



BEETHOVEN

Sonatas for Fortepiano and Violin

Ian Watson and Susanna Ogata

Volume 1

COR16138

THE NEW YORK TIMES

"The music's moody outbursts and vivacity come fully alive in elegant readings that are attentive to quicksilver changes in dynamics and articulation...the Sonata No. 4 in A minor is darkly played, their 'Kreutzer' Sonata brilliant and stormy."

GRAMOPHONE

"...a powerful fortepiano sound enhancing the impact of performances notable for their energy and rhythmic drive. The effect is particularly striking in the passionate outer movements of Op. 23 and the first Presto of the 'Kreutzer'."

LIMELIGHT MAGAZINE

"The performances are electrifying – vigorous, sharp and unstoppably energetic. This is an exciting addition to the considerable catalogue of famous recordings of these works."

BBC R3 CD REVIEW

"These are altogether compelling performances, with well-judged tempos...and the music always vividly characterized."

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Volume 2



Photograph: James Doyle

The two sonatas featured on this CD, Volume 2 of Beethoven's Sonatas for Fortepiano and Violin, offer a kind of beauty and lyricism not to be found in the stormier seas of our Volume 1. These pieces reveal many facets of the intimate side of the composer. The creative and complex variety of characters and moods in this set of works continues to surprise and delight us.

Over the course of our preparation for this recording, we feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to share these works with audiences in a wide variety of settings. We have made many new friends and meaningful connections along the way. Some highlights from our preparation of this volume include performances in Texas, outreach concerts for school children, performances for students at MIT, performances on early music series in the New England area as well as concerts for our loyal supporters in Boston. It is a continual inspiration to see how the performances offer a fresh perspective for some who have never heard the works on period instruments. We see firsthand that, despite being 200 years removed from their composition, these works still hold importance and significance for our audiences.

We are ever grateful to our team and our supporters. Our producer and engineer Jesse Lewis continues to crystallize our vision, and Tim Hamilton provides the use of his piano – cheerfully going the extra mile in tuning, transporting, and cherishing the instrument. Ira Pedlikin, Mary Briggs, and John Krzywicki continue to make extra efforts to support our work, and we are especially grateful for the support of our families and spouses, Amy Rawstron and George Ogata. Finally, thank you to our generous donors who continue to believe in this dream and are an integral part of our vision.

Susanna Ogata and Ian Watson

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

(1770-1827)

Sonata for Fortepiano and Violin No. 5 in F major Op. 24 – ‘Spring’

1	Allegro	9.54
2	Adagio molto espressivo	5.54
3	Scherzo. Allegro molto – Trio	1.20
4	Rondo. Allegro ma non troppo	6.49



Sonata for Fortepiano and Violin No. 10 in G major Op. 96

5	Allegro moderato	10.26
6	Adagio espressivo	5.40
7	Scherzo. Allegro – Trio	2.04
8	Poco allegretto	8.30

Total Running Time 50.37

By 1800, eight years after his arrival in Vienna from Bonn, the 29-year-old Beethoven had become the hottest musical property in the city, hailed both for his prowess as a pianist, and for a stream of brilliantly original compositions. In April he gave a triumphant concert in the Burgtheater that included the premieres of his Septet and First Symphony, and an unspecified piano concerto, probably No. 1 in C. During the summer he completed his first set of string quartets, Op. 18, challenging his former teacher Haydn on his own ground. Publishers were by now falling over each other to acquire the rights to his latest works. As he wrote to his friend Franz Wegeler in Bonn: “My compositions bring me in a lot, and I may say that I almost have more commissions than I can cope with. I have six or seven publishers after everything I write, and could have more if I choose. They don’t make me offers any more. I ask, and they pay.”

As Mozart had found in Vienna in the 1780s, ‘sonatas for keyboard, with violin’, as they were habitually dubbed by publishers, were perennially popular with the amateur domestic market. Beethoven wrote nine of his ten violin sonatas in fairly quick succession between 1797-8 and 1803, the year of the ‘Kreutzer’ Sonata. The beautiful ‘stray’ G major Sonata, Op. 96, followed in 1812. Contradicting the traditional description, Beethoven, like Mozart in his later sonatas, invariably treats the two instruments as absolute equals in the discourse.

