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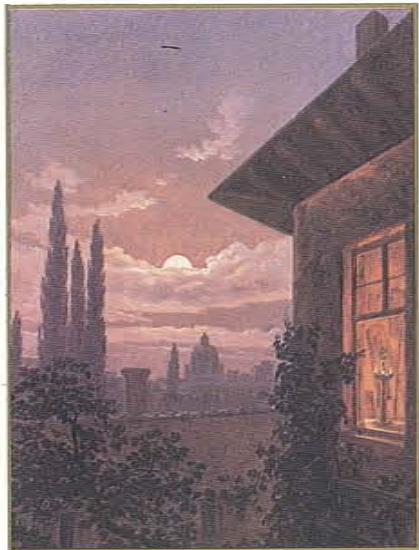
BEETHOVEN

Famous Piano Sonatas

“Pathetique”

“Moonlight” • “Appassionata”

Jenő Jandó, Piano



Compact
Classics

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)

Ludwig van Beethoven was born in Bonn, grandson of the Kapellmeister of the musical establishment of the Prince-Archbishop of Cologne and son of a singer in the chapel. His father, Johann van Beethoven, was of little help to him, and denied him a sound general education, while attempting to exploit the child's still undeveloped musical gifts. Beethoven was to suffer for the rest of his life from his lack of education and a consequent inability to express himself at all clearly.

By good fortune he found an able teacher in Christian Gottlob Neeff, court organist and musical director of a theatrical company. Training was thorough, with a study of J. S. Bach's famous 48 Preludes and Fugues and the duty of deputising for Neeff both as organist and as conductor of the theatre orchestra. Beethoven's position was officially recognised when, at the age of fourteen, he was appointed assistant court organist.

In his final years in Bonn Beethoven profited from experience as a viola-player in the opera orchestra, playing the works of composers such as Mozart, Cimarosa and Gluck. It was in Bonn that, in 1792, he met Haydn, returning from a visit to London, where he had conducted the first set of his London Symphonies.

Whether at Haydn's invitation or of his own volition Beethoven travelled to Vienna at the end of the year, and was to remain there for the rest of his life. He took some lessons from Haydn, to whom he dedicated his first piano sonatas, but found in the court organist Albrechtsberger a more satisfactory and systematic teacher, particularly of counterpoint, the art of putting melody against melody. From the court Kapellmeister Salieri, to whom he dedicated his first violin sonatas, Beethoven learned the techniques necessary to the setting of Italian words.

Mozart in Vienna had struggled to earn an adequate living without direct patronage, and without a remunerative position at court, although the success in Prague of Don Giovanni had brought him the official position of Kammermusikus, chamber musician, with the responsibility for writing minuets for court balls and entertainments.

In the 1790s there had already been changes, as the French Revolution took its course, disturbing the stability of society, as the more privileged classes became alarmed, and the radicals more optimistic. Beethoven sought to exist in Vienna by his own exertions, in independence of a patron. He was soon respected as a re-

markable pianist, performing, as was the custom, mainly in the houses of the aristocracy, but offering a certain number of the public concerts in the year. As a teacher he had distinguished pupils, and was able to gain some support from his compositions, although much of his later correspondence seems to be concerned with the difficulties of this, in an age when copyright agreements were unknown.

The event that was to alter Beethoven's life dramatically was his deafness, which, becoming evident as early as 1798, was to make public performance impossible, and to drive the composer into an enforced solitude.

A remarkable document, the so-called Heiligenstadt Testament, a message written to his brothers Kaspar and Johann, allows us to see the despair that deafness brought him. The letter is in the form of a final will and testament, to be read after his death. Written in the countryside outside Vienna, at the village of Heiligenstadt, it was the prelude to an act of will by which he surmounted his fate. The death that he seemed to welcome was to occur only 25 years later, after a life in which new heights in music had been scaled and a new world opened to his successors.

Beethoven's Sonatas

Probably the best known of Beethoven's sonatas are the Pathétique, Moonlight and Appassionata. Only the first name was given by the composer. The Moonlight Sonata has its name from the inspiration of the poet Rellstab (whose verses were to be set to music by Schubert). Writing in 1832 he likened the sonata to the wild scenery bordering Lake Lucerne, seen from a boat by moonlight. The French romantic composer Berlioz, on the other hand, preferred to see sunlight in the sonata, and other writers have been equally imaginative.

Sonata No. 8 in C Minor, Op. 13 "Pathétique"

The Sonata pathétique was written in 1798 and 1799, and was published in the latter year with a dedication to Prince Lichnowsky, the nobleman who had travelled to the court of Berlin with Mozart in 1789. The work, Opus 13, is in C Minor, and is described as a "Grande" Sonata, music suitable for public performance by the composer, who was at this time one of the most distinguished keyboard-players in Vienna.

