

## *Violin Sonata op.23*

The fourth violin sonata is composed in 1800/1801. It was dedicated to 'Grafen Moritz von Fries'. It is the first and one of the two sonatas which are written in minor. The texture of the first movement hints towards the 'Kreutzer Sonata op.47' which was written only two years later.

**First movement:** The first movement of the fourth sonata op.23 is written Presto. This is the first presto that we encounter in these violin-sonatas. It is often unison with both instruments and gives a very stormy impression. The continuous triplet movement gives no time to breathe and no time to rest. Sudden accents make the affect even more stormy and the octaves, that are often written at the end of the phrase, give even more sound. There is often a dialogue, with the same or with a countermelody, between one hand of the piano and the violin part with the other hand of the piano giving the harmony or the rhythmical/motoric drive. In the beginning of the development section, the storm continues and there is dialogue that ends up in the same rhythmical drive, but now in major, from the piano. This part is being interrupted by the same type of dialogue as before, reminding us again that the effect of the whole movement did not disappear but is still there. After that, the storm starts to become less until Beethoven stops the musical flow for a bit. Then from far the violin and the left hand of the piano start to have their conversation again with the right hand giving that rhythmical drive again. Building the tension over many bars we arrive back to the first theme and a coda that ends in a very sudden piano, diminuendo and a fade out.

**Second movement:** The second movement is a long 'Andante scherzoso più Allegretto'. It consists of three main sections. The beginning is a very innocent affect that starts with its introduction by the piano and with the violin entering, and playing together with the left hand of the piano, after eight bars. The second part is a 'fugato' and brings us to a scherzo, which means 'a joke'. The third part that is full of fun and conversation, again between the two instruments. In the middle part of this second movement Beethoven shortens the first theme into four bars and continues with the same 'fugato' theme and changing the tonalities. Then he breaks the theme into smaller segments and combines the first melody with that smaller segment. In this movement, Beethoven constantly works with a dialogue between both instruments. In the middle part of this second movement, Beethoven has a section where he wants just dialogue between the instruments. This results in a phrase that has just melody that is switched between instruments constantly. The movement ends, like the end of the first part of this movement, with the third 'innocent' theme. Both the right hand and the violin play the same thing with the left hand giving the feeling of a calm musical movement.

**Third movement:** The last movement of this sonata is written in a very quick metre: Allegro Molto Alla-Breva. It is again written as a Rondo form, as all the previous piano-violin sonatas. Due to the tempo-markings, we end up with a tempo that gives the feeling of a very high speed. The piano introduces this theme with consists of the main theme and a counter theme. (This type of writing was more common in the times of Bach than in the classical period and can hint to the love that Beethoven had for Johann Sebastian Bach. He had studied the preludes and fugues when he was a child with his teacher Christian Gottlob Neefe.) After eight bars the violin plays the main melody that the piano had before. The counter-melody, which was in the left hand of the piano, is now in the right hand of the piano with double as many notes giving its listener an even bigger feeling of the high tempo. The general effect of this movement does is to build towards climaxes and shocking changes. Beethoven wrote

many contradicting segments in this movement that lead to the stormy affect that is created when it is played. He goes as far as writing an adagio for a couple of bars to make the music come to a standstill before the main theme picks up the tempo and flow again. After a segment that introduces whole notes, that gives the feeling of a slow part, the violin repeats that same section but the piano has a very different part which gives a more flowing feeling than the static feeling that was created before. After the last time that the main melody comes back the melody ends up in the biggest climax of the whole sonata. The violin and the piano have loud chords and a rapid movement in first the piano and then in the violin end up in a long shocking chord that brings the whole climax to an end. Like the first movement, this movement ends with a sudden fade out into complete silence.