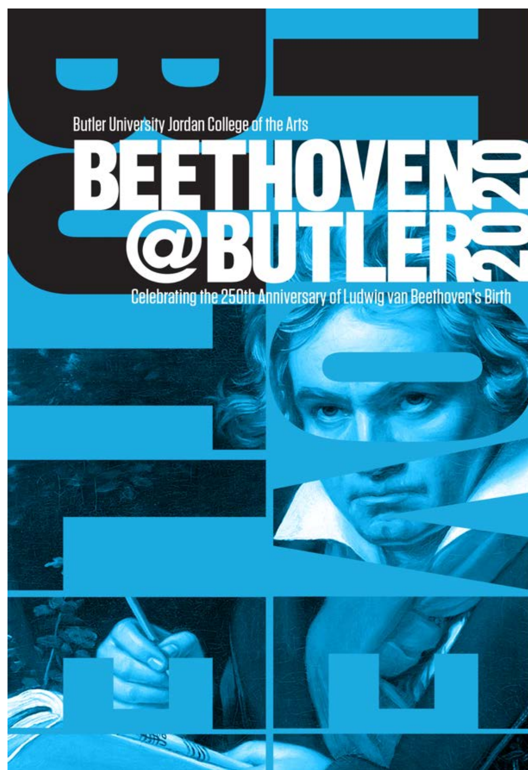

BUTLER UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC BEETHOVEN @ BUTLER 2020 SERIES

presents

The Complete Piano Sonatas Concert #4

Eidson-Duckwall Recital Hall
Sunday, October 4, 2020 • 7:00 P.M.

PROGRAM

Sonata No. 3 in C Major, op. 2, no. 3 — Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Allegro con brio
Adagio
Scherzo: Allegro
Allegro assai

Marianne TobiasWilliams, Butler University

Sonata No. 19 in G Minor, op. 49, no. 1

Andante
Rondo: Allegro

Douglas Perez, Butler University

Sonata No. 20 in G Major, op. 49, no. 2

Allegro ma non troppo
Tempo di Menuetto

Sam Jones, Butler University

Sonata No. 27 in E Minor, op. 90

Mit Lebhaftigkeit und durchaus mit Empfindung und Ausdruck
(*Vivaciously and with feeling and expression throughout*)
Nicht zu geschwind und sehr singbar vorgetragen
(*Not too quickly and in a very singing manner*)

Kate Boyd, Butler University

Sonata No. 28 in A Major, op. 101

Etwas lebhaft und mit der innigsten Empfindung
(*Somewhat lively and with deepest feeling)*

Lebhaft marschmäßig
(*Lively march tempo)*

Langsam und sehnsuchtsvoll
(*Slow and yearning)*

Geschwinde, doch nicht zu sehr, und mit Entschlossenheit
(*Swiftly, but not too much, and with determination)*

James Helton, Ball State University

BIOS

MARIANNE WILLIAMS TOBIAS

Marianne Williams Tobias grew up near Butler at 4747 North Meridian Street. She is a graduate of Harvard University, Longy School of Music, and University of Minnesota (MFA, DMA). Post-doctoral work was with Menahem Pressler at the Jacobs School of Music. She has written and collaborated on five books (IU and Indiana Historical Society Press). For thirty-one years she has been employed by the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra as Resident Program Annotator. "I am very honored to be a part of this Beethoven Series, and looking forward to teaching at Butler this year." She also is a certified legal translator in Spanish from the University of Chicago and a certified Vet tech.

DOUGLAS PEREZ

Douglas Perez earned Master and Bachelor of Arts degrees in Piano Performance from Pensacola Christian College, studying with renowned Brazilian pianist Daisy DeLuca Jaffé and Dr. Gustavo Peterlevitz. An active pianist, he enjoys performing as soloist as well as collaborating with others. Recent collaborations include the Butler University Chorale, Butler Symphony Orchestra, and Indianapolis Symphonic Choir. Mr. Perez has taught at the Interlochen Arts Camp since 2018 and was promoted to Head Piano Teaching Assistant in 2019. Douglas Perez is currently pursuing a double Master of Music in Piano Performance and Piano Pedagogy at Butler University, studying with Dr. Kate Boyd.

