

Deux-Elles

Beethoven

Pathétique

Beethoven Piano Sonatas Op. 10 No. 1, 2, 3 and Op. 13

Martin Roscoe

Beethoven Piano Sonatas

MG - As a listener to your recitals for more than twenty years, I've always been amazed at the breadth of the repertoire you play, from Bach's '48' and the *Goldberg Variations* to Birtwistle and beyond. From that position of being something of a musical polymath, you're now focussing on the music of one composer over the next four or five years. Why do we need another Beethoven cycle? What are your aims in playing and recording it?

MR - Well, with regard to the breadth and range of my repertoire, I'm fortunate in having very catholic tastes, although it should also be said that some of the working life of any musician can sometimes be governed by necessity!

I'm not sure "needing" a Beethoven cycle is applicable: there's always room for another viewpoint on the greatest works and after thirty-five years performing and teaching Beethoven's sonatas I feel ready to give my own versions.

I would say my aim is to try to produce recordings which have some of the freshness

and spontaneity of live performances, so I am preceding each disc with a series of concerts around the UK and abroad. It is of course also very important to have a complete knowledge of detail and I am using the new ground-breaking edition by Professor Barry Cooper of Manchester University, one of the world's leading Beethoven scholars, which has just been published by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music and won a 'Best Classical Publication' award from the Music Industries Association.

MG - Does the new edition present you with different decisions that have made you rethink the way you play this music now? Are we going to hear crucial changes as in Jonathan Del Mar's recent editions of Beethoven's symphonies?

MR - I wouldn't say there was anything very radical which entails the need for a new approach but there are many details of notes, articulation and dynamics, particularly the placing of the dynamics, which other Urtext editions have allowed to slip by. Barry Cooper's critical commentaries are comprehensive and

Martin Roscoe and Mike George



in the fifth bar of the first movement of Op. 10 No. 2 one usually sees (and hears!) a dotted rhythm which is clearly absent in original editions because later statements of the theme have them. Why not enjoy the difference?

MG - In your first volume we meet Beethoven in what we might call 'chapter 3' of his cycle; 'chapter one' is the trio of sonatas from 1783 and in 'chapter two' he's already put his stamp on the world with the three Sonatas Op. 2 and his first Grand Sonata Op. 7. Do we then meet a more relaxed Beethoven in these next Op. 10 Sonatas, with less to prove?

MR - Beethoven was always experimenting and pushing boundaries throughout his career. So his first four published sonatas all have four movements, making them symphonic in scale, but it could be construed that they are statements of seriousness which the sonatas on this disc do not have to follow. There are no sonatas by either Haydn or Mozart with four movements. Beethoven's Op. 10 Sonatas have very different originalities. In the C minor it is the massive *Adagio* with its richness and space which

makes it a movement entirely characteristic of Beethoven, while the whirlwind *Finale* ends in a totally unexpected - questioning - manner. In Op. 10 No. 2, there is no slow movement at all, while Op. 10 No. 3 opens with a *Presto* - most unusual. The D minor *Largo e mesto* is one of Beethoven's most tragic utterances for the piano and the only full-scale minor-key slow movement until the *Hammerklavier*. The last two movements are by way of contrast among his most charming and witty. I suppose this is a roundabout way of agreeing that, yes, in these sonatas, Beethoven felt at liberty to experiment even more than in the earlier works.

MG - It's pretty obvious to me from the way you play the *Pathétique* that you don't just see it, as some people do, as a popular warhorse.

MR - The term 'warhorse' implies to me something which is tired, overblown, or both! The *Pathétique* is, I think, a work of peculiar intensity and dynamic energy which can still blow away its listeners with its power and freshness. There's also an economy and tautness of structure not so obviously evident

in Opp. 2 and 7 - it's shorter than any of these. The unusual step of giving it a name (he only named one other of his sonatas - *Les Adieux* - all the other so-called named sonatas acquired them later from other sources) underlines the importance Beethoven attached to the meaning of this Sonata. The choice of C minor (the minor key most associated with Beethoven) is also crucial. Mozart in C minor is, I feel, serious and almost ceremonial; in Beethoven's C minor there is always a feeling of struggle underpinning the tragedy.

