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SONATAS

Klára Würtz

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart 1756-1791

Complete Piano Sonatas

CD1	73'04	CD2	58'14	CD3	56'39	CD4	55'14
Piano Sonata No.1 in C K279		Piano Sonata No.6 in D K284		Piano Sonata No.9 in D K311		Piano Sonata No.12 in F K332	
1 I. Allegro	4'53	1 I. Allegro	5'08	1 I. Allegro con spirito	4'23	1 I. Allegro	6'29
2 II. Andante	5'08	2 II. Rondeau en polonaise: Andante	4'20	2 II. Andante con espressione	4'46	2 II. Adagio	4'39
3 III. Allegro	3'16	3 III. Andante (Tema con variazioni)	15'31	3 III. Rondeau: Allegro	6'00	3 III. Allegro assai	6'43
Piano Sonata No.2 in F K280		Piano Sonata No.7 in C K309		Piano Sonata No.10 in C KV330		Piano Sonata No.13 in B flat K333	
4 I. Allegro assai	4'27	4 I. Allegro con spirito	5'53	4 I. Allegro moderato	6'36	4 I. Allegro	7'18
5 II. Adagio	5'56	5 II. Andante un poco adagio	5'03	5 II. Andante cantabile	6'29	5 II. Andante cantabile	5'29
6 III. Presto	2'49	6 III. Rondeau: Allegretto grazioso	5'55	6 III. Allegretto	5'38	6 III. Allegretto grazioso	6'30
Piano Sonata No.3 in B flat K281		Piano Sonata No.8 in A minor K310		Piano Sonata No.11 in A K331		Piano Sonata No.14 in C minor K457	
7 I. Allegro	6'41	7 I. Allegro maestoso	5'56	7 I. Andante grazioso	12'50	7 I. Allegro molto	5'24
8 II. Andante amoroso	5'27	8 II. Andante cantabile con espressione	7'00	8 II. Menuetto	5'50	8 II. Adagio	7'38
9 III. Rondeau: Allegro	4'32	9 III. Presto	2'44	9 III. Alla Turca: Allegretto	3'24	9 III. Allegro assai	4'20
Piano Sonata No.4 in E flat K282							
10 I. Adagio	6'56						
11 II. Menuetto	4'06						
12 III. Allegro	2'57						
Piano Sonata No.5 in G K283							
13 I. Allegro	5'21						
14 II. Andante	5'36						
15 III. Presto	3'46						

CD5	61'47		
Piano Sonata No.15 in F K533		Piano Sonata No.17 in B flat K570	
1 Allegro	7'32	7 I. Allegro	5'40
2 Andante	6'31	8 II. Adagio	7'21
3 Rondeau: Allegretto	6'21	9 III. Allegretto	3'25
Piano Sonata No.16 in C K545		Piano Sonata No.18 in D K576	
4 I. Allegro	3'16	10 I. Allegro	5'07
5 II. Andante	4'06	11 II. Adagio	5'29
6 III. Rondo	1'38	12 III. Allegretto	4'22

Klára Würtz *piano*

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart 1756-1791 Complete Piano Sonatas

Sonata No.1 in C K279

Mozart wrote this first real sonata when he was 19 years old during his concert tour to Italy, while he was working on the composition of the opera *La finta giardiniera*. The style of the sonata draws elements from different musical sources. The first movement is strongly rooted in the Classical style with Baroque elements, the slow movement has a singing Italianate character, and Papa Haydn is peeping around the corner in the witty finale. All three movements are in sonata form. The piano writing is very 'pianistic', and demands great dexterity and even virtuosity from the player. In the recapitulation of the first movement Mozart does not simply repeat the exposition but is constantly inventing surprising turns of melody and harmony, in an almost improvisatory way. The second movement is unique with its aria-like melody and free flow of ideas, evoking a sweet, 'dolce', mood. The finale brims with vitality and good humour, spiced with almost burlesque elements.

Piano Sonata No.2 in F K280

This sonata is modelled on a sonata of Haydn in the same key, which had appeared some time earlier. Both slow movements of the sonatas are in F minor and are marked Adagio, and both are in the Siciliano rhythm. The principal theme, consisting of several contrasting motifs, is followed by a subject in triplets, containing some interesting chromatic episodes. The movement abounds in playful scales and runs, giving the player ample opportunity to exhibit his virtuosity. The slow movement is a miracle of concentration and expression of feeling. The profundity and the expression of pain and anguish foreshadow the later Mozart in his great dramatic minor-key works. The finale clears all dark clouds, and is a feast of surprises, jokes and *Spießfreude*.

