



BEETHOVEN,
Period.

Matt Haimovitz
Christopher O'Riley

PENTATONE
OXINGALE SERIES

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Complete Sonatas and Variations for Pianoforte and Violoncello. Recorded on period instruments.

CD 1		
Sonata for Pianoforte and Violoncello in F Major, Op. 5, No. 1		
1	I Adagio sostenuto	2.33
2	I Allegro	14.11
3	II Rondo. Allegro vivace	6.47
4	12 Variations on “See the conquering hero comes” from Handel’s <i>Judas Maccabaeus</i> for Pianoforte and Violoncello, WoO 45	9.52
Sonata for Pianoforte and Violoncello in G Minor, Op. 5, No. 2		
5	I Adagio sostenuto e espressivo	4.53
6	I Allegro molto più tosto presto	13.22
7	II Rondo - Allegro	8.37
8	12 Variations on “Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen” from Mozart’s <i>Die Zauberflöte</i> for Pianoforte and Violoncello, Op. 6	11.27
Total playing time CD 1 :		71.58

CD 2

Sonata for Pianoforte and Violoncello in A Major, Op. 69		
1	I Allegro ma non tanto	
2	II Scherzo. Allegro molto	12.40
3	III Adagio cantabile	5.19
4	III Allegro vivace	1.27
5	7 Variations on “Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen” from Mozart’s <i>Die Zauberflöte</i> for Pianoforte and Violoncello, WoO 46	9.06
Sonata for Pianoforte and Violoncello in C Major, Op. 102, No. 1		
6	I Andante	
7	I Allegro vivace	2.18
8	II Adagio – Tempo d’Andante	4.47
9	II Allegro vivace	2.16
Sonata for Pianoforte and Violoncello in D Major, Op. 102, No. 2		
10	I Allegro con brio	
11	II Adagio con molto sentimento d’affetto	6.29
12	III Allegro fugato	8.16
Total playing time CD 2 :		4.09
Matt Haimovitz, Violoncello		68.02
Christopher O’Riley, Fortepiano		



Photography by Jessica Lifland

BEETHOVEN, Period.

Each time I approach Beethoven’s Sonatas and Variations for Piano and Cello is a life-affirming milestone. To grapple with the composer’s uncompromising vision, his ideal of equality and balance—reached only through the conflict and union of two disparate souls—is, in the words of my thesis advisor at Harvard University, the eminent scholar Lewis Lockwood, to “approach... the very edge of insight into the workings of a great composer’s mind.”

Yet nothing could have prepared Christopher O’Riley and me for the revelation of exploring these works using period instruments: in our collaboration, Chris plays on an original Broadwood fortepiano made in 1823 (see the description by William Meredith), and I play my own

Goffriller cello, crafted in Venice, Italy in 1710—outfitted with ox-gut strings also from Italy and an early 19th century rosewood tailpiece and drawn by a Dominique Peccatte bow of the same era.

With this setup, the fact that the cello can easily overpower its partner changes everything. Suddenly, the consideration is no longer the modern-day “how can the cello cut through the multi-voiced powerhouse of a concert grand piano,” but “how can it make room for the nuances of the 19th century fortepiano?”

There were a variety of tunings in use in Beethoven’s Vienna. Ultimately, Chris and I found that our instruments resonated ideally at A=430, a microtone lower than the modern A=440 and higher than the Baroque A=415. Perhaps more interestingly,

the fortepiano is not tuned in equal temperament. When Beethoven boldly modulates to distant keys, one viscerally senses how far we have strayed. Each consonant interval begins to degrade as we venture farther from the home key.

These were the kinds of tools for which Beethoven conceived his scores—the raw, intimate and human sounds in his mind as he navigated the turmoil of extremes in these new works.

While Haydn and Mozart had never composed sonatas for the cello and piano, Beethoven knew he could make history by putting this combination on the map. He was also fearless in unshackling the cello from its continuo origins, confronting and celebrating the challenges of its low voice in relation to the piano’s polyphony. Within

a twenty-year period, Beethoven returned to the combination three times—in his early, middle, and late periods—singlehandedly creating and immortalizing the genre.

