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L.van Beethoven

Piano Sonatas

Volume No. 4

Metamorphosis.

Beethoven and Nature

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Link **Artist page:**

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link for **video of Beethoven's piano sonatas:**

vimeo.com/showcase/letiziamichielon

CD1

L.v. Beethoven (1770-1827)

Sonata N. 19 in G minor op. 49 n. 1

Andante

Rondo: Allegro

Sonata N. 20 in G major op. 49 n. 2

Allegro, ma non troppo

Tempo di Menuetto

Sonata N. 15 in D major op. 28 (“Pastoral”)

Allegro

Andante

Scherzo & Trio: Allegro vivace

Rondo: Allegro ma non troppo

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Letizia Michielon
pianoforte

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
32 Sonate e principali opere pianistiche
VOL. 4 - 2

Metamorphosis
Beethoven and Nature

Digital Edition



CD2

Sonata N. 16 in G major op. 31 n. 1

Allegro vivace

Adagio grazioso

Rondo: Allegretto

Sonata N. 17 in D minor op. 31 n. 2 (“The Tempest”)

Largo-Allegro

Adagio

Allegretto

Sonata N. 18 in E flat major op. 31 n. 3 (“The Hunt”)

Allegro

Scherzo: Allegretto vivace

Menuetto & Trio: Moderato e grazioso

Presto con fuoco

Omnipotent God, in the forest!
I am blessed, happy in the forest.
Every tree talks about You. What magnificence, O Lord!
In these valleys, up high, there is peace, the peace to serve Him.
(L.van Beethoven, Fischhof Manuscript).

Ongoing progress

“Only art and science raise mankind to divinity”, Beethoven writes in his letters. Such tension, directed at the ideal achievement of higher life is revealed by art and nature and Beethoven pursues it with a generous spirit of service aiming to solace the suffering of humanity. The breadth of this project, both ethical and aesthetic, commands extraordinary audacity and in his diary, a travel notebook which renders with immediacy the inner development of Beethoven, the composer notes verses by Herder from *Müh und Belohnung*:

Ergo, risk! No one can take from you
What God destined for you.
Actually, He destined it for you, for you, fearless man!

A fortitude feeding on the roots of humanistic *Bildung* (formation) which arises through an incessant process of human and artistic metamorphosis.

Beethoven forges a plastic composition language, a true expression of an existence dedicated to following the sublime adventures of the spirit by virtue of his ability to overturn every result attained, to analyze his own work from different perspectives and to transform his stylistic achievements into search tools for new challenges.

This educational process is held up by his faith in a divine principle evincing its force in the extraordinary richness of life encompassed in the natural kingdom.

Needless to say, Beethoven shares with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe a passion for nature and both are enthusiastic followers of a new discipline founded in those years, the philosophy of nature.

The composer ranges from Kantian readings and Goethean *Theory of Colours* to *Acoustics* by Chladni and the astronomy articles by Litrow, lingering on writings by Newton, Schelling and Fichte and transcribing in his diary whole passages from sacred texts of Indian religion.

It is a broad-spectrum inquiry which weaves science, religion and philosophy, principles of which are then transfused in compositional forms able to plastically express the origin of life and the extraordinary complexity of its articulation.

Music, the sublime allegory of the meeting between the finite and the infinite, shines as a sort of mystic theophany, a revelation of form acquired by the Absolute when reflected by human consciousness.

Only such conciliation of opposites leads to higher knowledge, to peace and a profound enraptured intuition of beauty.

The six sonatas included in the fourth stage of our journey are collocated in analogous cultural *humus*.

Composed between 1797 and 1802, they introduce the comprehension of decisive crucial points of Beethovenian artistic evolution, within an extraordinary blooming of works, such as the string *Quartets* op. 18, the Second *Symphony*, the drafts of the *Third Symphony*, the *Sonatas* for violin and piano op. 23, op. 24 and op. 30 and the *Concert* for piano and orchestra op. 37.

The XVIII century patina of the two ***Sonatas* op. 49** (1797-1799), which recalls the compositions of Johann Christian Bach and the gallant style maestros, conceals a refined psychological depth and a taste for miniatures that transpire gravitation towards the culture of *Empfindsamkeit* and contemplation of the delicacy of forms.

Yet, the most interesting aspect regards the form of the diptych, which can be interpreted both as an ensemble composed by two micro sonatas specular of each other and as a single sonata in four movements.

In the originality of this modular solution there lies, in our opinion, the most modern feature of the work.

After the audacious experimentation of *Sonatas* op. 27, the composer goes back to test himself with the traditional model of sonatas in four movements, as with ***Sonata* op. 28** (1801), nicknamed «Pastoral» by its first publisher, in virtue of episodes with the drone bass in the first and last movement.

