

BEETHOVEN

Favourite Piano Music

“Moonlight”, “Pathétique” and “Appassionata” Sonatas
Variations on “God Save the King”

“Fidelio” Overture, arranged by Ignaz Moscheles
(first recording)



Anthony
Goldstone
(piano)

played on the Steinway model D
at Wisbech Grammar School

BEETHOVEN: FAVOURITE PIANO MUSIC

PIANO SONATA in C sharp minor, Op. 27, no. 2 ("Moonlight")

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|---|-----|---------------------------|--------|
| 1 | I | <i>Adagio sostenuto</i> - | [5:01] |
| 2 | II | <i>Allegretto</i> | [2:13] |
| 3 | III | <i>Presto agitato</i> | [7:12] |

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|---|---|--|--------|
| 4 | OVERTURE TO "FIDELIO", Op. 72, arr. Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870) | | [6:31] |
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PIANO SONATA in C minor, Op. 13 ("Pathetique")

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|---|-----|--|--------|
| 5 | I | <i>Grave - Allegro di molto e con brio - Tempo primo</i> | [9:54] |
| 6 | II | <i>Adagio cantabile</i> | [4:38] |
| 7 | III | <i>Rondo (Allegro)</i> | [4:12] |

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| 8 | 7 VARIATIONS ON "GOD SAVE THE KING", WoO 78 | | [8:25] |
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PIANO SONATA in F minor, Op. 57 ("Appassionata")

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|----|-----|---------------------------------------|--------|
| 9 | I | <i>Allegro assai</i> | [9:21] |
| 10 | II | <i>Andante con moto</i> - | [6:28] |
| 11 | III | <i>Allegro ma non troppo - Presto</i> | [7:37] |

PIANO SONATA in C minor, Op. 13 ("Pathetique")

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| 12 | As track 5 but with "conventional" repeat | | [8:19] |
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Total CD duration: [79.57]

Beethoven was unlucky in love. Not renowned for his social graces, he tended to fall for ladies (or girls) of the nobility, who then married in their own class. One such was Countess Giulietta Guicciardi, the dedicatee of the "*Moonlight*" Sonata, written in 1801. He had met her probably the previous year, when she was sixteen, he thirty, and she became his piano student. Whether inspired by Giulietta or not, the sonata is suffused with intense emotion.

One feels tempted to date the beginnings of impressionism in music to the first movement [1] of this, the second of two sonatas comprising Beethoven's Opus 27, both designated *Quasi Una Fantasia* (like a fantasy). It is so well known that any description is redundant, but it may be useful to remind ourselves of the shock produced, two centuries ago, by beginning a sonata with a complete slow movement (not a slow introduction) without any easily singable melody or readily identifiable form (though there are vague elements of a sort of truncated sonata form), and played *sempre pp e senza sordini*, i.e. very softly and with sustaining pedal throughout. Beethoven almost certainly intended the pedal not to be lifted at all, so blurring the harmonies. That would have been possible on the instruments of his day, whose sound had a shorter "decay" time than that of modern pianos, and the resulting haze would have anticipated Debussy by nearly a century. It is all atmosphere. The sonata acquired its nickname – and even more popularity than it had already – after the poet Ludwig Rellstab wrote about it in 1832, conjuring from it the image of gliding in a boat across Lake Lucerne by moonlight.

Beethoven asks for the second movement [2], a brief *Allegretto* in D flat major, to follow without a break. Sometimes described as a minuet, this movement feels to me more like a *Ländler* – a waltz-like German or Austrian dance. In the central trio section the right hand often precedes the left by one beat, producing a humorous effect. Any smile, though, is rapidly swept away by the finale [3], a furious *Presto agitato*, which while beginning quietly is shot through with sudden *sforzando* accents. Back in C sharp minor, it is in sonata form, but the second subject is in the dominant (G sharp) minor, not the expected E major. In fact there is virtually no hint of the major mode anywhere in this movement, which has an unrelieved demonic character, like a witches' ride. (The same procedures are followed, producing the same effect, in the finale of the "*Appassionata*" Sonata.) The coda of this *tour de force* contains cadenza-like passages, and indeed it is almost a concerto without orchestra. The contrast with the opening movement could not be more complete.

