

LINCOLN CENTER'S 2017/18 GREAT PERFORMERS

The Program

Tuesday, February 27, 2018, at 7:30 pm

Pre-concert lecture by Scott Burnham at 6:15 pm in the Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse

Virtuoso Recitals

Garrick Ohlsson, *Piano*

ALL-BEETHOVEN PROGRAM

Sonata No. 8 in C minor ("Pathétique") (1797–98)

Grave—Allegro molto e con brio

Adagio cantabile

Rondo: Allegro

Sonata No. 23 in F minor ("Appassionata") (1804–05)

Allegro assai—Più allegro

Andante con moto

Allegro ma non troppo—Presto

Intermission

Sonata No. 21 in C major ("Waldstein") (1803–04)

Allegro con brio

Introduzione: Adagio molto

Rondo: Allegretto moderato—Prestissimo

Sonata No. 14 in C-sharp minor ("Moonlight") (1801)

Adagio sostenuto

Allegretto

Presto agitato

Please make certain all your electronic devices are switched off.

This performance is made possible in part by the Josie Robertson Fund for Lincoln Center.

Steinway Piano

Alice Tully Hall, Starr Theater

Adrienne Arsht Stage

Great Performers

Support is provided by Rita E. and Gustave M. Hauser, Audrey Love Charitable Foundation, Great Performers Circle, Chairman's Council, and Friends of Lincoln Center.

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UPCOMING GREAT PERFORMERS EVENTS:

Thursday, March 1 at 7:30 pm in Alice Tully Hall

Simon Keenlyside, baritone

Malcolm Martineau, piano

Songs by SIBELIUS, SCHUBERT, VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, SOMERVELL, WARLOCK, GRAINGER, and FAURÉ

Monday, March 19 at 8:00 pm in David Geffen Hall

Academy of St. Martin in the Fields

Joshua Bell, director and violin

MENDELSSOHN: Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

WIENIAWSKI: Violin Concerto No. 2 in D minor

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 6 ("Pastoral")

Wednesday, March 28 at 7:30 pm in Alice Tully Hall

Christian Tetzlaff, solo violin

ALL-BACH PROGRAM

Sonata No. 2 in A minor

Partita No. 2 in D minor

Sonata No. 3 in C major

Partita No. 3 in E major

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We would like to remind you that the sound of coughing and rustling paper might distract the performers and your fellow audience members.

In consideration of the performing artists and members of the audience, those who must leave before the end of the performance are asked to do so between pieces. The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not allowed in the building.

Snapshot

By Christopher H. Gibbs

This evening's program presents four of Beethoven's most innovative and famous piano sonatas. All eventually acquired nicknames—"Pathétique," "Moonlight," "Waldstein," and "Appassionata"—although only the first of these originated with the composer.

Beethoven was one of many musicians of his time—Mozart was the principal earlier model—who made his name and fame as a pianist-composer. When he arrived in Vienna in 1792 at the age of 21, he was already recognized as a brilliant keyboard virtuoso. Beethoven dazzled Viennese audiences and aristocratic patrons with his playing, improvising, and composing. At the time, piano sonatas were not performed in public (of course piano concertos were), and yet private events in aristocratic palaces or in domestic settings provided ample chance for keyboard music to be heard. Beethoven's reputation was further enhanced by a ready market for his publications.

Beethoven's first great and enduring compositions were piano sonatas, which he wrote well before tackling string quartets, symphonies, and dramatic music. It proved to be a genre he would transform over his career with the 32 canonic sonatas. The first that is profoundly Beethovenian—that changed the rules of the genre—is the "Pathétique," Op. 13, which opens this concert. The other three sonatas we hear today were likewise key compositions from the first half of Beethoven's career as he kept pushing the limits of composition and moving from his Classical training to full-blown Romanticism.

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Timeframe

ARTS

1797–98**Beethoven's Sonata No. 8 ("Pathétique")**

Jane Austen begins writing *Elinor*, which becomes *Sense and Sensibility*.

1801**Sonata No. 14 ("Moonlight")**

J.M.W. Turner paints *Dutch Boats in a Gale (Bridgewater Sea Piece)*.

1803–04**Sonata No. 21 ("Waldstein")**

Friedrich von Schiller writes his dramatic play *Wilhelm Tell*.