In 1796 Berlin was a hotbed of cello activity, thanks to the cello-playing King of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm II, who brought in the greatest cellists of the day for his enjoyment and study. On a sojourn in Berlin, Beethoven, who had already encountered fine cello playing in his native Bonn and adopted Vienna, was inspired by the virtuosity he heard in Jean-Louis Duport’s incomparable playing and, wanting to make the best impression on the King, composed the two Sonatas Op. 5 for Duport and himself to premiere for the royal cello enthusiast. Although the early Sonatas Op. 5 share a similar overall structure of two movements—a grand

first movement Allegro preceded by a slow and profound introduction, followed by a more compact and lively second movement Rondo—they explore myriad compositional techniques. The introduction of Op. 5 No. 1, for example, begins with both instruments playing arpeggiated fragments together in unison, breaking the silence, as if to dare the listener to distinguish the difference between the two. And in Op. 5 No. 2, the pathos of the opening introduction is brought out in an orchestral array of contrasting roles. In the faster movements, Beethoven explores every combination of presenting the theme, first with piano, followed by cello, then the opposite.

Beethoven composed three sets of variations during this period as well. A popular theme from Handel, “See the conquering hero comes” was

yet another effort to endear himself to the King and pay tribute to one of Beethoven’s favorite composers. Another set of variations of this period, based on the theme from Mozart’s opera, The Magic Flute, “Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen,” takes full advantage of the rich interplay between the two instruments to dramatic and lyrical effect, as does a third set from a few years later, again on a theme from Mozart’s The Magic Flute, “Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen.”

In his Sonata Op. 69, Beethoven achieves a symmetry and balance, a sense of perfect equality between the two instruments. Rather than simply a standalone work, Op. 69 can be viewed as part of a trilogy with the two Op. 70 Piano Trios, all three elevating the cello to greater prominence. The work was likely composed for its dedicatee, Ignaz

von Gleichenstein, a patron of Beethoven’s and a cellist. Professor Lockwood writes,

Beethoven apparently composed his sonata [Op. 69] early in 1808, astonishingly while taking time off from his work on the Fifth Symphony and before beginning the composition of the Pastoral Symphony. Early 1808 was an immensely productive time in Beethoven’s career... he had the Fifth Symphony under way and the Pastoral Symphony in view, and new publications were coming out. He offered the new cello sonata to Breitkopf in June 1808 and they published it in April 1809, not without a number of errors about which Beethoven complained loud and long...

The question of edition, the possibility of misprints that were not the intention of the composer,

is particularly treacherous in Beethoven. In this regard he is arguably the first modern composer who is prescient, or arrogant, enough to imagine that not only his contemporaries but future generations would have to interpret his music.

For this recording, we base most of our decisions on the latest Bärenreiter urtext editions, but for Op. 69 we have also been deeply influenced by the compelling autograph score of the first movement. The expressive intent of the handwriting itself offers profound insight. In a 2012 paper on the autograph, Lockwood writes:

Among Beethoven’s surviving compositional documents the autograph of his A Major cello sonata Opus 69, first movement, is a rare specimen. It is a true composing

score, filled with a thicket of revisions, and as such it gives us insight into the later stages of the evolution of this masterpiece. For his middle-period works evidence of this kind is extremely scarce... And among the autographs that do contain extensive changes, this one for Op. 69 is truly exceptional for the scope and character of Beethoven's revisions. His radical changes of basic material run all through the first movement and are visible above all in its Development section...My own view is that the revision of the Development, with its reversal of roles, its dramatic use of registers and sonorities, and its virtually self-contained formal structure, is so striking as to strongly suggest that his transformation of this section—this little sub-movement within the larger frame – could have been the compositional stroke of genius that led to all the remaining changes.

In 1815, Beethoven once again returned to the genre with a pair of sonatas. To this day, two hundred years after the fact, these late sonatas sound and feel like modern music. They must have been incomprehensible to most listeners of Beethoven's time and the first publisher to whom they were offered rejected them outright.

Nearly twenty years ago, in the introduction to my Harvard thesis on Beethoven's Sonata Op. 102 No. 2, I wrote:

The two piano and cello sonatas [Op. 102] are a product of a time marked by personal and creative crisis. Only three years before, Beethoven gave up all hope for a lasting romantic union, writing the unanswered Immortal Beloved letter. Circumstances outside of his control,

however, such as the illness of his brother Caspar Carl, added to his emotional instability. He seemed to accept his mortality, possibly directing his will for continued life to an obsessively protective relationship with his nephew Karl.

