

EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

A CELEBRATION OF BEETHOVEN

Wednesday, May 5, 2021
Hatch Recital Hall
11 AM, 12:30 PM, AND 2 PM



EASTMAN
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

UNIVERSITY *of* ROCHESTER

PROGRAM

11:00 AM

Septet in E-flat Major, Op. 20

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Adagio—Allegro con brio
Adagio cantabile
Tempo di menuetto—Trio
Tema con variazioni. Andante
Scherzo. Allegro molto e vivace—Trio
Andante con moto alla marcia—Presto

Michael Miller, clarinet
Harrison Short, bassoon
Brianna Garcon, horn
Jonathan Fenwick, violin
Amelia Eckloff, viola
Anna Groesch, cello
Owen McCready, bass

12:30 PM

Piano Trio in D Major, Op. 70, No. 1, “Ghost”

Allegro vivace e con brio
Largo assai ed espressivo
Presto

K. Lee Morris, violin
Clara Hope Simpson, cello
Angeni Wang, piano

Quintet for Piano and Winds in E-flat Major, Op. 16

Grave—Allegro ma non troppo
Andante cantabile
Rondo. Allegro ma non troppo

Gwen Goodman, oboe
Phoebe Kuan, clarinet
Jonathan Churchett, bassoon
William Sands, horn
Matthew Figel, piano

PROGRAM

2:00 PM

String Quartet No. 11 in F Minor, Op. 95, “Serioso”

Allegro con brio

Allegretto ma non troppo

Allegro assai vivace ma serioso

Larghetto espressivo —Allegretto agitato

Leonardo Matsuoka, violin

Jason Hurlbut, violin

Gabrielle Malaniak, viola

Shawn Thoma, cello

Piano Trio in B-flat Major, Op. 97, “Archduke”

Allegro moderato

Scherzo: Allegro

Andante cantabile ma però con moto

Allegro moderato—Presto

Jeongwon An, violin

Macintyre Taback, cello

Michele Wong, piano

Coached by Elinor Freer and David Ying

PROGRAM NOTES

Septet in E-flat Major, Op. 20

From its very first public performances, Beethoven's Septet was met with enormous popularity, attested to by the extraordinary number of arrangements which popped up during the composer's lifetime. This is likely, in part, due to the rather conventional natures of the piece. Remarkably, Beethoven grew increasingly dissatisfied with this composition, as evidenced in his conversation with Charles Neate in the summer of 1815. Neate mentioned that the Septet was highly admired in London, and Beethoven is supposed to have replied "That damned stuff! I wish it were burned!" It's possible that Beethoven grew frustrated with critics praising it by comparatively castigating his more innovative compositions, though he chafed when a particular work grew popular regardless of how innovative it was.

Prefaced with a slow and dignified introduction, the opening Allegro is both elegant and poised. The violin and clarinet are prominent, with themes introduced by the violin and repeated by the clarinet, though each instrument is eventually given a moment to showcase its own personality. This movement, rich with skillful motivic development and playful dialogues, comes to an end with a spirited coda. As a singing clarinet solo opens the second movement, this adagio allows the audience to see Beethoven at his most relaxed. Contrary to the previous allegro, themes are introduced by the clarinet and then subsequently repeated by the violin. These lilting phrases subtly find new keys and variations through clever technical devices, but the ease and calm of the movement would have you barely notice it. As for Mvt. 3, the tune of the minuet is taken from Beethoven's Piano Sonata op. 49, no. 2, which, despite what the higher opus number would suggest, was actually written earlier. This minuetto dances along with a spring to its step, chipperly exiting the more flowing landscape of the preceding adagio movement. The trio is very tongue-in-cheek, drolly and wittily playing around with beat groupings and surprising changes in volume. The fourth movement is based on a Rhenish folk tune ("Ach Schiffer, lieber Schiffer"). Its theme is set in a harmonically grounded AABA form, which (as jazz musicians can confirm) is perfect for variation. As such, Beethoven provides each variation with a unique character and color, primarily generated by instrument combinations and rhythmic intensity. The horn kicks off the energetic fifth movement, its timbre put in high contrast to the lightly hopping strings. Here Beethoven also plays with uneven phrases, askew either from overlapping or interruption. For the second section, the cello shines with a high melody, accompanied by bassoon and strings. The concluding sixth movement recalls the opening of the first—beginning with a strong unison chord. Yet, this introduction is even darker and heavier than the first. Finally, as if hoping to break free all along, the allegro springs into action with a high-spirited finale theme. Instantly, the movement takes on a joyful and carefree character. The violin dazzles all throughout the allegro, playing acrobatic and concerto-like lines. The movement builds to an aggressive and intense chord, takes a breath with

PROGRAM NOTES

winds, plucked strings, and a violin cadenza, then rides home—ending with a fast-paced and exuberant coda.