Similarly to what happens in the homonym symphony, Beethoven sure enough explores a dimension of time in these pages defined by Adorno as «extensive» rather than «intensive», which, in the opinion of the musicologist, particularly allows Haydn and Beethoven the control of wide temporal spaces through «time differential» (that is, the «motive»), so that time is not left flowing but actually proves to be «intensive», i.e. «subjugated» and «concentrated».

The *Sonata* op. 28 also appears steadfastly structured, permeated by only one *Stimmung* which expands with internal cohesion among different movements, all gravitating around the tonality of D major, except for the *Andante* in D minor.

The themes draw long archways, enveloping melodies, where constitutive elements integrate to form a unique body, with circular breath.

Composed between 1801-1802 and published between 1803-1804, the three ***Sonatas* op. 31** constitute a single polyptych, plastically divergent from an expressive point of view. Beethoven investigates for the last time the triptych, an experiment once again evoked in the *Sonatas* op. 53,

op. 54 and op. 57, with different opus numbers, and then in the final three sonatas, a *summa* of his artistic and existential path.

Rosen summarizes the characteristics of the three opening movements as comic, tragic and lyrical, while Fischer captures a Haydnian appeal in the first, a demonic power in the second and a light and capricious panache in the third. A variety of traits even more prodigious if we consider that Beethoven, as evidenced by his sketches and drafts, actually devoted himself to works of very different genre and staff. All his works are full of vital momentum, despite 1802 being the year of his deepest inner crisis, his burning passion for the countesses Therese Brunswik and Giulietta Guicciardi, as well as his famed *Heiligenstadt Testament*.

The expressive atmosphere of the first sonata is that of the sparkling Italian opera; however, Beethoven sublimates the vocality of the bel canto style by translating it into refined instrumental language. He is similarly drawn to the analogy between the operatic *plot*, the intertwining of social relations and the systemic network that unites them with natural organisms and the compositive tissue. Theatre, society and nature thus come together ideally and his abstraction endeavour takes shape through elaborate writing, with polyphonic depth, perfectly suited to express the very fabric of the relationship among the adamant sound structures.

In this context, the well-known *Tempest* is like an open wound, a sort of chasm that represents, at the macro-form level, the tension apex of the entire polyptych, conceived as an organism in continuous transformation.

Musical form, therefore, consists precisely of the process giving form («the way, not its end, is the goal»), and it is thanks to this form plasticity over time that Beethoven can reinvent the functions traditionally attributed to thematic bodies.

After the lacerations of the first movement, the *Adagio*, according to Adorno, effuses a meaning of hope, «the highest category of Beethoven's metaphysics».

This contemplative oasis is overwhelmed by vertiginous spires of the *Allegretto*, a *perpetuum mobile* with an obliterating force so impressive it swallows the theme, quelled in the solace of nothingness.

Only when juxtaposed with these last measures of the *Tempesta*, can the awe spawned in the initial measures of the *Hunt* be grasped in its entirety.

The sonata is nicknamed *Die Jagd* («The Hunt») for the affinities that can be found between the first idea of the *Allegro* and the rhythmic module characterising the main theme of *Der Wachtelschlag, Lied* composed in 1799.

The visionary spirit of the *Scherzo* vanishes in the *Menuetto*, where reminiscences and anticipations of the different movements are composed together.

Still, it is only a brief interlude, after which life re-explodes with the Dionysian impetus of dance. The vitality that is released from the tarantella rhythm used in *the Presto con fuoco* is irrepressible. On the rotating triplets of the accompaniment, containing a play of skillfully constructed dissonances, the first theme seems to almost quiver with joy.

The entire polyptych thus ends in an atmosphere of euphoric exultation, rendered even more enthralling when set against the implosion of the last movement of the *Tempesta*.

In reality, the force of this vital jubilation had already been embodied in the *Allegretto* of the first sonata. The metamorphic process in fact comes to completion in the *Hunt* by way of the transforming action wielded by the relationship principle that encompasses and links all the linguistic tools, from motif elaboration, to harmonic chaining and rhythmic arrangement. The formal structure and splendour of piano composition emerge utterly renewed, ready to stand the challenges that await Beethoven in op. 53, 54 and 57.

Letizia Michielon

(translation: Eleni Papaioannou)

Letizia Michielon

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Venetian pianist, composer and philosopher of music, Letizia Michielon is a multifaceted artist. Thanks to her neo-humanistic training, she engenders her own creative profile through dialogue between different disciplines, endeavoring to crystallise an innovative and endlessly expanding aesthetic direction.

Since graduating at the age of sixteen with honours at the “B. Marcello” Music Conservatory in Venice under the guidance of her Maestro, Eugenio Bagnoli, she has embodied not only the passion for the study of sound, a synthesis of a wide-ranging cultural path, but also a conception of interpretation as a challenge projected into the future, capable of profoundly affecting the adventure of knowledge.

