

2 CDS

audite

BEETHOVEN

Complete Works for Cello & Piano

Marc Coppey | Peter Laul

recorded live at St Petersburg Philharmonia

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

Cello Sonata No. 1 in F major, Op. 5/1

- I. *Adagio sostenuto – Allegro* 17:07
- II. *Rondo. Allegro vivace* 7:02

12 Variations on 'See the conqu'ring hero comes' from Handel's Oratorio 'Judas Maccabaeus', WoO 45 12:06

Cello Sonata No. 2 in G minor, Op. 5/2

- I. *Adagio sostenuto e espressivo – Allegro molto più tosto presto* 19:20
- II. *Rondo. Allegro* 7:43

12 Variations on 'Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen' from Mozart's 'The Magic Flute', Op. 66 9:45

Cello Sonata No. 3 in A major, Op. 69

- I. *Allegro ma non tanto* 12:31
- II. *Scherzo. Allegro molto* 5:43
- III. *Adagio cantabile – Allegro vivace* 8:13

7 Variations on 'Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen' from Mozart's 'The Magic Flute', WoO 46 9:45

Cello Sonata No. 4 in C major, Op. 102/1

- I. *Andante – Allegro vivace* 7:42
- II. *Adagio – Tempo d'Andante – Allegro vivace* 7:05

Cello Sonata No. 5 in D major, Op. 102/2

- I. *Allegro con brio* 6:55
- II. *Adagio con molto sentimento d'affeto* 9:33
- III. *Allegro fugato* 4:24



The idea to make a live recording of Beethoven's complete works for cello and piano is, of course, quite risky. A concert featuring this programme will be nearly twice as long as an ordinary concert; also it is hard to avoid coincidences and keep up the necessary concentration. Nevertheless, we had the courage to do this – for several reasons. First of all, we have been playing these sonatas together for almost 20 years, so in a way, these years can be seen as one long rehearsal leading up to the concert. Secondly, we wanted the atmosphere of this special concert hall (more on that subject later) to contribute an air of spontaneity and vitality to the pieces we had studied for so long. The third reason – and perhaps the most important – is our belief that Beethoven's music calls for a certain willingness to take risks. The best recordings of the past are quite far away from what one would call the 'golden mean.' When it comes to the use of tempi, pedal, emphasis, timing and expression, there is a certain polemic sharpness to those interpretations that corresponds with the rebellious nature of the composer Beethoven – the innovator and disturber of silence. If one decides to take this risk, playing a live concert with a live audience is much more appropriate than being cooped up in a recording studio with a 'greenhouse-like' atmosphere. Together with the audience, and in a single concert experience, we wanted to follow Beethoven's chronological path from the early sonatas to the late ones, and express our feelings and thoughts on structure and content of the oeuvre. We decided to record in the Small Hall of the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, not only because it is one of the best chamber music halls that Russia and Europe have to offer, but also because of the connection to the first performances of Beethoven's works, many of which took place there during his lifetime. For instance, this hall (or a former version of it, to be exact) was the stage for the first performance of the grand *Missa Solemnis* in 1824, during a concert of the Philharmonic Society. This was to remain its only performance in Beethoven's lifetime – in Vienna, playing religious music in concert was prohibited, and the work was considered too massive to be played in a church service in the cathedral. The performance was organised by Prince Nikolai Golizyn, a famous patron of the arts who supported Beethoven during his last dire years and who commissioned three string quartets (op. 127, 130 and 132). Actually, it is thanks to him and his vigorous and altruistic love for music that we are able to enjoy these last quartets today. The young prince was a fine cello player himself and took part in performing these works, thus communicating Beethoven's complicated late oeuvre to St. Petersburg's audiences of the time. That being so, it felt natural to choose this hall which, 200 years ago, resonated with the sound of Prince Nikolai Golizyn's cello and the music of Ludwig van Beethoven. Many famous musicians followed in these footsteps – Franz Liszt, Robert and Clara Schumann and Anton Rubinstein performed in this hall, and moreover, many premiers of Dmitri Shostakovich's works took place here.