Following the compositionally barren year of 1813, Beethoven's focus gradually returned...It was the completion of work on [his single opera] Fidelio that brought Beethoven back into the compositional stream...a cathartic response to the creative turmoil. There is a sense, then, that Beethoven needed to look back, to reflect and assess his past, to confront his mortality, as well as his immortal achievements, in order to find the courage to persevere along the challenging and lonely path he had set for himself.

Op. 102 No. 1 and 2 are the culminating monument of Beethoven's association with the cello...Written for cellist Joseph Linke, a close friend and long-established performer of the quartets, and dedicated to Countess Erdödy, the works are enveloped in an expressive intimacy and urgency. The musical complexities of these works challenge the relationship between the two instruments like no other of Beethoven's sonatas. There is almost a sense that Beethoven needs to break down the foundations of Op. 69, classically proportioned and balanced, to challenge the Platonic ideal of chamber music interplay; preconceived instrumental properties are deconstructed, transcending any self-conscious equality between them to establish a still higher plane of thematic and structural synthesis...The Op. 102 pair offers a glimpse into the

compositional metamorphosis which took place leading to the Beethoven of the late works.

The two Op. 102 Sonatas contrast in movement layout, No. 1 labeled "Freie Sonate" in the autograph and No. 2 a three-movement sonata form. Both, however, are innovative in the formal manipulation of motivic cores which unify each work into an intelligible sound world...one could argue that although the first sonata seems more innovative and problematic in the surface formal layout, the second, in fact, goes still further in the disguised internal relationships which tie the whole together; there is no immediately recognizable cyclic return of material through the course of Op. 102 No. 2, for example. That surface differentiation, however, is misleading in fully describing the complementary ties which bind the

two works into a single statement, two acts of a complete work.

So many questions endure for the composer of these works—yet we will never again be able to have that conversation with a living, breathing Beethoven to discuss what emboldened him to compose for the cello and piano over three distinct periods in his career, to clear up questions of dynamics, articulation, tempo, pacing, to hear from the man himself whether our interpretation of his work is in sync with his imagination, and if not, could he accept our ideas.

And yet, there is a famous anecdote about the violinist Ignaz Schuppanzigh, a good friend and teacher of Beethoven, who premiered several of his works including the late quartets. When Schuppanzigh complained about one particularly

treacherous passage for the instrument, the composer reportedly remarked, "Do you believe that I think about your miserable fiddle when the muse strikes me?"

Matt Haimovitz

About the artists and their instruments

MATT HAIMOVITZ

GRAMMY-nominated Matt Haimovitz is acclaimed for both his tremendous artistry and as a musical visionary – pushing the boundaries of classical music performance, championing new music and initiating groundbreaking collaborations, all while mentoring an award-winning studio of young cellists at McGill

University's Schulich School of Music in Montreal.

Mr. Haimovitz made his debut in 1984, at the age of 13, as a soloist with Zubin Mehta and the Israel Philharmonic, and at 17 he made his first recording for Deutsche Grammophon (Universal Classics) with James Levine and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Haimovitz made his Carnegie Hall debut when he substituted for his teacher, Leonard Rose, in Schubert's String Quintet, alongside Isaac Stern, Mstislav Rostropovich, Pinchas Zukerman and Shlomo Mintz.

Haimovitz's recording career encompasses more than 20 years of award-winning work on Deutsche Grammophon and his own Oxingale Records. Close collaborations have included composer Philip Glass, pianist Christopher O'Riley, actor Jeremy Irons,

author Cornelia Funke, and mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade, among others. The solo cello recital is a Haimovitz trademark. In 2000, he made waves with his Bach “Listening-Room” Tour, for which Haimovitz took Bach’s beloved cello suites out of the concert hall and into clubs. He was the first classical artist to play at New York’s infamous CBGB, in a performance filmed by ABC News.

