

Andrew Rangell
Haydn Piano Sonatas

Sonata No. 56 in D (Hob. XVI:42) [11:53]

- 1 Andante con espressione [8:28]
- 2 Finale: Vivace assai [3:23]

Sonata No. 50 in D (Hob. XVI:37) [12:49]

- 3 Allegro con brio [6:36]
- 4 Largo e sostenuto [2:46]
- 5 Finale: Presto ma non troppo [3:26]

Sonata No. 32 in G minor (Hob. XVI:44) [15:25]

- 6 Moderato [10:02]
- 7 Allegretto [5:24]

Sonata No. 33 in C minor (Hob. XVI:20) [28:07]

- 8 Moderato [12:55]
- 9 Andante con moto [8:37]
- 10 Finale: Allegro [6:33]

Haydn's Keyboard Sonatas

For the most truly comprehensive documentation of Haydn's overall development—and of his genius—one might be better served by a survey of the string quartets or the symphonies than of the keyboard sonatas. Still, there is no more distinctive or important contribution to 18th-century keyboard literature than Haydn's 60 (or so) sonatas, which span four decades, from the 1750's to 1795, when the three final "London" sonatas were composed for the talented Therese Janson. The exact number of Haydn sonatas varies according to different opinions regarding authenticity and attribution of certain, mostly early, works. Hoboken, in his well-known thematic catalogue, listed 52 sonatas. More recently, Christa Landon, editor of the Wiener Urtext edition, lists 62. Usually the sonatas have been chronologically divided as follows: "Early" sonatas up to 1766. "Late" sonatas 1781-95. "Middle" sonatas—the largest group—can be subdivided (for stylistic reasons) into 1) seven "expressive" sonatas, 1765-71, and 2) three published sets of six sonatas each, 1773-80. Most of these sonatas are three-movement works. A fair number are in two movements, a few are in four. The numerous early sonatas (variously termed "divertimento" or "partita" by Haydn himself) are rather limited in scope and in ambition, written evidently for ready use in private teaching. Later sonatas were written for patrons, friends, and, in some cases, for virtuosi.

An unusual circumstance in Haydn's prolific sonata production is the emergence of a completely new level of imagination and conceptual boldness in his works dating from the second half of the 1760's (those aforementioned "expressive" sonatas). At this time the so-called "Sturm und Drang" movement had attained artistic currency in Europe. Though mainly literary, it emphasized overt and intense expression—and its most prominent musical exemplar was C. P. E. Bach, whose dramatically personal use of texture, register, dynamics, and harmonic contrasts certainly influenced Haydn's symphonies of the period. These same influences are vividly present in the G minor and C minor sonatas recorded here. While Haydn was to create most of his finest sonatas during the ensuing 25 years, he never surpassed these two sonatas in concentrated emotional impact. This, to me, is somewhat astonishing. (The inspired F minor variations of 1790 is the only directly comparable late keyboard work.) Finally, there happens to be a highly unfortunate omission in our collection of Haydn's sonatas: the scores of seven of them—those which would bridge an important gap between the early and middle sonatas—have never been found. (Haydn's personal catalogue indicates they had indeed been composed.) Thus, a particularly intriguing segment of Haydn's sonata journey remains hidden from us.

Sonata No. 56 in D major (Hob. XVI:42)

In 1784, a set of three two-movement sonatas, published by Bossler, represented Haydn's first departure from the three-movement format in a decade. The D major sonata, one of Haydn's most sophisticated and serious confections, must be considered among his finest achievements in the form. The opening Andante is a hybrid variation/rondo construction, a type much explored by Haydn. The charming eight-bar theme opens with tiny halting phrases, childlike in their simplicity, which introduce the dotted rhythm present throughout the movement. As an elaborate succession of variations unfolds, these opening phrases always seem to suggest a fleeting return to innocence—but with an ironic smile. Two episodes figure into the larger symmetry of this architecturally spacious event: a short, related, and recurring counter-theme; and a vivid minor-mode central section. The variations, ingeniously decorative, grow in extravagance. At the last moment, however, simplicity wins the day, in a wee and winsome codetta. Act II is much shorter. A cleverly chaotic, and virtually monothematic, rondo, the Vivace assai is cast in a (very lopsided) binary form. Section one is simply the 8-bar theme. Section two—92 bars long—is a running deconstruction and reconstruction of the two basic thematic components, step-wise and scalar figures. The mixture is volatile and filled with breathless pauses. Several half-cadences and a deceptive cadence occur, but a full cadence in D is actually deferred all the way until bar 86. At the very end, a most emphatic 4-chord cadence

is then cutely counterbalanced by two little throw-away cadences. End of story.

