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Henri Temianka (Concert Programs)

University of California, Los Angeles

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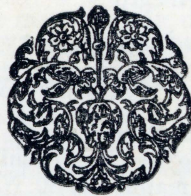
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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT LOS ANGELES
COMMITTEE ON FINE ARTS PRODUCTIONS

Presents

HENRI TEMIANKA, violinist
LEONARD PENNARIO, pianist

Complete Cycle of
BEETHOVEN VIOLIN AND PIANO
SONATAS



May 14, 21, 28, 1958 . . . Schoenberg Hall . . . 8:30 P.M.

PROGRAMMES
Wednesday, May 14

- Sonata No. 1 in D major, Op. 12, No. 1
Allegro con brio
Tema con Variazioni
Rondo: Allegro
- Sonata No. 2 in A major, Op. 12, No. 2
Allegro vivace
Andante, piu tosto Allegretto
Allegro piacevole
- Sonata No. 3 in E flat major, Op. 12, No. 3
Allegro con spirito
Adagio con molto espressione
Rondo: Allegro molto

— INTERMISSION —

- Sonata No. 10 in G major, Op. 96
Allegro moderato
Adagio espressivo
Scherzo: Allegro
Poco Allegretto, Adagio, Presto

Wednesday, May 21

- Sonata No. 4 in A minor, Op. 23
Presto
Andante scherzoso, piu Allegretto
Allegro molto
- Sonata No. 5 in F major, Op. 24 (Spring)
Allegro
Adagio molto espressivo
Scherzo: Allegro molto, Trio
Rondo: Allegro ma non troppo

— INTERMISSION —

- Sonata No. 7 in C minor, Op. 30, No. 2
Allegro con brio
Adagio cantabile
Scherzo: Allegro, Trio
Finale: Allegro

Wednesday, May 28

- Sonata No. 6 in A major, Op. 30, No. 1
Allegro
Adagio molto espressivo
Allegretto con Variazioni
- Sonata No. 8 in G major, Op. 30, No. 3
Allegro assai
Tempo di Minuetto
Allegro vivace

— INTERMISSION —

- Sonata No. 9 in A major, Op. 47 (Kreutzer)
Adagio sostenuto, Presto
Andante con Variazioni
Finale: Presto

COMMENTARY

The ten sonatas for piano and violin contain some of the most enchanting as well as profound pages Beethoven ever wrote. The importance of these sonatas has to some extent been overshadowed by the monumental accomplishment of the 17 string quartets. One reason for this is that the writing of the string quartets spanned most of Beethoven's creative career, whereas nine out of the ten violin and piano sonatas were written within the comparatively short space of seven years, from 1798 to 1805. Only the last sonata was written at a later time, in 1812.

Beethoven's creative legacy to the world is commonly divided into three different periods, all distinctively set apart. According to the general assumption, the first period was one of imitation, the second that of his full maturity, and the third period, that of the highest sublimation and introspection in the last years before his death.

Like all generalizations this one must be viewed with considerable reserve. Above all, it is important to avoid the misconception that Beethoven in his first period was merely an imitator of his precursors, such as Mozart and Haydn, or that the sublime heights and depths which he reached were only reserved for his later works. Consider, for instance, the slow movement of the third sonata in E flat major, written in 1798, when Beethoven was only 28 years old. Here is one of the most profound and mature utterances in all of Beethoven's career. On the other hand the sixth, seventh and eighth sonatas were all written within the space of one year, namely 1802. Yet these three works are so different from each other in spirit and content that they might have been written each in a different period of Beethoven's life. The sixth sonata speaks of serenity and introspection. The seventh sonata is one of the most passionately dramatic works written by Beethoven, comparable in its intensity to the fifth and seventh symphonies. The eighth sonata, on the other hand, is as effervescent as champagne, bubbling over with exuberance, gaiety and with a middle movement full of tenderness.

What makes the ten violin and piano sonatas of Beethoven so exciting is precisely this wonderful variety and contrast. Take the ninth sonata, the *Kreutzer*, the most famous of them all. This is as much a concerto for violin and piano as a sonata, written with tremendous brilliance for both instruments and revealing Beethoven at his most dramatic and extrovert. We are accustomed to thinking that the string quartet is the most difficult and perfect form of all writing. But could anything be more difficult than to write a sonata for piano and violin in such a way that full justice is done to each instrument?

The violin is not the piano's natural partner. Far from it. The partnership was originally one between the much more delicate harpsichord and the violin, with the harpsichord playing the predominant role in many instances. We can find much evidence to show Beethoven's pre-occupation with creating a perfect balance between the powerful modern grand piano and the tiny violin. One device frequently used by Beethoven in these sonatas is the double exposure of a subject. Instead of stating the theme once and then proceeding according to custom, in the sonatas Beethoven first gives the theme to one of the protagonists and then lets the other repeat it, as if to say to both players: "don't be jealous, each of you will have an equal chance"!

The greatest of all the ten sonatas is undoubtedly the last one, the Opus 96 in G major. Chronologically this work is within close proximity of the great Archduke Trio (Opus 97) and the stormy F minor String Quartet (Opus 95).

Yet, how different is this sonata from the two other works. Here is Beethoven at his most sublime. Here is music full of other-worldliness from beginning to end.

Beethoven's biographers have attempted to classify Beethoven's inspiration as deriving in the main from three major sources, love of Woman, love of Nature, love of Country. There is also evidence from Beethoven's own notebooks that he was strongly moved by his religious faith and conviction.

I would not attempt to classify the motivating inspiration of each of these sonatas, although certain movements clearly reveal their source. In the seventh sonata, dedicated to Emperor Alexander I of Russia, there is a tremendous patriotic fervour and unmistakable military rhythm, both in the opening and closing movements. This pre-occupation with military rhythms is usually presumed to be a typical Beethoven characteristic, but it is quite revealing to study the works of Beethoven's forgotten contemporaries. In so doing, one discovers that they too used typically military rhythms, reminiscent of such battle hymns as the Marseillaise, (for instance the Hummel Septet) and one can only conclude that during the Napoleonic era, thoughts of heroism and freedom predominated and could not help but be expressed in the creative arts.

Of the ten sonatas no fewer than three are in A major, while a fourth one is in A minor. Two are in G major and one in D major. Thus Beethoven follows the established custom of most composers in using the open-string keys as being most favourable to the violin. Significantly, he used the C minor key for the most dramatic of all the sonatas (excepting the Kreutzer sonata). Here again Beethoven reveals his predilection for the C minor key in projecting drama. Of all the Opus 18 string quartets, the one dramatic one is in C minor. The one dramatic string trio (Opus 9) is in C minor. The so-called "Victory" Symphony (No. 5), is in C minor, and so is the Third Piano Concerto.

Seven of the sonatas are written in three movements. It is noteworthy that only the "Spring" sonata, (No. 5), the C minor sonata (No. 7), and the last sonata (No. 10), are written in four movements, each containing a brief, witty scherzo.

Henri Temianka