

### **Sonata no. 3 in E flat major, Op. 12, no. 3**

The third sonata features a sense of grandeur, power and majesty found in few other works of Beethoven's early years. In addition, the piano writing is often of near-heroic proportions, by far the most substantial in the first three sonatas, and scarcely equalled in any of the subsequent sonatas. The violin is far from idle, but much of the piano work might just as well have been channeled into a sonata for solo piano. The second movement constitutes the emotional centre of gravity in this sonata. This is the first adagio we encounter in the traversal of these sonatas, and one of the finest slow movements in early Beethoven. To Abram Loft, it is music of "wonderful, timeless tranquillity ... a lovely bouquet, fragrant with gracious melody and luxuriant turns and roulades." The finale is a rollicking, joyous rondo with a catchy if hardly distinctive main theme. Frequent contrasts of dynamics and register are a constant feature of the movement.

### **Szymanowski violin sonata op.9**

The Violin Sonata in D minor Op 9 (1904) was first performed in Warsaw during 1909 by Rubinstein and the violinist Paweł Kochański (1887–1934), another longstanding friend of the composer. It is a conventionally structured work in three movements. The influence of Scriabin seems to arise more from such works as his densely textured Piano Sonata No 3 than from his delicately ornamental early Preludes and Impromptus. A good deal of Szymanowski's piano-writing here is strenuously chordal, not always allowing the music the momentum to which it appears to aspire. However, there are already many moments of striking originality along the lines identified by Rubinstein, and the slow movement (featuring contrast between bowed and pizzicato—or plucked—playing styles) serves as an effective lyrical foil to the more turbulent rhetoric of the opening one. The finale is a headlong tarantella which finds some space for imitative counterpoint. Despite a somewhat routine effectiveness, especially in its peroration, the work as a whole is of much more than merely documentary interest. In the first movement particularly, the wisdom of hindsight allows us to hear in certain idiosyncratic melodic intervals the seed of later works, waiting to be awakened fully by the experience of Sicily and Algiers a few years on.

### **Falla, Suite populaire espagnole**

Manuel de Falla, together with Albeniz and Granados one of the great three of „racial” (to use a term of Karol Szymanowski) Spanish composers, used in extenso Spanish folk music as his main source of inspiration. He came from a family with a double national colour: his father was an Andalusian, his mother a Catalan. The idea of Siete canciones populares españolas for

voice and piano was born in 1914, in the last months of the composer's stay in Paris. The songs premiered in Madrid as early as in 1915, were published in 1922, and transcribed for the violin by Paweł Kochański and for the cello by Maurice Maréchal. They are known in their instrumental version as *Suite populaire espagnole*. A collection of miniatures rather than a cycle, they can be understood as a metaphorical journey through region of Spanish culture.

*El paño moruno* has its origins in the Moorish South. The popular folksong *Canción* received an original harmonic accompaniment; it is characteristic in the repetitiveness of melodic turns, typical for the folk style. The lyrical and melancholy character is represented in the suite by two lullabies, the Andalusian *Nana* and *Asturiana* from Northern Spain. The temperament of fiery flamenco is personified in *Polo*, an Andalusian dance maintained in small metre, with syncopated rhythm and rapid note repetitions that energise the course of the music. Its Oriental roots are audible in melismas and intonations of motives in the melody. A different variety of gesture is brought by *Jota*, a dance of Aragonian provenience, in a rapid tempo and compound metre, originally performed with castanet accompaniment. The *differentia specifica* is defined by the contrasts between the motoric qualities and the quasi-improvisational character of cascade motives. In his Spanish Suite, Manuel de Falla did more than just reproduce the emotionality of folklore, suspended between deep singing and elemental rhythm – he sublimated it. The musical narration, varying from one individual miniature to the next, draws the audience into a kaleidoscope of colourful images of music and movement, provoking it into active participation.