



ST MARY'S PERIVALE

BEETHOVEN PIANO SONATA FESTIVAL

Programme for Session 2:

Saturday 3 October, 7pm–10pm

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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7.00pm Ashley Fripp
Sonata in G major Op 14 no 2
Allegro — Andante — Scherzo: Allegro assai

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 he had to come to terms with his 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 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 second of the pair, in G major, is perhaps more 'domestic' in feeling. The first movement is in long lyrical lines almost throughout, though this does not preclude some more dramatic writing in the development section, with the left hand taking the theme. The humorous, yet also singing, second movement is a set of variations on a simple binary theme, first part staccato, second part legato. The ending seems to be petering out when Beethoven ends with a Haydnesque surprise (spoiler alert!). Beethoven's finale is a Scherzo in name – his only work to end with a scherzo. Skittish and quick-witted, it shows a very different side of Beethoven from his usual heroic, tragic or profound persona. But, as Donald Tovey insisted, Beethoven was a complete artist – one of the most complete who have ever lived.

British pianist Ashley Fripp has performed extensively throughout Europe, Asia, North America, Africa and Australia in many prestigious concert halls, including the Carnegie Hall (New York), Musikverein (Vienna), Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), the Philharmonie Halls of Cologne, Paris, Luxembourg and Warsaw, the Bozar (Brussels) and the Royal Festival, Barbican and Wigmore Halls (London). He has won prizes at over a dozen national and international competitions, including at the Hamamatsu (Japan), Birmingham and Leeds International Piano Competitions, the Royal Over-Seas League Competition, the Concours Européen de Piano (France) and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama's Gold Medal, and was a Rising Star of the European Concert Hall Organisation. He has performed in the Chipping Campden, Edinburgh, Brighton, Bath, Buxton, City of London and St Magnus International Festivals, the Oxford International Piano Festival, the Festival Pontino di Musica (Italy) and the Powsin International Piano Festival (Poland), and on BBC television and radio as well as for many European national radio stations. Ashley currently studies with Eliso Virsaladze at the Scuola di Musica di Fiesole (Italy).



7.25pm Leslie Howard

Sonata in B flat major Op 22

**Allegro con brio — Adagio con molto espressione — Menuetto
— Rondo: Allegretto**

On the cusp of the new century, the Op 22 sonata represented for Beethoven himself a kind of staging post: though we mere mortals may consider several of the earlier sonatas as masterpieces – and many of them enjoy greater popularity – Beethoven seems to have regarded it as the the first sonata in which he had achieved absolute mastery and a kind of 'normality' in his handling of symphonic sonata structure. In this sense we can regard it as a presage of the enormously confident, original and masterly sonatas of the 'middle period' such as the three Op 31, the Waldstein and Appassionata. The key of B flat generally drew from Beethoven a clear, bright sonority and a forthright utterance: one thinks also of the 2nd Concerto and above all, of course, the Hammerklavier, Beethoven's only other sonata in B flat. The material is attractive throughout if perhaps not especially distinctive: this, plus its lack of a title or nickname, has led to the sonata being less often played than many of its equals and near-contemporaries. The first movement, in a model textbook sonata form, contains a notable passage at the end of the development section, an exciting build-up on the dominant, anticipating the even greater similar moment in the Waldstein and the visionary one in the 4th Symphony (where, however, the build-up is actually in the tonic key). The deeply felt Adagio movement, also in sonata form, has an astonishing anticipation of Wagner's Tristan Prelude in its development section. The third and fourth movements both look back to the 18th century and the classical era that Beethoven himself would develop to its ultimate conclusion before spearheading its dissolution in his late sonatas and quartets. The lively Minuetto, with its blustery minor-key Trio, is followed by a graceful Rondo finale which always reminds me of the sonatas of Carl Maria von Weber. Yet even here there is an intensely Beethovenian third section with some harsh dissonances that must have raised a few eyebrows in 1800.

Leslie Howard has balanced his prodigious pianistic recording career – more than 140 CDs – with an international concert itinerary which has seen him performing regularly throughout the world for more than half a century, always with a repertoire that seeks to extend the audience's experience. He has appeared regularly with the world's finest orchestras, and has also pursued a distinguished career as a chamber musician. He is also a renowned music scholar and editor.

