



CHANNEL CLASSICS

CCS 10897

MIA  
CHUNG

piano

Beethoven

Sonatas & Bagatelles volume II

**Mia Chung** has been consistently recognized for her superb artistry. She made her New York City debut in 1994 at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall. In a review of the performance, The New York Times described her as: "Uncommonly insightful, individualistic and lively.... She found balances and rhythmic emphases that made the work's drama seem fresh.... Her playing was dazzling."

In 1993, Mia Chung won First Prize at the Concert Artists Guild New York Competition, becoming the first pianist to earn this distinction in five years. Ms. Chung also won the competition's special U.S. Trust Award, Channel Classics Prize, and the ITT Corporation Prize. In 1997, she was awarded an Avery Fisher Career Grant.

Ms. Chung made her orchestral debut at age twelve as soloist with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and her highly praised recital debut at age eighteen at the Hall of the Americas in Washington, D.C. In addition to a re-engagement with the Baltimore Symphony, Ms. Chung has been soloist with the National Symphony and New Haven Symphony. She has appeared in solo recital throughout the United States including Boston, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., New Haven (Connecticut), Toledo (Ohio), Orange County (California), Jacksonville and Palm Beach (Florida). Festival appearances include the Flagstaff Festival in Arizona, the Rockport Chamber Music Festival in Massachusetts, and the San Juan Islands Chamber Music Festival in Washington. Chosen as an Artistic Ambassador by the United States Information Agency in 1993, Ms. Chung toured the former Soviet Union, Thailand, Singapore and Tonga under the agency's auspices.

Mia Chung has received the highest praise for her interpretations of Beethoven's works. In 1995, Channel Classics released Ms. Chung's debut CD featuring Beethoven's Sonatas, Op.31, No.1 and Op.111, and the Bagatelles, Op.126, as part of its Winning Artists Series (CCS 7195). Gramophone magazine noted: "Chung's performance is inspired ... a totally absorbing musical experience." Gramophone Magazine also listed the CD as one of its favorites for 1995. A Schumann disc followed in 1996, winning the Critics Association of Korea Award for best keyboard recording of the year. (CCS 9296)

Ms. Chung has also been involved in radio work in Boston and across the United States. In 1995, Ms. Chung served as the first 'Young Artist in Residence' for National Public Radio's Performance Today, syndicated to over 180 stations throughout the U.S. As WCRB-FM's 'Artist-in-Radio,' Ms. Chung's performances and commentary air throughout metropolitan Boston. In collaboration with WCRB-FM and the Boston Globe, she is bringing classical music to inner-city children through a series of in-school concerts.

Highlights of the 1995-96 season include Ms. Chung's debuts in Boston at Jordan Hall, in Japan at the Yokohama International Piano Festival and in Seoul, Korea in recital at the Hoam Arts Hall. Other recital appearances will be made throughout the United States. In addition, she will be premiering a new work by composer Lee Hyla, commissioned for her by Concert Artists Guild.

Mia Chung was born in Madison, Wisconsin, and grew up in the Washington, D.C. area. She has earned a bachelor's degree from Harvard University, a master's degree from Yale University, and a doctorate from the Juilliard School. Her teachers have included Peter Serkin, Boris Berman, Raymond and Anne Hanson, and George Manos. Ms. Chung is currently Artist-in-Residence and Assistant Professor of Music at Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts. She and her husband live in Cambridge, Massachusetts where they serve as resident tutors at Harvard University.

The three compositions on this recording illustrate the flux and evolution of Beethoven's spiritual and mental states during his middle and late periods. Beethoven's middle period style, characterized largely, but not singularly, by an extreme temperament, is contrasted by his late period tendency toward a spiritual yearning that supersedes all other urgencies. Extracting and explicating these aspects of Beethoven's compositions reveals insights to the man himself.

In the Sonata No.23 in F minor, Op. 57, the 'Appassionata,' composed in 1804-05, Beethoven was at his most passionate extreme. Deafness had become a reality. His initial reaction to his loss was anger—anger directed toward God for what he considered a cruel future. At the same time, he appealed to God to enable him to create even greater musical statements. This work is a fulfillment of his wish as well a reflection of his personal crisis. In the first movement, Beethoven's uncertainty, fury and passion come to the fore. Yet, even though the music may seem almost out of control, the composer's cool, rational side has structured the movement through symmetric four-measure phrases. The stark dynamic, harmonic and textural changes test the limits of the orderly phrase structure as though stretching the seams of a well-tailored suit. When it appears the drama can increase no further and when structural predictability is about to set in, Beethoven changes the tempo from *Allegro assai* to *Più allegro* in the coda to drive the intensity upward. Instead of ending with a climactic blow, however, the fury subsides and the movement closes as mysteriously as it began.