Beethoven's legacy includes 48 sonatas for various instruments (32 piano sonatas, ten violin sonatas, five cello sonatas and one sonata for French horn and piano), not counting the early works without opus numbers. There are not many composers whose music, when played monographically in a concert, does not at a certain point begin to lack variety. In this respect, Beethoven is quite unique – amongst his sonatas, you will have a hard time finding similarities in structure, material or style. A concert evening with Beethoven's sonatas is much like an action movie where the plot shifts are unexpected and unpredictable. While Beethoven composed his early sonatas in a classical style, he soon continued to evolve towards romanticism in the middle period of his oeuvre, and with his late sonatas eventually created works of art beyond classification. The sonatas by Beethoven are an encyclopedia of emotional experiences and states. One can find pathos, extreme concentration, transcendental epiphanies, philosophical reflections, inconsolable grief, tragedy, nervousness, fierce protest, anger and fury, but also rampant joy, good-naturedness, sense of humor, mischief, sarcasm, irony, self-mockery, vitality, freshness and the most intimate lyricism. They display incredible equivalence in their musical quality, and the composer's unique power of imagination is remarkable.

All this can be fully applied to the five sonatas for piano and cello. They represent the three important periods of Beethoven's oeuvre – the early, the middle and the late. Beethoven was indeed the first composer of significance who truly appreciated the cello and the piano as an ensemble. Mozart showed no great interest in the cello, for reasons uncertain. Perhaps one of them was that his acquaintances unfortunately did not include any excellent cellists, such as Jean-Louis Duport, the first to perform Beethoven's two sonatas op. 5.

Peter Laul & Marc Coppey
Translation: Rebecca Beyer

In the Name of the King: the two Op. 5 Sonatas and the Variations

It may come as a surprise to note that Beethoven, with his Op. 5 Cello Sonatas, created the first solo chamber music works in which the cello was lifted out of its continuo role (mainly underpinning harmony), becoming an entirely equal partner to the piano. The 26-year-old composer received inspiration from the highest level for this historical work: the dedicatee, Frederick William II of Prussia – nephew of, and successor to, Frederick the Great – was a music enthusiast and a talented amateur cellist; his teacher Jean-Pierre Duport was one of the first protagonists of the French Cello School. When France was beset by revolution, his brother Jean-Louis Duport also sought refuge at the Berlin court, taking his repertoire with him. This was complemented with original compositions by the skilled cellist Luigi Boccherini who regularly supplied music to Potsdam from Madrid, thus earning the title of Prussian *Hofcompositeur* [court composer]. However, in their chamber works with cello, specifically concerning the cello's independence and balance with the piano, neither Boccherini nor Duport took things as far as did Beethoven in his Op. 5 Sonatas. These pieces mark the beginning of a sporadic but sustained engagement with the cello, for which Beethoven wrote original works throughout his composing career.

For his only extended concert tour, taking him to Prague, Dresden, Leipzig and Berlin in 1796, Beethoven had come “armed” with the two cello sonatas which he had written with the king's instrument in mind. In the summer of that year, the composer and (presumably Jean-Louis) Duport played the works for the monarch, who generously rewarded Beethoven with a gold snuff-box filled with Louis d'or. Both sonatas vary the two-movement format – a technique which can also be found in some piano sonatas by Joseph Haydn, as well as certain pieces by Duport. Beethoven, however, made most imaginative use of this deviation from the traditional format of three or four movements. He made up for the missing slow movement by including a slow introduction which, in the G minor sonata, has a duration of more than five minutes and the character of an independent movement. On the other hand, the form of this *Adagio sostenuto ed espressivo* is anything but cohesive or motivically related to the subsequent *Allegro molto*, so that both sections of the movement share one overarching formal sweep.

The first *Allegro* of the Sonata in F displays an overwhelming abundance of thematic ideas and melodic wealth, in the main theme anticipating the elegant themes of Carl Maria von Weber. In this movement, Beethoven's diligence and originality is already evident in the formal hinges. At the end of the extensive exposition a harmonic jolt takes him into the development, which primarily features the principal theme. The transition into the recapitulation, on the other hand, has an almost magical effect thanks to a piano tremolo, and before the final coda proceedings seem to freeze for a moment, as if the two partners were asking themselves how to continue. The subsequent rondo alternates between the folk-like theme of the refrain and several colourful and dance-like episodes. Here, Beethoven also manages to evoke an intimate situation of reminiscing shortly before the conclusion.

The second sonata makes use of the character associated with a minor tonality in several ways: by using an elegiac opening melody with a strict, baroque-like continuation, and then by having the *Allegro's* G minor theme allude to motifs from Mozart's piano concertos in minor tonalities. The ensuing rondo begins with a theme in the manner of a gavotte, but during the subsequent repeats, the old dance is gradually freed of its courtly countenance and becomes quite boisterous, with the piano (played by Beethoven himself) seizing the leading role.

