

GARRICK OHLSSON
EDITION

VOLUME TWO

Ludwig van Beethoven

Piano Sonatas, Volume 1

Piano Sonata No. 4 in E-flat major, Op. 7 (31:35)

- 1** I Allegro molto e con brio (8:49)
- 2** II Largo, con gran espressione (9:04)
- 3** III Allegro (5:36)
- 4** IV Rondo: Poco allegretto e grazioso (8:06)

Piano Sonata No. 24 in F-sharp major, Op. 78 (10:41)

- 5** I Adagio cantabile - Allegro ma non troppo (7:36)
- 6** II Allegro vivace (3:05)

Piano Sonata No. 28 in A major, Op. 101 (21:42)

- 7** I Etwas lebhaft und mit der innigsten Empfindung;
Allegretto ma non troppo (4:13)
- 8** II Lebhaft. Marschmässig;
Vivace, alla marcia (6:44)
- 9** III Langsam und Sehnsuchtvoll;
Adagio, ma non troppo, con affetto (2:46)
- 10** IV Geschwind, doch nicht zu sehr, und mit Entschlossenheit;
Allegro (7:59)

Garrick Ohlsson, piano



The late Dr. Konrad Wolff wrote that "If Beethoven, unlike Bach and Mozart, has not yet found his definitive biographer and analytical theorist, it may be because, in many essential ways, he belongs to the present epoch of music. There are unresolved ingredients in the complex substance and aesthetics of his music that make Beethoven truly as controversial as today's avant-garde composers." The musical world's fascination with these ingredients has elicited radically differing responses to Beethoven's scores, reflective of the particular needs and tastes of each era. Over the years these compositions have been subjected to programmatic association, transcription and re-orchestration, interpretation on 'period' and 'modern' instruments, attempts at metronomic fidelity, and countless other viewpoints. Through it all, the powerful singularity of these conceptions have challenged the greatest interpretive musicians, dominating the musical landscape as no other composer has done before or since.

SONATA NO. 4 IN E-FLAT MAJOR, OP. 7

Beethoven's 32 Piano Sonatas span the years 1795 to 1822, with the three sonatas recorded on this collection placed near the beginning, middle and end of this remarkable journey. The *Sonata No. 4 in E-flat Major*, Op. 7, dedicated to his young student, Gräfin Babette von Keglevics and composed in 1796-97, is one of Beethoven's longest and most technically difficult sonatas to perform. Its exhilarating first movement, an *Allegro molto e con brio* in 6/8 meter, contains legato octaves, long leaps, ultra-fast scales, and a sustained tremolo passage that test the mettle of the performer. As he does almost continually throughout the 32 Sonatas, Beethoven seeks new developmental strategies for his materials. Charles Rosen points to Beethoven's alteration of the accentuation of the opening motif at its final appearance: the descending third which begins the piece on the beat, reverses its accentuation at the end, an early example of a process that would become a signature technique. The richly varied second movement, *Largo con gran espressione*, is composed in the sub-mediante, C major. The movement presents a hushed hymn-like theme that is juxtaposed with a more ornamental quasi-recitative line. Dramatic interjections of fortissimo chords, an unusual staccato episode, and an expansive range of rhythmic freedom are featured in this eloquent movement. Though not designated as a minuet, the third movement, *Allegro*, adopts the formal outline of the classic 18th century form. Continuing the second movement's restless combination of the gentle and forceful, the material evolves gradually from its almost tentative, rest-fragmented opening, to an affirmative final phrase and cadence. The trio section, in E-flat minor, is a whirl of texture with rapid triplets and heavily accented chords. The rondo finale, *Poco Allegretto e grazioso*, features a gentle cantabile theme, a brilliant arpeggiando middle section, and a final surprise- the music fading away to a quiet and mysterious conclusion.

SONATA NO. 24 IN F-SHARP MAJOR, OP. 78

Following the composition of his Sonata No. 23 "Appassionata" in 1805, Beethoven would not return to the composition of piano sonatas for four years, completing the 4th and 5th Piano Concertos, the 4th, 5th and 6th Symphonies, the "Razumovsky" Quartets, and the Violin Concerto among many other projects during this astonishingly fertile period. The *Sonata No. 24 in F-sharp Major*, Op. 78, one of Beethoven's two movement sonatas, was composed in 1809 and is dedicated to his friend and former student, Therese von Brunsvik. Though its outward appearance appears to be unassuming, the graciousness of this composition is underpinned by a subtlety of construction that is so refined that it appears to be almost improvisatory. The first movement, *Adagio cantabile - Allegro ma non troppo*, opens with a four bar prologue based on an F-sharp pedal which sets the stage for the compact sonata allegro which follows. In the course of this gentle and genial movement, fragments of the thematic and figurational materials appear and develop with such fluidity that the listener is almost unaware of anything but the charm of Beethoven's lyric invention and the sparkling economy of his keyboard textures. The finale, *Allegro vivace*, a scherzo in mood, is full of surprises. Rosen calls the movement "eccentric" and indeed the jerky figuration of the movement, with its question and answer two-bar phrases, always leads to the unexpected, including the movement's brief and jubilant coda.