Though initially regarded as a bizarre combination of instruments, the Septet's great popularity made the instrumentation relatively standard, inspiring other composers to write septets for the same ensemble. Examples of these include Kreutzer's op. 62, Bernwald's 'Grand Septet', Archduke Rudolph's Septet in E minor, and Bruch's Septet in Eb major. Schubert, always fast on Beethoven's heels, would add another violin to this ensemble to create his famous Octet, inspiring composers in his own turn.

Piano Trio in D Major, Op. 70, No. 1, "Ghost"

Published in 1809 when Beethoven was 39 years old, the "Ghost" is one of his most well-known piano trios. It was written as the first of his two Op. 70 piano trios, both of which were dedicated to his close friend, Countess Anna Marie Erdödy, whom he was living with during the time of their composition. The Op. 70 trios were written in a period of Beethoven's life where he did not have a dependable source of income, and this uncertainty is reflected in the volatility of the music.

The beginning of the first movement bursts forth with an energy that is not even contained by the time signature, with all three instruments rocketing upwards in unison. The impulsiveness of this opening comes to an abrupt halt and lands on a single note suspended in the cello, which next melts into the more lyrical section of the first theme. The second theme then introduces a smooth, scalar melody which is traded off between the strings and piano. Throughout the rest of the movement, these themes are distilled into fragments, molded into fugal exchanges, and colored in a variety of different tonal explorations. As captured in the opening moments, this compact movement reflects Beethoven's bold and uninhibited expression, unafraid to challenge the constraints of the musical conventions of its time.

The eerie tone set by the beginning of the second movement gives this trio its "Ghost" nickname. Carl Czerny, a student of Beethoven, is said to have used the term first because the movement reminded him of the opening ghost scene in Shakespeare's Hamlet. Hollow octaves in the violin and cello followed by fragments of melody in the piano create a spooky, searching quality that characterizes the movement. Even when all three instruments finally play simultaneously, unstable harmonies create a sense of increasing tension. This leads to an anguished outburst with explosive rising piano lines. After this subsides, the opening motive returns, but this time the major key creates a sense of hope. However, the piece soon transitions to a tumultuous minor section characterized by insistent violin double stops and an argument between the cello and piano. Following a recapitulation of the opening material, there is a final frenzied outburst, and the movement concludes with three bleak pizzicato notes.

PROGRAM NOTES

In stark contrast to the second movement, the third and final movement is exceedingly joyful. The entire movement is remarkably based on two themes from the opening which are continuously reimagined in new contexts and used with different combinations of instruments. Using these themes to portray characters ranging from sweet and gentle to boisterous and exuberant, Beethoven draws upon differing expressions of joy. Elements of surprise in the form of striking harmonies, sudden changes in dynamic, and abrupt pauses are also abundant throughout. At times, these elements in combination with the movement's fast tempo create a nearly comical effect which erases any hanging tension left by the previous movement.

Quintet for Piano and Winds in E-flat Major, Op. 16

Upon hearing the Quintet for Piano and Winds composed by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in 1784, Ludwig van Beethoven set out to compose a similar work in tribute. Beethoven's Op. 16 Quintet, written in 1796, shares the same instrumentation, form, and harmonic blueprint, while notably departing from his predecessor in expression and character. The first movement begins with an extended slow section, marked "Grave," giving the opening a noble introduction just like the beginning of a French Overture, punctuated with regal dotted rhythms evoking a stately processional. This pompous material serves as a foil to the main body of the movement, which after a virtuosic cadenza in the piano brings the Allegro section of movement to life with cheeky and boisterous energy. Elements of wit and humor abound in this movement, varying from unexpected interruptions and sly winks, all playing with the audience's sense of thwarted expectations. The theme of conversation is also present throughout the entire movement as much of the instrumental dialogue is based around the passing of melodic lines between the woodwinds themselves as well as with the piano.

The second movement represents a dialogue between child-like innocence and intense emotion; the piano (followed immediately by the clarinet) open with a delicate theme which returns again and again throughout the movement. Interspersed with occurrences of that melody are dramatic solos by the oboe, bassoon, and horn, each having its own distinct character, stylistically reminiscent of operatic singing. Innocence wins out here, with the movement closing much the same as it began.

