BEETHOVEN | SCHNABEL | MOÓR

CELLO MUSIC FROM AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

SAMUEL MAGILL CELLO & BETH LEVIN PIANO

Navona Records FINE MUSIC

SONATA IN A MAJOR, OP. 47 "KREUTZER" (1803) Ludwig van Beethoven

Beethoven's 9th *Violin Sonata*, his op. 47, was written in 1803 for the virtuoso George Bridgetower (1779-1860), a violinist of Afro-European heritage who was born in Poland and lived in England. Originally titled "Sonata mulattica," the Sonata was first performed by Bridgetower and Beethoven in public at 8:00 on the very morning after it was finished, most of it still in manuscript. The second movement was still lacking a separate violin part, forcing Bridgetower to read it over Beethoven's shoulder. Beethoven was astounded at the violinists's uncanny ability to read such a virtuosic work at sight and the two men immediately became friends. This friendship was short lived, however, for when Bridgetower casually made a disparaging remark about one of Beethoven's female friends, Beethoven demanded that Bridgetower return the manuscript and left the table in high dudgeon. The two never spoke again. Instead the dedication went to Rodolphe Kreutzer who never played the Sonata, declaring it unplayable and unintelligible. It is the longest and most technically demanding of any instrumental sonata with piano written prior to 1900. Lasting up to 40 minutes in duration, it is symphonic in its scope, and, unusually for its genre and time period, both the violin and the piano parts are of equal importance.

Beethoven suggested to his pupil Carl Czerny (1791-1857) that he arrange the "Kreutzer" for cello and piano, which Czerny did in 1822 for the cellist Joseph Linke. This edition as published by N. Simrock was lost for over 160 years, and not discovered until 1992 by the cellist and conductor Dmitri Markevich. This might explain why it has not entered the essential canon of cello repertoire.

Czerny made a fine and sensitive arrangement. He was mindful not only to rewrite many of the violin passages one octave down, but he greatly simplified much of it as well. He was, however, a bit overzealous in this regard, simplifying many passages where no change was necessarily required for the advanced player. I have taken the liberty of creating an alternate version which restores many passages found in the original. This was achieved by studying another, later version by the French cellist Auguste Franchomme (1808-1884). Working together with Louis Diémer (1843-1919), Franchomme arranged the complete *Sonatas for Violin and Piano* by Beethoven for cello and piano. This was published by Heugel, Paris, in 1867. Franchomme is best known for his friendship and collaboration with Chopin, who wrote for the cellist his great *Sonata for cello and piano, op. 65*. His edition of the "Kreutzer" is remarkable in that very little of the violin original was changed, creating an extremely demanding work which rivals the most formidable

concerti and concert pieces written for the cello. I have only restored those episodes which I felt were manageable enough to ensure a beautiful sound on the cello. I hope that the present edition will converge both earlier versions to create a more gratifying work.

SONATA FOR SOLO CELLO (1931) Artur Schnabel

Artur Schnabel (1882-1951) was born in Lipnik, Moravia, Austro-Hungarian Empire. Showing astounding musical gifts as a child, Schnabel's family moved to Vienna in 1888 in order that young Artur could be given the opportunity to study with the best musicians in the Empire. From 1891 he was a pupil of the great piano teacher Theodor Leschetizky (1830-1915), himself a pupil of Franz Liszt. Schnabel's official Vienna debut was given at the Bösendorfer-Saal in 1897.

