



IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES III
WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 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. 8 in G major, Op. 30, No. 3 (19 minutes)
Allegro assai
Tempo di Minuetto, ma molto moderato e grazioso
Allegro vivace

BEETHOVEN
Violin Sonata No. 9 in A major, Op. 47, "Kreutzer" (35 minutes)
Adagio sostenuto — Presto
Andante con variazioni
Finale: Presto

Intermission

BEETHOVEN
Violin Sonata No. 10 in G major, Op. 96 (30 minutes)
Allegro moderato
Adagio espressivo —
Scherzo: Allegro
Poco Allegretto

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Violin Sonata No. 8 in G major, Op. 30, No. 3 (1802)

For more information on this work, please see the program notes for the concert of July 28, 2020.

The Violin Sonata in G major, Op. 30, No. 3, is the most compact and cheerful such piece in Beethoven's creative output. The main theme of the opening sonata-form movement balances a frisky motive in rolling scale steps with a more lyrical idea. The second theme is full of incident, with mercurial shifts of harmony, a half-dozen thematic fragments, sudden changes of dynamics, and sharply accented notes. The trills and bustling rhythmic activity that close the exposition are carried into the development section. Though the second movement is marked "in the tempo of a minuet," this is music grown from song rather than dance, sweet and lyrical and gracious, that returns to its lovely opening strain throughout in the manner of a refrain. The finale is a genial rondo of sunny vivacity and sparkling passagework.

Violin Sonata No. 9 in A major, Op. 47, "Kreutzer" (1803)

George Augustus Polgreen Bridgetower was born in Biala, Poland sometime between 1778 and 1780; his mother was of Polish or German extraction, his father was probably from the West Indies, though he liked to claim that he was an "Abyssinian Prince." The mulatto Bridgetower was a remarkable prodigy of the violin, and he was accepted into the musical establishment of the Prince of Wales at Brighton when he was just ten. In 1803, Bridgetower was granted a leave to visit his mother in Dresden and play some concerts en route. Those performances created a sensation, and his arrival in Vienna in early May was awaited by the local music lovers with a mixture of excitement and curiosity. Beethoven met the 23-year-old Bridgetower almost immediately, and the two got along famously. Beethoven proposed to write a new piece for Bridgetower's debut in the city on May 24th and to accompany him at the piano, and he set to work immediately on the Sonata in A major. The premiere was a success, and Bridgetower remained in Vienna until July, playing to considerable acclaim and spending many evenings with his new buddy, Ludwig van Beethoven.

By all rights, this work, published as Beethoven's "Kreutzer" Sonata in 1805, should be called the "Bridgetower" Sonata. According to an interview Bridgetower granted in 1845, such was the composer's original intention, but he added that they had a quarrel "over a girl," and Beethoven denied him the dedication in recompense. Instead, the score was inscribed to the well-known French violinist and composer Rodolphe Kreutzer, whom Beethoven had met in 1798 in Vienna.

The first movement is a formal curiosity, beginning with a slow introduction in the nominal key of A major as preface to a large sonata structure in the parallel minor mode. The main theme, given by the violin in quicker tempo, is a staccato phrase with a Turkish tint. The chorale-like subsidiary motive provides only a brief respite from the impetuosity of the music. There is considerable developmental dialogue between the instruments before the earlier themes are recapitulated. The *Andante* is a spacious set of variations on a long theme. The tarantella-rhythm finale provides a brilliant ending.

Violin Sonata No. 10 in G major, Op. 96 (1812)

The G major Violin Sonata stands at the crossing of the lives of three eminent early-19th-century European personalities: the day's greatest composer (Beethoven, of course); a leading French violinist; and a royal personage. The royal was the Archduke Rudolph, the youngest son of Emperor Leopold II and the brother of Emperor Franz, who was the most important and durable of Beethoven's many aristocratic Viennese patrons; the violinist for whom the Sonata was written was the renowned French virtuoso Pierre Rode. It was for Rode's concert in Vienna at the palace of Prince Lobkowitz on December 29, 1812 that Beethoven created the G major Sonata, enlisting Archduke Rudolph as pianist for the occasion. The work's thorough integration of the instruments into a chamber-music whole, its careful and boundlessly inventive working-out of simple, folkish, sometimes even apparently trite thematic fragments, its striving for transcendence in the slow movement, its use of the variations form as a platform for a wide range of styles and emotions mark this Sonata as prophetic of the peerless profundities of the music of his last creative period.

The Sonata opens as if in mid-thought with a tentative trilled gesture from the violin. The piano tries out the motive, and together the participants spin from it a glistening arpeggiated passage and an animated transition. The second theme, entrusted to the piano, is a skipping-rhythm strain in sweet harmonies. Busy triplet figurations and subtle transformations of the main theme close the exposition. The development is neither long nor overly dramatic. The recapitulation returns the earlier material before the movement concludes with a generous coda spun from the main theme. The *Adagio* is based on a hymnal melody in which both piano and violin find material for elaborate filigreed decoration as well as quiet, nearly motionless contemplation. An inconclusive harmony leads to the *Scherzo*, tightly constrained, minor-mode music with sharp, off-beat accents; a flowing central section provides a stylistic foil. The variations of the finale take as their subject a dance-like ditty, whose playfulness is contrasted as the music unfolds with daring, unconventional transformations of the theme.

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