SAM JONES

Sam Jones is a recent graduate of Pensacola Christian College, having studied under Dr. David Hill. He currently holds a graduate assistantship at Butler University, where he has the privilege of studying under Dr. Kate Boyd. Outside of the practice rooms, Sam is researching and developing two separate smartphone apps designed to aid music teachers and motivate young students. He is anticipated to graduate from Butler in May 2021 with a Master's in Piano Performance.

KATE BOYD

Dr. Kate Boyd serves on the faculty of Butler University and Interlochen Arts Camp. She regularly performs throughout the U.S. and abroad as a soloist and chamber musician. Recent awards include Butler University Outstanding Faculty of the Year (2017) and Indiana Music Teachers Association Teacher of the Year (2019). In February 2020, Boyd performed Beethoven's complete sonatas for violin and piano in New Zealand.

JAMES HELTON

James Helton is Professor of Music and Piano Area Coordinator at Ball State University, where he has taught piano and chamber music since 2000. An active soloist and collaborator, he has performed throughout most of the United States and in Latin America, Europe, and Asia, and he has six commercially published CDs in circulation. For the Music Teachers National Association, he has chaired Performance and Composition Competitions for the state and East Central Division. On a lighter note, Helton may be heard on American Public Media's *Performance Today* "Piano Puzzler" with Fred Child and Bruce Adolphe. (Yes, he nailed it.)

PROGRAM NOTES

by Thomas May

Thomas May is a writer, critic, educator, and translator. Along with essays regularly commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony, the Juilliard School, and other leading institutions, he contributes to the *New York Times* and *Musical America* and blogs about the arts at www.memeteria.com.

AN INTRODUCTION

When we consider Ludwig van Beethoven's artistic persona overall, the role played by the piano can hardly be exaggerated. Often regarded as a vehicle or even a ready-made laboratory for the composer, the instrument also served as a kind of alter ego. It provided not only a tool but a place apart that encouraged Beethoven to confide his boldest, wildest intuitions and creative aspirations.

Recalling the spell Beethoven cast when performing at the keyboard, his prodigy student Carl Czerny wrote: "His improvisation was most brilliant and striking. In whatever company he might chance to be, he knew how to produce such an effect upon every hearer that frequently not an eye remained dry, while many would break into loud sobs; for there was something wonderful in his expression in addition to the beauty and originality of his ideas and his spirited style of rendering them." Czerny adds that, "after an improvisation of this kind, [Beethoven] would burst into loud laughter and banter his hearers on the emotion he had caused in them. 'You are fools!' he would say"—cultivating a contrarian image was part of the persona Beethoven presented to his aristocratic admirers.

The 32 published piano sonatas tally roughly a half-million individual notes. Those notes chart one of the most extraordinary trajectories in Western music, encoding the epic of an artistic adventurer who persistently challenged the boundaries of what music itself can express. Culminating in the visionary extremes of Beethoven's late style, these works span nearly his entire career (and even reach back to his adolescence in Bonn, if we include the three unpublished sonatas he wrote at age 12).

Beethoven produced a greater number of piano sonatas than he did of works in any other genre: 32 remains the canonical number (though in his edition, by admitting into the canon the aforementioned three from his teenage years, the musicologist Barry Cooper has attempted to extend the total to 35). At the same time, the piano sonatas resisted being categorized and dated according to the conventional three-period model of Beethoven's development—early, middle, and late (or, in Franz Liszt's unforgettable phrase: "l'adolescent, l'homme, le dieu").

The afterlives of these works have assumed countless forms and continue to set expectations: for composers, performers, music lovers. And just as they chart the development of Beethoven's genius, each encounter reflects a new stage in our understanding of what music, at its most challenging and under the pressure of that genius, can convey. As Jonathan Biss writes in *Beethoven's Shadow*, his behind-the-scenes account of the odyssey of performing and recording the sonatas, "composing gave his life an order and meaning that were otherwise unavailable to him." The challenges that the piano sonatas embody from Beethoven's own life and experience are transferred on to the performer (and listener), but the result "addresses and consoles the spirit in a way that no other creative artist has managed. [Beethoven] is simultaneously superhuman and intensely, painfully human."