Sonata No. 50 in D major (Hob. XVI:37)

The ever-popular D major sonata, published by Artaria in a set of six sonatas, in 1780, represents Haydn's "galant" style at its ingratiating best. Despite its youthful zest (which greatly appealed to me when I tried learning it as a youngster), the work is more difficult than meets the eye, quite challenging in the pacing and articulation of its outer movements, and especially in the characterization of its central sarabande Largo, whose texture and atmosphere are truly a world apart. The first theme of the opening movement, energetically and unswervingly trumpets the tonic key of D, while the longer second-theme group dances around the dominant (A) for most of the exposition, leaving just enough room, finally, for a merry little closing theme to toast the arrival. A compact and busily workmanlike development seems very convincingly headed for an arrival in B minor when it makes a surprise pirouette, and lo: the recapitulation is upon us! No consequential changes appear in this recap. Brightly affirmative, it happily rests on its laurels.

The solemn and melancholy tone of the Largo *e sostenuto* comes as a great surprise—and this shift, from galant style to a ceremonial, slightly archaic, baroque Sarabande (with its French Overture dotted rhythms)

seems to me an inspired addition to the work as a whole. The climax occurs on a weighty Neapolitan sixth-chord, creating a dramatic preparation for the impending finale. Marked "Innocentemente" (a favorite indication of Haydn), this rondo is a merry-go-round of 8 short repeating sections, followed by a brief lead-back to the theme, which soon gallops home on a newly-supplied alberti bass. All in all, a blocky little production, with scant substance, stock contrasts, no major surprises, and certainly nothing especially remarkable. But the darned thing is irresistible!!

Sonata No. 32 in G minor (Hob. XVI:44)

The second two-movement sonata on this disc, also a pinnacle in this form of complementary events, presents a contrasting approach. To begin with, the two movements are not overtly different from each other, and they are not placed in opposition to each other. They share a great deal: overall size, weight, texture, intimate tone of voice, moderate (actually almost identical) tempos, and, in fact, virtually the same opening pitches. Simply put, this a composite of two shades of gray. The opening Moderato, a sonata form in binary layout, creates an experience practically unique in the classical sonatas I know: a closely-knit and quietly inexorable fantasy—unfolding with a perfect freedom and underpinned by an intricate design. If, as a great architect once said, "The details do not enhance the design; they are the design," this movement might be the proof. In this construction, thematic and

sectional contrasts have been de-emphasized in favor of a more gradual development and interweaving of a small family of primary ideas. Thus, the three main sections of the exposition, (the first, second, and closing themes) are subtly integrated by shared materials, in strokes so deft as to evade our awareness. And so it is in the development and recapitulation as well. The most arresting event of the movement is found late in the development: a stretto treatment of the opening triplet, creating the wonderfully overarching phrase which introduces the recapitulation. The recap itself is transformed. At its beginning, the space between first and second themes is beautifully abridged into a swoon of falling suspensions. On the other hand, new floating space is created in the closing theme, with its mini-cadenza and long caesura. The movement's final measure comes to rest on its last (i.e., fourth) beat. Why? Because quietly walking off the stage is deemed by Haydn to be more perfectly in the character of the movement than a more formal or prepared cadence. This tiny detail, in the precision of its emotional effect, speaks of many equally telling choices made earlier in the movement.

The second movement, *Allegretto*, opens in the manner of a slow, deeply expressive minuet. It is a counterpart equal in seriousness to the first movement, but rather more transparent in its development. It breathes more easily. Combining elements of rondo and variation form, it builds to an architectural symmetry a little less imposing but somewhat akin to that of the D major *Andante* movement which opens this recital. Yet

the intention here is altogether different. There is no interest in show, in brilliance, in grandeur, even in charm per se. This is starkly economical writing. Its elaborations, such as they are, have a single aim: to depict a dappled landscape of melancholy. The final brief reprise of the central episode (in G major) is, I think, an inspired choice. It exchanges, in effect, one kind of symmetry (ending the movement with its opening material) for another (ending with a smiling, poignant flashback of the central episode). And, as in the first movement, a simple, modest final cadence seals the deal perfectly.