Haimovitz’s honors include the Concert Music Award from ASCAP, the Trailblazer Award from the American Music Center, the Avery Fisher Career Grant, the *Grand Prix du Disque*, the Diapason d’Or, and the *Premio Internazionale “Accademia Musicale Chigiana.”* **Matteo Goffriller Cello, Dominique Peccatte Bow**

Made by the founder of the “Venetian School” of luthiers in 1710, the cello is strung with ox-gut strings by Toro Strings, Salle Italy, on an early 19th century rosewood tailpiece. The instrument was set up by Louis Gaucher in Montreal.

CHRISTOPHER O’RILEY

Acclaimed for his engaging and deeply committed performances, the pianist Christopher O’Riley is known to millions as the host of NPR’s From the Top. Now in his fifteenth year on air, O’Riley introduces the next generation of classical-music stars to almost a million listeners each week. He performs around the world and has garnered widespread praise for his untiring efforts to reach new audiences.

Christopher O’Riley has performed as a soloist with virtually all of the major American orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, National Symphony, and San Francisco Symphony. In addition, O’Riley has performed recitals throughout North America, Europe, and Australia.

Living by the Duke Ellington adage “There are only two kinds of music, good music and bad,” O’Riley – a proponent of the former in all of its guises – has received the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant and an equally coveted four-star review from Rolling Stone magazine. O’Riley strives to introduce new audiences to classical music with an almost missionary zeal by performing piano arrangements of music by

Radiohead, Elliott Smith, Pink Floyd, and Nirvana alongside traditional classical repertoire. He has collaborated for many years with the flutist Sir James Galway and cellists Matt Haimovitz and Carter Brey.

A prolific recording artist, O’Riley has recorded the music of Beethoven, Stravinsky, Scriabin, Liszt, Ravel, Gershwin, Debussy, and John Adams for Sony Classical, Oxingale Records, RCA Red Seal, Decca, and Harmonia Mundi.

Christopher O’Riley splits his time between Los Angeles and rural Ohio.

Broadwood Fortepiano

Beethoven was given, borrowed, or bought examples of the three principal schools of fortepiano-building during his lifetime. When he moved to Vienna in 1792, he arrived

in the home of the Austrian/German style instruments that were famous for their clarity and tone colors. In 1803 he was given a Sébastien Erard fortepiano, an excellent example of the early nineteenth-century Parisian school. In 1817 Thomas Broadwood sent the composer one of his grand fortepianos as a gift. That instrument demonstrates all the virtues of the London fortepiano school. The 1823 Broadwood fortepiano used on this recording is the model that immediately followed the one sent to Beethoven. The major structural difference is that it has three short iron reinforcing bars on top of the soundboard and four longer ones bracing the bottom of the soundboard. The instrument has two pedals: the right pedal is a split damper pedal, allowing either the top or bottom to be damped as well as the complete range; the left *una*

corda pedal shifts the keyboard so that only one string instead of three is struck. Half-pedaling allows the performer to strike two strings, as is required in several late Beethoven sonatas. The instrument was a gift to the Beethoven Center at San José State University from members of the American Beethoven Society.

William Meredith
Director, The Ira F. Brilliant Center
for Beethoven Studies, Executive
Director, The American Beethoven
Society



BEETHOVEN, Period.

Beethovens Sonaten und Variationen für Klavier und Violoncello sind für mich stets aufs Neue echte Meilensteine. Lebensbejahende Meilensteine. Sich mit Beethovens kompromissloser Vision auseinanderzusetzen, seinem Ideal von Gleichheit und Ausgewogenheit, das nur durch den Widerstreit und die Einheit zweier grundverschiedener Seelen entstehen kann, bedeutet mit den Worten meines Doktorvaters an der Harvard University, Lewis Lockwood, sich „*zumindest rudimentäre Einblicke in den Kopf eines bedeutenden Komponisten zu verschaffen*“.

Für unsere musikalische Entdeckungsreise auf Originalinstrumenten gab es für Christopher O’Riley und mich dennoch

keine wirkliche Vorbereitung. Chris verwendet ein Fortepiano von Broadwood aus dem Jahr 1823 und ich spiele mein Cello von Goffriller, das 1710 in Venedig gefertigt wurde. Bespannt war es mit italienischen Rinderdarmsaiten und hatte einen Saitenhalter aus Palisanderholz aus dem frühen 19. Jahrhundert. Der Bogen stammt von Dominique Peccatte aus der gleichen Epoche.

