



**Ludwig van Beethoven**

(1770-1827)

**Complete Sonatas for Piano, Vol. 5**

**Garrick Ohlsson, piano**

**Grande Sonate Pathétique, Op. 13 (20:58)**

- 1 I. Grave: Allegro molto e con brio (9:48)
- 2 II. Adagio cantabile (6:09)
- 3 III. Rondo: Allegro (5:01)

**Sonata in C-Sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2 ("Moonlight") (16:42)**

- 4 I. Adagio sostenuto (6:53)
- 5 II. Allegretto (2:41)
- 6 III. Presto agitato (7:08)

**Sonata in C Major, Op. 53 ("Waldstein") (25:03)**

- 7 I. Allegro con brio (11:07)
- 8 II. Introduzione: Adagio molto (4:16)
- 9 III. Allegretto moderato (9:40)



*...As I am aware of what I want to do,  
the underlying idea never deserts me.  
It rises, it grows up. I hear and see the  
image in front of me from every angle.*

*--Beethoven*

In the last dozen years or so of the 18th century, eminent composers such as Haydn, Clementi, and Mozart were uniting the various components of their musical forms almost organically. Apparently different and contrasting themes, in particular, were constituted from motives which they shared in common. On occasion, this was the result of conscious delight, as when Haydn would write an entire sonata-form movement using only one theme! This sort of thematic strategy could be noticed and enjoyed by anyone in the audience, so obvious was its intent. Then there were slow introductions whose imposing motives became the theme of the *allegro* which followed, as in certain of Clementi's sonatas – linkages which sophisticated listeners could appreciate because of their conspicuous placement on the surface of the form. Such relatedness justified the occasional and dramatic reuse of introductory material as part of the developing action which followed, as in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, where the very opening of the Overture is discovered to be the statue's music in the last act. Another, deeper procedure involved organic relationships

beneath the surface, at the subliminal, truly structural level of a work – where the listener could only feel and be moved by their affect. Works of this sort, such as Mozart's last symphonies, imprint themselves upon us with an impact that is beyond words. The young Beethoven learned from these precedents, saw how to make them work for him and, in 1799, synthesized them to produce the first of the three undeniable masterpieces that appear on this recording.

The *Grande Sonate Pathétique*, Op. 13, then, is an important piece of history. It seizes upon the challenges posed by Haydn, Clementi and Mozart and ushers in a new era for musical form – Beethoven's own. Late 18th century ears must have been astonished to hear this work's bold *Grave* introduction reappear so dramatically before the Development section of the *Allegro molto e con brio* as well as before its terse Coda. The movement's orchestral texture must also have caused surprise, particularly to those who knew some of Beethoven's seven previous sonatas with their largely string quartet textures. Clever listeners probably heard how the second theme of this movement and the first theme of the

*Rondo* are alike but could not have been expected to notice that both – along with the Sonata's other themes and many of their gestures – are contained within the *Grave's* solemn page. To discover that takes a scholar's eyes and a musician's insight: Rudolph Réti devotes more than 90 pages (!) to the matter in his 1967 book *Thematic Patterns in the Sonatas of Beethoven*. The *Adagio cantabile* plays a role more crucial to Beethoven's purpose than merely bearing themes derived from the *Grave*, for its calm between the two outer movements' turbulence is illusory. Its structure of phrases which repeatedly try to rise but which, in every case, sink downward as if drawn there by gravity actually increases the listener's subconscious tension, thus building upon the tension so abruptly generated by the end of the first movement. This stratagem heightens the *Rondo's* effectiveness as a finale of compelling force. No wonder, then, that this sonata was the most exciting thing for the piano which anyone could have experienced in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna!