Piano Sonata No.3 in B flat K281

In the first movement Mozart fully explores the tonal resources of the instrument, letting it sound in rich chords and vibrating accompaniments. The movement abounds in free improvisatory development and rich variation of the lyrical main theme. The slow movement is a perfect example of the 'gallant style'. The amoroso character of the music demands a graceful execution, never yielding to explicit sentimentality. The rondeau third movement is based on a theme in Gavotte style. The music, although refined after the French style, also contains unexpected dramatic passages in minor keys.

Piano Sonata No.4 in E flat K282

This sonata unexpectedly begins with a slow movement, followed by a minuet, and ends with an Allegro movement. The extraordinary Adagio is full of lyricism and quietly flowing cantilenas. The second movement consists of two minuets, both in simple, folk-like language. The last movement is reminiscent of Haydn and concludes the sonata in a light-hearted and carefree mood.

Piano Sonata No.5 in G K283

This sonata in G major (the only one in this key) is full of light, gaiety and song-like phrases, and reminds one of the sonatas of Johann Christian Bach, who was an important model for the young Mozart. The 'Italian' character of the music is clearly shown already in the first movement, where even in the development section, usually of dramatic character, there is not a trace of struggle, all minor-key feelings being avoided. The slow movement brings an innocent feeling of happiness, which is clouded over in the middle section, where the theme appears in A minor. The recapitulation brings relief and flows on in radiant cantilenas. The last movement is a sparkling Presto, bearing a close resemblance to the finale of the Piano Sonata No.2, also in 3/8 measure, and breathing the spirit of the *opera buffa*.

Piano Sonata No.6 in D K284

Mozart wrote this sonata in 1775, when it was commissioned by Baron Thaddäus von Dürnitz. The style of the first movement is bold, daring and spectacular, brilliantly written for the piano, using pianistic effects like hand-crossing and tremolo. It contains influences from the Mannheim style, whereas the rich singing lines have an Italian character. The second movement is a Rondeau en Polonaise, a wonderfully 'orchestrated' dance-like piece, where Mozart gives his imagination and fancy full reign. The third movement is a set of variations on a theme with a Gavotte character. This beautiful set of variations not only offers an embellished version of the original theme, but is constantly changing the character of the theme, from peacefully dreaming to joyfully galloping. Mozart skilfully explores all the pianistic resources of the time, using passages in parallel thirds, octaves, hand-crossing and trills.

Piano Sonata No.7 in C K309

Mozart composed this sonata for Rosa Cannabich, daughter of the well-known composer of that time, who was an admirable player. The first movement opens with a powerful unison theme, followed by a graceful melody, bringing immediate contrast in the first subject. The second theme appears further on, and creates a mood of charming and delightful ease. The development follows the rules of the sonata form by presenting the theme in different keys, and in dark minor colours. The slow movement gives a musical picture of Rosa Cannabich, of whom Mozart had a high opinion (he describes her as highly intelligent, kind and amiable). The music is a series of variations on a theme of great intimacy, evoking a sense of simplicity and lightness. Noteworthy are the many detailed performance marks, which should be strictly observed, according to Mozart. In the final Rondeau Mozart introduces orchestral effects reminiscent of the Mannheim Schule. The writing is of virtuoso and brilliant standard. The piece ends surprisingly with a pianissimo coda.

Piano Sonata No.8 in A minor K310

The background to this tragic minor-key sonata is the unexpected death of Mozart's mother, while he was giving concerts in Paris in 1778. The work is of an unusual dramatic character, and is the expression of deep personal feelings. The first movement's principal theme, marked 'maestoso', begins with a dissonant appoggiatura. The dotted rhythm of the theme dominates the whole movement with an almost obsessive pressure. The second theme is in C major, but the underlying tension also casts a shadow on this episode, especially when it resolves into minor in the recapitulation. In the development section the dotted rhythm rages furiously in both fortissimo and pianissimo, and creates an almost unbearable tension. The second movement is an Andante, marked 'cantabile con espressione'. The many execution marks relating to phrasing, articulation and dynamics give a good insight into Mozart's performance practice. The aria-like first section is interrupted by a dramatic middle section in the minor key, where the bass is making bold gestures under a frantically leaping accompaniment in the right hand. The third movement brings no consolation or smiling faces. It is a restless Presto, in which the music breathlessly chases a phantom. The middle section, in the character of a musette, gives a glimpse of a better world, but immediately the first theme takes its course again, and comes to a violent end in the minor key.

