FACULTY RECITAL

KATHLEEN WINKLER, violin
JON KIMURA PARKER, piano

THE COMPLETE CYCLE
OF BEETHOVEN’S SONATAS
FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO

THREE CONCERTS:
FEBRUARY 16, 19 AND 22

Concert III
Tuesday, February 22, 2005
8:00 p.m.
Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY
Sonata No. 6 in A Major, Op. 30 No. 1
Allegro vivace
Adagio molto espressivo
Allegretto con Variazioni

Sonata No. 8 in G Major, Op. 30 No. 3
Allegro assai
Tempo di minuetto, ma molto moderato e grazioso
Allegro vivace

INTERMISSION

Sonata No. 9 in A Minor, Op. 47 “Kreutzer”
Adagio sostenuto – Presto
Andante con Variazioni
Finale. Presto

The reverberative acoustics of Duncan Recital Hall magnify the slightest sound made by the audience. Your care and courtesy will be appreciated. The taking of photographs and use of recording equipment are prohibited.
Compared to the other chamber music genres in which he composed, Beethoven's interest in the sonata for piano and violin was no more than a passing fancy. He turned out piano sonatas in an almost continuous stream throughout his career, and returned repeatedly to the string quartet and the piano trio, but Beethoven wrote nine of his piano and violin sonatas within a single six-year period, from 1797 to 1803, with the tenth following nine years later, in 1812. Perhaps Beethoven was put off by the genre's traditional status as an "accompanied" keyboard sonata for amateurs, in which the violin part was optional. It was in this form that the sonata for piano and violin became one of the most popular genres in the second half of the eighteenth century. The young Mozart found it a convenient vehicle to flatter his royal patrons, and by his eleventh birthday he had published sixteen such sonatas, dedicated to a variety of princesses and countesses. As a young man looking for work, first in Mannheim in 1778, and then in Vienna in 1781, he again turned to the sonata for piano and violin, publishing two sets of six each. But in these latter works, as in the last four sonatas that Mozart composed in the mid-1780s, he transformed the genre into a challenging dialogue for two equal and indispensable partners.

When Beethoven began composing his piano and violin sonatas, he modeled them on Mozart's later works, although this would not have been obvious from the title pages of his first three published sets. The three opus 12 sonatas, published in 1799, and the pair that was published as opp. 23 and 24 in 1801, were advertised as "sonatas for the piano with a violin." The three opus 30 sonatas, published in 1803, had an even more conservative designation: "sonatas for the piano with the accompaniment of a violin." Beethoven nevertheless took full advantage of the violin's resources from his very first set, which includes double and triple stops, florid passagework, and lyrical passages on the E string. By the time he got to the opus 30 sonatas, he was composing some of the most difficult and idiomatic violin music of the time.

Where Beethoven's first eight sonatas for piano and violin were composed for publication, the last two were written for specific performances by two of the leading violinists of the day, and were then published several years after their composition. The Sonata in A Major, Op. 47, was composed in 1803 for the Vienna debut of the mulatto violinist George Bridgetower, with Beethoven playing the piano part. The sonata's nickname, "Kreutzer," somewhat confusingly refers to the French violinist Rodolphe Kreutzer, to whom Beethoven dedicated the work when he published it in 1805. The Sonata in G Major, Op. 96, was composed for an 1812 concert by Pierre Rode, another French violinist, and Archduke Rudolph, a pianist and patron of Beethoven's, to whom the sonata was later dedicated. It was published in 1816. The origins of these latter two works indicate how far Beethoven had brought the piano and violin sonata from its initial role as a work for amateurs. Beethoven acknowledged this transformation with his rather awkward designation on the title page of the "Kreutzer" Sonata: "written in a very concertante style, somewhat like a concerto."