LUDWIG van BEEHVOVEN.

SONATA NO. 28 IN A MAJOR, OP. 101

From the prolific years of the Op. 78 Sonata, we move to the more difficult years surrounding the composition of the *Sonata No. 28 in A Major*, Op. 101. Beethoven's personal problems, including his fight for the guardianship of his nephew Karl and his advancing deafness, greatly limited his ability to compose. The Op. 101 sonata was written during the summer of 1816, and is dedicated to Beethoven's favorite piano student, Baroness Dorothea von Ertmann. The first movement, *Etwas lebhaft und mit der innigsten Empfindung* (Somewhat lively and with the deepest inner sentiment), begins as if in mid-conversation with the dominant (E) being established with only oblique reference to the tonic. Beethoven's secretary, the violinist Anton Schindler, wrote that Beethoven described this movement, as "impressions and reveries". The second movement, a march marked *Lebhaft. Marschmässig* (Lively, In the style of a march), follows immediately and is in the standard dance form with its canonic trio providing a pensive contrast to the dotted martial rhythms of the outer sections. The slow movement, *Langsam und Sehnsuchtvoll* (Slowly and full of yearning) is played with the soft pedal held down throughout. It is a very brief movement and serves as an introduction to the finale, *Geschwind, doch nicht zu sehr, und mit Entschlossenheit* (Fast, but not too fast, and with determination), with its brief final cadenza leading into a re-statement of the first movement's opening theme before the beginning of the finale proper. The boisterous finale, with its fugal development section, is full of bucolic humor and comes to a fortissimo conclusion.

—L. Tipton Carruthers

Since his triumph as winner of the 1970 Chopin International Piano Competition, pianist **Garrick Ohlsson** has established himself worldwide as a musician of magisterial interpretive and technical prowess. Although he has long been regarded as one of the world's leading exponents of the music of Frédéric Chopin, Mr. Ohlsson commands an enormous repertoire, which ranges over the entire piano literature. A student of the late Claudio Arrau, Mr. Ohlsson has come to be noted for his masterly performances of the works of Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, as well as the Romantic repertoire. His concerto repertoire alone is unusually wide and eclectic – ranging from Haydn and Mozart to works of the 21st century – and to date he has at his command some 80 concertos. A musician of commanding versatility, Mr. Ohlsson is a consummate chamber pianist who performs regularly with the world's leading chamber groups.

In 2005–06, Mr. Ohlsson will perform in North America with symphony orchestras of Cleveland, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Houston, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, Seattle, Washington, D.C., and Berkeley; and the National Arts Centre, St. Paul Chamber, and the London Philharmonic at Lincoln Center. Special projects include a tour with the Takács Quartet and appearances at the Bonn Beethovenfest. Mr. Ohlsson will appear in recital at venues including Avery Fisher Hall, Skidmore and Muhlenberg colleges, SUNY Purchase, University of California at Davis, and In Fresno, Denver, and Baton Rouge.

Highlights of Mr. Ohlsson's 2004–05 season included performances with Orpheus at Carnegie Hall and with the Emerson String Quartet at Zankel Hall and a tour with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra in North America. In recent seasons Mr. Ohlsson has performed recital series devoted to the original music and transcriptions of Liszt, Rachmaninoff and Busoni; he has also

commissioned and premiered a new work for solo piano, "American Berserk," by John Adams and a piano concerto by the noted young composer Michael Hersch. In the summer of 2005, he presented the complete cycle of Beethoven piano sonatas for the first time at the Verbier Festival in Switzerland, a project that he will repeat in summer of 2006 at both Tanglewood and Ravinia.

Mr. Ohlsson is an avid chamber musician and has collaborated with the Cleveland, Emerson, Takács and Tokyo string quartets, among other ensembles. Together with violinist Jorja Fleezanis and cellist Michael Grebanier, he is a founding member of the San Francisco-based FOG Trio.

A prolific recording artist, Mr. Ohlsson can be heard on the Arabesque, RCA Victor Red Seal, Angel, Bridge, BMG, Delos, Hänssler, Nonesuch, Telarc and Virgin Classics labels. For Arabesque he has recorded the complete solo works of Chopin and four volumes of Beethoven sonatas.

A native of White Plains, N.Y., Mr. Ohlsson began his piano studies at the age of 8. He attended the Westchester Conservatory of Music and at 13 entered The Juilliard School in New York City. His musical development has been influenced in completely different ways by a succession of distinguished teachers, most notably Claudio Arrau, Olga Barabini, Tom Lishman, Sascha Gorodnitzki, Rosina Lhévinne and Irma Wolpe. Although he won First Prizes at the 1966 Busoni Competition in Italy and 1968 Montréal Piano Competition, it was his 1970 triumph at the Chopin Competition in Warsaw, where he won the Gold Medal, that brought him worldwide recognition as one of the finest pianists of his generation. Since then he has made nearly a dozen tours of Poland, where he retains immense personal popularity. Mr. Ohlsson was awarded the Avery Fisher Prize in 1994 and received the 1998 University Musical Society Distinguished Artist Award in Ann Arbor, Mich. He makes his home in San Francisco.

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