Heroic and Popular – the Variations

Beethoven also wrote, either during his Berlin sojourn or to echo his music-making with the Duport brothers, two sets of variations for cello and piano. One of them is based on a well-known chorus, “See, the conqu’ring hero comes”, from Handel’s oratorio *Judas Maccabaeus*, whilst the other takes its theme from Mozart’s *Magic Flute*, which had been premiered five years previously (in late 1796) at the Theater auf der Wieden in Vienna. The variations on the “heroic” Handel theme, mutating into a merry dance in the finale, are fairly conventional; in his Mozart variations, however, Beethoven reveals his own hand. Although the bipartite theme of Papageno’s song “Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen” is rhythmically levelled out, Beethoven keeps conjuring up new figures and characters in his short, almost aphoristic, variations, right up to the all too tragic minor-keyed *Adagio* variation (No 10), which could almost be regarded as a characterisation of the bird-man who is by no means just superficial and funny.

Beethoven was to return to Mozart’s *Magic Flute* for another set of variations: in 1801, when the *Singspiel* was revived in Vienna, Beethoven chose the duet “Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen”, sung by Pamina and Papageno. Although these seven transformations are not on the same level as the sophisticated *Eroica Variations*, Op. 35, for piano, written around the same time, Beethoven fashions them with idiosyncratic contours, pairing a gnarly sense of concision and a blissful unfolding of melodies (in the *Adagio* variation). The finale heralds one of Beethoven’s most notable duo sonatas: the “Kreutzer” Sonata for violin and piano.

New Paths – the Sonata Op. 69

“Oh you people who think or declare me hostile, stubborn or misanthropic, how you wrong me; for you do not know the secret cause of this [...]”. In October 1802 the 31-year-old Ludwig van Beethoven wrote his so-called “Heiligenstadt Testament” whilst on an extended summer break outside Vienna (the “secret cause” was his increasing deafness). This marks the beginning of a period in his career which, on account of his deep insights into advanced music, his political and humanitarian commitment as well as his autobiography, ranks among the most exciting phases in history: during this “heroic” period between 1802 and 1815 he wrote his opera *Fidelio*, his Symphonies 3-8, his Fourth and Fifth Piano Concertos, his middle string quartets and piano sonatas. And even a less heroic work such as the Cello Sonata Op. 69 exudes, in its formal layout and dramatic concision, the same sense of determination as the contemporaneous Fifth Symphony.

However, at the time of its genesis – the sonata was completed in 1808 – the composer’s financial situation was anything but secure. As before, he lived off commissions and irregular contributions from aristocratic benefactors. And when the Imperial Court Theatre rejected his offer of submitting an opera and additional pieces each year (!) for a suitable fee, Beethoven, in October 1808, opted for a tried and tested formula: he threatened to accept an invitation by Napoleon’s brother Jérôme to live and work at his court in Kassel, expecting his Viennese admirers to protest. Indeed, several aristocrats proceeded to pay him a considerable annuity of 4000 guilders per year. The conditions were favourable – all he had to do in return was to remain in Vienna.

Beethoven’s friends and confidants included Baron Ignaz von Gleichenstein, who became an intimate friend until the two men fell out over an issue concerning a lady. Gleichenstein was a talented amateur cellist and without doubt the reason why Beethoven returned to the genre of the cello sonata more than a decade after his Op. 5 set (the A major sonata is dedicated to his friend). Naturally, he now searched out different routes than in his early sonatas. The Op. 69 sonata features an unmistakeable sense of impetuosity as a basic stance, resulting from the eschewal of an extended

slow movement. The short third movement, *Adagio cantabile*, is no more than a brief moment of catching breath before the finale – a model which Beethoven had already trialled in the final version of the “Waldstein” Sonata. During the volatile years of the Napoleonic Wars there was clearly no room for the gravity of the early sonatas’ adagios.

The motto-like beginning of the opening movement for cello alone alludes to his late works. The piano’s response leads to a pause with a short cadence, and the music proceeds with the roles switched. The second theme shows how Beethoven already at this stage interlocks the solo and accompanying instruments with each other, linking melody and accompaniment inextricably with one another. Keen-eared scholars have detected a quotation from the aria “Es ist vollbracht” from Bach’s *St John Passion*, leading to speculation about Beethoven’s adoption of Bach’s music. The *Scherzo* offers up a highly dynamic and syncopated theme into which Beethoven inserts two trio sections: a technique he was to employ again in his seventh symphony. The finale, featuring a catchy main theme and a rhapsodically pausing secondary theme, appears to be more forthcoming, leading into an almost panegyric coda – Beethoven certainly knew how to win over the experts whilst taking the enthusiasts by surprise.

