CU ★ PRESENTS

Faculty Tuesdays

Beethoven: Sonata and Symphony

David Korevaar, piano

Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the house manager.

7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2020
Grusin Music Hall
Imig Music Building

CU

College of Music
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

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Program

Music by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Grand Sonata in E-flat Major, Op. 7 (1796-97)
    I. Allegro molto e con brio
    II. Largo con gran espressione
    III. Allegro
    IV. Rondo: Poco Allegretto e Grazioso

Sonata quasi una Fantasia in E-flat Major, Op. 27, No. 1 (1800-1801)
    I. Andante—Allegro—Andante—
    II. Allegro molto e vivace—
    III. Adagio con espressione—
    IV. Allegro vivace

—Intermission—

Symphony No. 4 in B-flat Major, Op. 60 (1806)   arr. Franz Liszt
    I. Adagio—Allegro vivace
    II. Adagio
    III. Menuetto: Allegro vivace
    IV. Allegro ma non troppo

Program notes

It has often been said that Beethoven writes for the piano as if he was composing a symphony. The statement is partially true, and piano teachers often ask students to "orchestrate" a work in their imagination as a way of opening up a more colorful approach. In a sense, I have picked today's program to both prove and disprove the generalization. On the broadest level, the ambitious early Sonata in E-flat Major, Op. 7, is among the most symphonic of Beethoven's conceptions both in scope and in texture, yet the last movement speaks of something particular to the piano: no work as "public" as a symphony would have dared to end so softly, and the textures of this movement overall strike me as

very much native to the piano itself. More modestly scaled, but far more ambitious in its originality of form, the Op. 27, No. 1 Sonata quasi una Fantasia attempts something that is all about the piano, requiring an intimacy of approach as well as a lightning-fast changing of tempo and character that would have defied performance by an orchestra of Beethoven's time.

Franz Liszt, over the course of his long career as a performer and composer, did much to carry the Beethovenian torch, and was known to perform the most difficult and least user-friendly of his piano sonatas (in particular, Op. 106) to a public that was

clamoring for virtuosic variations on popular airs. He also transcribed a number of the symphonies for solo piano for use in his own concerts early on (the Third and Fifth), but didn't complete the cycle until his publisher suggested it. The Fourth Symphony was transcribed relatively late in Liszt's career, and shows his mastery of translation in full flower—this is a loving tribute to Beethoven, with Liszt doing his utmost to simply present Beethoven's symphony on the piano. I'll leave it for the audience to judge how successful Liszt has been in transferring the color of the orchestra to the keyboard.

With this transcription of a symphony, it is clear how differently (Horowitz's opinion to the contrary notwithstanding) Beethoven approached the composition of a symphony from how he approached a sonata: the choice of material and the sheer length (and this is a "short" symphony by Beethoven's standards) are obvious distinctions. The length is a function of greater forces: more colors and textures available for development and extension, and no consideration given to the individual stamina of the poor pianist. That said, Liszt was correct in noting that Beethoven's symphonies fall under the pianist's hand relatively easily (at least if you are Liszt), and his material is amenable to this treatment.

Through all three pieces, Beethoven's compositional playfulness and imagination emerge: these are all masterpieces, and each is completely different from the other in how it completes the sonata structure, in spite of the superficial commonalities. The slow movement of Op. 7, one of Beethoven's most profound, shows a command of musical rhetoric and silence that creates a deeply emotional world. In Op. 27. No. 1, the slow material is presented far differently, with an absence of silence and an underlying drumbeat in the bass that keeps the underlying motion. In the symphony's slow movement, Beethoven playfully exploits the contrast between the staccato, jumpy heartbeat and a songfully seductive descending scale. While undeniably clever, the result is also profound, and shows a composer in full command of the resources available in the orchestra, including a sense of textural layering that is far more obvious and developed than in the piano sonatas.

About the performer

Pianist **David Korevaar** balances his active performing schedule with teaching at the University of Colorado Boulder, where he was named Distinguished Professor in 2019 and holds the Peter and Helen Weil Fellowship. He is a 2016 honoree as Distinguished Research Lecturer at the University of Colorado. Since his New York debut at Town Hall in 1985, Korevaar has performed in many roles: as solo recitalist, as soloist with orchestra, as chamber musician and collaborator, as well as expanding into the world of theater and dance. He has performed throughout the United States and is heard frequently in his home state of Colorado. Internationally, he has performed at London's Wigmore Hall and around Europe from Riga, Latvia, to Heidelberg, Germany, and in the Netherlands. He has been a frequent visitor to Japan and has performed and taught in Central Asia. Korevaar is a founding member of the Boulder Piano Quartet, currently in residence at the Academy in Boulder, and performed for many years as a member of the Clavier Trio. He is a regular guest with the Takács Quartet and has collaborated with other ensembles, including the Manhattan, Colorado, Shanghai and Chester quartets. He continues to perform and record with distinguished colleagues, including violinists Charles Wetherbee, Harumi Rhodes and Edward Dusinberre; violists Geraldine Walther and Matthew Dane and flutist Christina Jennings, among others. In May 2000, he received the Richard French award from The Juilliard School, honoring his doctoral document on Ravel's Miroirs. Other honors include top prizes from the University of Maryland William Kapell International Piano Competition (1988) and the Peabody-Mason Music Foundation (1985), as well as a special prize for his performance of French music from the Robert Casadesus Competition (1989). By age 20, he had earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from The Juilliard School. He completed his Doctor of Musical Arts degree from The Juilliard School as well.

Upcoming performances

$ Ticketed events L Live broadcast at cupresents.org

Wednesday, Jan. 29
Pendulum New Music
7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall L

Tuesday, Feb. 4
Faculty Tuesdays
Douglas Walter, vibraphone and marimba
7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall L

Thursday, Feb. 6
CU Wind Symphony
7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium L

Saturday, Feb. 8
Artist Series: A Far Cry
7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium $

Tuesday, Feb. 11
CU Symphony Orchestra
7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium L

Wednesday, Feb. 12
CU Philharmonia Orchestra
Celebrating voices of classicism and unity
7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall L

Feb. 13-15
**The 25th Annual Putnam County
Spelling Bee**
The musical by Finn, Sheinkin and Feldman
Music Theatre, Imig Music bullding

Thursday, Feb. 13
Concert Jazz Ensemble
7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium L

Sunday, Feb. 16
Spring Festival of Choirs
7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

Tuesday, Feb. 18
Faculty Tuesdays
Charles Wetherbee, violin
7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall L

Wednesday, Feb. 19
Pendulum New Music
7:30 p.m., ATLAS Black Box

Sunday, Feb. 23
Honors Competition Finals
12:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

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