Debuting at the age of just fourteen in the Wiener Saal of the Mozarteum in Salzburg, she later perfected her art with M. Tipo, K. Bogino, A. Jasinski, P. Masi and M. Mika, embarking upon a concert career at a very young age leading her to perform in prestigious halls, such as Mozarteum in Salzburg, Schönberg Centre in Vienna, Kunstuniversität in Graz, Casal del Metge in Barcelona, Chopin Academy in Warsaw, BKA Theatre in Berlin, Mozart Hall in Bratislava, Abravanel Hall (Salt Lake City), Pollack Hall i(Montreal), New York University, la Fenice Theatre and "E. Vedova" Foundation in Venice, "G. Verdi" Conservatory in Milan, Olympic Theatre in Vicenza, Teatro Comunale in Ferrara, "G. Verdi" Theatre and Miela Theatre in Trieste.

For years, she has dedicated herself to expounding upon Beethovenian thought, recording his complete sonatas and major piano works for Limen Record Company in a production that intertwines the implementation with scientific research aimed at deepening the neo-humanistic *Bildung*.

A work in progress that has forged the *Beethoven 2020 Project*, underway at the Scuola Grande of San Rocco, where the artist Letizia Michielon is setting forward Beethoven's complete sonatas as well as piano and orchestra concertos with the Mitteleuropa Orchestra conducted by F. Fanna.

In parallel, again with Limen, she launched the recording of the complete works by Chopin in addition to pieces by C. Debussy and M. Ravel.

Letizia Michielon's interpretative proficiency is firmly intertwined with her compositional experience. Naturally, as she holds true to being mindful of the aesthetic conception of Schlegel, Hegel and Gadamer, interpreting means re-creating and somehow "re-composing" the work that is being performed.

After graduating in Composition, under the guidance of R. Vaglini, at the "B. Marcello" Music Conservatory, she was commissioned by prominent international festivals, including the Music Biennale, La Fenice Theatre, Ex Novo Musica, Berlin BKA, Trieste Prima, Limoux Festival, and Washington Square Festival.

Her compositional journey has opened further horizons towards orchestral conducting, cultivated under the guidance of P. Bellugi, R. Rivolta and M. Summers, while even encompassing electronic music, which she studied at the Venice Conservatory.

Her works are often inspired by figurative impressions or philosophical and poetic readings.

Philosophy effectively represents her third gravitational pull.

After graduating *summa cum laude* at Ca' Foscari University, with a dissertation on the aesthetic writings of F. Schiller, she received a PhD in Pedagogical and Didactic Sciences at the University of Padua arguing a thesis on J.W. von Goethe. In 2019, she attained her second PhD in Philosophy of Music at Ca' Foscari presenting a dissertation on Adorno's *Beethoven*.

She collaborates with the research group led by prof. Mario Gennari at the University of Genoa and is part of the *Impromptus series* scientific committee (EUT, Trieste), which comprises work in the form of essays on aesthetics, musicology and music philosophy.

Vice Presidente of Goethe Institute in Venice, she is member of Ateneo Veneto in Venice and of the Mitteleuropean Cultural Institute in Gorizia too.

She edited: *Il gioco delle facoltà in F. Schiller. Bildung e creatività* (Il Poligrafo, Padova, 2002); *L'archetipo e le sue metamorfosi. La Bildung nei romanzi di Goethe* (Il Poligrafo, Padova, 2005); *La chiave invisibile. Spazio e tempo nella musica del XX-XXI secolo* (Mimesis, Udine, 2012); *Die Klage des Ideellen, Il Lamento dell'ideale. Beethoven e la filosofia hegeliana* (EUT, 2018), presented in Pordenone Legge Festival; *Il suono messo a nudo. Contrappunti al Beethoven di Adorno* (EUT, 2020); and the soon to be published monograph *La mia musica è calligrafia. Suono e silenzio nel pensiero compositivo di Toshio Hosokawa* (EUT, 2022).

She wrote scientific papers for Cambridge Press, Mimesis, Il Poligrafo, Il Melangolo, Castelveccchio, Libria, Ca' Foscari Japanese Studies.

She is currently investigating the relationship between music and neuroscience, the fascinating world of complex thinking and performance studies - themes she tackles with her students in the Philosophy of Music, Piano Performance and 20th Century Piano Repertoire courses, disciplines she teaches at the "G. Tartini" Music Conservatory of Trieste. From November 2022 she will teach at the "B. Marcello" Music Conservatory of Venice.

The enthusiasm for teaching, inherited from Maestro Bagnoli, initially led her to teach at the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice. She later held master classes at prestigious international institutions such as MDW in Vienna, the Lugano Conservatory, the Chopin Academy in Warsaw, the

Royal Conservatory in Madrid, Trinity Laban in London, the Music Academy in Novi Sad, the Music Academy in Sarajevo, New York University, McGill University in Montreal and IUAV in Venice (Music and Architecture class).

Her recordings and interviews have been broadcast by RAI, Italian Swiss Radio, Capodistria Radio Television, Salt Lake City Radio, and Tokyo NHK.

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