

Intense moments in the minor mode inform all of the movements of the second sonata in A Major, which otherwise is pure joy from beginning to end in its delight of a sweeping use of the entire range of the keyboard as it was in Beethoven's youth, and its beautifully expressive themes. The third sonata of Opus 2 is in the key of C and was clearly designed to show Beethoven's prowess at the keyboard—he was considered the finest pianist of his day, and in fact, it was in this guise that he originally became well-known to the Viennese public. His acclaim as a composer followed somewhat later, growing by the year 1810 to international proportions. The C Major Sonata is orchestral in conception—the opening movement has every indication of being a piano concerto with its own piano accompaniment, including a Development full of the requisite arpeggios and a cadenza just before the coda. There is no question that Beethoven was showing off here, and delighted in doing so.

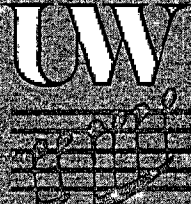
The E flat Sonata, Opus 7, poses other problems. Excepting the Hammerklavier, Opus 106, it is the longest of the 32 Sonatas published with opus numbers. Strong and weak bars shift with frequency (listen to the beginning and the end of the first movement)—huge skips over the keyboard, scales played lickety-split, tremolandos that require careful voicing, awkward turns and trills—all conspire to give this work another dimension of difficulty that has not been seen in the first three sonatas. Another characteristic is the use of silence in the slow movement (Beethoven also used this technique in the slow movement of Opus 2; #3). The silences between the notes of the theme are as important as the notes, perhaps even more so, for they lend the music its austerity, its purity, and its grandeur. As part of the structure, moreover, there are inviolable. This particular element of music, I have found, is often the most difficult thing to teach young budding performers. And it is one of the most important!! In the last movement, the charming initial theme is interrupted by a contrasting middle section in the relative minor. This abrupt and harsh writing is transformed at the end of the piece into an enormous sense of tranquility that dissipates into nothingness. It is one of the great transformations in all music, and magical to boot.

Program notes by Craig Sheppard, ©2003

BEETHOVEN: A JOURNEY

Part II March 17, 2003
Part III May 21, 2003

CLASSICAL
KING FM 98.1



School of Music

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14,371

University of Washington
THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

\$476
2003
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Presents a Faculty Recital:

CRAIG SHEPPARD, PIANO

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
(1770-1827)
A Journey (Part I)

January 7, 2003

7:30 PM

Meany Theater

PROGRAM

CD 14.370

1 PIANO SONATA IN F MINOR, OPUS 2 #1 (1795)
(dedicated to Joseph Haydn)

Allegro 20:01
Adagio
Menuetto: Allegretto
Prestissimo

2 PIANO SONATA IN A MAJOR, OPUS 2 #2 (1795)
(dedicated to Joseph Haydn)

Allegro vivace 27:19
Largo appassionato
Scherzo: Allegretto
Rondo: Grazioso

INTERMISSION

CD 14.371

1] PIANO SONATA IN C MAJOR, OPUS 2 #3 (1795)
(dedicated to Joseph Haydn)

26:20

Allegro con brio
Adagio
Scherzo: Allegro
Allegro assai
Prestissimo

2] PIANO SONATA IN E FLAT MAJOR, OPUS 7 (1796-97)
(dedicated to the Countess Babette von Keglevics)

27:00

Allegro molto e con brio
Largo, con gran espressione
Allegro
Rondo: Poco Allegretto e grazioso

Beethoven arrived in Vienna in 1792 to take up permanent residency, within two years after the death of its enlightened ruler, Joseph II. Perhaps out of fear for the unleashing of the hopes and aspirations of the common man that followed upon the heels of the French Revolution of 1789, the new Emperor, Franz, at immediately created a regime dedicated to the preservation of the status quo, a society in which political repression and police surveillance in the form of innumerable spies were but two manifestations of the new order. The Emperor Franz's reign was to last until 1835, eight years after Beethoven's death. So it is all the more ironic that one of history's greatest revolutionaries lived his entire adult life in a potentially repressive environment.

Beethoven had been composing from an early age. In his native Bonn, there was sufficient inspiration to draw upon. Both of the Electors of Bonn during Beethoven's youth, Maximilian Friedrich and Maximilian Franz, were dedicated to the principles of the Enlightenment, which fostered all forms of intellectual curiosity. Under the direction of his composition teacher, Neffe, Beethoven composed a set of three early piano sonatas, three piano quartets, an early piano concerto in E flat, and a number of short vocal compositions. In these earliest

CRAIG SHEPPARD, Associate Professor of piano, came to the UW School of Music in 1993. A graduate of both the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia and the Juilliard School in New York City, he studied with Rudolf Serkin, Sir Clifford Curzon, Eleanor Sokoloff, Sascha Gorodnitzki, and Ilona Kabos.

