

## Artur Schnabel

### Beethoven Piano Sonatas, Vol. 10

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## BEETHOVEN

### PIANO SONATAS

#### VOLUME 10

No. 31 in A flat major, Op. 110

No. 32 in C minor, Op. 111

"EROTICA" VARIATIONS AND FUGUE FOR  
PIANO IN E-flat major, Op. 35

ARTUR SCHNABEL

RECORDED 1932 & 1938

"The player's fine mind shows best in the last half of (*Ogave*) 110. He beautifies the sometimes rather awkward piano writing. This is a rich combination of expository skill and imaginative interpretation. The only player who I think makes the figure (it is a rondo-figure, worth pondering) even more deeply serene is Hess. There is just a shade of rhythmic unevenness in Schnabel; but the movement's inward grandeur shines out." [1933]

"...nor do I know of musically more satisfying accounts of the Sonatas Opp. 110 and 111 —which is not to forget fine, and better-recorded accounts, by Kempe, Myra Hess or Aram. — This cycle, I need hardly reiterate, is one of the glories of the gramophone. Indeed, I can think of few undertakings of comparable scope which offer such self-evident proof of the importance of the medium. If you missed the original release in 1964, don't hesitate now. The cycle has its oddities and eccentricities, but for once it is no exaggeration to say that to neglect Schnabel is to neglect Beethoven. [1981]

"[The only dull piece: in the volume is the Minuet in E flat,] but after it is over ample amends are made by the splendid Variations in the same key subtitled here "Erotica," because the theme, on an air from the ballet *Prometheus*, is used for the finale of the third symphony... At last Schnabel gets really good recording. In this album I find the fullness of tone that has always been lacking before and not a harsh or thin sound. As in the fourteenth album the pianist is at the top of his form and shows us convincingly what piano literature owes to Beethoven. There are one or two places in the *alla fuga* finale of the variations where semiquavers are rushed but there is no room for criticism elsewhere." [1933]

"...taken as a whole this is a marvelously successful performance, with vivid detail wedded to a conception of invincible grandeur. The pillars of the design are made clearer and firmer than I've ever heard them before; that's to say, the introductory arch (before the theme is reached) : the span of variations 1-14; the widening vista of the fifteenth variation (the *largo*), and the bridge to the final *figure and coda*." [1965]

WR4, RO, AR, SP: *From reviews of original issues and reissues, The Gramophone*

#### Recording and restoration notes

The final two sonatas in Schnabel's Beethoven cycle were both recorded at his first Abbey Road session in January 1932. As Schnabel later wrote, he was not overly pleased with the initial results of his efforts in a recording studio: "I felt as though I were being hurried to death. Everything was artificial - the light, the air and the sound, and it took a very long time before I could make the gramophone people adjust some of their equipment to music, even longer to adjust myself to the improved equipment."

Getting the best out of the two sonata recordings has not been easy - despite running to just 45 minutes, my working files for the sonatas alone generated some 11 1/4 hours of music and an entire abandoned near-finished set. They were more coarsely and noisily recorded than later sonatas in the series and in order to get the best from them I've had to leave a higher level of background noise than in most of the others - my attempts to reduce noise further resulted in inoleable losses of musicality and urwenness of sound.

The tonal quality of the piano in the 1938-recorded *Enrica Urbinova* is generally much improved over the earlier recordings, and generally sales were much quieter. However, the presence of swish through many of the sides created a great deal of restoration work and has left some higher residual noise in places than I would have liked. Overall, however, I believe the sound quality here is far more closely representative of the finer nuances of Schnabel's piano tone than is possible to attain from the 1932 sonatas. AR

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PAKM 048

BEETHOVEN Piano Sonatas Volume Ten - Nos. 31-32 - Eroica Variations  
Artur Schnabel

PAKM 048

PRISTINE AUDIO

BEETHOVEN Piano Sonata No. 31 in A flat major, Op. 110

1 1st mvt. - Moderato cantabile molto espressivo (6:37)

2 2nd mvt. - Allegro molto (1:55)

3 3rd mvt. - Adagio ma non troppo - Fuga: Allegro ma non troppo (10:19)

Recorded 21 January 1932, issued as HMV DB 1957-59. Matrix Numbers 2B.2609-14

BEETHOVEN Piano Sonata No. 32 in C minor, Op. 111

4 1st mvt. - Maestoso - Allegro con brio ed appassionato (8:15)

5 2nd mvt. - Arietta: Adagio molto, semplice e cantabile (18:03)

Recorded 21 January & 21 March 1932, issued as HMV DB 1656-59.

Matrix Numbers 2B.2619-24, 2B.3233-34

BEETHOVEN Variations & Fugue in E flat major, Op. 35 "Eroica"

6 Introduzione col Basso del Tema (Allegretto vivace) (3:22)

7 Var. I (0:35)

8 Var. II (0:44)

9 Var. III (0:37)

10 Var. IV (0:35)

11 Var. V (0:42)

12 Var. VI (0:38)

13 Var. VII (Canone all'ottava) (0:42)

14 Var. VIII (0:46)

15 Var. IX (0:37)

16 Var. X (0:41)

17 Var. XI (0:45)

18 Var. XII (0:39)

19 Var. XIII (0:37)

20 Var. XIV (Minore) (1:21)

21 Var. XV (Maggiore - Largo) (5:56)

22 Finale Alla Fuga (Allegro con brio) (4:17)

Recorded 9 November 1938, issued as HMV DB 3787-89. Matrix Numbers 2EA.7009-14

Artur Schnabel piano

XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on photographs of Artur Schnabel

Total duration: 68:43

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