

## Beethoven: Pathétique – Moonlight – Appassionata (2012)

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

Following his recordings on Deutsche Grammophon of music by Frédéric Chopin and Franz Liszt, Chinese pianist Yundi Li takes on the three most popular piano sonatas of Ludwig van Beethoven, the "Pathétique," "Moonlight," and "Appassionata." Known for having brilliant technique and dynamic showmanship, Yundi plays against type in these beloved works, which call for more introspection and expressiveness than might be expected from him. Even though the outer movements of "Pathétique" and "Appassionata" and the last movement of "Moonlight" give Yundi ample opportunity to demonstrate his agility, power, and high energy, they are relatively restrained, compared to the kind of virtuosic fare that made him an international star. Furthermore, the Classical impulse that informed these sonatas calls for a balance of moods, not just bravura playing. The slow movements let Yundi show he is more than just a flashy technician, and he gives carefully considered performances that work, albeit as fairly Romantic readings. Because Beethoven's piano sonatas have been interpreted and recorded by pianists too numerous to count, it's easy to dismiss performances that fall short of the great recordings of the past, especially any that seem addressed to a mainstream audience. Yundi's CD will not impress connoisseurs who have already settled on their favorite recordings, though casual listeners may like what Yundi does with the music and learn more about Beethoven as a result.  
--- Blair Sanderson, Rovi

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