



ST MARY'S PERIVALE

BEETHOVEN PIANO SONATA FESTIVAL

Programme for Session 1:

Saturday 3 October, 2pm–6pm

Programme notes by Julian Jacobson

St Mary's, a 12th-century church, is West London's foremost classical music venue. It has been live-streaming performances by world-class soloists and duos throughout the pandemic and will continue until we are able to open our doors to audiences once more



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2.00pm Edward Leung
Sonata in F minor Op 2 no 1
Allegro — Adagio — Menuetto: Allegretto —
Prestissimo

The very first of Beethoven's mighty canon of 32 opus-numbered piano sonatas makes up for its modest dimensions with forceful and original material, some of it reworked from his teenage piano quartets but tightened up in the process. Beethoven must have been perfectly aware that his opening theme is a literal quote of the finale of Mozart's great G minor Symphony, but Beethoven shapes his sky-rocketing arpeggio to very different ends and his restless truculence is far from Mozart's Olympian majesty. The sweet, cosy Andante, with its cooing appoggiaturas, gives little hint of the depths of Beethoven's later slow movements: could it be a homage to his mother who had passed away just a few years before Beethoven started working on the sonatas? In any case Beethoven returns to characteristic intransigence in the Menuetto, though with a 'cosy' major key trio with some rather primitive imitation between the hands. The Prestissimo finale is a whirlwind of triplets, ending in an uncompromising F minor with a descending arpeggio to square the circle with the sonata's opening theme.

Lauded as one of '16 Incredibly Impressive Students at Princeton University' by Business Insider, American pianist Edward Leung has performed in concert halls across North America, Europe, and Asia. Highlights of the current season include concerto performances with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Orchestra of the Swan; debuts at the Wigmore Hall and Laieszhalle in Hamburg; recitals in London, Winchester, Wiltshire, Ulverston, and the Wye Valley, and a début commercial recording with violinist Usha Kapoor for Resonus Classics. A 2019–2020 Live Music Now artist, he has swept all the major prizes at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, including the Piano Prize, Donohoe Gold Medal, Andrew Downes Performance Prize, Delia Hall Accompaniment Prize, Herbert Lumby Prize, and Sheila and Colina Hodge Memorial Prize.



2.25pm Andrew Yiangou

Sonata in A major Op 2 no 2

**Allegro vivace — Largo appassionato — Scherzo:
Allegretto. Minore — Rondo: Grazioso**

The second sonata of the set is perhaps the most subtly Haydnesque, though no experienced listener would mistake it for Haydn for more than a few bars. Nevertheless the wit and fire of the first movement, the elegance of the Scherzo and the grace of the Rondo finale – apart from its brusque, somewhat ill-tempered minor key central episode – do recall Beethoven's dedicatee and great teacher, even if he claimed to have learnt nothing from him. The first movement sustains a mood of cheerful melodiousness and free-ranging harmonic daring. Indeed it has been pointed out that the rising sequential passage modulates far more freely than one would normally expect so early in the movement. Beethoven's passage is blown away by a boisterous passage in fast sextuplets, fingered by Beethoven in an extraordinary way which is difficult enough on the old keyboard instruments and all but impossible on a modern piano, so that one suspects a parodistic intent from that 'daring young man on the flying trapeze'. Beethoven follows this with a slow movement, in the subdominant key of D, of great power and almost Handelian grandeur. The texture of the opening theme is remarkable, a solemn chorale-like theme supported by a quasi-pizzicato bass. Returning to A major for the remaining two movements, Beethoven follows his kittenish Scherzo, with its stormier 'minore' Trio, with a Rondo finale of ample proportions. The main theme, a fast-rising arpeggio followed by a huge descending interval of an octave and a sixth, must have seemed original to the point of eccentricity in 1795. The third, minor-key section shows that he was not afraid of a bit of crudeness when it suited him. The substantial coda hints at more serious matters before the sonata ends quietly and with exquisite punctuality.

International concert pianist Andrew Yiangou has been selected as one of the 14 semifinalists in the 12th International Franz Liszt Piano Competition 2020 in Utrecht. He was a recipient of the prestigious Mills Williams Junior Fellowship while studying at the Royal College of Music, with Professors Norma Fisher, Vanessa Latache and Gordon Fergus-Thompson. He was awarded multiple scholarships including support from the Tillet and Eileen Rowe Trusts. He has worked with artists such as Robert Levin, Ya-Fei Chuang, Stephen Hough, Lang Lang, Charles Owen, Kathryn Stott, Peter Jablonski and Boaz Sharon, and won prizes in many international competitions. He has performed all over the world as well as throughout the UK. Alongside mainstream repertoire he has a particular affinity for the music of lesser-known composers such as Nikolai Kapustin, Leopold Godowsky, Charles-Valentin Alkan, Nikolai Medtner, Georgy Catorie and Sergei Lyapunov.