Composed in the autumn of 1800 and originally published as a single opus with a dedication to one of his most generous patrons, Count Moritz von Fries, the sonatas in A minor, Op. 23, and F major, Op. 24, form a sharply contrasting pair. While Op. 23 is urgent and pithy, Op. 24, in the traditional ‘pastoral’ key of F major, has a lyrical freshness and ease that make it one of the most lovable of all Beethoven’s chamber works. ‘Spring Sonata’ was a nickname waiting to happen. Both sonatas

were enthusiastically praised by the reviewer of the influential *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, who found them “among the best B. has written, which is really to say among the best things being written today. The composer’s original, fiery and audacious spirit...increasingly begins to reject any kind of excess, and makes an ever more pleasing impression without losing any of his character.”

The sinuous opening melody, unfolding at leisure like an inspired improvisation, sounds gloriously spontaneous. Yet as with so many of Beethoven’s most memorable ideas, sketches show that it started life as a much plainer, squarer invention. While the predominant mood is one of relaxed geniality, with a gracious spirit of give-and-take between the two instruments, the second theme, veering between C major and minor, introduces a more strenuous, rhetorical note that Beethoven duly intensifies in the central development.

The *Adagio molto espressivo*, in B flat, is a luxuriant idyll, a harbinger of the Pastoral Symphony’s ‘Scene by the Brook,’ complete with suggestions of birdsong. At the movement’s centre is a gorgeous sequence of modulations, initiated by a dip from B flat to the deep, veiled key of G flat major. In quirky contrast with the rest of the sonata, the third movement is Beethoven’s most laconic *scherzo*, a tiny, rhythmically ambiguous *jeu d’esprit* in which violin and piano often sound comically out of sync. (Schumann reworked the first eight bars in duple time as the Soldiers’ March in his *Album for the Young*.) Sketches reveal how Beethoven improbably evolved this piquant music from a rather prim minuet.

Launched by as gracefully Mozartian a theme as Beethoven ever conceived, the *Rondo finale* matches the first two movements in lyrical expansiveness. Each return of the *rondo* theme is inventively varied. On its penultimate appearance it slips with airy

nonchalance from the ‘wrong’ key of D major to the prescribed F major, then finally dissolves into a flurry of dancing triplets.



Beethoven’s so-called ‘middle period’ – roughly the years between 1803 and 1814 – immediately conjures up images of the furrow-browed, fist-shaking Titan railing against destiny. But the mighty struggles famously embodied in compositions like the ‘Eroica’ and ‘Fifth’ symphonies, the ‘Appassionata’ Sonata and *Fidelio* are far from the whole picture. In other works – the ‘Pastoral’ Symphony, the Fourth Piano Concerto and the Violin Concerto – the expanded range of Beethoven’s thinking goes hand in hand with an unprecedented lyric breadth. In his chamber music these predominantly lyrical, reflective works have their counterparts in a group of masterpieces from the years 1808 to 1812: the A major Cello Sonata Op. 69, the E flat Piano Trio, Op. 70 No. 2, the ‘Archduke’ Piano Trio, Op. 97, and the last of Beethoven’s violin sonatas, Op. 96.

The Archduke in question was Rudolph, younger brother of the Austrian Emperor, a more than passable pianist and one of Beethoven’s composition students. Although the relationship between composer and his royal pupil-patron inevitably had its fraught and fractious moments, the two men maintained a warm friendship; and Beethoven rewarded Rudolph’s devotion and generosity by dedicating to him a succession of masterpieces including the Triple Concerto, the fourth and fifth piano concertos, three piano sonatas, the Op. 96 Violin Sonata, the *Grosse Fuge* and the *Missa solemnis*, in addition to the Piano Trio that bears his name – a list that surely makes Rudolph the most richly endowed dedicatee in musical history, after God.