SCIENCE

1797–98

Experiments further prove that diamonds are a pure form of carbon.

1801

German physicist Johann Wilhelm Ritter discovers ultraviolet radiation.

1803–04

English engineer Richard Trevithick invents the railroad locomotive.

IN NEW YORK

1797–98

Outbreak of yellow fever that eventually claims several thousand lives

1801

The New York Evening Post is founded by Alexander Hamilton.

1803–04

New-York Historical Society is established as the city's first museum.

Notes on the Program

By Christopher H. Gibbs

Sonata No. 8 in C minor, Op. 13 ("Pathétique") (1797–98)

Sonata No. 23 in F minor, Op. 57 ("Appassionata") (1804–05)

Sonata No. 21 in C major, Op. 53 ("Waldstein") (1803–04)

Sonata No. 14 in C-sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2 ("Moonlight") (1801)

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Born December 16, 1770, in Bonn, Germany

Died March 26, 1827, in Vienna

Approximate length: 1 hour and 40 minutes

Most of the familiar titles associated with Beethoven's compositions were bestowed by someone other than the composer. Critics, friends, and publishers invented the labels "Moonlight," "Tempest," and "Appassionata" for piano sonatas. Prominent patrons' names—Archduke Rudolph, Count Razumovsky, Count Waldstein—became wedded to compositions they either commissioned or that were dedicated to them, thereby winning a sort of immortality for those who supported the composer. Beethoven himself crossed out the heading "Bonaparte" from the title page of the Third Symphony, but later called it the "Eroica"—his only symphony besides the Sixth ("Pastoral") to bear an authentic title. On this recital, only the title of the opening piece—the earliest of the four sonatas—comes from Beethoven.

Beethoven's 32 canonical piano sonatas span most of his compositional career. They were preceded by a set of three early ones ("Kurfürstensonaten," WoO 47), published when the composer was 12 years old and living in his native city of Bonn. At age 16 he visited Vienna, where he may have had a few lessons with Mozart, but was soon called back home to tend his gravely ill mother. In 1792, he got another chance to study in Vienna. With Mozart now dead, Haydn would be his teacher. Count Waldstein, one of Beethoven's early patrons, helped to fund the venture and later received the dedication of the Sonata No. 21 in C major, Op. 53, which opens the second half of this concert. As Waldstein sent Beethoven off to Vienna, he prophesized: "With the help of assiduous labor you shall receive *Mozart's spirit from Haydn's hands*" (the last words were heavily underscored). Beethoven studied with Haydn, off and on, but their relationship seems to have been somewhat difficult.

Some ten years after his early student sonatas, Beethoven issued his first mature ones, a set of three, Op. 2, that he dedicated to Haydn. After a solitary "Grande Sonate," Op. 7, and another set of three, Op. 10, he wrote the **Sonata No. 8 in C minor, Op. 13**, that opens the concert today. By using the title "Pathétique," Beethoven meant to convey its pathos. Soon after its publication in 1799 a critic commented: "This well-written sonata is not unjustly called pathetic, for it really does have a definitely passionate character." The pathbreaking piece begins with a bold slow section (*Grave*), part of which returns twice, fully integrated with the fast, agitated core of the movement;

Beethoven is already experimenting with traditional formal expectations. The middle slow movement, one of the composer's best loved, is followed by a passionate finale. Although the title "Moonlight" was applied posthumously by a critic, Beethoven did label the **Sonata No. 14 in C-sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2**, "Sonata quasi una fantasia," which gives some indication of the improvisatory character of the opening movement, not bound to expected sonata form. After a brief middle movement, an intense finale takes us far from a calm moonlit eve.

The "Pathétique" and "Moonlight" sonatas were written around 1800, as Beethoven turned 30 and was known primarily as a pianist-composer. From the start, critics commented on the unexpected ("bizarre" is the word they often used), original, difficult, and masterful qualities of his music, which only intensified over time and increasingly baffled many listeners. Beethoven's life changed dramatically in the next few years, during which he wrote the "Waldstein" and "Appassionata" sonatas. A great personal crisis came around 1802, when Beethoven realized that he was losing his hearing. He poured out his heart in the so-called Heiligenstadt Testament, an unsent letter to his brothers in which he discussed the dire implications and contemplated suicide. His compositional style changed during this time, ushering in his "middle" or "heroic" period. Works in many genres were now longer, more difficult, and more original than those of any composer of the day. These were years of astounding—perhaps we could say, heroic—productivity: "I live only in my notes, and with one work barely finished, the other is already started; the way I write now I often find myself working on three, four things at the same time."

