



SONATENABEND

Piano music by Mozart,
Beethoven & Berg

MIKHAIL SHILYAEV



SONATENABEND

Piano music by Mozart,
Beethoven & Berg

MIKHAIL SHILYAEV

SONATENABEND

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Sonata in C minor Op.111

1	i	Maestoso – Allegro con brio ed appassionato	8'27
2	ii	Arietta: Adagio molto semplice e cantabile	16'17

Alban Berg (1885-1936)

3		Sonata Op.1	11'24
---	--	-------------	-------

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Sonata in A minor K310

4	i	Allegro maestoso	4'24
5	ii	Andante cantabile	6'26
6	iii	Presto	2'59

Ludwig van Beethoven

Eleven new bagatelles Op.119

7	i	Allegretto	1'57
8	ii	Andante con moto	1'03
9	iii	À l'Allemande	1'53
10	iv	Andante cantabile	1'44
11	v	Risoluto	1'07
12	vi	Andante – Allegretto	1'48
13	vii	Allegro, ma non troppo	0'59
14	viii	Moderato cantabile	1'35
15	ix	Vivace moderato	0'41
16	x	Allegramente	0'16
17	xi	Andante, ma non troppo	1'41

BONUS Andante favori WoO 57 8'28

73'10

MY VIEW OF VIENNA

The making of this CD would not have been possible without the generous support of Mr Alistair Jones, Mr Henry Atterbury, Ms Olessia Burner, Mr Nigel Mansfield and Mr Robert Lawrence, to whom this recording is dedicated.

Music is transient. Musical performance lives in time, then stops forever. Recordings are the only things that remain after the sound has subsided. In this way, today's musicians have a peculiar privilege of still being heard after ceasing to exist physically (sadly not because they deserve it more than their colleagues of the unrecorded past). I have performed this programme many times in concert, each time realising that these masterpieces could be polished endlessly while always remaining better in themselves – as ideas on paper – than any performance of them could ever be. That however didn't stop me from exercising the abovementioned privileges that our technocratic era has to offer. So it happened that this period of practice, performing, study, thinking, reading, changing country of residence, hard (or at times relaxed) work, and life in general have condensed into two days of studio recording.

The programme of this album is built around three sonatas of three composers from Vienna: Beethoven's last sonata Op.111 (this work is so significant that I will never close these brackets if I don't stop right now...!), Sonata K310 by Mozart, one of his most dramatic piano compositions which accidentally (or not) shares some musical features with Beethoven's Op.111, and the Sonata Op.1 by Alban Berg. Belonging to a different era, Alban Berg, as Arnold Schoenberg's pupil, whose analysis of Beethoven's works was the basis of his teaching method, still represents the great Viennese tradition. Whereas Beethoven's last word on the matter signifies the end of Classical sonata, Berg's Op.1 draws the line under the Romantic sonata. It would be a mistake to believe that Beethoven's genius manifested itself only in large forms. The set of Bagatelles Op.119, a cycle of eleven miniatures where he lets us watch the musical games, jokes and experiments in his laboratory, is a proof of the opposite. In Beethoven's *Andante favori* the concentration of lyricism meets the beauty of the strict musical form. One can only wonder whether the piece was inspired by the composer's love for the *Andante* as an idea (hence the title *Favourite andante*) or to its secret human dedicatee.

SONATENABEND

The sonata form, developed in the Classical era (c.1730-1820), that was used in the first movement of multi-movement pieces – but also sometimes in finales and slow movements – presents the listener with a full dramatic display of emotional and philosophical content, employing both a clear-cut presentation of contrasting, rhythmically-varied and dramatically-coherent themes in accord with the rational, humanity-oriented classical thought, and a melting pot of development, transforming and morphing the elements only to reprise the original themes, sometimes in a completely new light. Add to this a contrasting lyrical slow movement, a scherzo or minuet to lend comic or elegant relief, and a finale which provides the active solution to the whole dramatic concept, and you have a rather referential idea of classical sonata structure. However, a basic scheme is but a tool for a student, certainly not a strict set of rules for a creative genius. And so the composers who were bold enough to develop and define the form were also the ones who started its transformation.

Mozart's **Sonata in A minor** is one of the most striking examples of *Sturm und Drang* (Storm and stress), the proto-Romantic idea that was so popular in Viennese classical music. Written in Paris in 1778, when the lonely and depressed 22-year-old composer had just buried his mother, both it and its violin counterpart in E minor do not attempt to hide the inner turmoil, resulting in music that was, at the time, almost indecent in its personal character. The *Allegro maestoso* makes a tragic, yet majestic statement and puts a light-fingered, fleeting hope in place as a second theme; the better part of its development is a contrasting passage of a hitherto unparalleled dramatic force based on the rhythmic idea of the opening theme. The *Andante cantabile* follows the example with a dark C-minor storm cloud amidst reflective F Major; the perpetual motion of the finale's *Presto* is a subliminal rondo – a torrent of thought unwavering in its protesting force but for a surreal apparition in A Major.

