

## Acknowledgments

Recorded 2011-2016 at Patrych Sound Studios, NYC  
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Photos of Steven Masi by Seth Litroff

A portrait of Steven Masi, a middle-aged man with short hair, wearing a dark suit jacket over a dark shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is dark and out of focus.

Ludwig Van Beethoven

STEVEN MASI PIANO

TROY1661

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## DISC ONE

### Piano Sonata No. 1 in F minor, Op. 2, No. 1

1	Allegro	(5:45)
2	Adagio	(5:11)
3	Menuetto – Allegretto	(3:07)
4	Prestissimo	(4:51)

### Piano Sonata No. 2 in A major, Op. 2, No. 2

5	Allegro vivace	(7:22)
6	Largo appassionato	(7:30)
7	Scherzo: Allegretto	(3:26)
8	Rondo: Grazioso	(7:16)

### Piano Sonata No. 3 in C major, Op. 2, No. 3

9	Allegro con brio	(10:24)
10	Adagio	(9:28)
11	Scherzo: Allegro	(3:25)
12	Allegro assai	(5:47)

TOTAL TIME = 73:32

## DISC TWO

### Piano Sonata No. 4 in E-flat major, Op. 7

1	Allegro molto e con brio	(8:56)
2	Largo, con gran espressione	(10:58)
3	Allegro	(5:37)
4	Rondo: Poco allegretto e grazioso	(7:55)

### Piano Sonata No. 15 in D major, Op. 28

5	Allegro	(10:59)
6	Andante	(7:54)
7	Scherzo: Allegro vivace	(2:44)
8	Rondo: Allegro	(5:34)

TOTAL TIME = 60:35





### DISC THREE

#### Piano Sonata No. 5 in C minor, Op. 10, No. 1

- |   |                          |        |
|---|--------------------------|--------|
| 1 | Allegro molto e con brio | (5:58) |
| 2 | Adagio molto             | (8:36) |
| 3 | Finale: Prestissimo      | (4:22) |

#### Piano Sonata No. 6 in F major, Op. 10, No. 2

- |   |                      |        |
|---|----------------------|--------|
| 4 | Allegro              | (5:57) |
| 5 | Menuetto. Allegretto | (3:59) |
| 6 | Presto               | (2:27) |

#### Piano Sonata No. 7 in D major, Op. 10, No. 3

- |    |                   |         |
|----|-------------------|---------|
| 7  | Presto            | (7:07)  |
| 8  | Largo e mesto     | (11:51) |
| 9  | Menuetto: Allegro | (2:51)  |
| 10 | Rondo: Allegro    | (4:02)  |

#### Piano Sonata No. 8 in C minor, Op. 13 “Sonata Pathétique”

- |    |                                     |        |
|----|-------------------------------------|--------|
| 11 | Grave – Allegro di molto e con brio | (8:47) |
| 12 | Adagio cantabile                    | (5:22) |
| 13 | Rondo: Allegro                      | (4:57) |

TOTAL TIME = 76:17

### DISC FOUR

#### Piano Sonata No. 9 in E major, Op. 14, No. 1

- |   |                        |        |
|---|------------------------|--------|
| 1 | Allegro                | (6:45) |
| 2 | Allegretto             | (4:46) |
| 3 | Rondo – Allegro comodo | (3:39) |

#### Piano Sonata No. 10 in G major, Op. 14, No. 2

- |   |                        |        |
|---|------------------------|--------|
| 4 | Allegro                | (7:47) |
| 5 | Andante                | (5:42) |
| 6 | Scherzo: Allegro assai | (3:46) |

#### Piano Sonata No. 11 in B-flat major, Op. 22

- |    |                              |         |
|----|------------------------------|---------|
| 7  | Allegro con brio             | (7:33)  |
| 8  | Adagio con molto espressione | (11:44) |
| 9  | Menuetto                     | (3:41)  |
| 10 | Rondo: Allegretto            | (6:50)  |