The final movement is a relatively short, upbeat, and dance-like rondo. The contrast in the characters of dance and song is very present throughout the movement. The opening of the movement features a lively yet graceful main theme, punctuated by episodes which contrast sharply in character and expression. The middle of the movement is a rustic, more chaotic section in which the rondo theme is unexpectedly heard in a minor key. To conclude the piece, Beethoven mischievously writes a fake-out ending in which the dynamic level gradually fades out only to return for a triumphant ending with the horn's hunting call as a final farewell.

PROGRAM NOTES

Notable in this piece is Beethoven's use of the clarinet as the most prominent voice. Typically, and as is the case in Mozart's Quintet, the oboe is most frequently utilized in this manner due to its penetrating timbre. Instead, the clarinet is the instrument to which initial statements of the themes in each movement are given. The oboe is used to add different colors later in each movement, when melodies heard previously return.

Although Beethoven's Op. 16 is one of his more experimental and classically inspired works, it still hints at what is to come later in his career. Small harmonic and melodic motives that appear briefly in one movement make surprise appearances later on in the piece. Jolting dynamic contrast and accentuation of non-strong beats are other features that are used frequently in this work and many others.

String Quartet No. 11 in F Minor, Op. 95, "Serioso"

Beethoven's String Quartet No. 11 in F minor, Op. 95, was composed in the year 1810. Although it was composed during Beethoven's middle period, the characteristics of the piece are more similar to his late period style with its striking contrasts and surprises. Beethoven nicknamed the quartet "Serioso" which is derived from the third movement's tempo marking, *Allegro assai vivace ma serioso*. Most of the piece evokes very serious, strong, and radical moods. In the words of musicologist Joseph Kerman, it is, "not a pretty piece, but it is terribly strong—and perhaps rather terrible." At the time, Beethoven underwent many personal anxieties: he was struggling financially, was increasingly hard of hearing, and was in the midst of a failed love affair. The hardships he experienced at the time most likely influenced the writing of the "Serioso" Quartet. The first movement has two major themes. The first is an intense and condensed eleven-note phrase providing a distinctive, continuous motif throughout the movement. The second theme is introduced by the viola, a contrasting melodic phrase that is shared among the instruments of the quartet. The movement ends as abruptly and strikingly as it began, leaving only a whisper in the air.

The second movement is marked *Allegretto ma non troppo* and offers a striking contrast to the harsh, energetic tempo of the first movement. It begins with a downward scale in the cello which is soon followed by a heartfelt, song-like melody in the violin. The middle section of the movement is introduced with a plaintive melody in the viola. This melody is then copied by the other instruments in what, at the time of its writing, was considered the "old-fashioned" Baroque style of composition. The middle section is unusually long for a movement of this form, and it itself is separated into two smaller sections by a short return of the opening descending scale in the cello. This return is a very special moment in the piece, as it stands in the exact center and is very emotionally ambiguous—whether it is nostalgic, hopeful, or eerie is left up to the listener to decide. After the large middle section is complete, the last section presents a

PROGRAM NOTES

somewhat modified reiteration of the first section. It gradually builds into a soaring climax that quickly subsides and leads directly into the third movement.

The third movement takes the last unresolved chord of the second movement, linking the two before beginning an intense four-note motif that will take place throughout the movement. Similar to the first movement, this movement calls for condensed and extremely energetic themes, while the contrasting middle section features the second violin, viola, and cello in a melodic chorale-like theme. The first fiery theme returns when all seems calm, and triumphantly ends the movement. The fourth movement augments the opening motif of the third movement in an entirely different slow and expressive character. From this introduction bursts a lilting melody brought through moods of anxiety and high tension. Beethoven's trends of unpredictability are asserted through the final Allegro of the piece, concluding with ironic celebration and obliviousness to any of the previous hardship.

Piano Trio in B-flat Major, Op. 97, "Archduke"

Beethoven's Piano Trio Op. 97 (the "Archduke") was written in 1811, towards the end of the composer's middle period. Dedicated to the Archduke Rudolph, who was not only one of Beethoven's most loyal patrons but also his composition student and close friend, this piece was one of the last works that the composer performed in public; his increasing deafness made performing chamber music impossible. The final trio he ever wrote, it is ambitious both in its length and its astonishing complexity.