Beethoven's **Sonata in C minor Op.111** is for many musicians and music lovers the high peak of Beethoven's oeuvre, which says much considering that Beethoven is thought by many to be the pinnacle of music. The work has only two movements: a *Maestoso* introduction opens with a diminished seventh intonation, representing harmonic tension at its strongest and morphing into most dramatic and curious forms before spilling out into the first movement proper –

Allegro con brio ed appassionato. The first theme is but a knot of thoughts and feelings, mostly unhappy ones, and the second is a simple reflection on a major triad, which then runs through diminished broken arpeggios – almost directly quoted from the *Allegro maestoso* of the Mozart sonata – to reinstate the first intonation of the main theme as the conclusion. The development seems extremely compressed and rather direct in comparison to some of the famous monumental developments of Beethoven; this, however, serves excellently the development-like movement. Only the short major coda provides the way out. Through this tendency to give a movement a more consistent and unified expression, Beethoven reaches the abstract nirvana and regains the philosophical depth of Bach, Handel and the Baroque – even more so through his use of polyphony – while at the same time peering well ahead into the future with his mastery of motivic development and his harmonic idiom, in which the passing and leading tones become at times the underlined base. The *Arietta* follows suit – the variations on a theme in C Major lets us experience a simple and sincere choral-like progression in all its possible forms, even morphing at times into music which sounds suspiciously like that of the 1950s. However, through all this kaleidoscope one never loses sight of the theme itself. Whereas Beethoven seemed to be deliberately arguing in circles in the first movement, in the second he simply draws one – and since the circle is completed, it obviously has no need for other movements to follow.

There are many examples for the fusion of past, present and future among Beethoven's late works. The **Eleven new bagatelles Op.119** are not only a combination of re-edited older works (1-6) and new ones (7-11), but it also gives us a bridge between the Baroque dance suite (almost forgotten at the time), Schubert's unhindered melodic and harmonic expression, and the yet unwritten cycles of the Romantic period. One could imagine this opus as the musical birthplace of Schumann.

The first Bagatelle starts with an intonation closely resembling that of the opening theme of the **Andante favori**, originally written as the second movement for the "Waldstein" sonata Op.53 and deemed too long as such. This Rondo, "unofficially" dedicated in a private letter to the major love interest of Beethoven, Josephine Brunsvik, is an incredible blend of warmth, charm and the

underlying love, intricate in its melodic detail while never losing the typically-Beethovenian symphonic texture and philosophical scale.

Berg's **Sonata Op.1** meets us at the finishing line of the Western European classical tonal music. It bears the name of B Minor but adheres to it much less than its more famous predecessor by Liszt, who could be considered one of the major starting points towards losing the chains of tonality. While the chains were progressively loosened in the oeuvre of Wagner, Bruckner and Mahler – often through their development of the principles already seen, or at least glimpsed, in the works of Beethoven – and the Russians and the French rushed onto the music scene with their alternative vision of harmony and tonal scale, it was Schoenberg and his students Berg and Webern who dealt the decisive and conclusive blow to tonality, declaring it null and void in theory as well as in practice. The Op.1 is still a child of the 19th century – the first and only movement is written in a recognizable sonata form – it has themes, development and reprise – but, caught between desperation and humility with its harmonic tension and melodic pain, it pulls the boat built by the Romantics into the unknown and is on the border of breaking away from the lucid, stable way of the Classical era. Following Thomas Mann, who saw Beethoven's Op.111 as a farewell to the Classical sonata, we can safely say this work is a farewell to the Romantic sonata. The passing and leading tones become the main content of the melody and harmony, so much so that a rare consonance seems just a fleeting moment of calm in the jarring and dissonant reality of pre-war Europe. After the First World War, Europe was never the same – nor was its music. Oswald Spengler pronounced the twilight for Europe in his “Decline of the West”, just eight years after it fell on the piano sonata in 1910 with Berg's Op.1.

© 2014 Misha Ognianer

Many thanks to Joy & Don Salked, Giovanni Urga
and William Brown for their significant contributions,
to Misha Ognianer for the notes,
to Kevin Bee and Tom Deacon for their help with text editing,
and to David & Olga Orr, Henry Atterbury
and Josue Cardenas for their priceless support.

Produced by Mikhail Shilyaev.
Engineered by Raoul Terzi.
Assistant engineer: Michele Catri.
Editing, mixing and mastered by Adaq Khan.
Recorded 27-29 May 2014 at Master Chord Studio, London, UK.
Steinway technician: Branko Padjevic.

Publishers: Henle (1,2,7-17); Bärenreiter (4-6,BONUS); Muzyka (3).

Cover: photograph of Izhevsk, Russia © 2014 Mikhail Shilyaev.
Inside front cover: photograph of Mikhail Shilyaev © Joy Salked.
Introduction © 2014 Mikhail Shilyaev.
Booklet notes © 2014 Misha Ognianer.
Inside back cover: photograph of Heiligenstadt, Vienna © 2014 Mikhail Shilyaev.
Design: Red Engine Design.

Printed in the E.U.



5060192780482

STONE
records