Piano Sonata No.9 in D K311

From 1777 to 1778 Mozart made a journey from Mannheim to Paris, which played an important role in his career. During the journey three piano sonatas were composed, one of which is this sonata in D major. He wrote the sonata for Josepha, the pretty daughter of Court Counsellor Freysinger (a former schoolfriend of Mozart's father Leopold). The music is filled with a light and playful spirit, and still shows influences from the Mannheim School. One example of this is found in the closing Rondeau, where a cadenza is inserted before the main theme appears again, a technique only used in a piano concerto. This proves that Mozart wanted to enlarge the structure of the 'simple' piano sonata, introducing concerto-like elements. The

first movement is marked Allegro con spirito. The gentle second subject is enriched by beautiful counterpoint in the left hand. The development makes clever use of the Mannheim 'sigh' motive, a descending second, which was introduced as a little coda to the exposition. The song-like second movement contains some moving melodic episodes, and ends with a richly accompanied coda, evoking a feeling of sweet nostalgia. The Rondeau is a real concert piece, with flourishing cascades of scales, its 6/8 time playfully dancing towards an effective end.

Piano Sonata No.10 in C K330

The enchanting simplicity of the opening theme is the starting point of a wonderful movement in which simple scales and broken chords turn into pure music of sublime beauty. In the development Mozart applies rich and manifold thematic material expressing emotion and unrest by using frequent syncopation and 'sigh' motives. Mozart's marking 'dolce' is significant in the execution of the slow movement, which is in ternary form. The gentle, flowing atmosphere of the beginning is clouded over by the darker mood of the middle section, in the minor key. The reappearance of the first melody comes then as a ray of sunlight. The joyful Rondo is in rondo-sonata form. The music brims over with witty themes and brilliant virtuosity, reminding one of a jolly scene from one of Mozart's operas.

Piano Sonata No.11 in A K331

This is one of Mozart's most frequently performed sonatas. It was probably composed around 1783 when Mozart was working on his opera *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. This would explain the appearance of Turkish elements in both the opera and the sonata. Mozart was well aware of the popularity of exotic Turkish music in Vienna at the time, and introduced such elements not only into his opera but also into his piano works, hoping for better sales of his music. The Turkish march is not the only unique feature of the sonata. Unusual is also the first movement, being a set of variations, and the Minuet in place of the slow movement. In fact none of the movements is

in sonata form. The sonata does not require bravura technique, and it seems that Mozart composed this work bearing Viennese amateur pianists in mind. The first movement, Andante grazioso, is a set of variations on a beautiful theme in A major. The gently rocking melody develops into six variations of different character: playful, dark, peaceful and bristling. The second movement is a minuet. The writing and structure of the piece is a far cry from the simple minuets used in other works. Mozart employs complex counterpoint and audacious harmony, which, combined with the irregularity of phrase construction, makes this one of his most original minuets. The third movement is the well-known *Marcia alla Turca*, in A–B–C–B–A–B’–Coda form. The B section is the most Turkish in character: festive drums and cymbals sound on the piano, evoking a joyful march parade.

Piano Sonata No.12 in F K332

In 1781 Mozart, at the age of 25, moved from Salzburg to Vienna and started his mature creative activities. This is one of his sonatas which are presumed to have been composed between 1781 and 1783, his first years in Vienna. The pleasant first subject, a graceful melody in 3/4 time, is followed by sudden ‘Mannheim rockets’, upwardly surging figurations. The innocent second subject in C major seems to try to calm down the disturbance. The development does not offer dramatic struggles, but gently introduces the second subject again, and after a building up of tension the soothing first melody sets everything at peace. The beautiful slow movement, with its tender aria-like melody, lacks a more dramatic middle section, so as not to disturb the atmosphere of peaceful quietness and unclouded beauty of sound. The finale presents a whirlwind of semiquavers in 6/8 time. It presents a fine display of virtuosity, and its exhilarating momentum never fails to make a deep impression on the audience.

