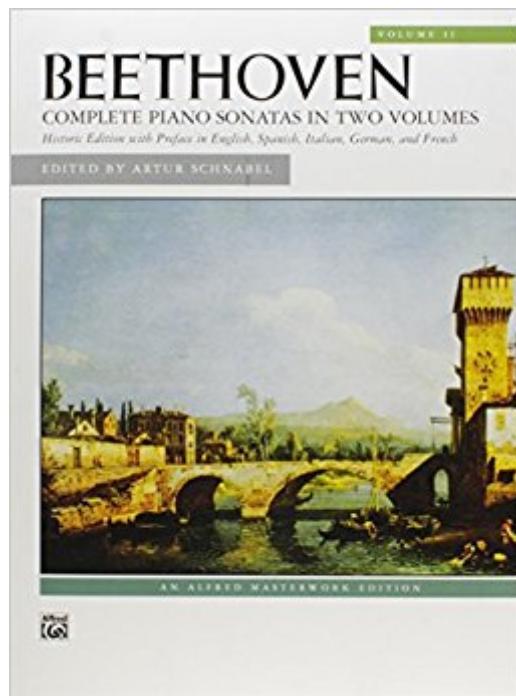


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Sonatas: Alfred Masterwork Edition Volume 2



Synopsis

Re-engraved, corrected editions by Artur Schnabel, with Schnabel's notes and comments in five languages. Volume One contains Sonatas One through Seventeen and Volume Two contains Sonatas Eighteen through Thirty-Two.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

While not an Urtext (unedited) edition, Schnabel's additions or suggestions are very insightful and will help assist any pianist with the intended interpretation. All comments made by Schnabel are clearly distinguishable from that of Beethoven's original hand. Schnabel was not a mechanic (his words) at the keyboard and never did encore's as a performer so he's not out to boost an ego or require unnecessary flashiness. His fingerings and dynamic markings are only 'suggestions' to that which was left out by Beethoven. His ideas in this edition truly make the most out of Beethoven's music. Con: The edition does have some confusing page references in the footnotes, which is a result of a printing error. Also, specific metronome markings are somewhat fast but, again, only a suggestion by the editor.

This book is a really good thing, if you can buy it, buy it. It has some really good recommendations by the great pianist Arthur Schnabel. All the recommendations are in 4 languages: English, French, German and Spanish. Schnabel writes in a lot of parts what he thinks about performing specific part of any sonata. Digitations, Dynamics. I think buying this book is a really good inversion.

All time great performances of top Beethoven Piano Sonatas. My favorites are Moonlight and Pathetique. Sound is quite good and with top playback equipment you can ever hear Mr. Rubinstein making sounds with his throat!

A must-own by any serious student of classical music for piano, with an untold wealth of insights into fingering, technique, and the subtleties of music-making and interpretation.

Good

The more I listened to Rubinstein, the more I understand his greatness. No amount of words can describe the joy of listening to his piano repertoire.

Schnabel was the master of Beethoven interpretation and his comments are spot-on illuminating. In technical passages his fingerings make the most sense versus other editions, and I appreciated the multiple-language footnotes. I bought both volumes, but a few weeks after pressing them open to set on the piano, pages started falling out from the glued backs. This is inexcusable for what I paid (over eighty bucks for the set). I contacted the publisher for redress and never heard back; too bad Alfred Masterwork is too cheap to back their product or properly bind an otherwise very worthwhile collection of my favorite classical music.

Rubinstein knew all 32 of Beethoven's Sonatas by heart, but in public and on record, limited himself to the most popular half dozen or so. The four Sonatas on this CD -- originally recorded at RCA Italiana Studios in the early 1960s -- were, with the five Concertos, the core of the pianist's Beethoven repertoire. Rubinstein's approach to the Pathetique is characteristic of his Beethoven playing: Tempos are sensible, avoiding extremes of speed or slowness; phrasing is devoid of artifice; pedalling is sparser than Beethoven's written indications (but many of Beethoven's contemporaries claim Beethoven over-pedalled); repeats are generally taken. Some purists will object how Rubinstein plays the first movement ornaments in the "Italian" rather than the "German" manner, but there has been no conclusive evidence either way on the "correct" manner to handle them (Beethoven probably didn't care anyway). This CD contains Rubinstein's only recording of the inescapable Moonlight Sonata. He performed it in public several times during the 1962-1963 season, and then dropped it from his repertoire. The first movement is played simply, even a little

dryly, as is the second movement. But Rubinstein lets loose in the Finale, with a breakneck tempo and stark dynamic contrasts, bringing the work to a rousing close. Nobody else could hit a piano that hard and still create such a beautiful sound. The Appassionata was a favorite of Rubinstein's. He featured it in his earliest concert performances, played it almost to the end of his career, and recorded it three times. This recording is more successful than the previous two (the first was almost comically slapdash). Max Wilcox, the producer of the original recording, has noted that this was one of the few times Rubinstein became hampered in the recording studio, and many takes were required before Rubinstein was satisfied. But one could never guess that from listening to the resulting performance, it is totally organic and betrays no hint of being spliced together. The performance of the Les Adieux Sonata is more reflective, mellow than Rubinstein's early mono version. The first movement is more a coherent statement of the work's structure than a portrait of a friend's Farewell. The Absence movement is not as colorful as, say, Kempff's; nor is the Return as joyous as Rudolf Serkin's version (but at least Rubinstein doesn't stamp the pedal). Of course, there are many recordings of the more popular Sonatas one would want for one's collection, including Serkin's, Kempff's, and even Horowitz's - not to mention those by more contemporary pianists which I personally do not find interesting. And there are a number of fine complete sets available. But for a straight, uncluttered approach to the music, Rubinstein can be heartily recommended. RCA's remastering has a bit more dynamic range and impact than the original LP.

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