Composed for the virtuoso violinist George Bridgetower, Beethoven's so-called 'Kreutzer' Sonata is a work of flamboyant extroversion, 'written in a distinctly concertante style, like a concerto', as the title page put it. Its polar opposite, Op. 96, was similarly inspired by the visit of a celebrated foreign violinist. The player in question was the Frenchman Pierre Rode (1774-1830), who arrived in Vienna in December 1812, en route from St Petersburg to Paris. A grand soirée was planned at the palace of Prince Lobkowitz in which Rode would perform a new Violin Sonata by Beethoven, with Archduke Rudolph at the piano. Although reports vary, it seems that by 1812 Rode was past his virtuoso peak. The composer-violinist Ludwig Spohr found his playing "cold and mannered" and "missed his former boldness in overcoming technical difficulties". Perhaps Rode's diminished virtuosity gives a clue to Beethoven's remark in a letter to Rudolph while at work on the last movement: "In our finales we like to have rather rumbustious passages, but R[ode] does not care for them so I have been somewhat hampered."

Beethoven was evidently frustrated that Rode failed to study the sonata intensively, both for Prince Lobkowitz's soirée on 29 December and a repeat performance on 7 January – though in partial mitigation, the finale was only ready days before the first performance. One reviewer observed that Rudolph played better, and with far more feeling, than Rode. But the sonata itself was enthusiastically received. Another critic noted that "...without struggling against tempests and storms, without having to fight giants or slay dragons, we amble along the thornless path, without a care in the world." A few years later, the reviewer in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* wrote: "Even artists of [Beethoven's] kind express their innermost being in whatever form this takes at a particular time; in consequence it might be concluded that the excellent Beethoven is now contented, sociable and cheerful... This sonata helps support that view... Not only are the two parts consummately matched, but when they come together, each makes a telling effect."

'Hampered' or not, Beethoven turned Rode's apparent distaste for 'rumbustious passages' to his advantage, and created a work of sublime poetic inwardness. Unfolding almost casually from its quizzical opening phrase, proposed by violin and echoed by the piano, the gently paced first movement – more *moderato* than *Allegro* – is a rarefied Ländler, with hints of spiritualised yodelling. In the 'Kreutzer' Sonata violin and piano were often locked in mortal combat. Here they dream and commune with infinite tenderness, like a pair of lovers. Each of the lyrical themes seems to grow naturally from its predecessor. Musing on a two-note figure from the exposition's closing theme, the development floats and hovers over a ceaseless flow of triplets. Typically, the recapitulation reinvents rather than repeats, quickly gliding to the darkly mellow key of E flat for new reflections on the opening theme.

The recapitulation's drift to E flat prepares us for the key of the slow movement, *Adagio espressivo*. Beginning with one of Beethoven's assuaging, chorale-like melodies, sounded by the piano alone, this deepens the first movement's mood of rapt tranquillity. The composer's sketches for this theme reveal a simultaneous process of simplification and lyrical intensification. The violin enters not with the chorale but with an echo of the piano's final cadence. This includes a three-note falling phrase identical with the opening of the E flat *Lebewohl* Sonata, Op. 81a, which had marked Rudolph's temporary departure from Vienna. Beethoven's reuse of the phrase here seems like an affectionate in-joke.

As in the 'Spring' Sonata, the third movement, a tetchy G minor *Scherzo* with stinging offbeat accents, is at odds with the mood of the sonata as a whole. The Trio, again in E flat, is a blithe, alfresco waltz that then morphs into a threefold canon (beginning with the violin) that takes both instruments to the heights. The *Scherzo's* coda brightens into G major in preparation for the naïvely pastoral theme of the

finale. Beethoven adapted this tune from a folk-like ditty in Johann Adam Hiller's Singspiel *Der Teufel ist los* ('The Devil's gone'), and then proceeded to work wonders with it in eight variations. Despite occasional 'rumbustious passages', the tone here is one of subdued gaiety, in keeping with the whole sonata. Variation 5 (*Adagio espressivo*) gravitates to the slow movement's key of E flat and dissolves the theme in a meditative *fantasia*, while the rustic revels of Variation 7 break off for a spectral chromatic *fugato*: the kind of extreme dissociation, half-comic, half unsettling, that looks ahead to many a work of Beethoven's so-called Third Period.

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Instruments



Photograph: Paul McNulty



Photograph: James Doyle

Fortepiano

For this project, Ian Watson is performing on a fortepiano that was built by Paul McNulty in 2000. This fortepiano is modelled after the Walter and Sohn pianos of the early 1800s. Anton Walter (1752-1826) is considered to be the foremost maker of Viennese style fortepianos of his time. His improvements to the Viennese fortepiano action remained a standard for many years. He built about 700 instruments, which were praised for their quality by Mozart, who bought a Walter in 1782, and by Beethoven, who played on one as well.