Benjamin Falovega



7.55pm Mishka Rushdie Momen

Sonata in A flat major Op 26 'Funeral March'

Andante con variazioni — Scherzo: Allegro molto — Marcia funebre: Maestoso andante — Allegro

After the large-scale, symphonic B flat sonata Op 22 of a year or so earlier, Beethoven seems to have felt the need to experiment with sonata form, writing a number of more open, freely structured works including the two famous Fantasy Sonatas Op 27 before returning to more formally structured writing in the Op 31 sonatas (and Op 30 Violin Sonatas). Op 26 opens not with a sonata allegro but with a set of variations on a gentle, elegant, minuet-like theme, surely Beethoven's nod to Mozart (thinking particularly of the similar theme and variations of the A major sonata). The theme is followed by five variations, the fourth being in the minor and the final fifth reminiscent of the fluent, somewhat discursive writing of Johann Baptist Cramer whose Etudes Beethoven much admired. All four movements are in the tonic A flat, though the merrily explosive Scherzo, placed second, opens as if in the dominant of E flat. The Funeral March slow movement made the sonata famous and was played at the composer's own funeral. Following this, the finale is a short, somewhat mystical moto perpetuo. Who knows, perhaps these last two movements influenced Chopin's epic Second Sonata, similarly following a funeral march with a (truly mysterious in Chopin's case) perpetual motion finale: at any rate we know he liked and taught this sonata, though he found a lot of Beethoven too rough for his tastes.

Mishka Rushdie Momen studied with Joan Havill and Imogen Cooper at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and has also studied with Richard Goode and Sir Andrés Schiff, with whom she currently studies at the Kronberg Academy. This study is funded by the Henle Foundation. She has given solo recitals at major U.K. venues such as the Barbican Hall, London, the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, Symphony Hall, Birmingham, and abroad in the USA, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Switzerland and India. Sir Andrés Schiff has presented her in recitals in cities across Europe and in New York. Committed equally to chamber music and solo playing, her musical partners have included Steven Isserlis, Midori and members of the Endellion, Belcea, Orion and Artemis String Quartets. Mishka Rushdie Momen's debut solo recording, 'Variations', was released in October 2019 on the SOMM label, and her playing has been broadcast on BBC radio and television, France Musique, New York's WQXR, Canada's CBC and on regional radio stations across the United States. A recital with Steven Isserlis was streamed and broadcast live from Wigmore Hall on BBC Radio 3 in the first week of the reopening of the Hall after the Covid-19 lockdown.



8.20pm Evelyne Berezovsky

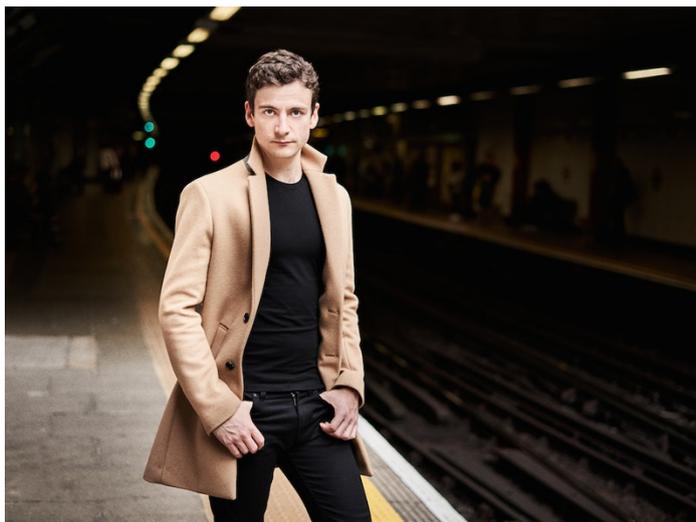
Sonata in E flat Op 27 no 1

Andante - Allegro - Andante - Allegro molto e vivace — Adagio con espressione — Allegro vivace