Sonata No. 33 in C minor (Hob. XVI:20)

Hearing the G minor and C minor sonatas in succession helps to clarify our appreciation of each. Both are, of course, deeply serious dramas. But the scope of the C minor, the stage, as it were, is much enlarged. So too is the language itself: witness the sweeping traversals of register, extremes of sonority, and overall virtuosity in the outer movements. The exposition of the opening *Moderato* establishes, in its three sections, radical shifts of texture and space, which dominate and define the drama. The 8-bar opening theme, graceful with thirds and sixths, but uneasy as well, sets the tone. Abruptly leaving the tonic, a discursive transition section unfolds. It features long, single-line passages (including a highly unusual sequence of alternating single-note dynamics, a la C. P. E. Bach) as well as a short *adagio* recitative. These events,

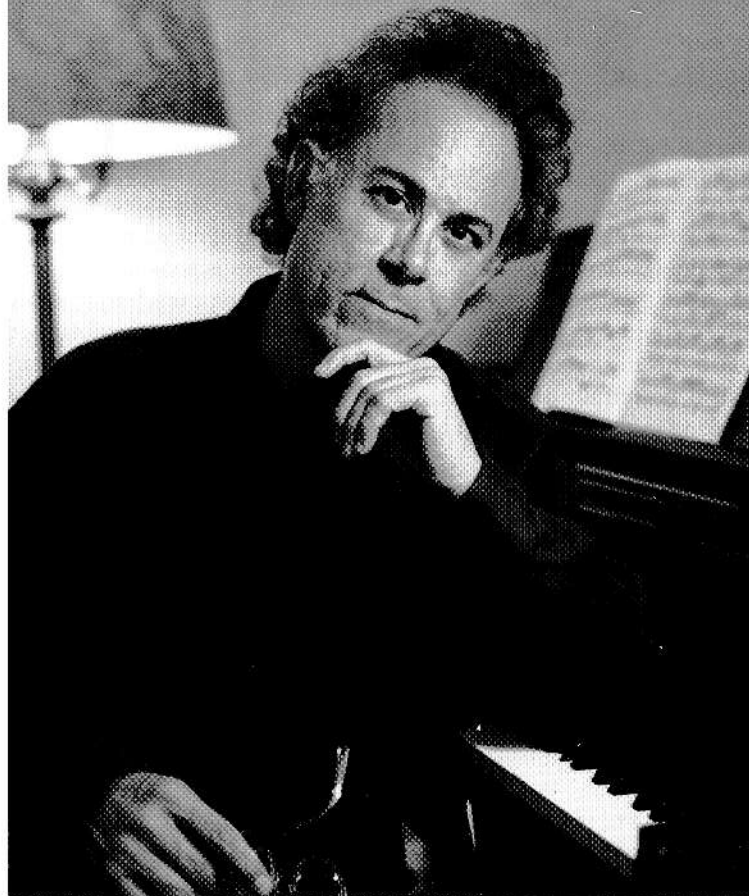
each briefly suspending harmonic motion, are simultaneously indrawing and time-altering. The disorientation is put to rest in the closing theme, a busily articulated affirmation of E flat major. Yet the exposition ends with a surprising double flashback: a last single-line passage, followed by a gentle cadence using the thirds of the opening. This is writing of exquisite daring. And it is sustained, and with cumulative impact, to the end. A final detail which must be mentioned: the dovetailing of development and recapitulation produced by Haydn's placing the transitional theme as lead-in to the first theme, in other words, reversing their previous order. In its context this touch is beyond clever. It is inspired.