Schnabel became known for his brilliant interpretations of Beethoven, Schubert, and Mozart, but performing as a soloist was never enough for this highly intellectual man. He was passionate about teaching and devoted a large part of his time to this discipline. The pianist devoted a greater share of his career performing chamber music and German lieder than most pianists of his day. Schnabel possessed a prodigious memory, becoming the first pianist to ever perform the 32 piano sonatas of Beethoven without the use of a score. Schnabel began composing at the age of 13 and before long composing became another of his passions, especially finding pleasure in writing lieder for himself and his wife Therese, already a famous contralto by the time of their marriage. After writing a large piano concerto in a late Romantic style, he later came to believe that the only way for him to fully express himself was to adopt atonality. Though he was certainly influenced by his friendship with Arnold Schoenberg, taking part in the 1st postwar performance of *Pierrot Lunaire*, he preferred to write in a free atonality rather than in the more restrictive 12-tone system. He produced five astonishing and original string quartets, three symphonies, a piano trio and a string trio. The extremely demanding *Sonata for Solo Violin*, written in 1918, is surely the longest of all solo violin works, lasting about 50 minutes.

In May of 1930, Schnabel was performing piano trios with his colleagues Carl Flesch and Gregor Piatigorsky. The one new work on the programs was a trio by Ernst Krenek, the Austrian composer of twelve-tone music. This work inspired Schnabel to begin composing again after a five year hiatus. He began sketching his

Sonata for Solo Cello right away, and it is assumed that it was Piatigorsky whom he had in mind. The *Sonata* was not finished until 1931, and he did not return to composing for five more years. Schnabel several times throughout his adult life stopped composing for no apparent reason. The Sonata is mostly atonal, but contains sudden moments of almost diatonic harmony. Many passages are reminiscent of the extreme chromaticism of Max Reger. Schnabel seems to utilize Schoenberg's concept of developing variation, so that even though he fundamentally employs the traditional sonata forms, all thematic material within each movement derives from the initial motive. His biographer Searchinger says, "The Sonata...has all the melodic beauty, lightness and clarity that might be expected from a single-voiced essay in free fantasy." One of Schnabel's unique compositional techniques is Aposiopesis, the use of frequent stops and gaps in the music, creating an almost manic fleeing from one direction and emotion to another. The second movement is an ostinato perpetual motion. The slow movement is as long as the first two combined, and is essentially a lied with constant variation. The fourth is a very fast, virtuosic dance in 7/8 time which is suddenly interrupted by a dirgelike chant contrasting with very soft pizzicato passages, and is in the form of a rondo. The *Sonata* fades away to nothing and the effect is otherworldly and haunting. Schnabel's music was received largely with incomprehension during his lifetime, and performances were few. Since the turn of the 21st century a new and appreciative audience has begun to realize his genius.

BALLADE IN E MAJOR, OP. 171 (1913) Emanuel Moór

Emanuel Moór (1863-1931), was born in Kecskemét, Hungary, the son of cantor Rafael Moór. A child prodigy, he not only exhibited pianistic talent at an early age, he won, at age 13, a competition for organ improvisation on four part fugues in Prague. Still in his teens, he became a pupil in composition of Robert Volkmann in Budapest, completing his tuition with Anton Bruckner in Vienna. He was hired as a Professor of Piano at the Szeged Conservatoire at age 18 and soon traveled widely as a piano virtuoso, touring the United States by 1885. During this time he accompanied the great Lili Lehmann while in America.

Moór and his wife Anita moved to London in 1888 and lived there for 12 years. An extremely productive composer, he wrote during this period the first two of his eight operas and the first four of his eleven

symphonies. Moór moved to Switzerland in 1901 and there he met the renowned violinist Henri Marteau for whom he wrote a number of works for the violin. As a result of this collaboration, Moór soon became acquainted with numerous virtuosi of the day, including Thibaud and Ysaÿe. But his biggest break came with his introduction to Pau Casals, then the world's foremost cellist. With the cellist's encouragement, the composer began to pen a series of works for the cello in many different forms, including two concerti for cello and orchestra, one for two celli and orchestra (for Casals and Suggia), one triple concerto for the star trio Thibaud, Casals, and Cortot, one concerto for string quartet and orchestra, and four sonatas for cello and piano. Casals never wavered in his belief that Moór was a genius of great originality, and furthermore he stated on many occasions that the world would someday discover this unjustly neglected and prolific composer. It has been speculated that one reason Moór was frustrated in his ambitions was because he exhibited truculent behavior on many occasions, causing friends and colleagues to turn their backs. After World War One Moór gradually stopped composing and turned to inventing musical instruments, his most famous invention being the double keyboard grand piano.