TODAY'S PROGRAM

Piano Sonata No. 3 in C Major, op. 2, no. 3

Of the very first set of piano sonatas that Beethoven published in 1796 as his Op. 2, the concluding work in C major is the boldest, in regards both to its structural scope and to the challenges it poses for the performer. This music has been hailed as a prefiguration of the brilliance of the later C major *Waldstein* Sonata. Like its companions in Op. 2, the third sonata is laid out in an expansive four movements (in contrast to the three movements more typical of Haydn's and Mozart's solo piano sonatas).

The Allegro con brio first movement presents an abundance of material, including a surprising transitional thematic group in the minor—a hint of the harmonic surprises scattered throughout this sonata. A lengthy

development is balanced by the unusual bravura required for the coda, for which Beethoven writes out a cadenza—as if he wanted to make this solo sonata interchangeable with a public concerto. In tandem with the expanded architectural proportions, he makes pithy use of the opening theme, enhancing a sense of organic unity. It even appears subliminally in the Adagio, in startling E major, where it is transformed into a new melody. An extended minor-key section evokes pathos with the most economical of means, based on a sighing semitone figure.

Beethoven shows off his contrapuntal prowess in the neatly dovetailing canon imitations of the Scherzo. Instead of offering repose, the Trio ripples past in restless triplets, while the coda retreats into stagey whispers. Some of the most dazzling flourishes (and technical demands) are reserved for the Allegro assai finale. The main theme of ascending chords (to be played with a light touch) almost suggests an amiable parody of the early Classical era commonplace known as the "Mannheim rocket." Into this movement Beethoven crowds powerful crescendos, daring harmonic shifts and hints of still another cadenza (which never actually arrives), with a fanfare of trills near the end.

Piano Sonata No. 19 in G Minor, op. 49, no. 1

The Op. 49 pair of sonatas comes from the heyday of Beethoven's years as a performing virtuoso in the 1790s. (The comparatively late opus number merely indicates that these pieces were held back from publication for several years, though their composition is actually dated sometime between 1795 and 1798.) Yet in this modest set of twins, each comprising only two movements, Beethoven purposely reins in virtuoso display. Anyone who has studied piano has likely encountered these so-called "easy sonatas," for they belong to the tradition of keyboard music intended for students and amateurs, to which such composers as J.S. Bach and Mozart also contributed such notable repertoire.

The gently doleful theme of the Andante that opens this sonata—so far removed from the breathless pathos Mozart associated with this key—reminds us of the melodic gift with which Beethoven charmed his audiences. In the Rondo: Allegro, which turns to G major, good-humored rhythmic frolics alternate teasingly between light and shade.

Piano Sonata No. 20 in G Major, op. 49, no. 2

Like its predecessor in the set, disregard the relatively high opus number of this work. The music is a product of Beethoven's years as a performing virtuoso in Vienna in the late 1790s. He merely waited to publish this set of modest sonatas until nearly a decade later.

Not that there is anything rote or formulaic about Beethoven's pared-down writing here. The second of this pair, in G major, is even more straightforward than its G minor twin but poses interpretive challenges in the lack of dynamic markings, which normally play such a crucial role in Beethoven's shaping of the musical argument. (The autograph score is not extant.)

Both movements are in G major, the first a simple and charming Allegro ma non troppo whose two main themes feature a contrast of extroverted and more subdued lyrical material. Beethoven, the master atomizer, pulverizer, and transmogrifier of motivic ideas, here contents himself with a mere wisp of a development section. The first movement is complemented by a rondo in *tempo di menuetto* (an indication Beethoven uses elsewhere in the sonatas only for Op. 54—as well as in his uber-popular Op. 20 Septet, for which he recycled this tune). Each reprise of the rondo theme offers an opportunity for the pianist to shade a bit differently with improvisatory inflections.

Piano Sonata No. 27 in E Minor, op. 90

A period of absence from the piano sonata genre separates this work, composed in the summer of 1814, from its predecessor, Op. 81a, which had been completed almost five years earlier. Even Beethoven's tempo indications hint at a significant change in perspective. While he had started introducing German directives to clarify his Italian ones in that preceding sonata, the composer dispenses with the Italian convention altogether in Op. 90. The sonata is dedicated to the composer's patron Prince Moritz von Lichnowsky.
The German indication for the first movement ("Mit Lebhaftigkeit und durchaus mit Empfindung und Ausdruck") might be translated "lively, with feeling and expression throughout" and that for the second

("Nicht zu geschwind und sehr singbar vorgetragen") "to be played not too fast and in a very singing manner." (The traditional lore from Anton Schindler suggested Beethoven wanted to name the movements "Contest between Head and Heart" and "Conversation with the Beloved," respectively.)