The central *Andante con moto* is a fantasy of a different kind, its flavor Baroque, given its two—and three—part textures and walking-bass line, both of these sustained to a remarkable, almost hypnotic, extreme. The form is binary, but with a heightened, non-literal recapitulation near the end. Repeated note in the right hand, a descending scale in the left—these define the opening theme; yet the texture itself seems overwhelmingly to be the main (and, in a way, the only!) subject. That is, the melodic line is not really a separate entity, but always interlocked polyphonically with the walking-bass line. The melody moves, nonetheless, with suavity and freedom, often in extended syncopated relation to the bass. In this drama, it is the mixture of the formal and the uncanny which amazes me. In my score, not a single dynamic is indicated. To me, this suggests the simple truth that in this strange middle world, all voice levels, balances,

and inflections are necessarily in the hands of the performer.

A descending scale figure is prominent, by design, in all three movements of this work—but it is most dominant in the darkly brilliant finale. Haydn often concluded sonatas with a minuet, or minuet-like movement, but, despite its triple meter, the main theme here is too agitated, too rhythmically ambiguous, to resemble a minuet. The form is sonata, in a binary layout, yet the urgent reappearances of the main theme (each time varied) deliver a powerful rondo impression to the listener. An extraordinary detail: in this movement of almost unbridled intensity, one marvels at the hushed, beautifully calibrated endings of both sections. But what is most shocking in the structure (and experience) of this movement is a radical reconstitution of its recapitulation, developed and enlarged, as it is, to an almost unrecognizable extent—raising the emotional stakes in a manner which would take Beethoven a long time to equal.

—*Andrew Rangell*



Andrew Rangell

Born in Chicago and raised in Colorado, Andrew Rangell is a graduate of the Juilliard School, earning a doctoral degree in piano under Beveridge Webster. Mr. Rangell made his New York debut as winner of the Malraux Award of the Concert Artists Guild and has since performed throughout the United States, and in Europe and Israel. He has also lectured extensively, and taught on the faculties of Dartmouth, Middlebury, and Tufts University. His many New York recitals have included an unusually wide range of repertoire, from Gibbons, Sweelinck, and Froberger to Berio, Nielsen, Schoenberg, Enescu, and the two epic sonatas of Charles Ives. Mr. Rangell's gifts as an extraordinary interpreter of Beethoven received high acclaim during three successive seasons (1986-89) devoted to the performance, in a seven-concert sequence, of the thirty-two Beethoven piano sonatas. This period saw ten traversals of the complete cycle (including Boston presentations at both Sanders Theater and Jordan Hall, and at New York's 92nd Street Y) as well as a debut at Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival and the award of an Avery Fisher Career Grant. Of Mr. Rangell's most recent New York recital, Charles Michener of the New York Observer wrote: "For me, the great discovery of the series has been Andrew Rangell. . . Mr. Rangell is an individualist. And such was his intensity—like the late Glenn Gould, he seemed to be propelled by an irresistible force—that the listener's attention was riveted to the music."

Andrew Rangell's extensive discography on the Dorian label includes Bach's Goldberg Variations, Beethoven's final five sonatas, two diverse collections entitled "A Recital of Intimate Works" (Vol. I & II), and a pairing of Beethoven's Diabelli Variations and Ravel's Gaspard de la Nuit. A two-disc set of Bach's six Partitas released in November, 2001 was cited in both The Boston Globe and Boston Phoenix as one of the 'Best recordings of 2001.' Mr. Rangell's performances of the complete Chopin Mazurkas joined the Dorian catalogue in 2003 and were characterized, in Gramophone, as "taking the humble mazurka to new heights of variety and sophistication." 1998-99 marked Andrew Rangell's first active concert season following a long hiatus due to a serious hand injury. Since that time he has steadily reclaimed and expanded his performance and recording career. He was honored to perform a solo recital (which featured Ives' "Concord" sonata) in the 2003 Venice "Biennale," Italy's foremost contemporary music festival. In spring of 2008 Andrew Rangell was Artist-In-Residence of the Philadelphia Bach Festival.

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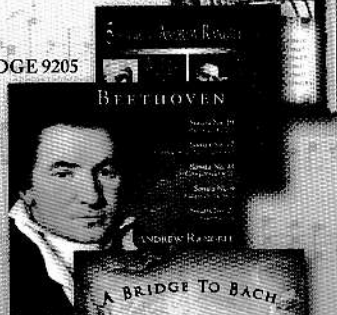


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