Following his New York debut in 1972, he won the silver medal at the Leeds International Pianoforte Competition in England and moved there in 1973. He quickly established himself through recording and frequent appearances on BBC radio and television as one of the preeminent pianists of his generation.

Sheppard has performed with all the major orchestras in Great Britain, as well as those of Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Atlanta, Dallas, Seattle, and others, and with such conductors as Sir Georg Solti, James Levine, Leonard Slatkin, Michael Tilson Thomas, Lord Yehudi Menuhin, Erich Leinsdorf, Aaron Copland, David Zinman, Gerard Schwarz and Peter Erös.

In 1999, he made his recital debut at the Berlin Philharmonic to great critical acclaim. Most recently, Sheppard has performed and taught in both Japan and Taiwan, and will return to Japan in March 2003. He also makes his first trip to Korea during the summer of 2003.

In January 2003, Sheppard begins a seven-concert cycle of the complete piano sonatas of Beethoven in Meany Theater on the University of Washington campus, with additional concerts in March and May 2003, and in the 2003-04 concert season.

Sheppard frequently appears in summer festivals, such as the Seattle Chamber Music Festival and the Park City (Utah) International Festival. He also teaches at the Heifetz International Music Institute in Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, a music camp devoted to bringing out the best in each young performer.

He has recorded on the EMI, Polygram (Philips), Sony, Chandos and Cirrus labels, and his most recent CDs are available through Annette Tangermann in Berlin (e-mail: at-label@gsx.de).

works, Beethoven gave unconscious homage to his Baroque and Classical predecessors. One recognizes immediately, for instance, in the first of the piano sonatas in E flat, an overzealous attempt by the young composer at phrasing and articulation, redolent of what would be more possible on a violin (which Beethoven also played) than on the piano. It was gestures such as these that would become infinitely more refined by the time that Beethoven had his first piano trios and piano sonatas that bore opus numbers published scarcely ten years later in 1795, thus paving the way for all of his mature compositions.

It is indicative of the sort of character that Beethoven possessed that he decided to put the most serious (by far) of all three Opus 2 sonatas first (we can contrast this with Brahms, who had his C Major Sonata published first, before the more serious Sonata in f# minor, simply because he felt it would be the more popular of the two). The f minor Sonata, Opus 2 #1, of Beethoven is a monumental first statement by any stretch of the imagination. Three of the four movements are in the minor key, even the slow movement is in the same key of F (this in the major mode). In the opening statement of the f minor Sonata, as well as the very opening of the first piano trio of Opus 1 (in E flat), Beethoven replicates the famous "Mannheim rocket" of the last movement of Mozart's G minor Symphony, K.550. But he immediately sets himself apart from his illustrious predecessor. What we see, particularly in the first two of tonight's sonatas, is a structure very much influenced by Beethoven's initial studies in Vienna with Haydn—all three Opus 2 sonatas are, in fact, dedicated to Haydn. We see an extended transitional passage in each of the first two movements that follows Haydn's "textbook" prescription of using the dominant of the secondary theme. As a result of the addition of these transitional passages, the Exposition of each opening movement is tripartite in form, whereas Mozart's were generally bipartite (and, often, the secondary thematic group had little or no transitional material before it, thereby lending its appearance a much more abrupt character.) More importantly, we see the beginnings of Beethoven's ability to create a mass edifice from the simplest of elements—the "Mannheim rocket" and a descending six-note figure in the first sonata, a contrast of wide expanse and compression of space within the second, a favoring of the neighboring lower tone in the third. In each case, these elements are used throughout the four movements of each sonata, thereby giving the works a unity that had previously been unknown in that genre. The thematic link between movements in Beethoven is so strong that it would be unthinkable to interchange movements from sonata to sonata—say, to replace one last movement in c minor with another in the same key. On the other hand, it has often been said (and rightly so) that Mozart's last (Rondo) movements, wonderful as they are, could easily be switched from one sonata to another in the same key, with little consequence. It is perhaps this very early structural awareness, and the natural growth and permutations that this was to undergo in the next thirty years, that would set Beethoven apart from nearly all the composers who both preceded and followed him, let alone from his own contemporaries.