TOTAL TIME = 62:13





## DISC FIVE

### Piano Sonata No. 19 in G minor, Op. 49, No. 1

- |   |                |        |
|---|----------------|--------|
| 1 | Andante        | (4:34) |
| 2 | Rondo: Allegro | (3:44) |

### Piano Sonata No. 20 in G major, Op. 49, No. 2

- |   |                       |        |
|---|-----------------------|--------|
| 3 | Allegro ma non troppo | (4:57) |
| 4 | Tempo di Menuetto     | (3:18) |

### Piano Sonata No. 12 in A-flat major, Op. 26

- |   |  |        |
|---|--|--------|
| 5 | Andante con variazioni                                 | (8:23) |
| 6 | Scherzo, allegro molto                                 | (2:35) |
| 7 | Maestoso andante, marcia funebre sulla morte d'un eroe | (7:10) |
| 8 | Allegro  | (2:59) |

### Piano Sonata No. 13 in E-flat major

- |    |                                     |        |
|----|-------------------------------------|--------|
|    | "Quasi una fantasia," Op. 27, No. 1 |        |
| 9  | Andante – Allegro – Andante         | (4:53) |
| 10 | Allegro molto e vivace              | (1:53) |
| 11 | Adagio con espressione              | (2:54) |
| 12 | Allegro vivace                      | (5:35) |

### Piano Sonata No. 14 in C-sharp minor

- |    |  |        |
|----|--|--------|
|    | "Quasi una fantasia," Op. 27, No. 2 "Moonlight Sonata" |        |
| 13 | Adagio sostenuto                                       | (5:22) |
| 14 | Allegretto   | (2:14) |
| 15 | Presto agitato   | (7:20) |

TOTAL TIME = 67:49

## DISC SIX

### Piano Sonata No. 16 in G major, Op. 31, No. 1

- |   |                            |         |
|---|----------------------------|---------|
| 1 | Allegro vivace             | (6:47)  |
| 2 | Adagio grazioso            | (14:39) |
| 3 | Rondo, allegretto – presto | (7:48)  |

### Piano Sonata No. 17 in D minor, Op. 31, No. 2 "The Tempest"

- |   |                 |        |
|---|-----------------|--------|
| 4 | Largo – Allegro | (9:34) |
| 5 | Adagio          | (9:29) |
| 6 | Allegretto      | (7:36) |

### Piano Sonata No. 18 in E-flat major, Op. 31, No. 3 "The Hunt"

- |    |                               |        |
|----|-------------------------------|--------|
| 7  | Allegro                       | (8:03) |
| 8  | Scherzo. Allegretto vivace    | (5:16) |
| 9  | Menuetto. Moderato e grazioso | (4:19) |
| 10 | Presto con fuoco              | (4:58) |

TOTAL TIME = 78:29





## DISC SEVEN

### Piano Sonata No. 21 in C major, Op. 53 "Waldstein"

- |   |  |         |
|---|--|---------|
| 1 | Allegro con brio                         | (10:58) |
| 2 | Introduzione: Adagio molto               | (4:34)  |
| 3 | Rondo. Allegretto moderato – Prestissimo | (10:49) |

### Piano Sonata No. 22 in F major, Op. 54

- |   |                          |        |
|---|--------------------------|--------|
| 4 | In tempo d'un menuetto   | (6:01) |
| 5 | Allegretto - Più allegro | (4:24) |

### Piano Sonata No. 23 in F minor, Op. 57 "Appassionata"

- |   |                                |         |
|---|--------------------------------|---------|
| 6 | Allegro assai                  | (10:53) |
| 7 | Andante con moto               | (7:12)  |
| 8 | Allegro ma non troppo - Presto | (8:54)  |

TOTAL TIME = 63:44

## DISC EIGHT

### Piano Sonata No. 27 in E minor, Op. 90

- |   |  |        |
|---|--|--------|
| 1 | Mit Lebhaftigkeit und durchaus mit Empfindung und Ausdruck | (6:45) |
| 2 | Nicht zu geschwind und sehr singbar vorgetragen            | (9:18) |