Late Poise – the Sonatas Op. 102

Seven years later, in the summer of 1815, and under entirely different auspices, Beethoven wrote his final two cello sonatas, Op. 102. The Congress of Vienna and Europe’s restoration had quashed his hopes for a liberally minded monarchy, and musically he found himself in the midst of a deep crisis. This relatively unproductive period saw experiments with the more intimate genres of piano and cello sonatas; the title, “free sonata”, for the Sonata in C major, Op. 102 No 1, also indicates this. Its structure and tonal language have little in common with the previous work. With a duration of around fifteen minutes it has a very concise format: all processes and even the often harsh dynamics play out in the tightest of spaces. The “problem” of the slow movement which he introduced in the Op. 69 sonata for the first time is now intensified: neither the introductory *Andante* nor the *Adagio*, with the added quotation of the sonata’s opening (*Tempo d’Andante*), is a blissfully oscillating song-like movement; instead they are both brief, restrained moments of calm with improvisatory or recitative-like characteristics. The proportions thus shift towards the fast movements: a sonata movement with a gruff principal theme, and a final rondo which is full of surprising effects and whose figures are mainly derived from a short, ascending chain of notes. No wonder that this almost monastic limitation of means did not result in an appealing, sonorous show piece, but rather in an unwieldy anticipation of his late oeuvre.

The Sonata in D major opens with a striking signal that could set a dramatically charged, restless *Allegro con brio* in motion. In the development section there are indeed moments of energetic compression, but on the whole Beethoven, in this piece, displays a greater sense of poise than in the works of his “heroic” phase. One of his most heartfelt movements before the great chants of his late string quartets is the *Adagio* of the D major Sonata, which is based on a sublime chorale melody that reaches an almost Bachian intensity and segues into an “infinite melody” in the middle section. The finale, generating a serene fugal subject from a simple ascending scale, is by no means the first fugal finale in Beethoven’s chamber music – another prominent example being the third “Razumovsky” Quartet from the Op. 59 set. Its increasingly stubborn pace and angular harmonic idiom, however, point towards the “Hammerklavier” Sonata, written a few years later, or the *Große Fuge* for string quartet, Op. 133.

MARC COPPEY

French cellist Marc Coppey, winner of the Bach Competition Leipzig at the age of eighteen (First Prize and Special Prize for the best interpretation of Bach), is considered one of today's leading cellists. Early on Sir Yehudi Menuhin discovered his talent and subsequently invited him to make his Moscow and Paris debuts performing together with him and Viktoria Postnikova. In 1989, Mstislav Rostropovitch invited Marc Coppey to the Evian Festival and from there his solo career took off.

A frequent soloist with leading orchestras, Marc Coppey has collaborated with distinguished conductors such as Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Alan Gilbert, Lionel Bringuier, Eliahu Inbal, Emmanuel Krivine, Yutaka Sado and Yan Pascal Tortelier, to name but a few. He has appeared in numerous recitals in Europe, North and South America and Asia in prestigious concert halls such as Wigmore Hall in London, the Schauspielhaus in Berlin, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Salle Pleyel, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and the Philharmonie in Paris, the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory in Moscow and the Metropolitan Museum in New York. He is a regular guest at festivals including those of Radio-France-Montpellier, Strasbourg, Besançon, La Roque d'Anthéron, Monte-Carlo, the Nantes and Lisbon "Folle Journée", Bachfest Leipzig, Musikfest Stuttgart, Chamber Music Festival Kuhmo and the Pablo Casals Festival at Prades.

An avid chamber music player, Marc Coppey has explored and performed the cello repertoire with renowned artists, among them Maria João Pires, Stephen Kovacevich, Nicholas Angelich, Michel Béroff, Kun-Woo Paik, Peter Laul, Augustin Dumay, Viktoria Mullova, Valeriy Sokolov, Alina Pogostkina, Ilya Gringolts, János Starker, Paul Meyer, Emmanuel Pahud and the Tokyo, Takács, Pražák, Ébène and Talich Quartets. From 1995 to 2000 he was a member of the Ysaÿe Quartet.

Marc Coppey's choice of repertoire is eclectic and innovative. He frequently plays the complete Bach Suites and other well-known concert repertoire, but also works that are rarely heard. Performing and promoting contemporary music is very important to him: he is the dedicatee of several contemporary works and he played the world premieres of the Cello Concertos by Lenot, Tanguy and Monnet as well as the French and Spanish premieres of Elliott Carter's Cello Concerto. As a tribute to Pierre Boulez, he premiered ten works for solo cello by some of today's most prominent composers at the Philharmonie de Paris in March 2015.

