

The Young Beethoven

Sunday March 27, 2022

2:30pm

Works of Ludwig van Beethoven [1770 – 1827]

Nancy DiNovo, Violin

Yuel Yawney, Violin

Rebecca Buthven, Viola

Brian Mix, Cello

Michael Vaughan, Double bass

François Houler, Clarinet

Jesse Read, Bassoon

Steve Denroche, French Horn

Andrew Clark, French Horn

Dawn Haylett, French Horn

George Zukerman, host-commentator

Proudly sponsored by Regan Hunt

DUO, # 1 in C major, W.o.O 27* [for clarinet and bassoon]

[written between 1789 and 1792]

Allegro comodo

There were a number of prominent wind virtuosi employed by the Court in Bonn, and since Beethoven played in the Elector's orchestra, the three duos, listed as W.o.O 27 were presumably written with specific players in mind. The original manuscript has been lost, and the duos were not published until 1810 although it is likely that they were composed around 1791.

TRIO Opus 9, no 1 in G Major [for violin, viola, cello]

[written between 1797 and 1798]

Scherzo, allegro

During the years 1797 and 1798 Beethoven wrote his three trios, Opus 9, apparently in preparation for his first quartets which would arrive a year later. An earlier trio [Opus 3], written in 1794 is in serenade form with multiple movements, but his Opus 9 trios are in the classical four-movement form which characterized the quartets of Haydn and Mozart and which Beethoven adopted for his own early quartets.

QUARTET, Opus 18, no 4 [for string quartet]

[written between 1798 and 1800]

Andante, scherzoso quasi allegretto

Beethoven's first quartets were a set of six, Opus 18, written between 1798 and 1800 and published one year later. In his book on the Beethoven quartets the American scholar Joseph Kerman summarizes the impact of these quartets: "they display technical mastery, depth of thought, and intensity of musical inspiration unsurpassed by any other composer."

QUINTET, W.o.O. 208 * [for clarinet, three horns, bassoon]

[written between 1788 and 1793; completed, Willie Hess 1957]

Adagio Maestoso - Allegro

One of Beethoven's earliest sketches, found among his nephew Karl's papers, was for an incomplete quintet for wind instruments probably written when he was 18 or 19 years old. In 1957 the work was completed by German musicologist, Willie Hess.

SEXTET, Op. 81B [for two horns with string quartet]

[written in 1795]

Allegro con brio

When Beethoven was already 25 years old he wrote this sextet for two horns and string quartet. He modelled in on Mozart quintet for horn and strings. Why, then, two horns? One theory is that there were two virtuoso horn soloists working in Bonn, each of whom requested a solo work for their instrument. He accommodated both by writing a single work in which the two players could shine simultaneously.

interval**SEPTET, Op. 20** [for clarinet, horn, bassoon, violin, viola, cello and bass]

[written between 1799 and 1802]

Adagio, Allegro - Adagio cantabile – Tempo di Menuetto – Theme and variations, andante

Scherzo, allegro molto e vivace – Andante con moto alla Marcia - presto

Completed in 1800, the Septet, Op.20 was the most ambitious chamber work that Beethoven had ever undertaken. It foreshadowed the symphonies to come. [His first symphony was Opus 21]. Although The Septet is in serenade form, with multiple movements, it is orchestral in approach and akin to the Octet which Schubert later modelled on this work, it lies half way between chamber music and orchestra. During his lifetime, the work was among Beethoven's most popular works, and at one point he is reputed to have declared, "I wish the work had been burned...nobody wants to listen to anything else I have written since!"

*W.o.O – Werke Ohne Opus, "Works without Opus numbers"