Three years passed before the Viennese had access to the *Sonata in C-sharp minor*, Op. 27, No. 2 – now called *Moonlight* af-

ter H.F.L. Rellstab, who described its first movement with the phrase "a boat passing the wild scenery of Lake Lucerne in the moonlight." The year was 1802. Appearing in tandem with a partner (in E-flat Major), the Sonata bore the title *Sonata quasi una Fantasia* (Sonata like a Fantasy). Its sonata-form movement came last, not first; its second movement was marked to be played immediately after the first, perhaps as a continuation of its expression; its interrelationships were structured so subtly that all anyone could notice was that the slowly rising arpeggios of the opening became the toccata-like, rocketing figures of the finale. Keen minds noticed that both figures took place over similarly descending bass lines just the way the second movement's opening theme did, while only close observation revealed thematic kinships present in all three – just as might be suspected from the now 32-year-old genius who had produced Op. 13! The magic spell cast by this new Sonata, however, was not that of sustained tension, as in Op. 13, but something unimagined before: the progressive crystallization of form from movement to movement. Beethoven's *Adagio sostenuto* had a strange, veiled quality on the pianos

of his day, for it was marked to be played with the dampers off the strings (an effect impossible on modern instruments with their greater resonance). The tonal blur suits the formal haze created by a theme which sings dolefully and at length from the middle of the keyboard, is submerged for a time by slow waves of arpeggios and soon comes to the surface of Rellstab's lake to be revealed anew by the moonlight. In other words, since there is little real form (A-"b"-A) upon which to focus one's attention, the listener's mind is free to fantasize. As the *Allegretto* slips in we think of an old-fashioned minuet, but Beethoven does not call it that nor does he want the first part of its rounded binary form to have the usual repeat. Still, the form is there, followed by a binary Trio before the *Allegretto* is repeated. This higher degree of clarity and charming major key establish a point of maximum dynamic contrast with the *Presto agitato* which follows explosively. Here is sonata form in all its logic – as the bearer of tidal waves of emotion. Three subjects and a closing motive are the characters caught up in this raging drama. And they all vanish at the end under the onslaught of arpeggios based on the same harmony that coaxed the

first movement into being.

*The Sonata in C Major, Op. 53* (called Waldstein, after the name of its dedicatee) was published in 1805, the year of the *Eroica* Symphony. Like that vast orchestral canvas, the Sonata reveals Beethoven again in his "grande" mode, although the piece has but two movements. Yet what a pair they are! To call their huge conceptions merely a sonata-form (*Allegro con brio*) and a rondo (*Allegretto moderato*) would be to miss Beethoven's complex point altogether: they are conceived as two expressions of the same melodic shape – a fifth – rising or falling and manifest as a sonata with rondo characteristics coupled to a rondo with sonata characteristics. Intervening is an *Introduzione: Adagio molto* – itself another, but very small A- "b" -A form (with Coda-as-transition) – of profound, but strained, calm which, like the *Adagio cantabile* of Op. 13, makes every effort to wrest itself from the keyboard's depths towards the brighter reaches of the treble. Its 26 bars actually take the listener to a trance-like pause on a single note which leads, finally, into the Rondo – a moment akin to the beauty of dawn, hence the French sobriquet for this

Sonata, *L'Aurore*. The Rondo's opening melody is displayed sublimely in the treble against a cushion of pedal tones marked carefully into the score. As it returns again and again, Beethoven adds chains of trills to his melody's shimmering poise – with the listener held in thrall each time and through to the *Prestissimo* Coda with its daring octave slides (called *glissandi*) and unprecedented 38-bar-long trill. The sound generated by this movement is the perfect foil to the almost orchestral driving force of the first movement and the only possible outcome of the effort made by its *Introduzione* to struggle from its shadowy realm toward the light.

The splendor of these three conceptions never fails to excite interest. Their underlying ideas support that splendor as irresistibly for the general public as for pianists everywhere. Thus, their popularity remains undimmed by the passage of more than 200 years, evidence of a master strategist at work – with timeless perfection – in the art of tones. No one did this with greater inspiration nor a surer hand than Ludwig van Beethoven.

--Frank Cooper

*Frank Cooper, an authority on music of the 19th Century, is Research Professor of Music at the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida.*