"*Fidelio*" Overture [4] was the last of four overtures intended by Beethoven at different times for his great opera of human love, loyalty, courage and emancipation. The first three, *Leonore* nos. 1, 2 and 3, bear the opera's earlier title and date from 1805-7. The final version of the opera, now called *Fidelio*, was completed and

produced in Vienna much later, in 1814. Its overture, unlike those for *Leonore*, is concise and commands the listener's attention from the start with an arresting call-to-arms, which after a pause is followed by a slow soft horn call. This alternation of material is repeated in the subdominant, after which the music remains slow but builds in power menacingly. Eventually we reach the main section – a compact sonata-form *Allegro* with much dramatic contrast whose first subject is derived from the opening call-to-arms; after the *Allegro* has run its course the call-to-arms is recalled with the concomitant soft horn call. A *Presto* coda raises the excitement and drives forward to a peremptory close.

Ignaz Moscheles, who made the piano transcription recorded here, was a German-Bohemian whose many compositions were highly esteemed for a long time. In his twenties he was already hailed as a front-rank virtuoso pianist. When he was only twenty Beethoven entrusted him with creating a piano reduction of the whole of *Fidelio*, with which the composer was well satisfied, dedicating this version to his patron and composition pupil Archduke Rudolph: thirteen years later the great man, nearing his end, wrote to Moscheles in London with a request to secure funds for him: this he did, but sadly the money paid for Beethoven's funeral. Particularly admired in Britain, Moscheles settled in London in 1826, among many important activities conducting in 1832 the first English performance of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, and for forty years he was closely connected with the Philharmonic Society (for which he conducted "*Fidelio*" Overture in 1834 and 1839). Among his many famous pupils was Mendelssohn, who received piano lessons from him at the age of thirteen, became a close friend, constantly seeking out Moscheles's opinions of his own new works, and in 1846 installed him as first piano professor in his newly formed Leipzig Conservatory.

It is satisfying to be able to link Moscheles's inclusion in this programme with the next work. When he translated A.F. Schindler's biography of Beethoven into English in 1841, his preface included the following reminiscences: "I learnt from some schoolfellows that a young composer had appeared in Vienna, who wrote the oddest stuff possible – such as no one could either play or understand: crazy music, in opposition to all rule: and that this composer's name was Beethoven. On repairing to the library to satisfy my curiosity, I found there Beethoven's Sonate pathétique. This was in the year 1804. [However, elsewhere he mentions tackling the work when he was seven years old, which would be three years earlier.] My pocket-money would not suffice for the purchase of it, so I secretly copied it.

"The novelty of its style was so attractive to me, and I became so enthusiastic in my admiration of it, that I forgot myself so far as to mention my new acquisition to my master [Dionys Weber], who reminded me of his injunction [to study only the works of Mozart, Clementi and J.S. Bach for three years], and warned me not to

play or study any eccentric productions until I had based my style upon more solid models. Without, however, minding his injunctions, I seized upon the piano-forte works of Beethoven as they successively appeared, and in them found a solace and a delight such as no other composer afforded me."

One is always tempted to try to associate the emotional qualities of a work of art with the contemporary personal circumstances of its creator, but the process can be fraught with pitfalls, being simplistic and ignoring the complex layers making up the persona of any creative artist, let alone a great genius such as Beethoven.