2.55pm Florian Mitrea

Sonata in C major Op 2 no 3

Allegro con brio — Adagio — Scherzo: Allegro — Allegro assai

As with some of Mozart's sets, the last of Beethoven's first set of piano sonatas is on the grandest scale and contains concertante elements, with a cadenza-like passage in the first movement's coda and some distinctly orchestral writing. Beethoven seems intent on displaying his own pianistic prowess, and we remember more in this sonata than in the first two that his fame at this time was as a virtuoso pianist and improviser, rather than as a composer. At the outset Beethoven presents the pianist with some tricky double-thirds, all the harder for being in 'piano' rather than 'forte'. As in the second sonata, the second subject begins in the minor and modulates widely before finding its way to the dominant major. The development, with its fearless if slightly empty virtuosity, reminds us that Beethoven was the pianistic grandfather, through his pupil Carl Czerny, of Liszt. The slow movement, in the unusual key of E major, is touching in its emotional sincerity and gives more than a hint of the greatness Beethoven would achieve in his mature slow movements. Probably the finest movement is the Scherzo, terse, exhilarating and ingeniously imitative in its texture. Here one feels Beethoven already as the master symphonist. The stormy, minor key Trio leads straight back to the Scherzo, innovatively opening up the classical structure. The playful 6/8 Finale makes great sport with fast rising three-part staccato chords in the right hand, with calmer subsidiary material. The Sonata as a whole makes a fine effect and one should celebrate this vigorous product of Beethoven's youth for its high spirits and pianistic daring

Described by Martha Argerich as 'an outstanding young pianist', British-Romanian pianist Florian Mitrea is an award-winning soloist, having been a double-laureate at many of the most prestigious international competitions, including at the 2017 Glasgow, 2015 Hamamatsu, and 2014 ARD Munich Competitions. Florian has performed at venues including the Carnegie Hall, the Bozar Centre in Brussels, the Usher Hall in Edinburgh, the Royal Concert Hall in Glasgow, the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester, the Bunka Kaikan Hall in Tokyo, the Seoul Arts Centre, the Bavarian Radio Studios, and across Romania. He was an invited soloist with the Philharmonia in London, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the Collegium Musicum in Basel, and the Romanian National Radio Orchestras and the Bucharest Philharmonic. He has impressed critics with 'absorbing and masterly' performances (The Edinburgh Guide 2019), 'stupendous virtuosity' (Suddeutsche Zeitung, 2017), 'phenomenal precision throughout' (The Herald, 2017), and 'a mixture of phenomenal technique and ravishing musical intelligence' (The Cambridge Independent, 2018). He won the Radio Romania Muzical Most Popular CD of 2018 award for his solo debut CD. An alumni and appointed Associate of the RAM in London, Florian is now a teacher within the Piano Department, while also finishing his studies at the Imola Piano Academy, under Boris Petrushansky.



Edward Webb

3.30pm Simon Watterton

Sonata in E flat major Op 7

**Allegro molto e con brio — Largo, con gran espressione —
Allegro — Rondo: Poco allegretto e grazioso**

This magnificent early masterpiece has somehow never received its full share of attention: yet it has everything – power, virtuosity (sometimes one senses Liszt just over the horizon), strikingly original melodic material and one of Beethoven's most heartfelt slow movements. Taking some 30 minutes to perform, it is also one of his most generous sonatas; only the Hammerklavier is longer. Sometimes called 'Grand Sonata', it was the first (apart from the little duet sonata Op 6) to be published on its own, not as part of a set – further evidence of its stature in Beethoven's own mind. If, as Blake says, energy is eternal delight, then Beethoven's opening movement must be one of the most delightful ever composed. There are a few crudenesses in the part-writing such as would never be found in Mozart and which later editors have 'corrected' in various ways: nowadays we can surely take early Beethoven 'warts and all' for the powerfully new emotional force he was expressing. There has been some speculation that Beethoven was in love with the sonata's dedicatee, one Babette von Keglevics, as so often a pupil of his: this has earned the sonata the occasional and somewhat cheesy nickname 'Die Verliebte'. Be that as it may, the slow movement – in the submediant key of C – conveys deep and personal emotion in a new and, one has to say, revolutionary manner. After this, the third movement – generically a Minuet but not so called by Beethoven, showing its looser, more open structure – returns to the tonic, with a stormy, gloomy Trio in E flat minor (an extremely rare key for the period). Beethoven further loosens the formality of the classical minuet-and-trio structure by making the trio lead straight back to the main section. After all the intensity the Rondo finale is all charm and elegance – that is until the tempestuous second episode in C minor (an early instance of Beethoven's 'C minor mood'). There are some magical shifts of tonality later on before the movement, and the sonata, ends in rustling pianissimo tranquillity.

