Beethoven - Moonlight, Pathetique & Appassionata Piano Sonatas (1990)

Sonata No. 14 in C-sharp minor for Piano, Op. 27, No. 2 "Moonlight" *1. I. Adagio sostenuto 6:28 2. II. Allegretto 2:14 3.. Presto agitato*
Sonata No. 8 for Piano, Op. 13 "Pathétique" in C minor
4. I. Grave - Allegro di molto e con brio 9:23 5. II. Adagio cantabile 5:49 6. III. Rondo. Allegro 4:13
Sonata No. 23 in F minor for Piano, Op. 57 "Appassionata"
7. I. Allegro assai 9:15 8. II. Andante con moto 6:57 9. III. Allegro ma non troppo; Presto 8:06

Rudolf Serkin – piano

Rudolf Serkin's early 1960s accounts of the most popular "name" sonatas, on a CBS "Great Performances" mid-price CD, are compellingly direct and offer excellent value. The playing is deliberate, but hardly theatrical: as always, the pianist emphasizes the virtues of literalism. The recordings are closely miked and sonorous, and convey good piano tone along with every breath, sigh, groan, and vocalization Serkin produces. The Adagio of the Pathetique is especially lovely. --Ted Libbey, Editorial Reviews

I have listened to this recording in awe since I first heard the original on LP in 1983. I have heard many pianists play these pieces, but I have hear few renditions as sincere, austere, emotionally rich, and technically secure as this one.

Serkin's rendition of the Presto Agitato of the Moonlight Sonata, track 3, is one of the few most

superb technical and musical accomplishments I have ever heard. He manages to capture an intermittent lightning storm in sound, and do it better than anyone else I have ever heard. Every time I hear it, it makes me shiver. I have heard Horowitz, Dubravka Tomsic, Marta Argerich, Ashkenazy, Arrau, Brendel, Berezovsky, Stephen Hough, Hamelin, and manyother great pianists. They, too, can achieve this effect, but it is something that is achieved intermittently. It is never insured. Its not something you pull out of a hat. It is true inspiration. True inspiration on track 3. Buy it.

Both the Pathetique and the Appassionata are interpreted with unique style. How often does a pianist these days leave you with a lasting vision of the piece that is different from the vision presented by every other pianist? Not often. Serkin had personality, and it shows. Listen to the way he phrases, pedals, and voices. This recording is wonderful. I highly recommend it for someone who wants to learn something about *true* interpretation, and what you can add beyond what is written on the score. --- C. K. Merrill "CKMerrill" (Los Angeles, CA)

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