### Piano Sonata No. 24 in F-sharp major, Op. 78 "à Thérèse"

- |   |                  |        |
|---|------------------|--------|
| 3 | Adagio cantabile | (8:39) |
| 4 | Allegro vivace   | (3:17) |

### Piano Sonata No. 25 in G major, Op. 79 "Cuckoo"

- |   |                     |        |
|---|---------------------|--------|
| 5 | Presto alla tedesca | (5:20) |
| 6 | Andante             | (2:57) |
| 7 | Vivace              | (1:56) |

### Piano Sonata No. 26 in E-flat major, Op. 81a "Das Lebewohl"

- |    |                                   |        |
|----|-----------------------------------|--------|
| 8  | Das Lebewohl: Adagio - Allegro    | (7:14) |
| 9  | Abwesenheit: Andante espressivo   | (4:13) |
| 10 | Das Wiedersehen: Vivacissimamente | (6:25) |

TOTAL TIME = 56:03





## DISC NINE

### Piano Sonata No. 28 in A major, Op. 101

- |   |   |         |
|---|---|---------|
| 1 | Etwas lebhaft und mit der innigsten Empfindung  | (4:19)  |
| 2 | Lebhaft, marschmäßig  | (6:12)  |
| 3 | Langsam und sehnsuchtsvoll.<br>Geschwind, doch nicht zu sehr und mit Entschlossenheit | (10:28) |

### Piano Sonata No. 29 in B-flat major, Op. 106

- |   |  |         |
|---|--|---------|
|   | “Große Sonate für das Hammerklavier”                   |         |
| 4 | Allegro  | (10:53) |
| 5 | Scherzo: Assai vivace                                  | (2:44)  |
| 6 | Adagio sostenuto                                       | (19:15) |
| 7 | Introduzione: Largo...Allegro – Fuga: Allegro risoluto | (11:48) |

TOTAL TIME = 65:38

## DISC TEN

### Piano Sonata No. 30 in E major, Op. 109

- |   |                                      |         |
|---|--------------------------------------|---------|
| 1 | Vivace, ma non troppo                | (4:34)  |
| 2 | Prestissimo                          | (2:48)  |
| 3 | Gesangvoll, mit innigster Empfindung | (14:15) |

### Piano Sonata No. 31 in A-flat major, Op. 110

- |   |   |         |
|---|---|---------|
| 4 | Moderato cantabile molto espressivo   | (6:33)  |
| 5 | Allegro molto   | (2:11)  |
| 6 | Adagio ma non troppo, Fuga: Allegro ma non troppo,<br>L'istesso tempo della Fuga poi a poi di nuovo vivente | (11:28) |

### Piano Sonata No. 32 in C minor, Op. 111

- |   |   |         |
|---|---|---------|
| 7 | Maestoso - Allegro con brio ed appassionato | (9:15)  |
| 8 | Arietta: Adagio molto semplice e cantabile  | (19:14) |

TOTAL TIME = 70:18





I believe that artists, whether it is with pen and words, brush and color, body and movement, or instrument and note, are forever searching for the truth, and in, “the matter.” It is a never-ending ‘peeling of the onion’; listening for the holes in the silence; looking for that moment when the ‘interpretive’ becomes ‘revelatory’. It is the essence of the pursuit for the articulation of the infinite. None more delicate nor arduous than that of capturing sound.

Having been invited to join Mr. Masi, along with Mr. Patrych, and contribute to the capturing of Beethoven’s 32 sonatas, has been a supreme privilege. It is also an exclamation point of 40 years of friendship. One that began in 1974, when I first met Mr. Masi at a summer theatre in North Conway, New Hampshire, where he was generously giving of his time away from his other ‘day-job’, that of becoming a classical pianist, helping a company of fledgling actors and singers, of which I was one, find their way to and through the songs of Sondheim, Gershwin, Cole Porter.