His most popular - and named - sonatas are inevitably considered to be *de rigueur* for any pianist. The *Pathétique* remains a huge thrill to perform: I'd even say I find it much more exciting now than when I first learnt it some thirty-five years ago!



Martin Roscoe is a versatile musician who flourishes in performance, whether as a concerto soloist, recitalist or chamber musician. He is an artist who endeavours always to serve the composer and the music. His enduring popularity and solid reputation are built on a deeply thoughtful musicianship which is allied to an easy rapport with audiences and fellow musicians alike. He has enjoyed working as a soloist under such eminent conductors as Sir Simon Rattle, Kent Nagano, Luciano Berio, Yan Pascal Tortelier, Sir Mark Elder and Mark Wigglesworth.

One of Britain's most prolific recitalists, Roscoe performs at the Wigmore Hall every season. His chamber music partnerships include some long standing collaborations with artists such as Tasmin Little, Steven Osborne, the Leopold String Trio and the Brodsky, Endellion and Lindsay Quartets.

Roscoe's numerous recording projects have included all the piano works of Szymanowski for Naxos, the complete piano music of Nielsen for Hyperion, and James MacMillan's *The Berserking* for Chandos. He has recently recorded the complete Beethoven violin sonatas with Peter Cropper for Sanctuary Classics and is now recording the complete Beethoven piano sonatas for the Deux-Elles label.

A respected and much loved member of the conservatoire teaching establishment, Roscoe has held positions at the Royal Academy of Music and, now, at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He is the Artistic Director of both the Beverley Chamber Music Festival and the Ribble Valley International Piano Week.

The Complete Beethoven Piano Sonatas

Martin Roscoe

Volume 1 *Pathétique* DXL1161

Op. 10 No. 1
Op. 10 No. 2
Op. 10 No. 3
Op. 13

Volume 2 *Waldstein* DXL1162

Op. 7
Op. 49 No. 1
Op. 49 No. 2
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Volume 3 *Final Trilogy* DXL1163

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Op. 111

Volume 4 *Funeral March* DXL1164

Op. 22
Op. 14 No. 1
Op. 14 No. 2
Op. 26

Volume 5 *In the beginning...* DXL1165

Op. 2 No. 1
Op. 2 No. 2
Op. 2 No. 3
WoO 47 No. 1

Volume 6 *Moonlight* DXL1166

Op. 27 No. 1
Op. 27 No. 2
Op. 28
Op. 54
WoO 47 No. 2

Volume 7 *Tempest* DXL1167

Op. 31 No. 1
Op. 31 No. 2
Op. 31 No. 3
WoO 47 No. 3

Volume 8 *Appassionata* DXL1168

Op. 57
Op. 81a
Op. 101

Volume 9 *Hammerklavier* DXL1169

Op. 79
Op. 90
Op. 106

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Piano Sonata in C minor Op. 10 No. 1

- 1** Allegro molto e con brio 5:29
- 2** Adagio molto 8:24
- 3** Finale: Prestissimo 4:23

Piano Sonata in F Op. 10 No. 2

- 4** Allegro 8:33
- 5** Allegretto 3:59
- 6** Presto 3:51

Piano Sonata in D Op. 10 No. 3

- 7** Presto 6:47
- 8** Largo e mesto 9:16
- 9** Menuetto: Allegro 2:48
- 10** Rondo: Allegro 3:55

Piano Sonata in C minor Op. 13 *Pathétique*

- 11** Grave - Allegro di molto e con brio 8:51
- 12** Adagio cantabile 5:01
- 13** Rondo: Allegro 4:41



Producer Mike George
Recording Engineer Patrick Naylor
Booklet Notes Martin Roscoe and Mike George
Cover Design Frank Parker, A Creative Experience
Recorded in Potton Hall, Suffolk, 15th and 16th September 2007.

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