



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

Nicholas Kitchen, violin

Yeesun Kim, cello

John Owings, piano

April 15, 2023

7:00 PM

Van Cliburn Concert Hall at TCU

Program

Sonata in D Major for Piano and Cello, Op. 102 No. 2

L. van Beethoven

Allegro con brio
Adagio con molto sentimento d'affetto
Allegro fugato

Sonata in C Minor for Piano and Violin, Op. 30 No. 2

L. van Beethoven

Allegro con brio
Adagio cantabile
Scherzo. Allegro
Allegro – Presto

Intermission

Piano Trio in B-flat Major, Op. 97 "Archduke"

L. van Beethoven

Allegro moderato
Scherzo. Allegro
Andante cantabile, ma però con moto
Allegro moderato – Presto

Notes on the music

Beethoven elevated the role of the cello in chamber music to a prominence it had not previously enjoyed. Nowhere is this better demonstrated than in his five Sonatas for Piano and Violoncello (the title he used), composed between 1796 and 1815, the year he composed the two Sonatas Op. 102. These were among Beethoven's first works that followed several unproductive years of his struggles with increasing deafness, poor health, and personal crises, and may rightly be said to be the beginning of what has come to be called his "third period." This new phase is marked by a departure from more traditional approaches to the structure of a sonata and the frequent use of fugal sections or entire movements based on fugue. The final movement of **Op. 102 No. 2** is a freely-constructed fugue of three voices, giving many opportunities for dialogue between the two instruments. Following an opening movement that celebrates the bright key of D major with an array of brief themes that alternate between bursts of energy and moments of tender lyricism, the middle movement is a sorrowful lament sung by the cello, whose deep, soulful tone is supported by the dark, chordal textures of the piano. The D major middle section brings relief from the grief expressed in the minor keys of the rest of the movement. The music reaches a heart-stopping moment that seems to suspend all motion, and after lingering for some time on the unresolved dominant seventh, becomes revived by the rising scales that announce the fugue subject. The work concludes with a series of stubbornly determined gestures as if to affirm Beethoven's newfound creative energy.

Beethoven's ten Sonatas for Piano and Violin parallel his piano sonatas and concertos in many ways. In **Sonata No. 7, Op. 30 No. 2 in C minor**, composed in 1802, we can hear reminders of Op. 13, "Grande Sonata Pathétique," the Piano Concerto No. 3, Op. 37, as well as a foretaste of the Piano Sonata Op. 57, known as the "Appassionata," composed a few years later. Dramatic and heroic gestures, explosive energy, and a firm grasp of structure characterize these works from Beethoven's "middle period." While the piano clearly has a dominant role in Op. 30 No. 2, Beethoven takes full advantage of the color possibilities offered by pairing the two instruments. In the opening movement, the singing tone of the violin's upper register above the piano's low rumbling is but one example. Near the end of the Adagio second movement, the piano's running scales are in contrast to the violin's long cantilena melody. On the other hand, the two instruments often imitate each other, the violin encouraging the piano to sing in the Adagio and the piano urging the violin to join in the martellato (hammered) repeated notes in the last movement. Much of the work's high energy and intensity reaches its peak in the furious Presto that concludes this large and powerful sonata.

Composed in 1811, the **Piano Trio in B flat, Op. 97**, dedicated to Archduke Rudolf, is the pinnacle of Beethoven's Piano Trios and one of his iconic masterpieces. The scope, nobility, and grandeur of the "Archduke" reflect Beethoven's deep admiration and respect for his lifelong friend and patron. Each of the four movements is a large-scale

composition in itself, and the whole is one of Beethoven's most richly scored works of chamber music with piano. The octave doubling of the melody and the full, chordal texture of the piano's opening solo set the tone for the entire work. The strings add to the opulence of the sonorities, joining with the piano to create the effect of a full symphony orchestra. The first movement contains a long section of pizzicato (plucked) writing for the strings, a striking effect when combined with the bird-like trills of the piano, all building to a climax that ushers in the surprisingly quiet return of the opening theme. The Scherzo's second movement dances in a playful manner, with mysterious chromatic, fugal passages that open onto a grand Viennese waltz played by the piano – suggesting a ballroom scene that could easily be a *Valse Noble* in Schumann's *Carnaval*. The third movement's hymn-like theme and the following variations add a spiritual dimension that brings us to the emotional high point of the entire work. The solemn, reflective atmosphere of the end of this movement is suddenly interrupted by the jollity of the finale, with its chuckles and laughter that culminate in the work's conclusion – a whirlwind Presto that leaves the listener in a state of euphoria.