The middle movement, *Andante con moto*, gives the listener a view of Beethoven's soulful side. A simple and modest hymn-like theme establishes the basis for the variations that follow. With each succeeding variation, the rhythmic values are halved, and the transparent texture rises up the keyboard as if Beethoven is on a spiritual quest. Ultimately, he presents a descending scale that brings the music back to earth and the theme is reiterated in the lower register. The figuration in this middle movement—particularly in the later variations—and the religious nature of the theme are aspects that reach their maturity in later sonatas such as

the Sonata No.30 in E major, Op.109.

The final movement is a perpetual motion of sixteenth notes that generates an overwhelming level of energy. However, Beethoven warns the performer to control the energy by playing an *Allegro* tempo that is *ma non troppo*—not too much. Beethoven guides the incessant rhythm through its various peaks and a dramatic valley, concluding with an impish and haunting dance of eighth notes marked *Presto*. Within moments, the returning sixteenth note frenzy brings the work to a thundering close, as though Beethoven's fists were pounding a table in disgust with this intrusion. While Beethoven's thoughts are earthbound in the outer movements of the 'Appassionata' Sonata, fleeting glimpses of the transcendent in the middle movement provide a sign of things to come. Indeed, after anger came acceptance.

In the Sonata No.30 in E major, Op. 109, fury and tempestuousness recede, giving way to a more tender and cerebral expression. The first movement's opening *Vivace* measures, followed by the contrastingly mature *Adagio* theme are the basis for the entire movement. Though fantasy-like and free, the rational, economical nature of Beethoven's creative process again comes to the fore. He seems to be seeking spiritual solace and yet his mind continues to wrestle. The ethereal patterns in the upper register, the rising movement of the development and the registral disparateness of the treble and bass figures project a groping and yearning for quietude. In the final moments of the first movement, the *Vivace* pattern rises heavenward, but is anchored with the arrival of a closed

E major harmony in the lower register.

Without pause, the second movement intrudes with a return of his middle period temperament. Beethoven infuses this tight sonata form structure with a stern, anxious feeling. The arpeggiated, scalar and repeated figures are rhythmically gilded with hints of impetuousness and mystery. It becomes clear that Beethoven's dark side has not disappeared; it simply appears less often.

The final movement demonstrates the vastness and depth of Beethoven's creative spirit with a theme and variations. The hymn-like theme, modest, yet full of intimate expression is built on a rising E major scale, just as the opening phrase in the first movement was built on a descending one. The variations are neither impassioned nor angry, rather they are a collection of heartfelt and clearly etched imitative statements. The disciplined expression of variations two and three reaches its most glorious form in the fugue (variation five) while the deep feeling of the first variation (*Molto Espressivo*) achieves fruition in variations four and six. In the sixth and final variation, the whirring trills in the outer registers and the cascading scales offer a glimpse of the divine—the opening of heaven's gates and the pouring out of God's grace upon mankind. The sonority and suspense gradually dissipate until the gentle return of the theme, this time more humble, private—resigned. It is the same music, but transfigured by the journey on which Beethoven has led us.

Underneath the apparent simplicity of the Eleven Bagatelles, Op.119, exists a realm of subtlety and invention. With the exception of the fifth bagatelle, in which the stern, driven side of Beethoven is revisited, we see an alternation of reflection and wit. The composer's introspective side makes an appearance in the first, fourth, opening of the sixth, eighth, and final bagatelle. A child-like playfulness emerges in the second, third, sixth, ninth and tenth. The enigmatic quality of Beethoven's late style is present in the seventh bagatelle, where the materials are segmented, and trills as well as sequences abound until a descending C major arpeggio breaks the sense of confusion. The diversity of expression which Beethoven achieved in these gems is astounding. Though short, they are among the most musically demanding statements ever created. In them, one discovers the heights of Beethoven's musical genius and plumbs the depths of his soul.

*Mia Chung*



**Elf Neue Bagatellen, Opus 119 (1820-22)**

① Allegretto	2:40
② Andante con moto	1:00
③ à l'Allemande	1:27
④ Andante cantabile	1:56
⑤ Risoluto	1:20
⑥ Andante	1:49
⑦ Allegro, ma non troppo	1:05
⑧ Moderato cantabile	1:38
⑨ Vivace moderato	0:40
⑩ Allegramente	0:08
⑪ Andante, ma non troppo	1:53

**Sonate No. 30 in E major, Opus 109 (1820)**

⑫ Vivace, ma non troppo	4:25
⑬ Prestissimo	2:10
⑭ Andante molto cantabile ed espressivo	14:15

**Sonate nr. 23 in F minor, Opus 57 (1804-05)**

**'Appassionata'**

⑮ Allegro assai	9:42
⑯ Andante con moto	6:37
⑰ Allegro ma non troppo	8:14

**Total time 62:20**



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