

Violin Sonata op.12 no.3

The Sonata in E-flat major is the most virtuosic, together with the sonata op.30 no.2 and the 'Kreutzer' sonata Op.47, for the piano-part. The piece is written in three movements and is the conclusion of the whole set op.12. It is the biggest of the three sonatas with a long second, slow, movement and two very impressive fast movements.

First movement: This movement is written in Allegro con spirito. Which means: lively with spirit. The melodic fragments that Beethoven wrote are in general quick with quick sixteenth notes that present a quick flow of the music. The sonata changes between fast sounding melodies and more rhythmical and even faster sections. Those sections have to sound with the utmost brilliance, which was much easier to play on the piano of Beethoven's time than the standard piano of today. The piano-part could be considered as the most difficult in this set of ten sonatas. The character is, at times, very playful and happy. This is mainly due to the more melodic sections while the more rhythmical sections present more drama. Beethoven used many different techniques in the piano part, which are very interesting. He writes, for example, a double trill in both hands with a melody doubling the violin part and the bass to sustain the other two parts. Towards the end, there is a quasi-cadence like passage that is completely out of the metre of the piece and introduces a relatively short coda that concludes the first movement

Second movement: This is the only Adagio part of the whole op.12. It is written 'Con molta espressione' which in general is being interpreted as a bit slower, for the music of Beethoven, and should be taken with a lot of time. It is a melodic movement in which the violin and the piano, especially the left hand, are completely intertwined and are not two separate musical entities but one musical thing. A long middle development section in which the piano is only accompanying and sustaining the violin melody ends up back to the first melody that is now presented, for the violin, in a different rhythmical form than in the beginning. There is more movement due to this figure. After the repetition of the first melody the piano and violin become one entity again and this concludes in a very dramatic part with both instruments having big chords. This results in a very soft ending of the second movement. Beethoven is able to create an almost sacred affect and I consider it to be one of the most beautiful movements of the whole set of 10 sonatas.

Third movement: This Rondo is, as a contrast to the slow movement, an extremely joyful piece. The piece is written in 'Allegro Molto' and shows the virtuosic possibilities of both instruments. The fun and different effects that the small rondo-sections bring, gives a lot of variety and leaves the listener in awe and joy. The piece is built upon the main rondo-theme that is being changed every time it comes back. The piece is more straight-forward than the other two rondo's in the op.12 set. It does not work as much with the accents on off-beats and has more sudden changes due to all the different and small sections. The finale of the last movement is one big E-flat party that constantly reminds of the beginning of the rondo-melody.