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## Zyklus von Kleinigkeiten

Cycle of Trifles

Ana Torfs

[biography](#) | [titles](#)

1998

35 mm | 01:24:39 | b&w | sound

orig. version: German | avail. languages: Dutch, English, French

In the margin of the sketches for the composition *Bagatelles*, opus 126, Ludwig Van Beethoven wrote: *Cyclus von Kleinigkeiten*. The word *bagatelle* means a trinket, rickrak, bauble, trifle but this is not intended to be pejorative. The 'Bagatelles' show a diversity of quickly drafted moods, they also can concern a specific problem with composing, or experimenting with a certain technique. They offer the opportunity to experiment in a relaxed way. After 1815 Beethoven's health degenerated rapidly and his hearing worsened so much that he was no longer able to understand all conversations, so visitors had to make themselves intelligible by writing in notebooks Beethoven had always had with him, until his death in 1827. Ana Torfs serene and elaborate film looks at Van Beethoven's life through the unique records left in these conversation books. They contain the words that were literally addressed to the deaf composer during some of the most important phases of his last years: they conserve as it were, what happened all around him. *Zyklus von Kleinigkeiten* ('Cycle of Trifles') provides an insight, albeit literally one-sided, into his everyday life and creates a unique picture of Beethoven in his natural environment through very stylised and timeless black-and-white scenes.

"The images in magnificent black-and-white show the sedateness of the Empire Style. Fierce emotions are expressed in a tiny and derived manner in a contrast between word and image, in displacements and disconnections. The overall colour is one of the dissonant note of tautology, simultaneously the ultimate force and the enormous weakness of official film language". (Dirk Lauwaert, *Muziek en Woord*, 1998)

"The strong white light every sequence fades into at the end, the static images of inconspicuous landscapes and of those relaxing actions accompanying the preparation of simple meals, the moments of silence between the text fragments, the apparently extraverted gaze of the characters: together they shape an inviting emptiness the spectator can 'take delight' in, an old-fashioned expression which adequately conveys between contemplating and enjoying. Particularly, the actors introduced me into this strange universe of trifles from the every-day life of one of the most famous composers". (Marleen Baeten, *etcetera*, 1998)

*This production can only be screened in 35mm format.*