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 Chopin exponents, 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, which he regularly performs with the world's leading orchestras. A musician of commanding versatility, Mr. Ohlsson is also a consummate chamber pianist. He has collaborated with many of the leading chamber groups of our time, including the Cleveland, Emerson, Takács and Tokyo String Quartets, and 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 RCA Victor Red Seal, Angel, Bridge, BMG, Delos, Hänssler, Nonesuch, Telarc, and Virgin Classics labels. For Bridge Records, he has recorded the following: Bach *Goldberg Variations*, BWV 988; Handel: *Suite No. 2*, HWV 427 BRIDGE 9193; Beethoven Sonatas, Vol. 1: Op. 7, Op. 78, Op. 101 BRIDGE 9198; Beethoven Sonatas, Vol. 2: Op. 2, No. 2, Op. 81, Op. 111 BRIDGE 9201; Beethoven Sonatas, Vol. 3: Op. 2, No. 3, Op. 14, No. 1, Op. 14, No. 2, Op. 79 BRIDGE 9207; Charles Wuorinen: Music for Violin and Piano (with Benjamin Hudson) BRIDGE 9008; Justin Dello Joio: Two Concert Etudes, Sonata BRIDGE 9220.

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 age 13 entered the Juilliard School. His musical development has been influenced by a succession of distinguished teachers, most notably Claudio Arrau, Olga Barabini, Tom Lishman, Sascha Gorodnitzki, Rosina Lhévinne, and Irma Wolpc. Although he won First Prizes at the 1966 Busoni Competition in Italy and the 1968 Montréal Piano Competition, it was his 1970 triumph in

the Chopin Competition in Warsaw, where he won the Gold Medal, that brought him worldwide recognition. Mr. Ohlsson was awarded Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Prize in 1994 and received the 1998 University Musical Society Distinguished Artist Award in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Most recently, Mr. Ohlsson was nominated in the "Best Solo Performance" category of the 2008 Grammy Awards for his "Beethoven Sonatas, Vol. 3" (BRIDGE 9207). That, and the present disc, are part of his Complete Beethoven Sonata cycle, which will be issued by Bridge in 2008 and 2009.

Producer and Engineer: Adam Abeshouse

Editor and Mastering Engineer: Adam Abeshouse

Design: Douglas H. Holly

Cover photograph by Philip Jones Griffiths, Magnum Photos, Inc.

Executive Producer: Becky and David Starobin

Piano: Bösendorfer, Imperial Grand, No. 33808

Piano technician: Michael Miccio

Recorded at SUNY/Purchase Performing Arts Center, Theater C, June 27,  
28 & 29, 1995.

This recording was initially released on Arabesque Z6677


For Bridge Records: Barbara Bersito, Douglas H. Holly, Alexis Napoliello,  
Brad Napoliello, Charlie Post, Doron Schächter, Robert Starobin and  
Sandy Woodruff

Bridge Records, Inc. 200 Clinton Ave. New Rochelle, NY 10801  
for information about Bridge releases and to join our mailing list: Email:

[bridgerec@bridgerecords.com](mailto:bridgerec@bridgerecords.com)

[www.BridgeRecords.com](http://www.BridgeRecords.com)

Brad Napoliello, webmaster

Garrick Ohlsson on  **BRIDGE**



### Beethoven Sonatas, Volume 3

Piano Sonata No. 3 in C Major, Op. 2, No. 3  
Piano Sonata No. 9 in E Major, Op. 14, No. 1  
Piano Sonata No. 10 in G Major, Op. 14, No. 2  
Piano Sonata No. 25 in G Major, Op. 79  
BRIDGE 9207

### Beethoven Sonatas, Volume 2

Piano Sonata No. 2 in A Major, Op. 2, No. 2  
Piano Sonata No. 26 in E-flat Major, Op. 81A ("Lebewohl")  
Piano Sonata No. 32 in C Minor, Op. 111  
BRIDGE 9203



### Beethoven Sonatas, Volume 1

Sonata No. 4 in E-flat Major, Op. 7  
Sonata No. 24 in F-sharp Major, Op. 78  
Sonata No. 28 in A major, Op. 101  
BRIDGE 9198



**J. S. Bach:** Goldberg Variations, BWV 988  
Handel: Suite No. 2 in F major, HWV 427  
BRIDGE 9193

**Charles Wuorinen:** Works for Violin and Piano (1969-1983)  
Benjamin Hudson, violin; Garrick Ohlsson, piano;  
Speculum Musicae  
BRIDGE 9008

[www.BridgeRecords.com](http://www.BridgeRecords.com)



GARRICK ÖHLSSON  
E D I T I O N

[WWW.BRIDGERECORDS.COM](http://WWW.BRIDGERECORDS.COM)