movement is but a harbinger of the enormous desolation and isolation that Beethoven would ultimately suffer from his own deafness. It has been postulated, though not documented, that Beethoven had rheumatic fever during the summer of either 1797 or 1798, and I believe fervently that this movement was a result of that illness, which very likely sparked off the initial stages of the deafness that would eventually overwhelm him.

Following upon the heels of the three Opus 10 sonatas, the great Pathétique, Opus 13, should now appear conservative, bold and raw in its assertiveness, but hardly innovative. Perhaps herein lies its appeal. Compositional unity is stressed once again in the rising third in each of the melodies in all three movements, the appearance of the rising fourth and falling fifth at strategic moments (this also informs the entire middle section of the last movement). In its heroic character, its forward thrust, the first movement of the Pathétique can’t be beat. Like my mentor, Rudolf Serkin, I prefer to take the first movement repeat from the very beginning of the sonata rather than from the beginning of the allegro molto, as indicated on most editions. (The original score has gone missing, so we will never know Beethoven’s true intentions.) The slow movement is deservedly one of Beethoven’s most famous and recognizable. The laid-back nature of the theme in the last movement is usurped at the end by a bravado rush to the finish, the suffering abruptly resolved.

[Program notes © Craig Sheppard, 2003]

Tonight’s program, as well as the rest of this series, is dedicated to the memory of the great German pianist, Romuald Wikarski, who died so tragically at the hand of Russian soldiers in Berlin, two weeks before the end of World War II in late April, 1945, at the age of 52. Wikarski performed the entire cycle of Beethoven sonatas in Berlin’s Bechstein Hall during a five-month period in the Winter of 1936-37, and became well-known as a piano pedagogue during those years. Among his many students were the future great lieder singer, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. Wikarski’s daughter, the cellist Cordelia Wikarski-Miedel, lives today in Seattle and teaches cello at the University of Puget Sound.

BEETHOVEN: A JOURNEY
Part III: May 21, 2003
BEETHOVEN ARRIVED IN VIENNA IN 1792 AND LIVED FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE IN THE AUSTRIAN CAPITAL. DETERMINED, AS ARE MANY YOUNG PEOPLE, TO MAKE HIS MARK ON THE WORLD, HE SET OUT IN THE THREE OPUS 2 SONATAS AND THE OPUS 7 THAT APPEARED ON THE FIRST OF THIS SERIES TO DAZZLE HIS LISTENERS, TO SAY “HERE I AM. LISTEN TO ME!!”


REFLECTIONS ON A PROGRAM

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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. While living in England, Sheppard taught at the University of Lancaster, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and the Yehudi Menuhin School, and gave numerous master classes at both Oxford and Cambridge Universities.

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. Sheppard has taught and performed in both Japan and Taiwan on several occasions (most recently in March of this year), and makes his first trip to Korea in August of this year.

In January 2003, Sheppard began a seven-concert cycle of the complete sonatas of Beethoven in Meany Theater. The four final concerts in the series will take place on Tuesday evenings, October 4, 2003 and January 6, March 16, and May 18, 2004 in Meany Theater.

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).
group and the beginning of the second—all bespeak youthful impulse. Even in
the slow movement, an initial theme of great simplicity and beauty is
interrupted by loud outbursts, by flurries of thirty-second notes in the right hand,
by an abrupt return to the initial theme, where once again Beethoven’s rests
speak volumes. In the last movement, we are never quite sure where the first
beat of the bar falls—even the second theme goes over the bar line, as if to prove
the point. It is only at the end, when the piece suddenly and unexpectedly dies
away, that we achieve some form of metric stability.

The two Opus 49 sonatas were written during the same period as all the Opus
2 and Opus 10 sonatas, that is, from about 1795 to 1798 (the exact dates are
impossible to ascertain). They might never have seen the light of day, most
certainly not among the canon of “true” Beethoven sonatas, had not one of
Beethoven’s brothers reached into his drawer one day in 1803 and sent them to
the publisher without the composer’s knowledge or consent. They are charming
works, nonetheless, more in the form of Sonatinas, or Leichte Sonaten (Easy
Sonatas), as Beethoven insisted on calling them. Each has two movements.
The second sonata was published without any dynamic or phrasing markings
whatsoever (with the exception of two pianissimi in the second movement).
The second movement of this work, a Minuet (Menuetto), was the precursor to
the very popular movement of the later Septet, Opus 20, based on the same
melody. In a lighter vein, I bumped into a colleague last week at a concert here
in Meany who asked if I was going to play those “boring” sonatas of Opus 49 in
my next program. She then went on to explain that she’d taught them so often
that she’d grown tired of them! Well, to be honest, I don’t ever remember
having taught either of these pieces (though I’ve taught all the rest, and in some
cases, many times), nor have I ever performed them. My guess is that their
simplicity and beauty will appeal to many members of the audience, perhaps
even more so than the other sonatas on tonight’s program. And I know that I’m
going to enjoy playing them!

Opus 10 #2 is a gem, a study in Beethovenian humor. With a middle move­
ment that aspires to the more sublime, its outer movements sparkle with quick
and unexpected shifts of harmony, phrase lengths, and mood changes. I would
almost call it slapstick at times, and I’m not so sure that Beethoven would have
objected!!

Opus 10 #3 brings us to Beethoven, the great architect. The very first four
descending notes form the basis of the entire first movement and reappear well
over two hundred times. This same pattern is observed in the third movement
Menuetto (take away the tied first note in the right hand, and you have it). And
the fourth movement is the coup de grace. Based on the fifth, sixth, and seventh
notes from the very beginning of the work (i.e., the notes that follow the falling
fourth that has already been talked about), the movement frolics and cajoles,
sometimes coming apart in the funniest of ways, only to dissolve at the end into
nothingness. It is a supreme achievement, Beethoven’s greatest compilation of
disparate elements to date. The anomaly in this sonata is the intensely tragic
slow movement, easily the greatest slow movement that Beethoven would write
in his youth, all the way into his mature years. It has often been surmised that
artists, particularly those of such deep levels of sensitivity, have the ability,
albeit subconsciously, to presage events in their own lives, and sometimes even
events more worldly. So, perhaps, the intense tragedy associated with this