Marc Coppey's recordings have received critical acclaim worldwide. They include works by Beethoven, Debussy, Emmanuel, Fauré, Grieg, Strauss, Dubois, Bach, Dohnányi, Matalon and Dutilleux. Together with the Pražák Quartet, Marc Coppey has recorded the Schubert Quintet and with pianist Peter Laul the Brahms Cello Sonatas, Russian Cello Sonatas and a Schubert album. His audite debut recording with Haydn and C.P.E. Bach Cello Concertos (2016, aud. 97.716) raised international attention. The following recording of Bloch's Schelomo and Dvořák's Cello Concerto (2017, aud. 97.734) with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and Kirill Karabits received several international awards and was nominated for the International Classical Music Awards (ICMA).





Arte TV broadcast his full-length live performance of the complete Bach Suites from the Chapelle de la Trinité, Lyon.

In addition to his solo career and his chamber music activities, Marc Coppey is Professor at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris and gives master-classes across the globe. He is artistic director of the Colmar Chamber Music Festival as well as the Zagreb Soloists.

Marc Coppey was born in Strasbourg, France. He studied cello at the conservatory of his home town, continued at the Paris Conservatoire and at Indiana University in Bloomington, USA. Today he resides in Paris. He was made Officier des Arts et des Lettres by the French Culture Ministry in 2014.

Marc Coppey performs on a rare cello by Matteo Goffriller (Venice, 1711), the «Van Wilgenburg».

PETER LAUL

Peter Laul was born into a musical family in St. Petersburg (Russia). He received his education at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, where he studied with Prof. Alexander Sandler, and where he has since become a faculty member. He has won prizes at the European Piano Contest Bremen, Germany (1995: 3rd prize and special prize for the best performance of a work by Bach; 1997: 1st prize and special prize for the best performance of a sonata by Schubert), and at the Scriabin International Piano Competition in Moscow, Russia (2000: 1st prize). In 2003, he was awarded the honorary medal "For achievements in the Arts" by the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation.

Peter Laul has performed as a soloist with the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, the Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra, the Moscow Symphony Orchestra, the State Symphony Capella of Russia, as well as numerous additional Russian orchestras. He has worked with conductors such as Maxim Shostakovich, Valery Gergiev, Vassily Sinaisky, Jean-Claude Casadesus, Nikolaj Znaider and Nikolay Alekseev. He has also performed with the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie, the SWR Symphonieorchester, the philharmonic orchestras in Dessau, Bremerhaven and Oldenburg (Germany), the National Symphony Orchestra of Brazil, the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra and *Les Siècles* (France) under François-Xavier Roth.

Peter Laul's recital performances have taken him to numerous venues and festivals throughout Russia, Europe, Japan and the USA. In Russia, he performed e.g. in the St. Petersburg Philharmonia Halls, the Concert Hall of the Mariinsky Theatre, the Moscow Conservatory Halls, the Moscow Tchaikovsky Concert Hall and the Moscow International House of Music. Abroad he concertized in the Auditorium du Louvre, the Théâtre de la Ville, the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, Opéra de Lyon, the Lincoln Center in New York, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Die Glocke in Bremen, Sapienza University in Rome, Verdi Hall in Milan, Suntory Hall and Opera City Concert Hall in Tokyo, the Luxembourg Philharmonic Hall, and the Théâtre Royal de La Monnaie in Brussels. He performed the complete cycle of Beethoven's 32 Piano Sonatas both in the Small Philharmonic Hall of St. Petersburg and the Small Hall of the Moscow State Conservatory.

Recent performances at festivals include Serres d'Auteuil (Paris), Progetto Martha Argerich (Lugano), Les Musicales de Colmar and the Saint-Riquier Festival (France), the Arts Square, Stars of the White Nights and The Faces of International Pianism (St. Petersburg), the West Cork Chamber Music Festival (Ireland) and the Festival Printemps des Arts de Monte-Carlo (Monaco).

In addition, Peter Laul is a dedicated chamber musician. His chamber music partners include the Borodin Quartet, Marc Copey, Maxim Vengerov, Viktor Tretiakov, Ilya Gringolts, Alena Baeva, Valeriy Sokolov, Alexander Ghindin, Diemut Poppen, Maja Bogdanović, David Grimal, Paul Meyer, Romain Guyot, François-Frédéric Guy, Laurent Korcia and Tedi Papavrami.

His discography includes several solo and chamber recordings, among them works by Scriabin, the complete Brahms Piano Trios and Cello Sonatas, the complete Schumann Violin Sonatas and Piano Trios, and Stravinsky's complete works for violin and piano. Peter Laul has produced recordings for numerous television and radio stations in Russia and abroad.





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