Sonata No. 6 in A Major, Op. 30 No. 1

This sonata has a relaxed and lyrical character that is reminiscent of both the "Spring" Sonata and of opus 96. The opening theme of the first movement begins in the bass but quickly moves to the upper voices, although it is hard to
say exactly which voice, since each presents its own continuation. Beethoven would later use this same technique of textural diffusion with the opening theme of the “Eroica” Symphony. After a quick modulation to the dominant, the second theme is presented in a more typical fashion—first in the right hand of the piano, accompanied by an Alberti bass, and then in the violin, with arpeggiated triplets in the accompaniment. This second theme plays a prominent role in the development, where it is first split up between the two instruments and then turned into a fugue subject. The second movement, a three-part song form, is unusual in that the violinist plays continuously. She presents the first statements of both halves of the opening melody and then plays a graceful counter-melody when the pianist takes his turn. The A section is dominated by a pervasive dotted rhythm which stops abruptly at the beginning of the B section, and is eventually replaced by sextuplets. When the opening melody returns, these two conflicting rhythms are combined. As with opus 96, Beethoven concludes with a set of variations in a moderate tempo, rather than the typical rondo. We can see him moving away from the traditional type of ornamental variations on a theme, and instead focusing more on contrasting characters and textures. After the fifth variation, which is in the minor mode, with a learned contrapuntal texture, there is a transitional passage in which Beethoven develops the Scottish snap rhythm, which had appeared fleetingly at the end of the theme. This leads into the last variation, a light-hearted 6/8 allegro that concludes the sonata.

Sonata No. 8 in G Major, Op. 30 No. 3

In the opening theme of this sonata, Beethoven again explores some unusual textural possibilities. Both instruments play a quiet, quickly ascending figure in unison, which repeats and then leads to a clipped cadence in the piano that is framed by high chirps in the violin. The pianist then begins a melody that is quickly taken over by the violinist and we barrel along at an ever more frantic pace, until the opening unison figure returns, fortissimo, to announce the transition to the dominant. This rapid fire opening leads into an unusually concise sonata form, with a brief development and no coda. The second movement is a minuet and trio, rather than the more typical song form, but its character is more lyrical than dance-like. After the opening minuet returns, with hardly any variation in the setting or the ornamentation, the trio unexpectedly comes back as well, but it is interrupted by a dissonant chord, which alternates with the dominant for several measures until finally the pianist leads us back into a third statement of the minuet, with the melody now fragmented between the two instruments. This too breaks off and the movement comes to a close. The finale is the shortest, and wittiest, of any of the sonatas. What appears to be the opening melody, in the right hand of the piano, apparently turns out to be a vamp that accompanies the brief gypsy-like melody in the violin, but then it becomes part of the melody after all. The overall form of the movement is characterized by the same playful confusion. The light-hearted character leads us to expect a typical rondo, but the first episode, which presents hardly any contrast at all, breaks off after only a few bars and returns to the banal opening theme. The rest of the movement focuses single-mindedly on this theme, eventually landing on an emphatic half cadence that unmistakably signals closure. But the opening theme returns once again, in an unexpectedly remote key, and then finally wends its way back for the final cadence.
Sonata No. 9 in A Minor, Op. 47 “Kreutzer”

The “Kreutzer” Sonata is a singular work, completely unlike any other in the piano and violin repertory. It is not so much its harmonic language or musical form that is so radical, but the way in which it upends generic conventions. No one had ever composed a sonata for violin and piano that even approaches the enormous scale of the “Kreutzer” – in terms of length, rhetorical grandeur, and the virtuosic demands that it makes on both performers. We can sense this from the moment the violinist plays the dramatic opening gesture, which consists of four measures of continuous multiple stops. Typically, when a sonata form begins with a slow introduction, the body of the movement is in the major mode and the introduction is in the less stable minor mode, so that the tension of the opening is resolved by the entrance of the first theme. Beethoven begins this slow introduction in major, but he quickly turns to minor and stays there as the exposition begins, allowing the tension to continue building. The first theme, more motivic than melodic, consists of a rising arpeggiated figure that ends in a cadenza-like flourish, a brief pause before the continuous forward motion resumes again. The only real repose comes with the arrival of the second theme, which is not in the relative major, but in the more remote key of the major dominant. This respite proves to be short-lived, however: the pianist repeats the theme in minor and then the rapid rhythmic motion and the frantic character return. The beautiful slow movement, which provides a peaceful contrast after the relentless tension of the opening sonata form, is a far more conventional set of variations than the finale of opus 30, number 1 (or of the later opus 96). The theme is a small three-part song form in which the pianist plays the melody the first time through and the violinist plays it in the repeats. The two instruments also take turns in the variations, ornamenting the theme with a variety of typical rhythmic figurations. It is only in the last variation that we recognize the familiar elements that Beethoven uses to create the imaginative soundscape of his greatest variation movements: rapid figuration in the highest register of the piano, pizzicato in the violin, and continuous trills in both instruments. The finale is a fast-moving sonata form in 6/8 that feels monothematic (although it technically is not). The continuous rhythmic energy of the first movement returns, but the tension is replaced by joyous excitement. Beethoven originally intended this movement as the finale for opus 30, number 1 but changed his mind, perhaps because it does not fit with the lyrical character of that work, or because it is so long in proportion to the other movements. In the end he found just the right home for it. It has enough weight to balance the enormous first movement of the “Kreutzer” Sonata, and enough positive energy to provide a powerful resolution.

