

# BEETHOVEN

## Piano Sonatas, Vol. 3

Klaviersonaten • Sonates pour piano

Op. 2, Nos. 1-3

Jenö Jandó



1988 Recording | Playing Time : 67'26"

## **Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)**

### **Sonata No. 1 in F Minor, Opus 2 No. 1**

Allegro

Adagio

Menuetto: Allegretto

Prestissimo

### **Sonata in A Major, Opus 2 No. 2**

Allegro vivace

Largo appassionato

Scherzo: Allegretto

Rondo: Grazioso

### **Sonata in C Major, Opus 2 No. 3**

Allegro con brio

Adagio

Scherzo: Allegro

Allegro assai

Ludwig van Beethoven was born in Bonn in December, 1770, the son of Johann van Beethoven, a singer in the service of the Archbishop of Cologne, and, more important, the grandson of Ludwig van Beethoven, Kapellmeister to the same patron. It was perhaps the very distinction and strength of character of the head of the family that lay at the root of Johann van Beethoven's inadequacy as a father and final professional incompetence. The elder Ludwig died in 1773, but was to remain for his grandson a powerful posthumous influence, while Johann slid further into habits of dissipation, with Ludwig, his eldest surviving son, assuming in 1789 the role of head of the family, with responsibility for his two younger brothers.

In Bonn Beethoven received erratic musical training at home, followed by a much more thorough course of study with Christian Gottlob Neefe, who was appointed court organist in 1781. By 1784 Beethoven had entered the paid service of the Archbishop as deputy court organist, employed as a viola-player or as cembalist in the court orchestra, and turning his hand increasingly to composition. A visit to Vienna in 1788 for the purpose of study with Mozart led to nothing, cut short by the illness and subsequent death of his mother, but in 1792 he was to return to the imperial capital, again with his patron's encouragement, to take lessons with Haydn.

Beethoven came to Vienna with the highest recommendations and was quick to establish himself as a pianist and composer. From Haydn he claimed to have learned nothing, but he was to undertake further study with Johann Georg Albrechtsberger in counterpoint and with the court Kapellmeister Antonio Salieri in vocal and dramatic setting. More important he was to attach himself to a series of noble patrons who were to couple generosity with forbearance throughout his life.

As a young composer in Bonn Beethoven had followed the trends of his time; in Vienna he was increasingly to develop his own unmistakable and original musical idiom, sometimes strange and uncouth by the standards of the older generation, but suggesting completely new worlds to others. It was an apparent stroke of fate that played an essential part in this process. By the turn of the century Beethoven had begun to experience bouts of deafness. It was this inability to hear that inevitably directed his attention to composition rather than performance, as the latter activity became increasingly impossible. Deafness was to isolate him from society and to accentuate still further his personal eccentricities of behaviour, shown in his suspicious ingratitude to those who helped him and his treatment of his nephew Karl and his unfortunate sister-in-law.

In Vienna Beethoven lived through turbulent times. The armies of Napoleon, once admired by Beethoven as an enlightenend republican, until he had himself crowned as emperor, were to occupy the imperial capital, and war brought various changes of fortune to the composer's friends and supporters. The last twelve years of his life were spent in the relative political tranquillity that followed Napoleon's final defeat, a period in which the freedom of thought that had characterised the reign of Joseph II was replaced by the repression of his successors, anxious to prevent a recurrence of the unfortunate events that had caused such damage in France. Beethoven survived as an all-licensed eccentric, his bellowed political indiscretions tolerated, while others, apparently saner, were subject to the attention of the secret police. He died in March, 1827, his death the occasion for public mourning in Vienna at the passing of a figure whose like the city was not to see again.

By 1796, when Beethoven brought out the first set of three piano sonatas, dedicated to Joseph Haydn, he was enjoying considerable success in Vienna as a performer, patronised by Prince Lichnowsky, in whose company Mozart had travelled, in 1790, to Berlin and Potsdam, by Baron van Swieten, arbiter of musical taste and author of the texts of Haydn's oratorios *The Seasons* and *The Creation*, and by other noblemen of generosity and distinction. He had already written sonatas for the keyboard during his early years in Bonn and had caused Haydn some embarrassment by foisting on him a set of variations for piano, written and played in Bonn, but now claimed as new works. Haydn had written to Beethoven's patron, the Archbishop of Cologne, offering the supposed new composition as evidence of his pupil's progress in Vienna, coupled with a request for a more generous allowance for the young musician, who, it transpired, had been less than honest with his teacher both about his work in composition and the true state of his finances. The dedication of the three sonatas that form Opus 2 came after Haydn's return from his second visit to London and after lessons had ceased.

The first of the set, the Sonata in F Minor, opens with a first movement in the spirit of the older composer, with an ascending rocket of a principal theme, to which a subsidiary motive provides the necessary contrast of contour and key. The second movement Adagio calls for that singing style of performance for which Beethoven was well known, as the principal theme is elaborated and embellished. The Minuet, with his contrasting F major Trio, presages later Scherzo movements, while the final Prestissimo brings a touch of Promethean fire.

The second sonata, in A major, makes greater demands on both performer and listener, in particular through the quality that contemporary critics were to deprecate as "learned", the important element of counterpoint. The first movement contains surprises, with its dramatic second subject and the sudden shift of key at the start of the central development. The second movement is in a stately D major and is followed by a Scherzo of deceptive simplicity and a contrasting A minor Trio. The final Rondo opens with gentle panache, reserving something of its dramatic fire to the chromatic opening of its central section, material that reappears in the approach to the softer conclusion.

The C Major Sonata opens with a characteristic figure, echoed in the bass, a passage of some brilliance leading to a G minor second subject. The third section of the movement, the recapitulation, seems set to open in D major, until, by devious harmonic paths, the original key is restored, the music proceeding to a cadenza before its brilliant coda. The slow movement is in the unexpected key of E major and its elaborate melodic figuration is followed by a cunningly contrived C major Scherzo and A minor Trio. The sonata ends with a movement that calls for considerable panache, reminding us that at this stage in his career Beethoven seemed destined for fame as a virtuoso performer, at a time when the roles of composer and performer were generally combined.

## **Jenő Jandó**

Jenő Jandó was born at Pécs, 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. Jandó 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.

He is currently engaged in a project to record all of Beethoven's piano solo works for Naxos. Other recordings for the Naxos label include the concertos of Grieg and Schumann as well as Rachmaninov's 2nd Concerto and Paganini Rhapsody.





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Playing  
Time :  
67'26"**BEETHOVEN****Piano Sonatas, Vol. 3**

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**Op. 2 Nos. 1-3****Jenő Jandó, Piano****Piano Sonata No. 1 in  
F Minor, Op. 2 No. 1****1** Allegro

(5:36)

**2** Adagio

(4:49)

**3** Menuetto. Allegretto

(3:05)

**4** Prestissimo

(4:52)

**Piano Sonata No. 2 in  
A Major, Op. 2 No. 2****5** Allegro vivace

(6:55)

**6** Largo appassionato

(6:49)

**7** Scherzo. Allegretto

(2:58)

**8** Rondo. Grazioso

(6:35)

**Piano Sonata No. 3 in  
C Major, Op. 2 No. 3****9** Allegro con brio

(10:16)

**10** Adagio

(7:25)

**11** Scherzo. Allegro

(3:06)

**12** Allegro assai

(5:00)

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