

PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

PREVIEW
NOTES

Ingrid Fliter, *piano*

Wednesday, February 12 – 7:30 PM

Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center

PROGRAM (Selection of Program Notes)

Sonata in F Minor, Op. 2, No. 1

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born: December 16, 1770, in Bonn, Electorate of Cologne

Died: March 26, 1827, in Vienna, Austria

Composed: 1793-1795

Duration: 19 minutes

Though this sonata is obviously an early piece, it still sounds very much like Beethoven in its driving rhythms, muscularity, and overall sonic world. It is a strong composition, even though it shows outside influences: for all the composer's stylistic traits throughout the work, it cannot be denied that the voice of Mozart is present, most notably in the first movement. Beethoven was still evolving his style at this point in his career and had not yet even written an important work for orchestra. For whatever flaws one might point out in this composition, it nevertheless fully deserves to be in the company of the other sonatas comprising the mighty canon of 32. Beethoven dedicated this sonata to Joseph Haydn.

Sonata in G Major, Op. 49, No. 2

Ludwig van Beethoven

Composed: 1795-1796

Duration: 8 minutes

This Piano Sonata was probably written around the time Beethoven composed the Third and Fourth sonatas, but because it was published in Vienna in 1805, nearly a decade after it was written, it was assigned then-current opus and sonata numbers, placing it amid works from the composer's middle period. Owing to his perfectionist tendencies, Beethoven often suppressed works in his early years, either revising them later for publication, or determining after reflection that they in fact did meet his high standards. In the case of this sonata and its immediate predecessor (No. 19), it was Caspar van Beethoven, the composer's brother, who decided they were worthy of publication. Against the

composer's will, he presented them to a publishing house, thus allowing posterity to hear works that might otherwise have been lost or destroyed.

Sonata in D Minor, Op. 31, No. 2, *Tempest*

Ludwig van Beethoven

Composed: 1802

Duration: 23 minutes

Written in 1802, the three sonatas of Beethoven's Op. 31 probably coincide with the drafting of his famous "Heiligenstadt Testament," in which he expresses despair at his encroaching deafness. If any of the composer's works from this year indicate that he had embarked on a new path, it is the Piano Sonata No. 17 in D minor, Op. 31/2. The composer famously dismissed an inquiry about the "meaning" of this work with the advice to read Shakespeare's *The Tempest*; given the music's overtly dramatic character, it is easy to see how Beethoven might have drawn parallels to, or even inspiration from, the Bard's famous romance.

Sonata in A-flat Major, Op. 31, No. 3

Ludwig van Beethoven

Composed: 1821-1822

Duration: 20 minutes

Beethoven's piano sonatas grew in complexity and depth as the cycle of 32 progressed. The last dozen or so could be called absolute masterpieces of piano music, with the latter half of that group rising to a level that often inspires awe and wonderment. This work, though sometimes overshadowed by the mighty "Hammerklavier" Sonata, and the last, the C minor, Op. 111, seems quite as impressive as these better-known works. This unusual work, thematically threadbare at the outset, is a great and deeply profound composition, whose fugal finale achieves the highest keyboard art.