Wirral-born pianist Simon Watterton has given recitals as soloist and chamber musician all over the world, including China, Canada, the USA, Sweden and Italy as well as extensively in the UK and Republic of Ireland. He made his concerto debut at London's Cadogan Hall and featured as a Rising Star in International Piano Magazine when he performed all the Beethoven piano sonatas in London. He has appeared at the Wigmore Hall, St John's Smith Square and the Purcell Room, and performed live on Radio 3's In Tune and for Classic FM. As a writer, he selected and wrote the foreword for a new edition of Frank Bridge's piano music (Dover).



4.05pm Simone Tavoni

Sonata in C minor Op 10 no 1

Allegro molto e con brio — Adagio molto — Finale: Prestissimo

Right away one may notice the extreme tempo markings for all three movements: this sonata is already fully characteristic of what the world knows as Beethoven's C minor mood – tempestuous, revolutionary, deeply personal. The first movement opens with a bump as if to say: 'Here I am, take it or leave it.' In regular sonata form, the exposition and recapitulation are so terse, with quite complex rhythmic and harmonic phraseology, that Beethoven's instinctive (though also highly conscious) feeling for balance leads him to construct his development on a long-breathed melodic 'episode'. The deeply felt, occasionally ungainly, slow movement in the submediant key of A flat major gives an instant sense of relaxing into a deeply personal space. In the truncated sonata form, its 'development' section consists startlingly of a single fortissimo chord – another 'take it or leave it' moment. The somewhat drawn-out coda, beautiful as it is, shows that Beethoven still had some way to go before he could bring such a movement to a completely convincing close: but, as one of the quickest learners in musical history, he manages this already in the Largo e mesto of Op 10 no 3. Beethoven's prestissimo marking for his short, tense, humorously disquieting finale shows a man not afraid of provoking. The development is exceptionally short, a mere eleven bars: nothing is allowed to impede Beethoven's urgency till the coda takes us into the unexpected key of D flat major and slows to a crawl, as if to say 'Denk' es, o Seele', before the final sprint to the finishing post – a quiet, tense rustle and (again unexpectedly) in the major key.

Simone Alessandro Tavoni has given recitals internationally across Europe and U.S in venue such the Southbank Centre, Wigmore Hall, Royal Festival Hall, St Martin in the Fields, Steinway Hall in London, Liszt Museum in Budapest, Palau de la Musica Catalana in Barcelona, the Aarhus concert hall and the Florence Conservatory hall. In 2019, Simone has been selected as a Parklane Group Artist, as Keyboard Charitable Trust Artist and received the Luciano and Giancarla Berti full-ride scholarship to attend the Aspen Music Festival and School studying with renowned professor Fabio Bidini. Simone graduated from the Royal College of Music with Professor Andrew Ball and has recently attained an Artist Diploma at Trinity Laban Conservatoire with Professors Deniz Gelenbe and Peter Tuite. He began his musical education in Italy with Professor Marco Podesta and pursued his studies at the Liszt Academy of Budapest with Dr Kecskes Balazs and in Germany at the Hochschule fur Musik un Darstellende of Stuttgart with Dr Peter Nagy. In 2016 he was selected for the BBC Pathway scheme and he is a Fellow at the Aspen Music Festival and School.



