

Artur Schnabel Beethoven Piano Sonatas, Vol. 1

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"To some extent Schnabel was always a fatalist, and fate at this moment appeared to him in the shape of a little man called Fred Gaisberg, who was the artists' representative of the Gramophone Company (H&V). Mr. Gaisberg caught him at the psychological moment when he was thrilled anew with the idea of playing the entire thirty-two Beethoven sonatas in London. While rejecting once again the usual suggestion of recording an easily salable selection of well-known pieces he now made an all-or-nothing proposal to record the whole set of Beethoven sonatas, plus the five piano concertos, and this was eventually accepted. In tackling this unprecedented project the Company resorted to the plan of selling the records by subscription, through a newly organized Beethoven Sonata Society, which in the event turned out to be a great success. But the decision was not an easy one. 'I shall never forget the look on the faces of the directors when I told them,' reported Mr. Gaisberg in his memoirs, naïvely thinking that he had shared the great Schnabel with a 'fat guarantee' and convinced him that 'one could combine his ideals with the machine'.

On the day following the Queen's Hall recital in memory of Mrs. Courtauld, Schnabel made his first gramophone texts. Reporting home he said that the first records were 'high in sound' but were musically satisfactory—a seemingly curious distinction for a man who was praised throughout his career for his beautiful tone. But he always subordinated the purely sensuous element to the musical and emotional content of what he played. Beauty of sound was automatic with him—a part of his nature. What happened is that he had reconciled himself to the inevitable and was determined to solve the problems which existed, and it must be admitted that among other things he and his engineers eventually achieved a remarkable degree of tone fidelity. Early in February he signed his contract, and so began what he once called the most painful experience of his life.

From "Artur Schnabel - A Biography" by Cesar Sanzinger (Doubt, Macd & Co., New York, 1957)

Recording and restoration notes

Artur Schnabel's 1930s Beethoven Sonata recordings are not a remastering project to be undertaken lightly. There are of course many other transfers already available, and I have held off beginning this series for a number of years, until I could be confident not just of repeating the previous efforts of my colleagues, but of achieving something dramatically new and substantial to the recordings through Pristine's 32-bit XR remastering process. This is a project which has been started and abandoned several times before in my efforts to produce the very finest, most authentic piano tone, with as clean and quiet a background as possible. This I believe I have finally achieved here, and it is only in the occasional side or short section that one is reminded that these recordings were made nearly 80 years ago. My hope is that the much increased clarity, fidelity and realism of these Pristine releases will allow the listener a far greater appreciation of Schnabel's genius than ever before - and that you will forget the vintage of the recording and matters of sound quality and enjoy these legendary recordings as if hearing them for the very first time. **AR**

Full Programme Notes CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM
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BETHOVEN

PIANO SONATAS

VOLUME 1

No. 1 in F minor, Op. 2 No. 1
No. 2 in A major, Op. 2 No. 2
No. 3 in C major, Op. 2 No. 3

ARTUR SCHNABEL

RECORDED 1933 & 1934

Beethoven Piano Sonatas Volume One

BEETHOVEN Piano Sonata No. 1 in F minor, Op. 2 No. 1

- 1 1st mvt. - Allegro (3:19)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Adagio (6:04)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Menuetto and Trio - Allegretto (3:28)
- 4 4th mvt. - Prestissimo (5:04)

Recorded 23 April 1934, issued as HMV DB 2463-64

Matrix Numbers 2B 6147, 2149-51. All 1st takes except side 2: take 3

BEETHOVEN Piano Sonata No. 2 in A major, Op. 2 No. 2

- 5 1st mvt. - Allegro vivace (6:31)
- 6 2nd mvt. - Largo appassionato (7:26)
- 7 3rd mvt. - Scherzo and Trio - Allegretto (3:26)
- 8 4th mvt. - Rondo - Grazioso (5:54)

Recorded 9 April 1933, issued as HMV DB 2086-89

Matrix Numbers 2B 6390-96, all take 2

BEETHOVEN Piano Sonata No. 3 in C major, Op. 2 No. 3

- 9 1st mvt. - Allegro con brio (10:03)
- 10 2nd mvt. - Adagio (7:50)
- 11 3rd mvt. - Scherzo and Trio - Allegro (2:54)
- 12 4th mvt. - Allegro assai (5:19)

Recorded 26 April 1934, issued as HMV DB 2646-48

Matrix Numbers 2B 6172-77. Sides 1& 2: 1st takes, sides 3-6: take 2

Artur Schnabel piano

XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of **Artur Schnabel**

Total duration: **67:24**

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