The two-movement scheme—so different from that of the early Op. 49—additionally singles out this E minor sonata as a work on the threshold of Beethoven's musical thinking in his late style. Opus 78 from 1809 had likewise been cast in only two movements, yet here the juxtaposition is extreme, as if to suggest the yin and yang of experience itself. Instead of the raw conflict of dialectical opposites, organized to resolve in a goal-oriented "victory," both movements simply co-exist: night and day. As such, they foreshadow the design of Beethoven's final essay in the genre, Op. 111.

The first movement sets up internal contrasts that remain unresolved. Its opening statement, structured as a call and response, is declamatory, but emphatic and unyielding rhythms give way to a flowing lyrical impulse. The exposition is tight, compressed, yet intensely eventful, marked by dynamic contrasts and crashing dissonances, while the coda opens up vast new mysteries.

With a simple upbeat, the second movement shifts to E major. Notwithstanding the innocent suavity of its rondo theme, Beethoven makes it feel like the inevitable counterpart to the declamatory outbursts of the first movement. Even through the digressions of the intervening episodes, Beethoven's writing here spells out the implications of the opening lyricism with music that seems to pass beyond conflict and comes to a close with a heartbreakingly honest whisper.

Piano Sonata No. 28 in A Major, op. 101

Completed in 1816, this sonata reminds us not only of the extent to which the composer refined and expanded the formal and stylistic ideas he had inherited from Haydn, Mozart, and others. In his so-called late style, Beethoven radically reconsidered the essence of the piano sonata as a creative act.

By this time, worsening deafness had forced him to abandon his own career as a virtuoso pianist. The 45-year-old Beethoven dedicated Op. 101 to Baroness Dorothea von Ertmann, a student who became a highly respected contemporary Viennese pianist—and at one time was regarded as a strong candidate in the quest to identify the mysterious "Immortal Beloved" with whom Beethoven famously corresponded in the summer of 1812.

Another notable feature of the published score is the fact that here, for the first time, Beethoven used a German word for the rapidly evolving piano, settling on *Hammerklavier* (which would become the moniker of his subsequent sonata, Op. 106). His (notoriously unreliable) personal secretary Anton Schindler claimed that "this is the only one [of his piano sonatas] that was publicly performed during the lifetime of the composer," with Beethoven in attendance as part of the audience. He also reports that Beethoven named the first and third movements "impressions and reveries."

Marked "Etwas lebhaft, und mit der innigsten Empfindung" ("Somewhat lively, and with the most intimate sensitivity"), the gentle first movement conveys complex emotional intimacies beneath its deceptively simple, flowing surface. Richard Wagner not only greatly admired this music but learned much from it for his concept of "infinite melody."

The "lively, march-like" ensuing movement shifts unexpectedly to F major (like the Scherzo of the A major Seventh Symphony). Its contrasting middle section builds on the canonic overlapping of voices. The Adagio ("slow and full of longing") is not a stand-alone slow movement but serves as a meditative, improvisatory interlude and introduction to the finale, incorporating a memory of the opening movement's first theme near the end. Beethoven then segues into the richly confident final movement ("swiftly, but not too much so, and with determination"), which features elaborately contrapuntal textures—another preoccupation of Beethoven's late style—above all in the development section, which unfolds as a grand fugue. In the final bars, Beethoven repeats his trick of slowing and hushing the music before bringing it back to tempo at full blast.

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JCA LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT

We acknowledge that we gather here at Butler University on the traditional land of indigenous peoples including the Potawatomi, Miami, Delaware, and Shawnee. We honor with gratitude the land itself and the indigenous peoples past and present who have stewarded it throughout the generations. This calls us to commit to continuing to learn how to be better stewards of the land we inhabit, while also acknowledging that some were brought to this land not by choice.

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