Piano Sonata No.13 in B flat K333

Mozart wrote this sonata in the summer of 1778, during his stay in Paris. Its close resemblance to the sonatas of Johann Christian Bach is further explained by the fact

that he was also staying in Paris at that time. Both composers had frequent contact and had great respect for each other. In the first movement the music flows smoothly with an amiable smile and an Italian grace. Yet the part-writing and the darker shadows sometimes cast on the sunny landscape unmistakably bear stamp of Mozart’s genius. The slow movement reveals intimate and deep feelings, as often heard in Mozart’s works in E flat major. In the development the fragmented first subject is loaded with a brooding tension, which hangs over the movement until the very end. The third movement, Allegretto grazioso, is a rondo which has evident concerto-like episodes, notably the alternations of ‘solo’ and ‘tutti’, and the full-scale cadenza at the end, concluding this delightful sonata.

Piano Sonata No.14 in C minor K457

This sonata was written in 1784, the only sonata in the minor key, together with the A minor K310. The work is one of Mozart’s darkest and gloomiest creations, full of anguish, drama and grief. The piano-writing is of high calibre, calling for virtuoso powers, and already foreshadows the piano works of Beethoven. A bold subject in parallel octaves in the minor key sets the tone and atmosphere. No smiling and flowing italianate melodies here, but tight, grim structures, moving on in inexorable pace. The second subject is in E flat major, which is transformed into C minor in the recapitulation, the minor version having a totally new strength and tension. The development rages towards a climax, and the recapitulation brings no relief, the coda ending in a dark abyss of C minor. The slow movement is a richly embellished cantilena, wandering off in distant keys. It gives the player the opportunity to give his own imagination free reign, a practice which is customary in the piano concertos. The last movement presents a syncopated first subject of restless and breathless character, followed by a violent outcry of repeated octaves and leaps, which mercilessly recurs several times. The tight and concise character of the music makes it all the more dramatic and effective. The coda introduces a further new element which brings this extraordinary sonata to a violent close.

Piano Sonata No.15 in F K533

The movements of this sonata were composed separately, and were later combined into what is now regarded as one sonata. The writing of the first movement is daring, using many contrapuntal devices (canon, imitation), and extensive harmonic digressions into far-away minor keys. It recalls the works of Bach and Handel, whose compositions Mozart had studied closely. The coda presents some extraordinary chromatic shifts, before closing with flourishing triplet runs. The slow movement is in sonata form. It presents some of Mozart's most original music – listen to the asymmetrical phrase structures and the strange harmonic development, which must have sounded oddly dissonant to audiences at the time. The third movement, marked Allegretto, eases the tension of the two preceding movements, and is a pleasant Rondeau, in which the theme is differently ornamented each time it reappears. The minor episode again demonstrates clever counterpoint. A skilful, cadenza-like piling up of the theme is followed by the recurrence of the theme in the bass, and the movement ends peacefully.

Piano Sonata No.16 in C K545

This sonata, composed in 1788, bears the subtitle 'Little Sonata for beginners'. Today it is known as 'Sonate facile', and is popular with piano amateurs, often being the first music of Mozart to digest (but it needs a lot of chewing...). The structure of the first movement is of notebook discipline. It starts with a singing principal theme, followed by running scales. The recapitulation is the standard repeat of the exposition. The slow movement is touching in its simplicity, and through very modest means is still able to build up to a moving climax. The theme of the short Rondo is reminiscent of the cuckoo's call.

Piano Sonata No.17 in B flat K570

It was not until after this sonata was written in Vienna in 1789 that the style known as that of Mozart's last years became apparent in his piano sonatas. There is no trace of splendour and richly singing cantilenas, as in the B flat major K333, or the tragic and overtly dramatic tensions of the C minor K457 sonata. The language of this sonata is simple and clear with a deep inner meaning. The first movement begins with a calm theme in unison triads, followed by a some conventional musical patterns. Two sudden chords introduce the singing second theme in E flat major. The recapitulation is almost identical to the exposition. The Adagio is reminiscent of an ensemble of wind instruments, notably the first bar's 'horn call'. The profound, almost processional development of the music is interrupted by an episode in C minor, introducing gentle 'sigh' motives. In the middle a new theme appears, singing innocently in A flat major. The cheerful and lilting theme of the Rondo appears only twice, the middle section introducing a jovial episode in staccato repeating notes, which could have come straight out of *Die Zauberflöte*.