BIOGRAPHIES

The artistry of KATHLEEN WINKLER has earned her the plaudits of critics and audiences alike worldwide since her solo debut at the age of seventeen with the Philadelphia Orchestra. She has been heard with such orchestras as the Detroit Symphony (with which she has toured on many occasions), the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Danish Radio Orchestra, the Odense Byorkester, the Polish Slaska Philharmonic, the Grand Rapids Symphony, the Savannah Symphony, and the Phoenix Symphony, to name a few. She has toured throughout the U.S. and Canada as well as having performed in Sweden, Poland, Germany, Spain, and the Canary Islands. The recipient of numerous awards, Ms. Winkler took first prize in the First International Carl Nielsen Violin Competition which led to her sponsored debuts in Alice Tully
Hall at Lincoln Center, London’s Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room, the Kennedy Center and the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., and numerous radio broadcast performances on the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the International Voice of America.

Through a national search, Kathleen Winkler was selected by the United States Information Agency to represent the U.S. as an Artistic Ambassador on concert tours throughout the world. Her initial tour took her to Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Korea, and New Zealand. Another extended tour saw Ms. Winkler’s performances representing our country in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Algeria, Tunisia, Nigeria, and Kenya. A third tour took Ms. Winkler throughout Australia and South America.

The Philadelphia-born artist attended Indiana University where she received her Bachelor of Music degree, magna cum laude, as well as the coveted Performer’s Certificate. She also attended the University of Michigan where she received her Master of Music degree, summa cum laude. Formerly on the faculty of the Oberlin Conservatory, Ms. Winkler is currently Professor of Violin at the Shepherd School of Music. During the summer she is on the artist faculty of the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, California, where she holds the Léni FeBland Chair in Violin.

Ms. Winkler is married to Timothy Pitts, Principal Bassist of the Houston Symphony Orchestra, and is mother to six-year-old Nina and three-year-old Kiri.

Internationally acclaimed pianist JON KIMURA PARKER was born, raised and educated in Vancouver. In the past two seasons, Dr. Parker has performed as guest soloist with the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Baltimore Symphony, the Dallas Symphony, the Florida Orchestra, the Houston Symphony, the Minnesota Orchestra, and the NHK Orchestra in Tokyo, as well every major orchestra in Canada. He has given recitals in London, New York, Chicago, Munich, Budapest, Sydney, Hong Kong, and Tokyo and has performed regularly with the Cleveland and Tokyo Quartets, Joshua Bell, Lynn Harrell, Cho-Liang Lin and Pinchas Zukerman. A versatile performer, he has also jammed with Doc Severinsen and Bobby McFerrin. Gold Medal winner at the 1984 Leeds International Piano Competition, Dr. Parker was also awarded his country’s highest honor, the Order of Canada, in 1999.

Jon Kimura Parker is Professor of Piano at the Shepherd School of Music and is Artistic Advisor of the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival. A committed educator, he has given master classes at the Steans Institute, the Banff Centre, the Brevard Festival, Caramoor’s Rising Stars, and the Juilliard School. He hosts the television series “WholeNotes” about classical music, and performs and lectures in remote regions of Canada as a founding member of “Encore Six” (formerly “Piano Six”). Dr. Parker was also seen on CNN performing in war-torn Sarajevo and has been documented frequently on CBC, as well as on PBS’s “The Visionaries.” Dr. Parker has recorded for Telarc with André Previn, Yoel Levi, and Peter Schickele. He studied with Edward Parker, Ketko Parker, Robin Wood, Marek Jabloński, and Lee Kum-Sing, as well as Adele Marcus, under whom he received his doctorate at the Juilliard School in 1988. He is married to violinist and violist Aloysia Friedmann and is father to five-year-old Sophie. For further information, please see kimura.com.