Mit dieser instrumentalen Aufstellung war klar, dass das Cello das Fortepiano recht einfach würde übertönen können. Und somit stellte sich nicht die sonst übliche Frage „Wie gelingt es dem Cellisten, sich gegen das ‚Kraftpaket‘ eines modernen Konzertflügels durchzusetzen?“, sondern vielmehr galt es zu eruieren, wie wir überhaupt Freiräume für die Nuancen eines Fortepianos aus dem 19. Jahrhundert schaffen konnten.

Zu Beethovens Lebzeiten kursierten in Wien diverse Stimmungen. Schlussendlich waren Chris und ich der Meinung, dass unsere Instrumente bei einer Stimmung a1 = 430 Hz am besten klängen, also ein Kleinintervall unter dem modernen Kammerton a1 = 440 Hz und höher als das im Barock übliche a1 = 415 Hz. Interessanter als diese recht technischen Fakten ist wohl, dass das Fortepiano nicht gleichstufig gestimmt war. Wenn Beethoven nun verwegen in entferntere Tonarten moduliert, kann man förmlich intuitiv spüren, wie weit wir abgewichen sind. Jede Konsonanz erodiert förmlich, je weiter wir uns von der Grundtonart entfernen.

Unter diesen Voraussetzungen konzipierte Beethoven die hier eingespielten Stücke. Dabei hatte er stets die rauen, persönlichen und menschlichen Klänge im Kopf,

während er durch die extremen Turbulenzen dieser Stücke steuerte.

Während weder Haydn noch Mozart Duos für Violoncello und Klavier komponiert hatten, war sich Beethoven durchaus bewusst, dass er mit dieser Kombination Musikgeschichte würde schreiben können. Unerschrocken befreite er das Cello aus dessen Ursprüngen im Generalbass und stellte sich dabei der Herausforderung, die tiefe Lage des Streichinstruments in Bezug zur Mehrstimmigkeit des Klaviers zu setzen. Innerhalb eines Zeitraums von zwanzig Jahren beschäftigte sich Beethoven dreimal (in der frühen, mittleren und späten Periode) mit der Besetzung Violoncello/Klavier und machte das Genre quasi im Alleingang unsterblich.

Im Jahr 1796 war Berlin ein wahrer Tummelplatz für Cellisten, denn Friedrich Wilhelm II., König von Preußen und Celloliebhaber in einer Person, engagierte zu seiner Unterhaltung und zu Studienzwecken die besten Cellisten seiner Zeit. Beethoven befand sich im Rahmen einer Konzerttournee auf der Durchreise und ließ sich vom Niveau des Cellospiels zu eigenen Werken inspirieren. Um den König zu beeindrucken, komponierte er für den Virtuosen Jean-Louis Duport und sich selbst die beiden Sonaten op. 5. Uraufgeführt wurden die Stücke dann auch vor König Friedrich Wilhelm II.. Die beiden frühen Sonaten op. 5 weisen eine ähnliche, zweisätzliche Struktur auf: Auf ein prachtvolles Allegro mit langsamer, inniger Einleitung folgt ein eher knapper und lebhafter zweiter Satz. Und doch erkundet Beethoven in diesen zwei Sonaten

unzählige Kompositionstechniken. So spielen die beiden Instrumente etwa zu Beginn der langsamen Einleitung von op. 5 Nr. 1 unisono arpeggierte Melodiefragmente; sie brechen so das Schweigen, als ob sie den Hörer herausfordern wollten, die Instrumente auseinanderzuhalten. Und in op. 5 Nr. 2 entsteht das Pathos der Introduktion durch die kontrastierenden Rollen in nahezu orchestraler Aufstellung. In den schnelleren Sätzen untersucht Beethoven jede Kombinationsmöglichkeit zur Themenpräsentation, erst taucht es im Klavier auf, gefolgt vom Cello, um dann in umgekehrter Reihenfolge aufzutreten.

