

## 111 Years of Deutsche Grammophon - CD 20

### Beethoven: Piano Sonatas Opp.53 "Waldstein", 81a "Les Adieux" & 57 "Appassionata"



Piano Sonata No.21 in C, Op.53 -"Waldstein" 1 1. *Allegro con brio* [11:04] 2 2. *Introduzione (Adagio molto)* [4:39] 3 3. *Rondo (Allegretto moderato)* [7:34] 4 4. *Prestissimo* [1:45]  
Piano Sonata No.26 in E flat, Op.81a -"Les adieux"  
5 1. *Das Lebewohl (Adagio - Allegro)* [7:12] 6 2. *Abwesenheit (Andante espressivo)* [4:01] 7 3. *Das Wiedersehen (Vivacissimamente)* [5:57]  
Piano Sonata No.23 in F minor, Op.57 -"Appassionata"  
8 1. *Allegro assai* [11:03] 9 2. *Andante con moto* [6:30] 10 3. *Allegro ma non troppo* [7:53]  
Emil Gilels – piano

The Piano Sonata No. 21 in C major, Op. 53, also known as the Waldstein, is considered to be one of Beethoven's greatest piano sonatas, as well as one of the three particularly notable sonatas of his middle period (the other two being the Appassionata sonata, Op. 57, and Les Adieux, Op. 81a). The sonata was completed in the summer of 1804. The work has a scope that surpasses Beethoven's previous piano sonatas, and is notably one of his most technically challenging compositions. It is a key work early in his 'Heroic' decade (1803-1812) and set the stage for piano compositions in the grand manner both in Beethoven's later work and all future composers.

The Waldstein receives its name from Beethoven's dedication to Count Ferdinand Ernst Gabriel von Waldstein of Vienna, a patron as well as a close personal friend of Beethoven's. Like the Archduke Trio (one of many pieces dedicated to Archduke Rudolph), this one bears Waldstein's name though there are other works dedicated to him. This sonata is also known as 'L'Aurora' (The Dawn) in Italian, for the sonority of the opening chords of the third movement, which conjures an image of daybreak.

Ludwig van Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 26 in E-flat major, Op. 81a, known as the Les Adieux sonata, was written during the years 1809 and 1810.

The title Les Adieux implies a programmatic nature. The French attack on Vienna, led by Napoléon Bonaparte in 1809, forced Beethoven's patron, Archduke Rudolph, to leave the city. Yet, there is some uncertainty about this nature of the piece — or at least, about the degree to which Beethoven wished this programmatic nature would be known. He titled the three movements "Lebewohl," "Abwesenheit," and "Wiedersehen," and reportedly regarded the French "Adieux" (said to whole assemblies or cities) as a poor translation of the feeling of the German "Lebewohl" (said heartfully to a single person) (Kolodin, 1975). Indeed, Beethoven had written the syllables "Le-be-wohl" over the first three chords.

On the first 1811 publication, a dedication was added reading "On the departure of his Imperial Highness, for the Archduke Rudolph in admiration".

An average performance of the piece lasts about 17 minutes. The sonata is one of Beethoven's most challenging sonatas because of the mature emotions that must be conveyed throughout it. It is also the bridge between his middle period and his later period and is considered the third great sonata of the middle period. The last movement is technically very challenging.

Ludwig van Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 23 in F minor, Op. 57 (colloquially known as the Appassionata) is a piano sonata. It is considered one of the three great piano sonatas of his middle period (the others being the Waldstein, Op. 53 and Les Adieux, Op. 81a). It was composed during 1804 and 1805, and perhaps 1806, and was dedicated to Count Franz von Brunswick. The first edition was published in February 1807 in Vienna.

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Unlike the early Sonata No. 8, Pathétique, the Appassionata was not named during the composer's lifetime, but was so labeled in 1838 by the publisher of a four-hand arrangement of the work.

The Appassionata was considered by Beethoven to be his most tempestuous piano sonata until the twenty-ninth piano sonata known as the Hammerklavier being described as a "brilliantly executed display of emotion and music". 1803 was the year Beethoven came to grips with the irreversibility of his progressively deteriorating deafness.

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