The first movement opens with a famous dramatic introduction, fragments of which reappear to open the middle, development section, and to introduce the final bars (the coda or tail-piece). A brilliant rapid section makes up the body of the movement, with a contrasting theme of suaver outline contrasting with the stronger emotion of the first theme.

The second movement, marked *Adagio cantabile* (slow and singing in tone), is, as is usual, in a different key, here that of A major. It is followed by a Rondo derived, it would seem, from sketches made much earlier for other purposes.

For this and a number of other sonatas one German scholar has suggested, on a hint reported from a conversation with Beethoven, a literary model. In this case the parallel proposed is the story of Hero and Leander, as related by Musaeus. The first of this pair, a priestess of Aphrodite, was visited nightly by her lover Leander, who used to swim across the Hellespont to her tower at Abydos, and was finally drowned, when Hero's light failed to guide him through the stormy seas.

Sonata No. 14 in C Sharp Minor 'quasi una fantasia' Op. 27, No. 2 "Moonlight"

The Moonlight Sonata is more properly described by its title Sonata quasi una fantasia, Opus 27 No. 1, in the key of C Sharp Minor. The imaginative writer Arnold Schering, already referred to, found a literary parallel with Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice, but others have chosen to find in the sonata romantic notions of a different kind. It was completed in 1801, and dedicated, at the last minute, to Countess Giulietta Guicciardi, a young pupil of Beethoven.

This sonata has always enjoyed enormous popularity, and has, therefore, been the subject of speculation. It has also undergone the indignity of various arrangements, including, in 1835, a concert performance in which the first movement was played by an orchestra, and the second two by Liszt.

The form of the Moonlight Sonata is unusual. Its first movement, a texture of delicacy, is a slow one, and it is followed by a brief second movement in the form of a scherzo and trio, the slightly less regular successor of the Minuet. Histrionics are left until the last movement, with its contrasts of melody and dynamics.

Sonata No. 23 in F Minor, Op. 57 "Appassionata"

Sonata in F Minor, Opus 57, the Appassionata, was considered by Beethoven to be among his best piano sonatas. Its nick-name, although not chosen by the composer, is an apt one, although Schering's parallel with Shakespeare's Macbeth may appeal to us less. Dedicated to the Countess of Brunswick, the sonata was completed in 1805 and published two years later.

Once again this sonata proved a fertile source for imaginative speculation in the nineteenth century, writers finding in it grim spectres, heartfelt emotions, storms of passion and the ominous threats of Fate. Musically its first movement is one that allows a full exploration of the resources of the keyboard. It is followed by the kind of slower melody that Beethoven knew so well how to write. This is treated as the subject of a number of variations. Fiercely repeated chords introduce the Finale, which, with its great technical and musical demands, brings us into a new world, before the coda, with its sudden reminiscences of the beginning of the movement.

Jenő Jando'

Jenő Jando' was born at Pecs, in south Hungary, in 1952. He started to learn the piano when he was seven and later studied at the Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music under Katalin Nemes and Pal Kadosa, becoming assistant to the latter on his graduation in 1974. Jando has won a number of piano competitions in Hungary and abroad, including first prize in the 1973 Hungarian Piano Concours and a first prize in the chamber music category at the Sydney International Piano Competition in 1977. In addition to his many appearances in Hungary, he has played widely abroad in Eastern and Western Europe, in Canada and in Japan.



Jeno Jando

BEETHOVEN

Sonata No. 8 in G Minor "Pathetique"
Sonata No. 14 in C Sharp Minor "Moonlight"
Sonata No. 23 in F Minor "Appassionata"

Jenő Jandó, Piano

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|----------|--|--------|
| 1 | Sonata No. 8 in C Minor, Op. 13 "Pathetique" | |
| | Grave – Allegro di molto e con brio | (8:26) |
| | Adagio cantabile | (4:41) |
| | Rondo. Allegro | (4:25) |
| 2 | Sonata No. 14 in C Sharp Minor 'quasi una fantasia' | |
| | Op. 27, No. 2 "Moonlight" | |
| | Adagio sostenuto | (5:14) |
| | Allegretto | (2:03) |
| | Presto agitato | (7:16) |
| 3 | Sonata No. 23 in F Minor, Op. 57 "Appassionata" | |
| | Allegro assai | (9:33) |
| | Andante con moto | (5:48) |
| | Allegro ma non troppo – Presto | (8:08) |

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