4.30pm Colin Stone

Sonata in F major Op 10 no 2

Allegro — Menuetto: Allegretto — Presto

The second of Beethoven's Op 10 trilogy is the lightest and most genial of the three, as is usual in his early sets (Op 2 and the Op 12 Violin Sonatas). The somewhat whimsical opening Allegro evokes so strongly Beethoven's already fully developed independent spirit: not one bar could be mistaken for another composer, for all that this sonata is sometimes referred to as Haydnesque. Beethoven balances the somewhat episodic nature of his exposition, built up from many short contrasted motifs, with a flowing development section in longer phrase units. Already in Op 7 Beethoven had developed the traditional minuet into a more through-composed vehicle for deep expression. He does so again in the second movement of this sonata, contrasting a rather troubled F minor main section with a consoling Trio in D flat major with a singing line and some beautiful harmonic detail. The Presto finale is often described as fugal, though the fugal writing is fairly rudimentary. We can be sure that Beethoven could have written a solid fugue if he had wanted to, but here his intention is surely to liven up and give ballast to a basically homophonic movement in an unmistakable if rather free sonata form. The presto momentum is unstoppable and the movement ends most effectively and without the slightest let up.

Colin Stone's career as a performer began in the late 1980s. He was encouraged by Sir Charles Groves at the finals of the 1985 Young Concert Artist's Trust and went on to win the Royal Over-Seas League piano competition in 1986. A subsequent debut at the Wigmore Hall and numerous broadcasts on BBC Radio 3 helped to establish his growing reputation and has led to performances around the world. A number of acclaimed recordings followed both of solo repertoire and chamber music with the London Mozart Trio, which he founded in 1989. He gave his first cycle of Beethoven's Piano Sonatas in 2005 and, with the violinist Krzysztof Smietana, will perform the Beethoven Violin Sonatas in 2020.

Colin Stone is a professor at the Royal Academy of Music in London. Details of his other recordings and forthcoming concerts can be found on www.colinstone.co.uk



4.50pm Mengyang Pan

Sonata in D major Op 10 no 3

**Presto — Largo e mesto — Menuetto: Allegro — Rondo:
Allegro**

Often referred to as Beethoven's first completely realised masterpiece among the piano sonatas, this fine work – despite having no nickname – has remained a firm favourite with pianists and audiences and a staple of the repertoire. The only one of the three Op 10 sonatas in four movements, its opening Presto is irrepressibly energetic yet tightly organised motivically, all the material being derived from the opening: a descending four-note scale and a rising third and semitone. Indeed, one can easily show that the entire sonata is based on the opening four bars – ending as they do on a fermata which will come into its own in the finale. The slow movement, 'broad and sad', has long been celebrated as a touchstone for Beethoven's ability to express deep personal emotion, and he was rarely so subjective in later sonatas – perhaps until the Hammerklavier. The sweetly singing Menuetto seems to arise out of the gloom of the Largo like balm on troubled waters: its Trio is busy and slightly banal – possibly a deliberate respite on Beethoven's part. The explosively witty Rondo finale opens on the subdominant and Beethoven plays with our expectations throughout, breaking off and restarting abruptly and leading us through all kinds of keys. This movement surely influenced the finale of the slightly later 2nd Symphony.

Mengyang Pan was born in China and has been living in the UK since 2000. She began her piano study at the age of three before becoming a junior student at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. At the age of 14, she left China to study at the Purcell School in the UK with professor Tessa Nicholson. Upon graduating with high honours, she went on to complete her musical education at the Royal College of Music, training under Professors Gordon Fergus-Thompson and Vanessa Latache. The prize winner of many competitions including Rina Sala Gallo International Piano competition, Bromsgrove International Young Musician's Platform, Dudley International Piano Competition, Norah Sands Award, MBF Educational Award, Mengyang has performed in many prestigious venues such as the Royal Festival Hall, Wigmore Hall, Cadogan Hall, Bridgewater Hall and Birmingham Symphony Hall, among many others. As soloist, Mengyang has appeared with many orchestras and her collaboration with conductors such as Maestro Vladimir Ashkenazy, John Wilson and Mikk Murdvee has gained the highest acclaim. Mengyang also finds much joy in teaching. In 2019, Mengyang was appointed piano professor at the Royal College of Music in London. She also teaches at Imperial College.