The greater compositional scope is evident in the two later sonatas we hear tonight. Even the instrument was rapidly changing—like computers today—becoming more technologically advanced with a wider range of possible notes. Beethoven received a new Erard piano from the manufacturers in Paris during the summer of 1803 that expanded the compass of notes at his disposal. His ambition is clear from the start of the **Sonata No. 21 in C major, Op. 53 ("Waldstein")**, which was originally conceived on an even larger scale with a more extended middle movement (later published separately) that Beethoven changed to what is essentially an extended slow introduction to the lyrical and expansive finale. A critic, rather typically, commented that the work was "among the most brilliant and original pieces for which we are grateful to this master, but also full of strange whims and very difficult to perform...." By the time Beethoven composed his **Sonata No. 23 in F minor, Op. 57 ("Appassionata")**, he could write in the sketches: "Let your deafness no longer be a secret—even in art." The scale of the sonata is expanded even further, the technical demands more imposing, the extremes of range and dynamics more varied than in any previous sonata. His student, the pianist and composer Carl Czerny, recalled that Beethoven felt this was his greatest sonata before the later "Hammerklavier," Op. 106.

Christopher H. Gibbs is James H. Ottaway Jr. Professor of Music at Bard College.

Meet the Artist



DARIO ACOSTA

Garrick Ohlsson

Pianist Garrick Ohlsson has established himself worldwide as a musician of magisterial interpretive and technical prowess. Long regarded as one of the world's leading exponents of Chopin's music, Mr. Ohlsson also commands an enormous repertoire ranging over the entire piano literature, and he has come to be noted for his masterly performances of the works of Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert, as well as the Romantic repertoire. To date he has at his command more than 80 concertos, ranging from Haydn and Mozart to works of the 21st century.

This season that vast repertoire can be sampled in concertos from Chopin, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Barber, Busoni, and more, in cities including St. Louis, Washington D.C., Cincinnati, San Francisco, Portland, Prague, Stockholm, Wrocław, and Strasbourg. In recital he can be heard in New York, Seattle, Denver, Houston, and Los Angeles as well as Puerto Rico. Mr. Ohlsson appears twice during the season with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra—first playing two Prokofiev concertos and returning later in the season with Tchaikovsky's Concerto No. 1.

An avid chamber musician, Mr. Ohlsson has collaborated with the Cleveland, Emerson, and Tokyo string quartets, and recently toured with the Takács Quartet. Together with violinist Jorja Fleezanis and cellist Michael Grebanier, he is a founding member of the San Francisco-based FOG Trio. Mr. Ohlsson can be heard on the Arabesque, RCA Victor Red Seal, Angel, BMG, Delos, Hänssler, Nonesuch, Telarc, Hyperion, and Virgin Classics labels.

A native of White Plains, New York, Mr. Ohlsson began his piano studies at the age of 8, at the Westchester Conservatory of Music; at 13 he entered The Juilliard School. He has been awarded first prizes in the Busoni and Montreal piano competitions, the Gold Medal at the International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw (1970), the Avery Fisher Prize (1994), the University Musical Society's Distinguished Artist Award in Ann Arbor, Michigan (1998), and the Jean Gimbel Lane Prize in Piano

Performance from the Northwestern University Bienen School of Music (2014). Mr. Ohlsson is a Steinway artist.

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Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (LCPA) serves three primary roles: presenter of artistic programming, national leader in arts and education and community relations, and manager of the Lincoln Center campus. A presenter of more than 3,000 free and ticketed events, performances, tours, and educational activities annually, LCPA offers 15 programs, series, and festivals including American Songbook, Great Performers, Lincoln Center Out of Doors, Midsummer Night Swing, the Mostly Mozart Festival, and the White Light Festival, as well as the Emmy Award-winning *Live From Lincoln Center*, which airs nationally on PBS. As manager of the Lincoln Center campus, LCPA provides support and services for the Lincoln Center complex and the 11 resident organizations. In addition, LCPA led a \$1.2 billion campus renovation, completed in October 2012.

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