

Viktoriya
Mullova
VIOLIN

Beethoven

SONATAS 4, 5 & 7

Alasdair
Beatson
FORTEPIANO



Ludwig van Beethoven 1770–1827

Violin Sonata No.4 in A minor Op.23

1	I. Presto	7.32
2	II. Andante scherzoso, più Allegretto	6.52
3	III. Allegro molto	5.14

Violin Sonata No.5 in F Op.24 'Spring'

4	I. Allegro	10.05
5	II. Adagio molto espressivo	5.18
6	III. Scherzo: Allegro molto	1.11
7	IV. Rondo: Allegro ma non troppo	6.44

Violin Sonata No.7 in C minor Op.30/2

8	I. Allegro con brio	7.46
9	II. Adagio cantabile	7.36
10	III. Scherzo: Allegro	3.07
11	IV. Finale: Allegro	5.06

Total timing: 66.37

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This recording was born of a peculiar time. As a pandemic unfolded, as cities and countries shut down, and as concert life was put on hold, so the opportunity to immerse ourselves in Beethoven's music opened up. In some ways the timing was auspicious – 2020 was not only an important anniversary year for Beethoven (and he was surely feeling very neglected with the way things had come to pass), but we were also lucky to benefit from Clive Brown's newly prepared Bärenreiter edition of the sonatas, published a matter of weeks before the recording.

And so here we play three sonatas, the most considerable of which is Op.30 No.2, in (and very much belonging to) the 'Beethovenian' key of C minor. Revolution is in the air, and particularly in the outer movements we are carried on a thrillingly wild and unpredictable current.

The other two sonatas, though consecutive in opus number, contrast vastly. Op.23 is for the most part terse, anxious and unhinged, its unusual three-movement structure depriving us of any traditional 'slow' movement. It is truly a breathtaking work, though its sibling sonata, the so-called 'Spring' Sonata Op.24, makes for more amiable company – playful, abundant in invention, famously lyrical, and gifting us an Adagio of the utmost tenderness and profundity.

We present these sonatas on instruments appropriate to the early 1800s: a 1750 Giovanni Battista Guadagnini violin, strung with gut and played with a classical bow (made by Ralph Ashmead), and a replica of an 1805 Viennese Walter fortepiano built by Paul McNulty. Compared with their modern counterparts, might we feel a heightened intimacy between the instruments, with their shared subtleties of articulation and colour so intrinsic to the repertoire? And might we dare to feel a heightened closeness with Beethoven too, as we delve into the richness of his musical, emotional and spiritual worlds?

Alasdair Beatson



Artist biographies can be found at www.onyxclassics.com

Executive producer for Onyx: Matthew Cosgrove

Producer: Matthew Barley

Engineer, mixing and mastering: Robin Hawkins

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