded recital of Novák's music is available in Vol.1 of this anthology ALC 6001 (and separately on ALC 1113) and his two Volumes of Smetana are available separately on ALC 1128, 1173 (one also in ALC 6001)

Radoslav Kvapil has performed in major concert halls throughout the world: in 47 countries and in 26 States of the USA. He has given concerts in the Royal Albert Hall, the Barbican Centre and Wigmore Hall (London), Carnegie Recital Hall (New York) the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, the Auditorium du Louvre, Théâtre du Chatelet (Paris), Concert Hall of The Seoul Arts Center (Korea) and the Henry Crown Symphony Hall (Jerusalem), the Rudolfinum and the Smetana Halls (Prague). In both 2001 and 2002 he performed the Dvořák Piano concerto in Chicago, Paris and in London. Also in 2002 he gave a whole Dvořák recital in New York City and performed in the Kennedy Library, Boston.

Renowned as a piano pedagogue, he has given master-classes and lecture-recitals worldwide, including the Juilliard School, Eastman School of Music, North Texas University, and University of Michigan in USA, le Conservatoire National Supérieur de Paris and Lyon, the Rubin Academy (Tel Aviv), the Liszt Academy (Budapest), and Royal Academy of Music (London).

In April 2002, the French Government awarded him the title „Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres“.

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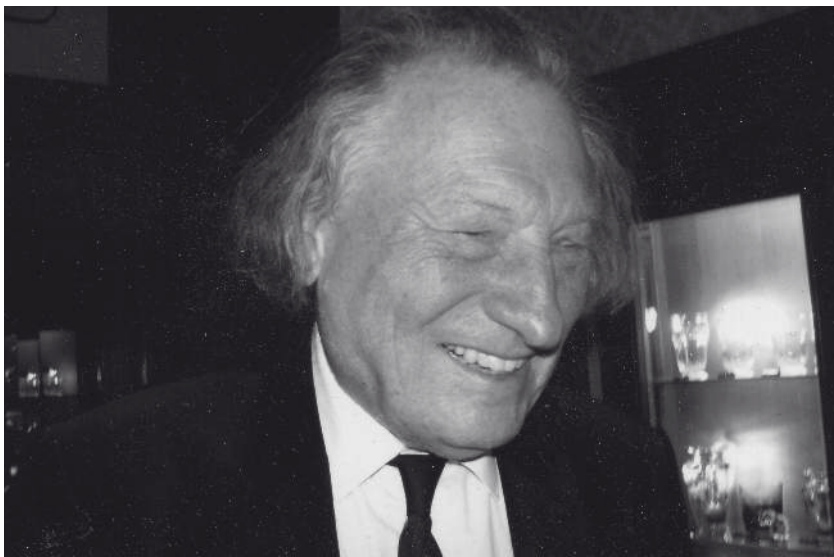
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- ALC 1038 Dvořák Cypresses (both versions) String Quartet & songs with piano / Kvapil etc
ALC 1044 Dvořák Piano music played on Dvorak's own Bösendorfer piano/ Kvapil
ALC 1113 Novák Piano Music: Sonata, Winter Songs, Slovak Suite, Dance/ R.Kvapil (new)
ALC 1128 Smetana Dreams & Dances for Piano incl Sny (Dreams) Czech Dances, Polkas etc
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Ludwig van Beethoven

Piano Sonatas

Radoslav Kvapil

Piano Sonata No.10 in G major, Op.14 No.2

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| [1] I. <i>Allegro</i> | 8:21 |
| [2] II. <i>Andante con variazione</i> | 5:29 |
| [3] III. Scherzo. <i>Allegro assai</i> | 4:10 |

Piano Sonata No.17 in D minor, Op.31 No.2 'Tempest'

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| [4] I. <i>Largo - Allegro</i> | 9:00 |
| [5] II. <i>Adagio</i> | 7:28 |
| [6] III. <i>Allegretto</i> | 7:33 |

Piano Sonata No.21 in C major, Op.53 'Waldstein'

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| [7] I. <i>Allegro con brio</i> | 12:34 |
| [8] II. <i>Introduzione. Adagio molto - attacca</i> | 3:00 |
| [9] III. <i>Rondo. Allegretto moderato - prestissimo</i> | 11:47 |

TOTAL TIME 69:26

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