With the two Op 27 sonatas, written on the cusp of the 19th century, the visionary Beethoven opens the way to the entire Romantic era in music. Their freer yet still disciplined forms and intensely personal expressive language prefigure the very best of Berlioz, Schumann, Chopin, Liszt, Wagner and the Russian Romantics. The opening movement of the "Moonlight" has become the most instantly and universally recognised piano piece ever written. With such an iconic companion-piece, it is perhaps no surprise that the first of the Fantasy-Sonatas has had to struggle for its due recognition, yet it is a fine work which no experienced Beethoven lover would wish to be without. Its four movements describe a particularly satisfying tonal progression from E flat to C minor to A flat and back to E flat, with Beethoven directing the pianist to join all the movements without a break: the third, slow movement in fact leads straight into the finale without a formal cadence. Within its four-movement structure there is further freedom and variety: the first movement opens pianissimo with a mysterious, murmuring theme which is interrupted out of the blue by a much faster, virtuosic passage in a new key (subtly hinted at by Beethoven in the Andante) and a different time signature. The 2nd movement, a scherzo by default though not so called by Beethoven, is an exciting whirlwind of arpeggios with an explosive, jazzy trio. The Adagio con espressione third movement has a serene beauty: its surprising brevity is explained by its repetition at the end of the fast, exhilarating finale, summing up this bountiful work with organic inevitability.

Born in Moscow in 1991, Evelyne is the daughter of eminent pianist Boris Berezovsky. She started playing the piano at the age of five and two years later joined the Purcell School of Music. She then studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London with Hamish Milne, in Italy with Elisso Virssaladze, and with Rena Shereshevskaya in Paris. She has played in public since she was 7 years old and has now performed at major venues in London, including the Wigmore Hall, St John's Smith Square and the Southbank Centre, and at venues in Germany, Belgium, Holland, France, Norway, Russia and Japan, including a recital at the prestigious piano festival in La Roque d'Antheron. In February 2012 she won 1st prize in the Lagny-sur-Marne International Piano Competition in France. She has often played for Radio France, including a performance at the Fête de la Musique at the Olympia, Paris. Evelyne has given concerts and recitals in the UK, France, Belgium, Germany and the USA, including performances at Lorin Maazel's Festival in Castelton, VA and Steinway Hall, New York.

Kaupo Kikkas



8.40pm Alexander Ullman

Sonata in C sharp minor Op 27 no 2 'Moonlight'
Adagio sostenuto — Allegretto — Presto

It is difficult to find anything to add to the countless descriptions of the famous 2nd Fantasy-Sonata, the 'Moonlight'. Most music lovers will know that the title is not Beethoven's and in any case refers only to the first movement. That iconic first movement is in a discernible sonata form but the normal outlines are blurred into a free flow of poetic fantasy to which each listener responds in his or her own way. In contrast with the first sonata, all three movements are in the tonic key. The minuet-like major key Allegretto second movement is all grace and naivety, with a rougher, bucolic trio. The Presto agitato finale – Beethoven does not mince his words – offers a new level of sheer physical excitement in pianism, with repercussions stretching far into the future to movements like the Precipitato finale of Prokofiev's 7th Sonata. To balance the freedom of the opening movement, Beethoven's finale is in clear and well defined sonata form. Its torrent of perpetual motion semiquavers is broken only by a kinetically charged third theme of staccato repeated chords and the recitativo passage near the end, where the music seems almost to exhaust itself before the final headlong onslaught.

Alexander Ullman was born in London in 1991 and studied at the Purcell School, the Curtis Institute and the Royal College of Music, completing his Artist Diploma as the Benjamin Britten Piano Fellow in 2017. He won the Franz Liszt International Piano Competition in Budapest in 2011 and from 2014 to 2017 he was represented by Young Classical Artists Trust. In 2017 he won the highly prestigious International Franz Liszt Piano Competition in Utrecht. Since then he has played at important venues throughout the world. Recent highlights include performances with the NCPA in Beijing and Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona as well as his debuts at the Lucerne Piano Festival, Klavierfestival Ruhr and Montreal Chamber Music Festival. He also made his debut with the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra and performed recitals across Europe, Georgia, Mexico, Korea and his native UK. In spring 2019, his first album on Rubicon, featuring Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite, Prokofiev's Six Pieces from Cinderella, as well as Stravinsky's Petrushka and Firebird suites, received rave reviews.



