

# PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

PREVIEW  
NOTES

Jonathan Biss, *piano*  
Tuesday, March 24 – 7:30 PM  
*Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center*

## **PROGRAM** (Selection of Program Notes)

### **Sonata in E-flat Major, Op. 7, *Grand Sonata***

Ludwig van Beethoven

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

*Died:* March 26, 1827, in Vienna, Austria

*Composed:* 1796-1797

*Duration:* 29 minutes

This early piano sonata, his fourth, is the longest example of the genre in Beethoven's catalog except for the massive "Hammerklavier" sonata of 20 years later. Much is made of Beethoven the revolutionary, and it is too easy to claim that this sonata's symphonic scope is another mark of the young man's daring genius. However, this composition, although unusually long, is a fairly straightforward work which observes the conventions of its day.

### **Sonata in C-sharp Minor, Op. 27, No. 2, *Moonlight***

Ludwig van Beethoven

*Composed:* 1801

*Duration:* 16 minutes

Beethoven billed each of the two works published under Op. 27 as a "sonata quasi una fantasia," presumably a hint that he was trying to meld the formal conventions of the 18th century sonata with a newer, freer, more Romantic style. Many musicians consider the first of this pair, the Piano Sonata No. 13 in E flat major (1800-1801), to be the superior work, but the Piano Sonata No. 14 in C sharp minor (1801) is by far more popular; in fact, it is one of Beethoven's most beloved works, and its first movement takes a place among the most widely and instantly recognizable music the composer ever penned. The familiar appellation "Moonlight" is not the composer's own, but the invention of German music critic Ludwig Rellstab, who compared the first movement's rippling texture to the moonlight shimmering on Lake Lucerne.

### **Sonata in F-sharp Major, Op. 78, *À Thérèse***

Ludwig van Beethoven

*Composed:* 1809

*Duration:* 10 minutes

Beethoven took a nearly five-year break from piano sonata composition after finishing the earth-shaking "Appassionata" sonata of 1804-1805. He returned to the genre only in May 1809, when the departure of his friend Archduke Rudolph prompted him to begin the "Les Adieux" Sonata No. 26, Op. 81a. Before that piece was finished, however, Beethoven wrote, signed, and affixed opus numbers to two other piano sonatas, so that, according to the numbering scheme, the Piano Sonata No. 24 in F sharp major, Op. 78, is the immediate successor to the "Appassionata" Sonata. Op. 78 was a work for which Beethoven had considerable affection.

### **Sonata in G Major, Op. 79**

Ludwig van Beethoven

*Composed:* 1809

*Duration:* 10 minutes

Like the Sonata No. 24 in F sharp major, Op. 78, Beethoven's little G major Piano Sonata, Op. 79, was written in 1809. Both works share several instantly discernible features. Firstly, both sonatas are surprisingly undemonstrative in tone, revealing a pronounced avoidance of bravura showiness, unwarranted rhetoric, and above all, extravagant emotionalism. Where they differ markedly, however, is in their respective number of movements, since the G major Sonata has three self-contained movements, conforming to established architectural principles, whereas in the earlier opus, sonata allegro and slow movements are effectively linked together thanks to the substantial Adagio cantabile preface offered before, and leading, without a break, to the main first allegro.