YEESUN KIM

Cello

Hailed by the New York Times for her "focused intensity" and "remarkable" performances, cellist Yeesun Kim enjoys worldwide acclaim as a soloist, chamber musician and teacher. A founding member of the Borromeo String Quartet, Ms. Kim has performed in over 20 countries, and in many of the world's most illustrious concert halls and Festivals.

Ms. Kim has performed throughout Europe and Asia with the Borromeo, in duo with violinist Nicholas Kitchen, and as a soloist, including engagements at the Philharmonie in Berlin, the Tonhalle in Zurich, the Opera Bastille in Paris, Wigmore Hall in London, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Suntory Hall and Casals Hall in Tokyo, the Saejong Cultural Center in Seoul, Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Jordan Hall in Boston, the Library of Congress and Kennedy Center in Washington, DC.

A much sought-after chamber musician, she has been invited to perform at many festivals including Spoleto in the United States and Italy, Ravinia, Marlboro, Santa Fe, La Jolla, Rockport, Music at Menlo, Chamber Music Northwest, the Prague Spring Festival, the Vancouver Chamber Music, the Stavanger Festival in Norway, the Evian and Divonne Festivals in France, and the Sejong Spring Festival in Korea.

As a member of the Borromeo Quartet since its inception in 1989, Ms. Kim has had extensive involvement with NPR's "Performance Today," the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in New York, and the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. Her radio and television credits include "Live from Lincoln Center" and numerous appearances on WGBH in Boston, Radio France, and NHK Radio and Television in Japan. Recording credits include "Bach WTC Book 1" for SQ [2016], "Native Informant" featuring music from Mohammed Fairouz [2013], "As it was, Is, And will be" featuring music from Gunther Schuller [2011], "String Quartets" by Robert Maggio [2011], "Speak Like the People, Write Like the King" featuring music by Steve Mackey [2009], "Soul Garden: The Chamber Music of Derek Bermel" [2002] "Beethoven: Serioso" [2002], and "Ravel: String Quartet and Sonata for Violin & Cello" [1999].

Ms. Kim currently serves on the faculty of the New England Conservatory, in the cello and chamber music departments, and teaches each summer at the Taos School of Music and at the Heifetz Institute. She has also taught at the McGill International String Quartet Academy in Canada, the Atlantic Music Festival, the Suntory Hall Fellows Academy in Japan, the Seoul National University and National University of Arts in Korea, and the Foulger Institute.

A recipient of the Avery Fisher Career Grant, Chamber Music America's Cleveland Quartet Award, Lincoln Center's Martin Segal Award, and the Evian International String Quartet Competition as a member of the Borromeo Quartet, Ms. Kim has garnered numerous awards individually as well, including the winner of the Ewha and Junggung National Competitions in Korea, and the Seoul Young Artists Award for achievement in music and academics.

Kim is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, with advanced degrees from the New England Conservatory of Music. Her mentors include Lawrence Lesser, David Soyer, Peter Wiley, Hyungwon Chang, and Minja Hyun.

She plays a Peregrino Zanetto cello, circa 1576, one of the oldest in the world.

