



IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES II  
TUESDAY, JULY 28, 2020

GERALD R. FORD AMPHITHEATER

LECTURE BY JAMES KELLER 11AM  
CONCERT 12PM  
POST CONCERT TALK WITH JAMES KELLER

Ida Kavafian, violin  
Anne-Marie McDermott, piano

BEETHOVEN  
Violin Sonata No. 5 in F major, Op. 24, "Spring" (22 minutes)  
Allegro  
Adagio molto espressivo  
Scherzo: Allegro molto  
Rondo: Allegro ma non troppo

BEETHOVEN  
Violin Sonata No. 6 in A major, Op. 30, No. 1 (26 minutes)  
Allegro  
Adagio molto espressivo  
Allegretto con variazioni

Intermission

BEETHOVEN  
Violin Sonata No. 7 in C minor, Op. 30, No. 2 (24 minutes)  
Allegro con brio  
Adagio cantabile  
Scherzo: Allegro  
Finale: Allegro

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Violin Sonata No. 5 in F major, Op. 24, "Spring" (1800-1801)

*For more information on this work, please see the program notes for the concert of July 27, 2020.*

The F major Sonata, "Spring," one of Beethoven's most limpidly beautiful creations, is well characterized by its vernal sobriquet. The opening movement's sonata form is initiated by a gently meandering melody first chanted by the violin. The grace-note-embellished subsidiary subject is somewhat more vigorous in rhythm and chromatic in harmony, but maintains the music's bucolic atmosphere. Wave-form scales derived from the main theme close the exposition. The development section attempts to achieve a balance between a downward striding arpeggio drawn from the second theme and flutters of rising triplet figures. A full recapitulation and an extended coda based on the flowing main theme round out the movement. The *Adagio* is a quiet flight of wordless song, undulant in its accompanimental figuration and delicately etched in its melodic arabesques. The tiny gossamer *Scherzo* is the first such movement that Beethoven included in one of his Violin Sonatas. The finale, a rondo that makes some unexpected digressions into distant harmonic territories, is richly lyrical and sunny of disposition.

Violin Sonata No. 6 in A major, Op. 30, No. 1 (1802)

Violin Sonata No. 7 in C minor, Op. 30, No. 2 (1802)

In the summer of 1802, Beethoven's physician ordered him to leave Vienna and take rooms in Heiligenstadt, today a friendly suburb at the northern terminus of the city's subway system, but two centuries ago a quiet village with a view of the Danube across the river's flood plain. It was three years earlier, in 1799, that Beethoven first noticed a disturbing ringing and buzzing in his ears, and he sought medical attention for the problem soon thereafter. He tried numerous cures for his malady, as well as for his chronic colic, including oil of almonds, hot and cold baths, soaking in the Danube, pills and herbs. For a short time he even considered the modish treatment of electric shock. On the advice of his latest doctor, Beethoven left the noisy city for the quiet countryside with the assurance that the lack of stimulation would be beneficial to his hearing and his general health.

The Op. 30 Violin Sonatas Beethoven completed by the time he returned from Heiligenstadt to Vienna in the middle of October 1802 stand at the threshold of a new creative language, the dramatic musical speech that characterizes his so-called "second period." One of the keys Beethoven used to unlock this revolutionary stylistic advance was the complete interpenetration of melody and accompaniment, the hewing of all the lines of a musical passage and even an entire movement from a small set of thematic atoms. Such a working method generates the main theme of the opening movement of the A major Sonata, in which most of the violin line and both hands of the piano are derived from either the quick turn figure or the flowing quarter-note motive introduced at the outset. The second subject is an arching melody with a trill. The second theme and the turn figure provide most of the material for the development section. A full recapitulation of the exposition rounds out the movement.

Of the second movement, Jelly d'Aranyi, the Hungarian violinist who inspired works from Ravel, Bartók and Vaughan Williams, wrote, "The *Adagio* is a great favorite of

mine. The blend of the two instruments is so perfect a thing.... The whole movement has such a feeling of tenderness and sorrow it reminds me of Michelangelo's *Pietà* and his unfinished *Descent of the Cross*. I do not want to suggest that this *Adagio* could be called religious music, I am thinking in both cases of the expression of infinite tenderness and sorrow, whether put into sound or carved in stone."

Beethoven's original finale for the A major Sonata was a large, brilliant and difficult rondo — indeed, too brilliant, according to his student Ferdinand Ries, and it was ultimately used to cap the "Kreutzer" Sonata. Beethoven next devised a new, gentler theme for a more modest rondo, but this melody finally ended up as the subject for the set of variations that closes the A major Sonata.

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The C minor Sonata opens with a pregnant main theme, announced by the piano and echoed by the violin, which, according to British musicologist Samuel Midgley, "is like a taut spring about to snap." This motive returns throughout the movement both as the pillar of its structure and as the engine of its tempestuous expression. The second theme is a tiny military march. The development encompasses powerful mutations of the two principal themes. A full recapitulation and a large coda round out the movement. The *Adagio*, one of those inimitable slow movements in which Beethoven created music seemingly rapt out of quotidian time, is based on a hymnal melody presented first by the piano and reiterated by the violin. A passage in long notes for the violin above harmonically unsettled arpeggios in the keyboard constitutes the movement's central section before the opening theme is recalled in an elaborated setting. The *Scherzo* presents a playful contrast to the surrounding movements. The *Finale*, which mixes elements of rondo (frequent returns of the halting motive heard at the beginning) and sonata (extensive development of the themes), renews the troubled mood of the opening movement.

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