In dieser Zeit komponierte Beethoven außerdem drei Reihen von Variationen für die Besetzung Violoncello und Klavier. Das bekannte Thema von „See the conquering hero comes“

aus Händels Oratorium *Judas Maccabaeus* war ein weiterer Versuch Beethovens, sich beim König beliebt zu machen und gleichzeitig einen Lieblingskomponisten zu ehren. Die „Sieben Variationen über ‚Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen‘“ aus Mozarts *Die Zauberflöte* nutzen das reichhaltige Zusammenspiel zwischen den Instrumenten voll aus, um dramatische und lyrische Effekte zu erzielen; genau wie die „Zwölf Variationen über ‚Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen‘, ebenfalls aus *Die Zauberflöte*, die drei Jahre später entstanden.

In der Sonate für Klavier und Violoncello op. 69 erreicht Beethoven dann echte Symmetrie und Balance, gewissermaßen das perfekte Gleichgewicht zwischen den Instrumenten. Man könnte op. 69 weniger als Einzelwerk, sondern vielmehr als Teil einer Trilogie

zusammen mit den beiden Klaviertrios op. 70 betrachten, stellen diese drei Werke doch das Cello heraus. Op. 69 wurde wahrscheinlich für den Liebhaber-Cellisten und Beethoven-Freund Ignaz von Gleichenstein komponiert, dem das Werk auch gewidmet ist. Lockwood schreibt dazu:

„*Diese Sonate [op. 69] komponierte Beethoven allem Anschein nach zu Beginn des Jahres 1808, erstaunlicherweise also parallel zur Arbeit an der Fünften Symphonie und vor dem Beginn der Pastorale. Der Anfang des Jahres 1808 war eine ungemein produktive Periode in Beethovens Karriere. [...] Er war vollauf mit der Fünften beschäftigt, hatte bereits die Pastorale im Blick*

und neue Veröffentlichungen standen ebenfalls an. Im Juni 1808 bot er die neue Cellosonate dann dem Verleger Breitkopf an, der sie im April 1809 publizierte; und dies mit einer Hand voll Fehler im Notentext, die Beethoven lautstark und immer wieder bemängelte...”

Die Problematik der Werkausgaben mit darin enthaltenen Druckfehlern, die natürlich nicht in der Intention des Komponisten lagen, ist im Fall Beethoven besonders ausgeprägt. In dieser Hinsicht war er wohl der erste moderne Komponist, der vorausschauend (oder arrogant!) genug war abzusehen, dass nicht nur die Zeitgenossen, sondern auch zukünftige Generationen seine Werke spielen würden.

Für die vorliegende Aufnahme legten wir in fast allen strittigen Punkten

die aktuelle Urtext-Ausgabe von Bärenreiter zugrunde, nur im Fall von op. 69 nutzten wir auch das sehr stringente Autograph des ersten Satzes. Die ausdrucksstarke Handschrift bietet bereits tiefreichende Einblicke. In einem 2012 erschienenen Text zu op. 69 formuliert Lockwood:

„Unter den überlieferten Autographen Beethovens ist der erste Satz zu seiner Sonate A-Dur für Klavier und Violoncello op. 69 ein sehr seltenes Exemplar. Handelt es sich hierbei doch um eine echte Kompositions Niederschrift, voller Verbesserungen; als solche vermittelt sie uns Einblicke in die späten Entstehungsphasen dieses Meisterwerkes. Für die Werke der mittleren Schaffensperiode gibt es kaum einen vergleichbaren Beleg. Und unter den Autographen mit

bedeutenden Änderungen ragt die Handschrift von op. 69 wegen des Ausmaßes und der Bedeutung der Revisionen noch einmal heraus. Beethovens radikale Änderungen des Notentextes ziehen sich durch den ganzen ersten Satz und sind besonders in der Durchführung sichtbar. [...] Beethovens Revision der Durchführung – mit dem Rollentausch der Instrumente, dem effektvollen Einsatz von Registern und Klängen sowie der in sich abgeschlossenen formalen Struktur – ist derart frappierend, dass ich mit Nachdruck behaupten würde, jene Umwandlung dieses Formteils, dieser kleine „Satz im Satz“, könnte eben jener kompositorische Geniestreich gewesen sein, der dann alle anderen Änderungen erst nach sich zog.“

Im Jahr 1815 wandte sich Beethoven dem Genre mit einem neuen

Sonaten-Paar zu. Hatte man bei op. 5 noch das Gefühl, hier könne die Form die überbordende Kreativität des kompositorischen Geistes noch nicht wirklich fassbar machen, so wenden sich die beiden Sonaten op. 102 eher nach innen, allerdings ohne den kühnen Geist der Innovation aufzugeben. Die Werke blicken gleichzeitig zurück und nach vorne. Dabei entwickelt Beethoven musikalische Gebilde in einer äußerst organischen Sprache, einerseits prägnant, andererseits ungemein persönlich. Aus seiner Verslossenheit früherer Jahre tritt Beethoven nun gestärkt aus Lebens- und Schaffenskrise hervor und bietet dem Hörer Einblicke in die musikalische Sprache seines Spätwerks.