NICHOLAS KITCHEN

Violin

Nicholas Kitchen has performed throughout the world as a soloist and chamber musician, most significantly as founding member and first violinist of the Borromeo String Quartet. He has done extensive projects with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Library of Congress, Performance Today and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. He has performed in some of the world's great concert halls such as the Berlin Philharmonie, the Zurich Tonhalle, Dvorak Hall in Prague, Wigmore Hall in London, the Opera Bastille in Paris, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Suntory Hall in Tokyo, the Oriental Arts Center in Shanghai and the Seoul Arts Center in Korea. He is the Artistic Director of the Heifetz International Music Institute and has been teaching at the New England Conservatory of Music since 1992. At both of these institutions, the Borromeo Quartet is Faculty Quartet-in-Residence. Nicholas was a pioneer in the use of computers and page-turning pedals to make it possible to always work and perform from complete scores. Use of the computer for music reading has resulted in his becoming involved in the intensive study of composer's manuscripts, especially the autograph scores of Beethoven. His surprising discoveries in Beethoven manuscripts have led to his giving papers at the Center for Beethoven Research at Boston University as well as at conservatories in Hong Kong and in Basel, Switzerland; the festivals Tanglewood and Ravinia, the Library of Congress and Juilliard School, and the Curtis Institute of Music.

Nicholas is the winner of the Arion Award from the Cambridge Society for Early Music in connection with his work on the music of Bach, and the Borromeo Quartet are winners of the Evian International Quartet Competition, the Cleveland Quartet Award, the Martin E. Segal Award and the Avery Fisher Career Grant. Recently celebrating its 30th anniversary, the Borromeo Quartet, besides being the first string quartet to utilize laptop computers in concert, was also the first classical ensemble to allow the audience to order recordings of the concert they had just heard through Living Archive. Nicholas has also created programs for young people such as MATHEMUSICA, a learning program exploring the mathematical underpinnings of music.

An important part of the Borromeo Quartet's performing history has been presenting the complete Beethoven cycle, as well as presenting concerts of all six Bartók Quartets. Nicholas has had the privilege of working closely with many remarkable composers such as John Cage, Gyorgy Ligeti, Gunther Schuller and Steve Reich, to name just a few.

Nicholas Kitchen has had a particular commitment to bringing the works of J.S. Bach into the repertoire for the string quartet and he has transcribed for the quartet both books of the Well-Tempered Clavier as well as the "Goldberg" Variations and numerous organ works.

JOHN OWINGS

Piano

Praised for his exciting pianism and sensitive artistry, John Owings' versatile career has ranged from solo and chamber music recitals to concerto appearances in major cities in the United States, Latin America, Europe, and Asia. His critically acclaimed CD recordings include piano music by Samuel Barber, Aaron Copland, Elliott Carter, Robert Casadesus, and Julius Reubke, as well as chamber music by Eric Ewazen, Richard Lavenda, Quincy Porter, and Elena Sokolowski.

A native of San Antonio, Mr. Owings received his formal training at the University of Texas, The Royal College of Music in London, and The Juilliard School, where his teachers were Rosina Lhevinne and Martin Canin. Other teachers have included Géza Anda, Dalies Frantz, Karl Leifheit, and Wilhelm Kempff.

Gold medalist of the Robert Casadesus International Piano Competition in Cleveland, Mr. Owings also won the Vianna da Motta International Competition in Lisbon, the London Liszt Society Competition, and the Musical Arts Competition in Chicago.

An ardent proponent of chamber music, Mr. Owings has enjoyed frequent collaborative performances with a number of distinguished musicians. *Trio Con Brio*, an ensemble he formed with violist Misha Galaganov and clarinetist Gary Whitman, has commissioned and premiered new works by over a dozen living composers.

A dedicated teacher, Mr. Owings' students have won national and international competitions and enjoy successful careers as performers and educators. He has given master's classes in the United States, England, Italy, Colombia, Peru, China, Korea, and Japan. He has been a guest artist at InterHarmony, MusicFest Perugia, Bucaramanga, the Round Top Festival, and PianoTexas International Academy and Festival.

John Owings is the Herndon Professor of Music and Chair of the Piano Division at Texas Christian University where he received the school's highest honor – the Chancellor's Award – in recognition of his performances of the 32 Beethoven Piano Sonatas. Six sonatas from these live performances have been issued on a CD recording.

www.johnowings.com