The *Ballade for Cello and Orchestra in E major*, op. 171, was dedicated to Casals in 1913 but never published. It was only in 2010 that an engraved edition was made privately by the Henrik and Emanuel Moór Society, in the version for cello and piano which the composer made himself. Late Romantic in language, this work is at times nationalistic in character; however, its soulful middle section seems to be inspired by Hebraic traditional chant. The virtuosic B section owes much to the Gypsy violin tradition. Many thanks to the Henrik and Emanuel Moór Society for the opportunity to make this world première recording.

– *Samuel Magill*

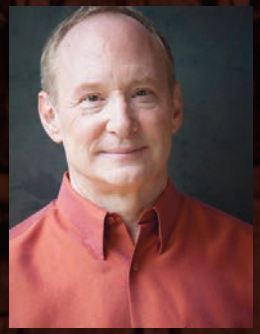
BETH LEVIN PIANO

Beth Levin's artistry invokes an uncanny sense of hearing for the first time works long thought familiar, as though the pianist herself were discovering a piece in the playing of it. Such a style of refreshment and renewal can be traced back to Levin's unique artistic lineage. As a child prodigy, she made her debut with the Philadelphia Orchestra at age 12. She was subsequently taught and guided by legendary pianists such as Rudolf Serkin, Leonard Shure, Dorothy Taubman, and Paul Badura-Skoda (who praised her as "a pianist of rare qualities and the highest professional caliber"). Her deep well of experience allows Levin to reach back through the golden age of the Romantic composers and connect to the sources of the great pianistic traditions, to Bach, to Mozart, to Beethoven.

Levin has appeared as a concerto soloist with numerous symphony orchestras, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Boston Pops Orchestra, the Boston Civic Symphony, and the Seattle Symphony Orchestra. Levin has worked with noted conductors such as Arthur Fiedler, Tonu Kalam, Milton Katims, Joseph Silverstein, and Benjamin Zander. Chamber music festival collaborations have brought her to the Marlboro Festival, Casals Festival, Harvard, the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, the Ankara Music Festival, and the Blue Hill Festival, collaborating with groups such as the Gramercy Trio (founding member), the Audubon Quartet, the Vermeer Quartet, and the Trio Borealis, with which she has toured extensively.

Among Levin's recordings are live performances of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* (Centaur Records, 2008), and Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations* (Centaur Records, 2011). Her interpretation of the *Diabelli Variations* has been described as "consistently fascinating" (Steve Smith, *NY Times*) and simply "stunning" (Robert Levine, *Stereophile Magazine*). Of Levin's *Goldberg Variations*, Peter Burwasser of *Fanfare Magazine* stated that she plays "as if she is in love with the notes...with always the sense that she is exploring Bach's genius." Her performances have been broadcast on National Public Radio, WGBH (Boston), WFMT (Chicago) and WNYC, WNYE, and WQXR (New York).

For all her devotion to the Romantic canon, Levin remains committed to the performance of the music of our time, interpreting composers such as Henryk Górecki, Scott Wheeler, Roger Stubblefield, Frank Warren, Mohammed Farouz, and Michael Rose, among many others. Her closest collaborators have been the composers David Del Tredici and Andrew Rudin, both of whom have written works for her. www.bethlevinpiano.com



