

PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

PREVIEW
NOTES

Jonathan Biss, *piano*
Tuesday, February 18 – 7:30 PM
Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center

PROGRAM (Selection of Program Notes)

Sonata in G Minor, Op. 49, No. 1

Ludwig van Beethoven

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

Died: March 26, 1827, in Vienna, Austria

Composed: 1797

Duration: 8 minutes

While this Sonata comes numerically just after the three from Op. 31 (Nos. 16-18), it predates them chronologically by at least five years. Beethoven, ever the perfectionist, suppressed many of his early works, sometimes revising them before finally sending them to the publisher or deciding after close examination that they were fit for print. He seems to have written his Piano Sonata No. 19 around 1797, making it roughly contemporary with Sonatas Nos. 4 through 7. The other sonata from Op. 49, No. 20, is also an early composition, probably begun a year or so before this one.

Sonata in G Major, Op. 31, No. 1

Ludwig van Beethoven

Composed: 1802

Duration: 24 minutes

Although the Sonata in G Major was numbered as the first piece in the trio of piano sonatas which were published as Op. 31 in 1803, Beethoven actually finished it after the Op. 31, No. 2, the Tempest Sonata. Due to his dissatisfaction with the classical style of music, Beethoven pledged to take a new path of musical composition and style. The Opus 31 works are the first examples of Beethoven's new and unconventional ideas, an attempt to make a name for himself in the annals of music history.

Sonata in E-flat Major, Op. 27, No. 1, *Sonata quasi una fantasia*

Ludwig van Beethoven

Composed: 1800-1801

Duration: 16 minutes

While Beethoven's Sonata, Op. 27, No. 2, the familiar "Moonlight," may get the publicity and the performances, it's the Op. 27, No. 1, in E flat that represents a radical breakthrough for the composer. It's also fun to listen to. Subtitled "Sonata quasi una Fantasia" like its opusmate, this work's closely connected sections do in fact form something resembling a free fantasia.

Sonata in A Major, Op. 101

Ludwig van Beethoven

Composed: 1816

Duration: 20 minutes

Beethoven's Sonata No. 28 is a generally subdued work, like its immediate predecessor. Unlike that piece, however, it foreshadows the styles and trends of the future and, though sometimes overlooked, deserves the attention of pianists and listeners. According to Schindler, who was not always a reliable source, Beethoven described the first movement of this sonata as containing "impressions and reveries." The latter word appears to fit the generally dreamy and peaceful mood of this movement. It is short and carries the description "Etwas lebhaft, und mit der innigsten Empfindung" (Somewhat lively, and with the most ardent perception). Obviously, the composer was hoping to draw the pianist's attention to the many subtleties of the piece.