The work begins with a sweeping, noble theme, articulated every so often by strange emphases and swells. The strings briefly question the direction the piano has set up—first the cello, then the violin, before they both concede to the original plan. Instead of going to the dominant as usual, the second theme finds itself in a bright and well-meaning G major. Excitement builds gradually until the development, where Beethoven begins to dissect and examine the theme material from the opening—the instruments toss around various fragments, settling in a faraway D major briefly, before an otherworldly extended section in string pizzicato. While one might expect these pizzicati to build to a triumphant return of the theme in the recapitulation, fragments of the theme material begin to break the texture down again, and we slide into the pianissimo recap through a hazy mix of trills in all instruments. The coda celebrates all we've gleaned about that opening material, as joyous outbursts vie with quiet excitement until the movement ends with an ecstatic flourish.

The opening of the Scherzo begins with the cello on its own, building its way up a scale towards a quirky sforzando on the fourth measure. The violin corrects the situation, and the instruments reverse roles; the violin

PROGRAM NOTES

introduces the same strange question, up a fifth, and the cello tumbles back down the scale reassuringly. After waiting its turn, the piano adds a left hand accompaniment, turning that theme into a comfortably swinging Ländler. The scherzo section never feels truly settled; unexpected interruptions and dynamic contours maintain the quirky aspect while the triple meter dances along. After a forceful and joyous V– I cadence, a completely different character enters: the middle section is full of chromatic slinking and mysterious modulations, punctuated by proud arrivals in various strange, unrelated keys. Though not labeled as such, the middle section could be said to act as a “trio,” creating a rather eccentric version of the conventional scherzo-trio-scherzo form. We slip seamlessly back into the scherzo before a coda which borrows from the trio section. Just before the end, the string reminder of the scherzo theme throws the piano off, pulsating upwards into the ether before a quick joke puts an end to the movement.

The Andante finds us back in D major, a warm key which has very little to do with our home key of B flat. A beautiful and expansive theme and set of variations follows, but this is quite unlike the earlier Theme+Variations movements we are used to from Beethoven: for the most part, they had been used to explore the composer’s sharp mind and compositional virtuosity, subtly calling to mind the theme while cycling through various characters and moods. This variation set seems to take aspects of the theme and develop them continuously; one of our coaches described this as looking at the theme through a kaleidoscope, changing the formation slightly each time. The coda starts to take apart the theme even further, getting lost in itself, before a warm and nostalgic character finds its way to the movement’s final resolution.

It was Beethoven’s tendency to link the final and penultimate movements together in his middle period; in this work, it feels a bit like being woken from a nice dream by a bucket of ice water. What follows is a fun and bubbly finale, with unexpected accents emphasizing the second beats of measures and quick contrasts in articulation even within the same measure. Structurally, this Rondo movement is full of slight variations in rhythm and texture that show the more playful side of Beethoven’s creativity. The extensive coda section that ends this movement seems like it was intended, in scope and inspiration, to wrap up the entire work rather than just the last movement. Starting in the far-away key of A major and a long trill in the piano, this relentlessly energetic Presto features many of the dramatic unexpected harmonic changes and offbeat accents that characterize the trio as a whole. The phrases spin out longer and longer, the crescendos and decrescendos becoming more suspenseful as the themes are handed back and forth between instruments, before arriving (right after a hushed *ritardando*) to a joyously celebratory ending marked “*più presto*”—where the strings in unison with broken octaves in the piano come together in a bright, declamatory finale that perfectly sums up the monumental trio that it concludes.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT EASTMAN

Information about upcoming Eastman concerts and events can be found at:

www.rochester.edu/Eastman/calendar



www.facebook.com/ConcertsAtEastman

Hatch Recital Hall fire exits are located along the right and left sides, and at the back of the hall. In the event of an emergency, you will be notified by the stage manager. If notified, please move in a calm and orderly fashion to the nearest exit.

Please note: The use of unauthorized photographic and recording equipment is not allowed in this building. We reserve the right to ask anyone disrupting a performance to leave the hall.

Restrooms are located on the main floor of Kilbourn Hall. Fully-accessible restrooms are available on the first floor of the Eastman School. Our ushers will be happy to direct you to them.

Supporting the Eastman School of Music:

We at the Eastman School of Music are grateful for the generous contributions made by friends, parents, and alumni, as well as local and national foundations and corporations. Gifts and grants to the School support student scholarships, performance and academic facilities, educational initiatives, and programs open to the greater Rochester community. Every gift, no matter the size, is vital to enhancing Eastman's commitment to excellence. For more information on making a gift, please visit www.esm.rochester.edu/advancement or contact the Advancement Office by calling (585) 274-1040. Thank you!