SAMUEL MAGILL CELLO

Praised in the September/October 2015 issue of *Fanfare Magazine*, cellist Samuel Magill has had a rich and varied career as soloist and chamber musician. James Forrest said of his Centaur release of Andrew Rudin's *Cello Sonata*, "Throughout, Magill's beautiful cello tone is in evidence, endlessly expressive, subtle in shading. Rudin is presently writing a composition for solo cello for this Metropolitan Opera Orchestra member, a first rate artist and instrumentalist." His first Naxos album of the *Cello Concerto* of Vernon Duke was hailed as "flat-out magnificent" by the *American Record Guide*, while *The Strad* wrote in 2010 of his world premiere recording of Franco Alfano's Cello Sonata "...Magill's husky, dark timbre matches the Cello Sonata's yearning intensity to perfection...." The June, 2014 *STRAD Magazine* raved about Magill's "sumptuous tone" in his March 2014 recital at Bargemusic in New York, in which he and Beth Levin performed the rarely heard Czerny transcription of Beethoven's "Kreutzer" Sonata. Magill has appeared as soloist throughout Japan and the United States, including performances of the Schumann Concerto and Brahms Double Concerto in Tokyo's famed Suntory Hall and in Alice Tully Hall. Magill has partnered with the pianists Oxana Yablonskaya, Pascal Rogé, Beth Levin, and the late Grant Johannesen, and has given annual recitals since 1994 at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. He is a co-founder of The Elysian Ensemble, a flute, cello, and harp Trio. They made their New York debut at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall to critical acclaim. *Strings Magazine* declared them "masters of their instruments."

A pupil of the late Zara Nelsova, Magill was educated at the Peabody Institute and Rice University. He is currently a member of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra in New York, and was formerly Associate Principal Cello. He was for nine summers Principal Cello and Soloist of the New York Symphonic Ensemble. As such he toured throughout Japan playing the concerti of Tchaikovsky, Saint-Saens, Dvorak, Dohnanyi, Schumann, Brahms, and Beethoven. Three of these performances were recorded live by Panasonic. Magill was also a member of the Pittsburgh Symphony and the Houston Symphony. www.samuelmagill.com

---

Tracks 1-3, and 8 recorded March 19 and 20, 2015
Tracks 4-7 recorded May 21 and 22, 2015 at
West Center Congregational Church, in Bronxville NY
Session Engineer Jeremy Tressler
Session Producers Neil Rynston & Lucian Rinando
Editors Jeremy Tressler & Samuel Magill

We are extremely grateful for the extraordinary assistance of the following people and foundations:
Joan & Robert Rechnitz
Henrik und Emanuel Moór Stiftung
www.emanuel-und-henrik-moor-stiftung.de
Schnabel Music Foundation, LLC
The 22 donors who contributed so generously to hatchfund.org

Cover Art, Egon Schiele's *The Small City II*
Photos of Samuel Magill by Richard Blinkoff
Photos of Beth Levin by Tess Steinkolk

Executive Producer Bob Lord
Audio Director Jeff LeRoy
Mastering Shaun Michaud
Production Engineer Nate Hunter
Art & Production Director Brett Picknell
Graphic Designer Ryan Harrison, Emily Roulo
A&R Alex Bourne
Marketing Manager Ethan Fortin

info@navonarecords.com
www.navonarecords.com
223 Lafayette Road
North Hampton NH 03862

Navona Records is a
PARMA Recordings company

SAMUEL MAGILL CELLO BETH LEVIN PIANO

SONATA IN A MAJOR, OP. 47 "KREUTZER" (1803) **Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770-1827)
Transcribed from the Violin and Piano original by **Carl Czerny** and **Auguste Franchomme**

1 I. **ADAGIO SOSTENUTO – PRESTO** 11:53
2 II. **ANDANTE CON VARIAZIONI** 14:48
3 III. **PRESTO** 7:09

SONATA FOR SOLO CELLO (1931) **Artur Schnabel** (1882-1951)

4 I. **ALLEGRO CON MOTO** 4:44
5 II. **ALLEGRETTO** 3:16
6 III. **LARGHETTO** 8:49
7 IV. **VIVACE MA NON TROPPO** 9:25

8 **BALLADE IN E MAJOR, OP. 171** (1913) **Emanuel Moór** (1863-1931) 13:41
(World Première Recording)

www.samuelmagill.com www.bethlevinpiano.com

Navona Records

8 96931 00324 7