Over the years watching Steven Masi’s pursuit has been an inspiration for me as I myself have tried to find a direct, honest, and compelling expression of who a particular character might be. Sharing in his and Joe’s collaboration has also been revelatory. I thank them heartily and sincerely hope that the listening to these exquisite recordings provides lasting enjoyment and appreciation for the spirit of artistic expression.

—DAVID STRATHAIREN

## Recording the Beethoven Sonatas with Steven Masi

### Eighty-Nine.

As of this writing, the current number of complete Beethoven Piano Sonatas that have either been completed or are pending is 89. It is interesting to note that the number of those in production is 11. The history of commercial recording goes back to around 1903; in the first 45 or so years of commercial recording (the 78 Era), Artur Schnabel’s was the one complete set of the Beethoven Sonatas. Sixty-five years later, eleven sets are moving toward completion in one year.

This begets the following question: why would anybody endure the enormous task of learning all this music—hundreds of thousands of notes, thousands of indications of interpretation—when each sonata itself might speak to the individual’s soul and taste in varying varying degrees, and with so many sets already available? Regardless of the appropriately deified status of these works, most pianists do not feel equally positive about each and every sonata, as was exemplified by a recent liner note about a certain pianist’s utter disdain for Op. 54, which he pilloried with gusto!

I first met Steven Masi 35 years ago at the 1981 Maryland International Piano Competition—later to be renamed William Kapell. I have a vague but positive memory of his preliminary round. Clearly, the judges must have liked it, as he advanced to the semi-final round. By that time, Steven and I had become good friends, and he asked me to turn pages for the compulsory commissioned work in the semi-final round. Now, those who know Steven know him to be a self-effacing fellow with a temperate ego; this must have been the case back then, as, convinced he would not advance to the semi-final round, he had neglected to pay much attention to the George Walker Bauble, which was the commissioned work in question. So when it came time to perform it, Steven felt more comfortable with the idea of having the score in front of him, as did a number of others. Unfortunately, the score had been rushed to publication (as are many commissioned works), and it would suffice to say that the quality control of the presentation of the music was suspect—this is certainly not to cast aspersions on Mr. Walker, a fine composer still active. When I turned the first page, the music came apart and fell under the piano, which necessitated my chasing after errant pages while Steven attempted to remember the music. To his credit, after a hysterical laugh about the entire episode in the wings, Steven came out and played an astonishing Ravel Toccata from L’Tombeau de Couperin (the best single performance I personally had heard in the competition up to that point). I was convinced that he would make the finals, as the other works in his semi-final round were also superlative, especially the Chopin Sonata No. 2. Alas, it was not to be. While working on the present project, I recalled that episode, and Steven informed me that one of the jurors had approached him after the competition had ended and castigated him for the incident with the Walker. He exclaimed that Masi was his favorite pianist in the competition and would have made the finals if not for the Walker debacle.

The life of a musician is inarguably not always a smooth road; career interruptions as well as disappointments can take the impetus out of one’s trajectory, and the music world has its share of abandonments, often by preternaturally talented individuals who simply cannot cope with the emotional or financial demands of the profession. Others often need temporary respite from the intensity of being a musician. Even Vladimir Horowitz took four significant breaks in his career. Perhaps things may have taken a different turn had that troublesome staple in the Walker score held fast; whatever the reasons, Steven took a bit of a break from playing between 1991 and 1996, and a medically imposed one for a year in 2007–8.

Talent and musicality are not extinguished with such a hiatus; one simply has to recapture the executorial ability, and my experience with many musicians is that if the ability exists, its merely a matter of time for the fingers to get back in step. The continuum of time can have an enlightened musical effect, as well. I have been a passionate student of the playing of many pianists, and have seen time change their



playing in the most profound ways. The Vladimir Horowitz of the 1960's as compared to the 1940's show a somewhat diminished apparatus, but a palpably more insightful and cultivated musician.