Nevertheless, the character of the first movement [5] of the "*Pathétique*" Sonata (dating from c. 1798, dedicated to Beethoven's faithful friend and patron Prince Carl von Lichnowsky, and the sole example from the canon of thirty-two piano sonatas to be given a descriptive epithet by its composer, if one excludes the "programmatic" Op. 81a – "*Farewell, Absence and Return*") is so like a cry of pain that it would seem contrary to distance it from Beethoven's encroaching deafness, which he tried to keep secret for as long as he could, and his growing realisation that it would increasingly afflict the rest of his life. English-speakers, for whom the adjective "pathetic" has been devalued, should perhaps be reminded of the ancient Greek source *word pathos*, which could mean suffering, pain, sickness, misfortune, calamity, passion, and violent emotion.

The first chord is like a premonition of doom, and the succeeding rhythm funereal (cf. the funeral march second movement, in the same key, of the "*Eroica*" Symphony of 1803). This opening *Grave* section is not so much a slow introduction as an *idée fixe*, which returns to punctuate the main fast music – at the beginning of the development and again after the recapitulation before the final last bars. It generates material later in the movement (indeed in the other movements too), and in fact bars 5 and 6 of the *Grave* are paraphrased in bars 4-6 and 10-12 of the development. Partly for this reason it has always appeared clear to me that, contrary to usual practice, the repeat mark at the end of the exposition should return us to the very opening, not just to the start of the *Allegro di molto e con brio*. To reinforce the point, the final elongated *fortissimo* chord of the "first-time bars" joins on seamlessly to the first chord of the *Grave*, but not to the first restless *piano* bars of the *Allegro*.

This is the way I perform the work, and so I was delighted to find recently, in "Keyboard Music" edited by Denis Matthews (David & Charles, 1972), in the "Beethoven, Schubert, and Brahms" chapter written by Matthews himself, the following words: "Obviously the repeat, if made, should take in the introduction as well as the allegro. Beethoven gave no contrary indication, though most editors (even the best) have marked off the

allegro with its own reverse repeat-sign, thus unbalancing this dual-tempo movement and making nonsense of the 'first-time bar' pause. But traditions, even spurious ones, die hard – the writer was once accused of a lapse of memory for obeying the original letter of the score!" Matthews was, apart from being a leading pianist, an academic of outstanding distinction, and I am relieved to find in him an ally. (For comparison, track [12] contains a version with the conventional repeat, which may be programmed to replace track [5] if desired).

After the *Sturm und Drang* of the first movement comes the famous dark-hued *Adagio cantabile* [6] in A flat major. The opening melody belongs in the rich tenor register to which it is first – and more often than not – assigned. Each of the two episodes begins in a minor key, and the coda uses the dominant ninth to heart-tugging effect (surely an early use of the chord – possibly one feature of "the novelty of style" referred to by Moscheles). The C-minor *Rondo* finale [7] leaves one breathless, not because of any great speed – it is, after all, marked *Allegro*, not *Presto*. I suggest that one factor is the unusually frequent use of highly charged, "ungrounded" harmonies such as diminished sevenths, "German" sixths and third inversions of the dominant seventh. The sole moment of repose is an episode in A flat major (recalling bars 5-7 of the second movement) that starts simply but soon gathers contrapuntal intricacy. The end is brutal – *p* quietening to *pp*. then an explosive *ff* with *fff* on the final chord.

The "*Pathétique*" *Sonata* is especially remarkable for two reasons: with its stark depiction of the turmoil in the artist's soul, it seems to me to have kick-started the romantic tendency in music, and its inter-movement thematic relationships, already touched upon, forcefully point the way toward procedures that would come to dominate compositional methods to this day. To take two examples of these connections – (1) the second subject of the first movement (growing out of the opening *Grave*) → the second episode of the slow movement → the opening theme of the finale: and (2) bars 5 and 6 of the slow movement → bars 5 and 6 of the finale.

