

Violin Sonata op.30 no.1

The sixth violin sonata of Beethoven was written for the Emperor 'Alexander I' from Russia. It consists out of three movements with the last movement being a Variation movement. Originally the last movement of the Kreutzer Sonata op.47 was intended to be the last movement of the this sonata but Beethoven changed these movements. They are written in the same tonality.

First movement: The first movement is written in 'Allegro' But because of the way the beginning is written it gives a character of a pastoral movement. The first movement shows a more integrated instrumentation and shows more coherence between the instruments. This is probably due to its more contrapuntal writing, which was not often used by the composers in the classic-era. This movement does remind us, in that regard, of the last movement of the fourth sonata. Even though Beethoven used a more contrapuntal style of composing, he still introduces the themes in the piano-part and lets the violin respond upon this.

Second movement: The second movement is another 'Adagio molto espressivo' like the fifth sonata. Here the violin has the main line from the beginning and the piano has the counter-melody in the left hand. Most of the movement is built upon a dotted rhythmic pattern. In the middle section the flow changes due to the change from the dotted rhythm to a triplet motion that gives more flow for the main line. Towards the end of this slow movement, the dotted rhythms come back which completes the movement.

Third movement: The last movement of this sonata is written as a variation form. The variation form was one of the preferred composition-forms that Beethoven used. One of his biggest variation work 'Diabelli Variations op.120 for solo-piano or the 32-variations WoO.80.

This variation work is a joyous piece that has a theme and 5 variations. A lot of dialogue is present in this work that starts directly from the first two bars of this piece where the piano imitates the rhythm and the intervals in the left hand that the violin played in the first bar. The first variation shows both instruments as soloists, Reacting upon each other and playing with the aspect of musical dialogue. In the second variation, the violin has the main line with a melodic accompaniment in the piano part that hints towards the counterpoint of the beginning of the first movement. The third variation is a solo for the left hand in the piano with the melody being played, both the right hand and the violin, in such a way that it combines dialogue and imitation. Variation number four is all about contrasts. The violin starts with chords on the downbeats and the piano plays a melodic phrase afterwards. Though the contrasts are not so much dynamically, they have a wonderful dialogue, which is the main character of this movement. The fifth variation is quasi-fugato and brings us back to the dotted rhythm of the second movement. This variation brings us to the last variation and the coda. The metre changes to a 6/8 rhythm that gives a dance-like character. The piano introduces the theme that is being repeated by the violin. This variation and coda confirm the virtuosity that is constantly present in this movement. Fast passages, quick dialogues and entrances of the instruments that make this movement a challenge and a pleasure to play for the instrumentalists.