As an example of this, I recently acquired two performances of Ravel's pianistic and musical masterpiece *Gaspard de la Nuit* performed by Martha Argerich, without a doubt one of our greatest living pianists. They are 56 years apart, with the earlier one a radio broadcast from March 1960 when she was 18 years old, and the later one played 11 days after she turned 75 on June 5th of this year. As the informed listener would expect, the earlier one is laden with virtuosity and headlong sweep. The later one is not lacking in these virtues, but what one hears is a maturity and attention to detail engendered by 56 years of living with the music. While I have listened to the earlier performance twice, I have listened to the later one more than 10 times, finding its enticements inexhaustible. I have had the same reaction to recent performances of Grygory Sokolov compared to his very early ones, and, in an earlier generation, with such pianists as Emil Gilels and Claudio Arrau. The foibles of age are rendered meaningless by the maturity and richness of expression in their later performances.

When Mr. Masi approached me with the idea of tackling this set, I was compelled by the maturity and thoughtfulness of his playing in the ones I heard. His two hiatuses did not compromise his playing in any deleterious way. Needless to say, the sheer number of sets out there gave me a pause for this particular project, but, feeling the quality of his interpretation and his desire to do it, we forged ahead. What you have before you represents the fruit of five years of labor, consideration, discussion and a shared passion for this seminal body of work in the piano literature.

A note about the performances on these discs: we always prioritized musical gesture and sound over absolute accuracy; the informed listener may hear little imperfections in the execution, but all of us who have been involved in the production feel that these do not detract from the overall grandeur and depth of the interpretation. In the final analysis, this spirit of interpretation is, and should be, all that matters; one could say that these are truly performances rather than manufactured assembly line articles of perfection. If one wants such perfection, there are options out there. But the pursuit of such perfection can cast a catastrophic pall on musical expression, a particular disease of the digital editing age, where everything has to be cue ball smooth at the expense of original art. In my 30 years as a recording producer, I cannot enumerate the occurrences where a musician has asked me to use a cleaner take over a musically superior one. The present artist, however, is and always has been an artist first, and our decisions reinforce the experience of this recording as performance. Had we spent another hundred hours sanitizing everything and

ruining the musical message, this set might have become a pyrrhic victory. It has always struck me as a vindicator of this philosophy that when I ask knowledgeable pianophiles to name their favorite sets of "The 32," the names I hear most often are Schnabel, Kempff and Arrau—three sets of powerful and compelling musicality, but not exactly paragons of perfection (and overall, my three favorites of the 78/LP era). It is in that spirit that one should approach all music, and in this spirit we present this set to you.

—JOSEPH PATRYCH, RECORDING PRODUCER  
NOVEMBER 2016

## Steven Masi



Acclaimed as an artist of unusual sensitivity and virtuosity, pianist Steven Masi has concertized extensively throughout North America, Europe and Asia. As a recitalist and chamber musician he has appeared at the Aspen Music Festival, Casals Festival, Chautauqua Festival and Music Festival of the Hamptons, and as a guest soloist with orchestras such as the Atlanta Symphony and New Symphony Orchestra of London. In Germany he was an artist member of the Bonn Chamber Music Society and recorded extensively for the Southwest German Radio and Aulos Records. Critic Colin Clarke has written about his Beethoven performances, "It is not exaggerating to suggest that Masi belongs with the elite in the late sonatas, providing as satisfying an experience as the likes of Solomon, Kempff, and Pollini, for example. Each texture of this *Finale*, the place of every note, is carefully considered, yet the sense of exploratory, transcendent journey is profound indeed. Masi hardly seems to feel technical hurdles. It is as if everything is in the service of Beethoven." Jerry Dubins writing in *Fanfare* added, "I don't know what life Steven Masi was living when this materialization of Beethoven's A-Major Sonata, op. 101 came into being because I wasn't there for any of his previous existences, but the one he experienced for this performance must have been of transcendent grace and glory, for it's a performance of both bliss and ecstasy." A graduate of the Juilliard School, Mr. Masi lives in Leonia, New Jersey, with his wife, clarinetist Diana Petrella and son Aidan.



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Ludwig Van Beethoven  
Complete Sonatas for Piano

STEVEN MASI PIANO

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