Bis auf den heutigen Tag, 200 Jahre später, klingen diese späten Sonaten

wie moderne Musik. Für die meisten zeitgenössischen Hörer müssen sie völlig unverständlich gewesen sein, und der erste Verleger lehnte sie unverblümt ab. Die Sonaten op. 102 entstanden im Auftrag von Beethovens enger Freundin, der Gräfin Marie Erdödy, der das Werk als ausgezeichnete Pianistin auch gewidmet ist. Als Instrumentallehrer für ihre Kinder beschäftigte die Gräfin den Cellisten Joseph Linke, den sie wahrscheinlich bei der Uraufführung begleitete. Die beiden Sonaten sind strukturell und formal gegensätzlich aufgebaut. Op. 102 Nr. 1 folgt einer quasi fantasia-Form, bei der das Notenmaterial der Werkeröffnung in der langsamen Einführung zum 2. Satz wiederkehrt. Beethoven gab diesem Werk den Titel „Freie Sonate“.

In Op. 102 Nr. 2 hingegen stellt Beethoven einen Bezug zur

traditionellen, dreisätzigen klassischen Form her. Hier rahmen zwei schnelle Sätze einen langsamen Mittelsatz ein. Und dennoch gibt es kaum Althergebrachtes in diesem Werk, das sowohl unser Gefühl für Zeitverläufe als auch unsere Hörerwartungen quasi permanent untergräbt, darüber hinaus aber einen der wohl innigsten langsamen Sätze der Celloliteratur zu Tage fördert. Die Sonate kulminiert in einer Doppelfuge mit einem zweiten Thema nach J.S. Bach, Mozart, Haydn und anderen. In den beiden späten Sonaten findet Beethoven bei den kontrapunktischen Arbeiten seine Inspiration bei Bach.

Es gibt so viele Fragen, die wir als Interpreten gerne an den Komponisten richten würden – aber wir werden niemals erfahren, was Beethoven ermutigte, diese Werke für Violoncello und Klavier über drei eigenständige

Schaffensphasen hinweg zu schreiben. Auch können wir ihn nicht mehr über Dynamik, Artikulation, Tempi oder Timing befragen. Oder ob unsere Interpretationen seiner Werke sich mit seinen Vorstellungen decken und falls nicht, ob er unsere Ansätze akzeptieren könnte.

In diesem Zusammenhang möchte ich eine berühmte Anekdote über den Geiger Ignaz Schuppanzigh

zitieren, einen guten Freund und Lehrer Beethovens, der zahlreiche von dessen Werken, darunter die späten Streichquartette, uraufführte. Als Schuppanzigh sich einst über eine ganz besonders tückische Passage beschwerte, antwortete Beethoven „Glaubt er im Ernst, ich denke an seine elende Geige, wenn der Geist zu mir spricht?“

Matt Haimovitz



Acknowledgments	
A Tippet Rise Production Made possible by the American Beethoven Society	
Producer David Frost	Executive producer Luna Pearl Woolf
Recording engineer Richard King	German translation Franz Steiger
Mixing and Mastering Richard King	Design freshu
Assistant engineer Dann Thompson	Front cover photo Daniel Forniés Sòria
Fortepiano Technician Mark Schecter	Product manager Angelina Jambrekovic

This album was recorded at Skywalker Sound in Lucas Valley,
California, USA in January 2014.

References:

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Special thanks to:

Peter and Cathy Halstead, Lisa Delan, William Meredith, Leslie Ann Jones, Lewis Lockwood, Tom Beghin, Silas Brown, Ty Kim, Cary Chin, McGill University Department of Sound Recording, Kaitlyn Raitz, Suhnné Ahn, Michelle Canale Mangano, Nessa and Maia.

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