Piano Sonata No.18 in D major K576

Mozart played this sonata in Berlin before the King of Prussia Frederick William II, in 1789. The King commissioned him to write some string quartets and piano sonatas of a 'light' character. Mozart only completed three string quartets and one piano sonata, this sonata in D major. It is far from being 'light': indeed the Baroque-like counterpoint makes this one of the most difficult sonatas to perform. The 'hunt' fanfare of the first theme is used in the development in fugato-like episodes. The Adagio in A major exudes intimacy. The richly ornamented flow of melody and the strong underlying tensions of the music are characteristic of the late Mozart. The last movement, marked Allegretto, is a fine example of Mozart's use of sonata-rondo form. The skilful contrapuntal devices and the virtuosic finger work make it a worthy conclusion to this ambitious sonata.

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“A Genuine Podium Phenomenon” Zoltán Kocsis

Through her innate musical intuition and imagination Klára Würtz is able to convey the essential musical message of the works she performs, both structurally and emotionally. By her extraordinary charisma she has the rare capacity to keep her audience spellbound. The complete naturalness, the beauty of her tone and her immaculate technical command make her a favourite and beloved artist with audiences all over the world.

Although she has an extensive repertoire her main strength and focus is on the Classical and Romantic repertoire. As prolific recording artist she made more than 40 CDs, ranging from Mozart to Bartók. Her recording of the complete Mozart Piano Sonatas was met with great critical acclaim: “Sensational! Würtz’ pianistic finesse, her inclination to let the phrases breathe and “sing”, her superb and fastidious equilibrium, and, above all, her inclination to leave well enough alone and let the music speak for itself, represent “centric” Mozart tradition at its attractive best.” (Harris Goldsmith in International Record Review). After a concert with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Bernard Haitink the Boston Globe wrote: “Würtz, who has the best recording of the complete Mozart piano sonatas to her credit, played with the same elegant, spirited style, command of dynamics, and lambent tone that is so admirable on the CD’s”. Another highly successful recording project is of the piano works by Robert Schumann, a composer with whom she has a strong affinity. Jed Distler wrote on Classicstoday.com: “Würtz’ performances unquestionably hold their turf alongside the reference versions. In Kreisleriana for instance she matches Radu Lupu’s poetry and sweep, while imparting more shape and meaning...Klára Würtz’s will be the finest complete Schumann cycle to have been recorded by one pianist”.

Though not claiming to be a “specialist” Klára has a special place in her heart for Franz Schubert. Richard Dyer (Boston Globe) speaks of the “inner radiance of her sound”, while Fanfare Classical Magazine rates her Impromptus recording “in the

exalted company of Schnabel, Brendel, Lupu, Zimerman and Perahia..this is very natural and distinctive music-making at a very high level”. Her other solo recordings include works by Bartók, Kodály, Janáček, Liszt, Chopin and Debussy. She recorded piano concertos by Mozart, Schumann, Rachmaninoff, Ravel and Bartók. An avid chamber music player she recorded the Beethoven and Brahms violin sonatas with Kristóf Baráti (“Reference recording” according to the leading German newspaper), Beethoven’s cello sonatas with Timora Rosler, Kodály cello sonatas with István Várdai, and piano trios by Schubert and Mendelssohn with the Klaviertrio Amsterdam.

From early childhood on Klára was immersed in music. From her 5-th year she joined the famous Hungarian Radio & Television Children’s Choir, with which she made extensive international tours. At seventeen she entered the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest where she studied with such iconic teachers as Zoltán Kocsis, Ferenc Rados and György Kurtág. Later she received scholarship from András Schiff for his chamber music courses in Prussia Cove, UK. In 1985 she won the First Prize in the Ettore Pozzoli Competition in Milan. In 1988 she was a prize winner in the Dublin International Competition and the only one to carry away a contract with an international agency: she signed up with Columbia Artist Management in New York and played over a hundred concerts in the USA and Canada, at the Ravinia Festival and the Kennedy Center in Washington, with a.o. the Czech Philharmonic under Jiri Belohlavek. She played in the International Piano Festival of Williamstown, the Newport Festival, the Carnegie Hall, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, La Roque d’Anthéron (France), at the Mozarteum during the Salzburg Festival, with the Budapest Festival Orchestra under Iván Fischer. She played chamber music with Janine Jansen, Dimitri Makhtin, Alexander Kniazev, the Pavel Haas Quartet and conductors Bernard Haitink, Theodore Kuchar, Marco Boni, Dirk Vermeulen, Justus Frantz.

Klára Würtz teaches at the Conservatory of Utrecht, and she lives with her husband and daughter in Amsterdam.