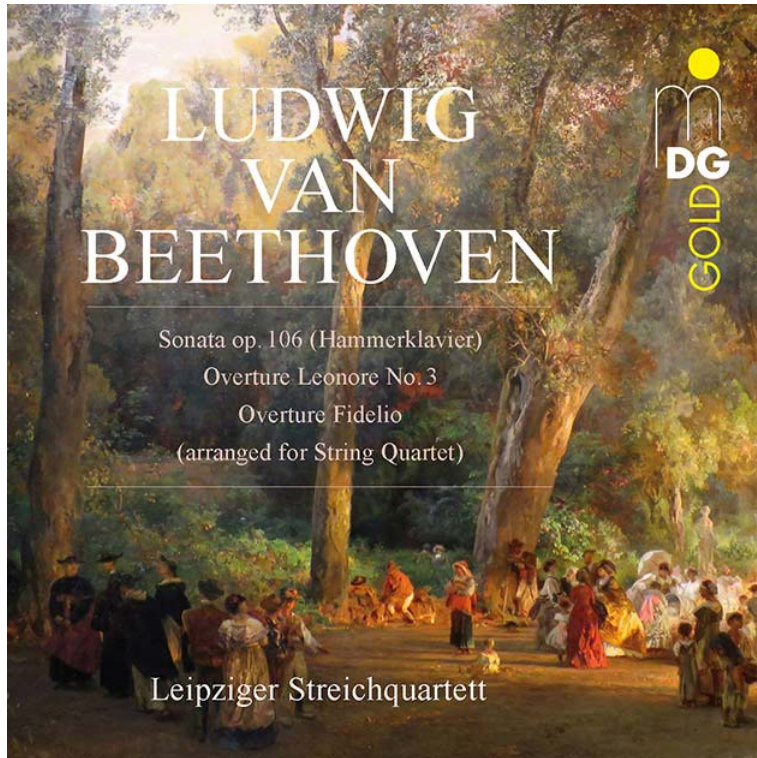


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05/18-(4)

L. v. Beethoven (1770 – 1827)
Große Sonate für
das Hammerklavier op. 106
Overture Leonore No. 3 op. 72b
Overture Fidelio op. 72c
(arranged for String Quartet)

Leipziger Streichquartett

1 CD

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Ultimate Challenge

Beethoven's Piano Sonata op. 106, the "Hammerklavier Sonata," is regarded as the most complex and demanding piece among the complex and demanding works from his late period. It was not until Franz Liszt, decades after Beethoven's death, that a pianist was able to master this sonata's madcap technical challenges. The version for string quartet prepared by David Plylar, a curator at the Library of Congress, was initially intended as a guide through the structural thicket of this gigantic opus. In this rendering by the Leipzig String Quartet, however, it also turns out to be an extremely revealing expansion of our musical horizons.

New Insights

The extended polyphonic passages quite naturally profit from the new opportunities offered by ensemble playing: the canon at the beginning of the development section in the first movement or the mighty fugue in the finale, which, by the way, very much transcends even the Great Fugue op. 133. Here interconnections hardly recognizable in Beethoven's original suddenly come into view. On the first violin the many instances of chromatic embellishment in the middle of the extended adagio assume a sorrowful intensity that cannot be reproduced on the piano.

Instrumental Nuances

Beethoven calls for the use of all eighty-eight piano keys, which at the time was a sensational demand. The extreme registers are also represented in the quartet version. Only a top ensemble like the Leipzig String Quartet has the magic and mastery it takes to bring its gigantic leaps, flageolet chords, and intricate harmonic relations to the concert stage.

Universal Consensus

Two transcriptions by Beethoven's contemporaries enrich the program. Along with the Gewandhaus violist Peter Michael Borck, the quartet members present Beethoven's third attempt to write an overture for his opera *Leonore*. At the very latest when Borck reaches for the famous offstage trumpet, the last skeptic will become a firm believer in the quintet's symphonic qualities. The considerably trimmer final version of the *Fidelio* overture impressively rounds off this extraordinary project.

Beethoven: Complete String Quartets

Leipziger Streichquartett
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