9.05pm Julian Jacobson

Sonata in D major Op 28 'Pastoral'

Allegro — Andante — Scherzo: Allegro vivace — Rondo:
Allegro ma non troppo

The nickname is not original but it has always seemed appropriate for this relaxed, bucolic sonata – perhaps the final creation of Beethoven's (sometimes) genial, good-humoured youth before the mental crisis of the following year catapulted him into the stern heroism of the middle period masterpieces. Beethoven loved nature and was not above spending whole nights in the open – once being arrested for vagrancy. The drone-like opening, with its 74 repeated Ds in the bass, conjures up the sound of the bagpipes. Above these, a gentle, subtle melody in irregular phrase lengths slowly flowers. A more perky theme leads to a wondrous, spring-like passage with running quavers and another perky closing theme, humorously syncopated. The development section, built on the last four bars of the opening theme, with much imitative writing and mainly in minor keys, gives the movement sufficient ballast for its place in a sonata. The second movement, though in D minor (with a delightful major key Trio), is scarcely less good-humoured than the first. It remained a favourite of the composer. The deft, witty Scherzo – Beethoven's delight in observing lambs gambolling? – has a Trio in which the same primitive, shepherd's-pipe tune is put through four different harmonisations. The Rondo finale is a celebration of pastoral indolence – though, as in the first movement, Beethoven is too much of the strong-willed creator not to add to his mixture some more serious music in minor keys, and he winds up the whole sonata with a virtuosic whirlwind of a coda.

*Julian Jacobson enjoys a distinguished career as pianist, composer, writer, teacher and conductor. Trained classically at the Royal College of Music London (where he now teaches, as well as at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire) and Oxford University, he was also the inaugural pianist of the National Youth Jazz Orchestra of Great Britain. He has performed in more than 40 countries on five continents. Frequently appearing in China, he is Guest Professor at Xiamen University, and gives masterclasses internationally. A large and varied discography includes rarities such as the four sonatas of Carl Maria von Weber and the Violin Sonatas of Georges Enesco. He is Chairman of the Beethoven Piano Society of Europe and is in the process of recording the 32 sonatas. In 2003 he made history by performing all the sonatas from memory in a single day, repeating this in 2004 and 2013; he plans a final 'marathon' for 2022. He has composed several film and TV scores including *To The Lighthouse* and *We Think The World Of You*, as well as instrumental pieces and songs. His virtuoso transcriptions for piano duet of Gershwin's *An American in Paris* and *Second Rhapsody* were recently recorded with his duo partner Mariko Brown for SOMM.*



9.35pm Olga Paliy

Sonata in G major Op 31 no 1

Allegro vivace — Adagio grazioso — Rondo: Allegretto — Presto

Even today this is probably Beethoven's least played piano sonata: past writers even used to suggest that it was a sort of ugly duckling among the 32. Yet the sonata is full of rewards for the attentive listener or player. The first movement makes much sport with a syncopated motif anticipating the main beat. It is full of an abrupt nervous energy typical of Beethoven's first middle-period works in which he wanted to cast off the last vestiges of 18th-century formality and strike out on new paths (as also for instance in the C minor Violin Sonata Op 30 no 2). Beethoven had come close to despair and suicide in his Heiligenstadt Testament and was more than ever conscious of his destiny and obligation as a great composer. The second movement, perhaps the only instance in music of the odd direction Adagio grazioso, is an extended parody of an Italian operatic aria or duet, complete with thirds, sixths, trills and cadenzas. In the rich-textured coda Beethoven finally shows us the beating heart of the sonata. The Rondo finale, an amiable, unhurried movement, again culminates in a more positive and urgent coda, marked Presto, to end with the same spirit of supercharged nervous energy with which the sonata opened.

Olga Paliy is a Ukrainian pianist successfully combining performance, research and teaching in her musical career. Giving her first solo recital at the age of 13, Olga received her musical education in the Ukraine and the UK. After successful completion of her research at the RNCM under the primary supervision of David Horne Olga was awarded PhD in April 2017. In her research Olga concentrated on Russian composer Sergey Taneyev and his contrapuntal technique. Olga's appearances in numerous international piano competitions led her to winning the top prizes in Ragusa-Ibla International Music Competition (Italy), The Art of 20th Century (Italy), The Art of Accompaniment (Ukraine), the Emmanuel Prize (UK) and Sussex International Piano Competition (UK). Olga has appeared as a recitalist, chamber musician and soloist with orchestra in major venues in the UK, Italy, Switzerland, Russia and Ukraine interpreting wide range of repertoire, from Bach and Scarlatti to Carl Vine and James MacMillan. She has worked with distinguished pianists such as Norma Fisher, Arie Vardi, Michel Beroff, Anton Voight, Charles Rosen, Stephen Hough, Angela Hewitt, Michel Dalberto, Nelson Goerner, Garrick Ohlsson and Jerome Rose. Since 2016 Olga has been a regular jury member of the Riga International Competition for Young Pianists, held annually in Latvia.