The dignified melody of *God Save the King*, the United Kingdom's national anthem, appears to have coalesced gradually through the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth. Many nations have adopted it: for example it has been sung by the United States as *America* ("My Country, Tis of Thee") and Germany as *Heil dir im Siegeskranz*, and it is still the national anthem of Liechtenstein. Among the numerous composers who have incorporated it into their own works or written variations on it are Weber, Paganini, Liszt, Brahms, Franck and, with great humour, Charles Ives. Beethoven, as well as producing the *Seven Variations* (1803) recorded here, later arranged the air for solo voice, chorus and piano trio, and it provides the triumphant culmination of his

Battle Symphony, composed in 1813 – the year in which he wrote in his diary. "I must show the English what a blessing they have in *God Save the King*."

After stating the vertical, chordal theme [8] Beethoven sets about transforming it into horizontal counterpoint, first in three parts with lyrical quavers, then as a two-part invention in running semiquavers. The third variation utilises the arpeggiated "Alberti bass" named after the Venetian composer Domenico Alberti (1710-c. 1740), remembered today solely for "inventing" it. Two contrasting variations follow, one of galumphing capriciousness, the other expressive in the minor mode. A lively march leads into the scurrying seventh variation and then the coda, which after musing on the theme, *Adagio*, launches into what is in effect an unnumbered *Allegro* eighth variation.

It was the publisher Cranz who named Beethoven's Opus 57 sonata "*Appassionata*". Written probably in 1804*. It was dedicated to Count Franz von Brunsvik, who was a cousin of Beethoven's earlier lady love Giulietta Guicciardi and to whose two sisters he was attracted also. The Count was a gifted 'cellist and a firm friend and supporter of the composer. One of Beethoven's fieriest works, the sonata fits the title perfectly.

On the face of it, a *pianissimo* arpeggio ranging over two octaves followed by a cadence with a trill does not appear to constitute a promising first theme for the opening movement [9] of a sonata. But the insidious rhythm, the "baldness" of the spacing, the pregnant silence after the dominant chord's first inversion – all these things mark this first idea as a stroke of genius, creating an atmosphere of hushed suspense. What is more, it is astonishingly repeated a semitone higher, in G flat major. Soon a soft drum motif of four notes, the first three being the same note repeated (cf. the "fate" motif of the *Fifth Symphony* of 1807-8) answers the cadence, there is a cascade of semiquavers, and we have now been presented with virtually all the source material for this movement, whose sudden extreme contrasts of dynamic and register, bursts of energy, violent syncopations, orchestral sonorities and motoric rhythms look forward to Liszt. Here Beethoven confirms what was beginning to become an important aspect of his style – the adoption of trills and repeated notes, ostensibly merely two of the bare bones of music, as intrinsically important building blocks of his themes.

The second movement [10] starts off in the same dark register that had begun the second movement of the "*Pathétique*", but in this case we have a bipartite theme (with each part repeated) followed by three variations, each of which strains higher to reach the treble regions. The rather sombre theme is perversely adventurous in that its harmonies escape only minimally from the Ionic and its first half, comprising eight bars, utilises just four

different notes: in its economy it rivals the opening theme of the *Allegretto* of the *Seventh Symphony*, written eight years later. The third variation replaces solemnity with fast figuration and syncopated accents, but as the music has seemingly burst into glittering light it comes tumbling back down into the gloom to reintroduce the theme (usually referred to as a fourth variation but, I think, more like a reprise). This however has now been partially liberated, as alternate phrases are played an octave higher. There is no final cadence but a brilliant coup which propels us shatteringly via hanging diminished sevenths straight into the tempestuous finale [11] in F minor.

Ferdinand Ries, Beethoven's only composition pupil apart from Archduke Rudolph, wrote that he and Beethoven had one morning embarked on one of their customary walks. They returned at nearly eight in the evening. "He had all the time been humming and sometimes roaring to himself, high and low, but without singing any notes. When I asked him what was up, he said. 'I have just thought of the theme for the last movement of the "*Appassionata*" sonata.' As soon as we reached his room he stormed over to the pianoforte without even taking off his hat. I sat down in a corner and he forgot me at once. For an hour or so he raged through the glorious new finale of the sonata. When at length he got up he was astonished to see me, and said. 'I can give you no lesson today. I must go on with this.'"