Anton Walter was born near Stuttgart in 1752 and became active in Vienna in 1778. When his stepson joined the company in 1800, the firm name was changed from “Anton Walter” to “Anton Walter und Sohn”. This instrument has the increased compass of five and a half octaves which came into use around 1800.



Violin

Susanna Ogata performs on a Joseph Klotz violin built in 1772. Joseph was from a family of ‘Klotz’ instrument makers from Mittenwald, Germany, who were, and continue to be, highly regarded for their craftsmanship. Mozart most likely performed on an instrument built by a member of the Klotz family. The bow she is using is an original, unlabeled Pre-Tourte style model, most likely from France in the early 1800s.

Ian Watson *fortepiano*

Ian Watson has been described by the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* as “a conductor of formidable ability” and by *The Times* in London as a keyboard performer with “virtuosic panache and brilliantly articulated playing” and “a world-class soloist”. He was appointed Resident Conductor of Boston’s Handel and Haydn Society in September 2014.



Ian has appeared as soloist or conductor with the London Symphony, London Philharmonic and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras, Scottish Chamber, English Chamber, Polish Chamber, Irish Chamber and Stuttgart Chamber Orchestras, Bremen Philharmonic, Rhein-Main Symphony Orchestra, Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Handel and Haydn Society, English Baroque Soloists, and The Sixteen amongst many others. He has also been featured on numerous recordings and film soundtracks including *Amadeus*, Polanski’s *Death and the Maiden*, *Restoration*, *Cry the Beloved Country*, *Voices from a Locked Room*, and the BBC’s *David Copperfield*.

In 2012/13, Ian directed the North American premiere of the new edition of Bach’s St Mark Passion with the Bach Society Houston, and took part in a recording of Bach’s four Lutheran Masses in London for CORO with Harry Christophers and The Sixteen (COR16115 & COR16120). He made a critically-acclaimed debut directing Baroque Band in Chicago and was immediately invited to return.

2014 saw the start of a major project with violinist Susanna Ogata, to record the complete Beethoven’s Violin Sonatas, as well as performances of the Triple Concerto and Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony with Arcadia Players – all on period-instruments.

Born in England in the Buckinghamshire village of Wooburn Common, Ian won a scholarship at age 14 to the Junior School of the Royal Academy of Music in London, later winning all the prizes for organ performance including the coveted Recital Diploma.

Susanna Ogata *violin*

Susanna Ogata enjoys an active performance schedule in greater New England and beyond. She has been praised for “totally convincing, spontaneous and free-flowing playing” (*The Berkshire Review*) and her musical “sensitivity and fire” (*Boston Musical Intelligencer*). Dedicated to exploring music on historical instruments, Susanna has participated in concerts presented by the Bach Ensemble led by Joshua Rifkin, Arcadia Players, Newton Baroque, Sarasa, Blue Hill Bach, and Boston Early Music Festival Series. She is a founding member of several period instrument chamber ensembles: Boston Classical Trio, Copley String



Quartet, and Coriolan String Quartet. She has appeared as soloist with the Handel and Haydn Society, Arcadia Players, Bach Ensemble, Blue Hill Bach, Foundling, Eastman Musica Nova Ensemble, Boston Virtuosi, and the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Symphony Orchestra. Susanna has recorded for Nonesuch and Telarc and has been featured on WGBH radio broadcasts.

Susanna has recently embarked with fortepianist Ian Watson on ‘The Beethoven Project’ to survey and record the complete Sonatas for Fortepiano and Violin of Beethoven on period instruments. *The New York Times* praised them for “elegant readings that are attentive to quicksilver changes in dynamics and articulation. Their performance of the Sonata No. 4 in A minor is darkly playful, their ‘Kreutzer’ Sonata brilliant and stormy.”

A tenured member of the Handel and Haydn Society, she was appointed as Assistant Concertmaster of the orchestra in 2014.

Her teachers have included Charles Castleman and Laura Bossert. She studied Baroque violin with Dana Maiben. She also worked extensively with Malcom Bilson and Paul O’Dette while completing her undergraduate and graduate studies at the Eastman School of Music.



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