5.20pm Callum McLachlan

Sonata in C minor Op 13 'Pathétique'

**Grave. Allegro di molti e con brio — Adagio cantabile —
Rondo: Allegro**

Second in popularity only to the Moonlight, the slightly earlier Pathétique sustains perhaps an even higher level of invention across its three highly contrasted movements. Although it was his second sonata in C minor (after Op 10 no 1), the Pathétique is the one that first fully articulates Beethoven's famous C minor mood as seen in the many masterpieces in that key, including of course the final sonata that finishes our traversal. The title indicates that the sonata has to do with pathos, defined as feelings of pity, sympathy and sorrow – a sonata in which elegance and formal perfection make way for a new warmth and humanity as well as a certain degree of melodrama. Beethoven's innovation in the first movement is the alternation of a slow, weighty, questing introduction marked Grave with a fast, exhilarating yet serious main sonata form Allegro di molto e con brio. Shortened versions of the Grave introduction recur at two key points, the beginning of the development and as the first part of the coda. Not noticeably a great melodist, Beethoven in his slow movement produces one of the world's most famous tunes – too famous to have avoided the fate of being turned into cheap popular songs ('More Than Love' etc). The original is a simple (but not unadorned) rondo based on a theme clearly borrowed from the slow movement of Mozart's C minor Sonata – Mozart smooth, sophisticated and sublime while Beethoven is human and warmly emotional. Beethoven's Allegro finale is also a rondo: here the pathos is gentler: wistful, occasionally more urgent or angry, devoid of pretension. With Beethoven, 'what you see is what you get'.

Callum McLachlan, 20, was born into a family of musicians. Entering Chetham's School of Music at age 11, he studied with Dina Parakhina. He currently studies at the Universität Mozarteum in Salzburg. He has performed at major concert venues in the UK, Europe and USA, including Beethoven's 3rd Piano Concerto at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, works by Britten in Steinway Hall London and Liszt's 2nd Piano Concerto at RNCM Concert Hall and at the Turner Sims hall in Southampton. He made his New York recital debut in 2019 and has recorded Beethoven's Pathétique Sonata in Salzburg. He has won 1st prizes in the Welsh International Piano Competition, The Youth Scottish International Piano Competition and RNCM Chopin Competition. He has also won the Musical Odyssey Talent Unlimited Prize.



5.45pm Petr Limonov
Sonata in E major Op 14 no 1
Allegro — Allegretto — Rondo: Allegro comodo

The pair of exquisite sonatas Op 14 show how much Beethoven had relaxed and almost been assimilated into polite society by his late 20s: no longer the angry young man from Bonn, he shows himself capable of writing music of great elegance and a sort of shining goodness. Perhaps this is just the calm before the storm: within the next two years Beethoven had to come to terms with his inevitable deafness and had entered his heroic 'middle period' style, largely (though not completely) crowding out music of such grace and 'domesticity'. It is hardly surprising that these sonatas have become such favourites with amateur pianists. They were dedicated to one of his patrons, the Baroness Josefa von Braun, whose husband was the court theatre director in Vienna. Both sonatas have just three movements. The first, in the warm key of E major, opens with a chorale-like theme in long notes. There is a wealth of varied material such as only Beethoven could render as a seamless, organic flow. The development is concerned mainly with a beautiful new right hand theme in octaves – singing octaves, not virtuoso ones! The second movement has the feel of a legendary tale about it: it was apparently a favourite of the composer who used to 'tear through it', obviously carried away by his own genius as the movement is quite gentle. A fine Rondo, alternating a singing theme (again in octaves) with scalic passages and a more animated central theme in G major, concludes the sonata.

Petr Limonov was born in Moscow in 1984 and studied at the Central Music School. After winning the 1st prize at the Nikolai Rubinstein piano competition in Paris (1998) he started giving concerts in Europe, Russia and Japan. He subsequently studied at the Royal Academy of Music, in Paris and at the Royal College of Music. In 2012 he became the principal conductor of the London Soloists Philharmonia orchestra. He frequently appears in UK and Europe collaborating, among others, with Nicola Benedetti, Laura van der Heijden, Jennifer Pike, Van Kujik Quartet, Leonard Elschenbroich and Liana Isakadze. He has recorded for Decca, Onyx Classics, Chandos and Champs Hill labels; the '1948' album, recorded with Laura van der Heijden, received the 'Edison Klassiek' award in 2018. Petr's notable appearances include La Roque d'Antheron festival (Boris Berezovsky's Carte Blanche, broadcast by radio France Musique), Wigmore Hall, iTunes Festival, Cadogan Hall, Kings Place, St Martin-in-the-Fields, Southbank Centre, the Great Hall of Moscow Conservatory, a recital in the Duke's Hall for HRH Prince Charles, TV appearances for BBC Proms Extra and broadcasts for BBC Radio 3 and 'Culture' TV channel (Russia).