What lesson could come close to the experience of being present at the birth of this torrential *moto perpetuo* finale? It is deliberately marked *Allegro ma non troppo*, so that when the coda accelerates to *Presto* it is as if the bolt has at last been released from the crossbow. One odd feature of this sonata-form movement is that the exposition is not repeated, whereas the development / recapitulation is. A hitherto universally accepted wrong reading in bar 339 (C in place of Beethoven's B flat on the second beat in the left hand) has been pointed out to me by Professor Barry Cooper of Manchester University, and adopted.

* I have seen the date for the completion of the "*Appassionata*" Sonata put as late as 1806, and yet on 26 August 1804 Beethoven wrote to the publisher Breitkopf & Hartel offering, among other works, "three new sonatas for pianoforte solo [Opp. 53, 54 and 57]." He added, "Should you like to have one of these with an accompaniment, I would also agree to arrange this too." Incredibly, this seems to mean that Beethoven was prepared to add an optional part for another instrument, such as the violin, to the "*Waldstein*" and "*Appassionata*" Sonatas. The imagination goes into overdrive at this.

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ANTHONY GOLDSTONE

Described by *The New York Times* as “a man whose nature was designed with pianos in mind”, **Anthony Goldstone** is one of Britain’s most respected pianists. A sixth-generation pupil of Beethoven through his great teacher Maria Curcio, Anthony Goldstone was born in Liverpool. He studied with Derrick Wyndham at the Royal Manchester College of Music (which later honoured him with a Fellowship), later with Curcio in London.

He has enjoyed a career encompassing six continents, the Last Night of the Proms (after which Benjamin Britten wrote to him, “Thank you most sincerely for that brilliant performance of my Diversions. I wish I could have been at the Royal Albert Hall to join in the cheers”), very many broadcasts and seventy CDs (including the BBC issue of his London Promenade Concert performance of Beethoven’s fourth Piano Concerto). He has an adventurous approach to repertoire and has been praised by Vienna’s *Die Presse* for “his astonishingly profound spiritual penetration”.

In the last few years Goldstone has become known for his acclaimed completions and realisations of works for solo piano and piano duet by Schubert, and for two pianos and solo piano by Mozart, all of which he has recorded on Divine Art CDs as part of an astonishingly inventive discography which has attracted worldwide admiration.

He is also one half of the acclaimed and brilliant piano duo Goldstone and Clemmow with his wife Caroline. The duo has made many CDs for Divine Art as well as Toccata Classics and other labels, including one (Divine Art DDA25020) containing première recordings of two Russian masterpieces, Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 4 and *Romeo and Juliet*, in spectacular transcriptions for four hands by friends of the composer – Sergei Taneyev and Nadezhda Purgold (Mme. Rimsky-Korsakov) respectively. Goldstone is also making a substantial contribution to Divine Art’s new Russian Piano Music series, issued by its American branch.

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Grammar school education was provided only for boys until in 1904 Alexander Peckover (a co-founder of Barclay's Bank) donated buildings and land for the foundation of the Wisbech Girls' High School. Boys and girls were then educated separately in buildings on opposite sides of the river Nene until the two schools amalgamated in 1970 to provide co-education on one site, on the North Bank of the Nene. Following a return to independent status in 1983 there has been a massive expansion programme with more than five million pounds spent on new buildings. The junior department was re-founded in 1997.

The school occupies a magnificent 27 acre site which blends some beautiful Georgian buildings with excellent modern facilities for teaching, learning, sport and a wide range of activities. A new music and drama wing was completed in 2003 and the status of music received a further boost when a new Steinway model D, chosen for the school by Anthony Goldstone, was purchased in the same year.

For further information about the school please go to www.wgs.cambs.sch.uk or telephone 01945 583631.

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Piano: Model D Steinway

Piano technician: Benjamin E. Nolan

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