MOZART: PIANO SONATA NO. 14 IN C MINOR, K. 457

Composed in Vienna in the fall of 1784, the C minor sonata was entered in the thematic catalog Mozart started earlier that year on October 14. For Mozart, 1784 was a year of intense compositional activity for the piano, the eight preceding entries in the catalog all indicating piano works. Six months later, Mozart composed a Fantasia in C minor, K. 475, that has become irrevocably associated with the sonata and invariably precedes it in performance, forming an expansive prelude. It was the composer himself who originally linked the two works, which were published together by the Viennese publisher Artaria under the title “Fantasie et Sonate Pour le Forte-Piano” late in 1785. Although unusual, such a coupling of a work in free, improvisatory style with the stricter form of a sonata was not unparalleled, particularly in the works of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach—with whose music Mozart was well acquainted. The title page of the first publication bears a dedication to Therese von Trattner, who was a pupil of Mozart’s and the wife of Johann von Trattner, a printer and publisher who was also Mozart’s landlord at the time the works were composed. As usual with Mozart’s relatively few minor-mode works, the C minor sonata is a highly personal work. But here the mood is not one of storminess or tragedy, as in his G minor works, but of high drama in the operatic sense. The mood of noble suffering in the central E-flat Adagio has, for example, been viewed by at least one commentator as music that appears to be a direct precursor of that Mozart was to write for the Countess in Le nozze di Figaro, while the final Allegro assai is a movement in intense dramatic agitation that looks forward to the Romantics, most immediately to the “Pathétique” sonata of Beethoven.

—allmusic.com

C. SCHUMANN: THREE ROMANCES, OP. 22

Clara Schumann was a prodigiously gifted pianist who also demonstrated a compositional gift suppressed by the antiquated but widespread notion that women were not born to write music for public consumption. Clara began composing when she was nine years old. Despite having to raise eight children after her husband Robert’s early death in 1856, she had a full career as a concert pianist. Yet, she also managed to produce 66 compositions, all of them by 1853 during which year she wrote Three Romances, Op. 22 for violin and piano, specifically for her to perform on tour with the eminent violinist and family friend Joseph Joachim. The violinist was quite taken with the pieces and continued to feature them when touring on his own.

The piano opens the Andante molto with a quietly ravishing passage and is soon partnered by the violin’s lyrical songlike flowing tune. a
brief central episode counters with energetic arpeggio figures from the piano before switching back and forth with gentler passagework.

A single piano chord launches the following Allegretto in the minor. The syncopated and lyrical main theme is animated by trills from the violin enhanced by energizing piano figures. A second theme in the major further heightens the energy. During the movement’s central section both instruments trade off mutually imitative figures before returning to the minor-key “a” section where the piano assumes a larger role in reprising the main theme. The movement ends on an unexpected single pizzicato chord.

The finale, Leidenschaftlich schnell (“fervent, fast”), opens rhapsodically with wave-like arpeggios on the piano over which the violin soars with an enchanting and optimistic song of its own. The succeeding variations all retain an engagingly lyrical quality wherein the violin continues with its lighter-than-air ambience, held aloft by the piano’s bubbling accompaniment.

—Willard Hertz

MAZZOLI: BOLTS OF LOVING THUNDER

Bolts of Loving Thunder was composed in 2013 for pianist Emanuel Ax. When Manny asked me to write a piece that would appear on a program of works by Brahms, I immediately thought back to my experiences as a young pianist. I have clear memories of crashing sloppily but enthusiastically through the Rhapsodies and Intermezzi, and knew I wanted to create a work based on this romantic, stormy idea of Brahms, complete with hand crossing and dense layers of chords. I also felt that there needed to be a touch of the exuberant, floating melodies typical of young, “pre-beard” Brahms. Brahms’ “F-A-F” motive (shorthand for “frei aber froh” or “free but happy”) gradually breaks through the surface of this work, frenetically bubbling out in the final section. The title comes from a line in John Ashbery’s poem Farm Implements and Rutabagas in a Landscape.

Bolts of Loving Thunder was commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Gustavo Dudamel, music director; Symphony Center Presents, Chicago; Cal Performances, University of California, Berkeley; and Carnegie Hall.

— Missy Mazzoli

BEETHOVEN: PIANO SONATA NO. 32 IN C MINOR, OP. 111

In his last sonata, Beethoven seems to have found the ultimate solution to the unity of form by resolving in one movement the conflicts of the other. The two movements contrast on a number of planes: major/minor, Allegro/Adagio, appassionato/ semplice, sonata form/variation form, turmoil/ecstatic serenity, earthly/spiritual. The perfection of this two-movement form was not, however, immediately realised by everyone when it was written in 1822. Beethoven’s publisher assumed a rondo-finale had got lost in the post when he received a sonata ending in a long Adagio. Later, when Beethoven’s friend and
biographer Anton Schindler questioned him, Schindler was
given the reply that he “had not had time to write a third
movement,” which was conceivably true in that a sketch for
an Allegro finale was apparently abandoned in order to
complete the Missa solemnis. But most probably Beethoven
came to the decision that another movement would have
disrupted the character of the sonata as it already stood.

The Maestoso introduction, with its double-dotted chords,
prepares the way for the energy and conflict of the main
Allegro. Here the semiquaver movement is relentless, with only
occasional dramatic pauses and poco ritenente interrupting
the constant tossing about of fragments of themes between
all registers of the piano. The movement finally comes to
rest in a pianissimo C major—and that, in effect, is where
the music remains through most of the Arietta. Here there is
no conflict—tension is exchanged for sublimity. The simplest
of themes is subjected to ever more complex subdivisions of
metre, until by the third variation the calm of the original is
transformed into euphoric abandonment (with an uncanny
foreshadowing of 20th-century boogie-woogie). The fourth
variation returns to a more static representation of the theme
over a demisemiquaver bass pedal. The fifth variation that
follows an episode of trills, with the only real excursion
away from C major in this movement, uses the theme in its
original form over a busier accompaniment. In the sixth and
final variation the theme moves into the uppermost register,
intertwining itself around a continuous trill on the dominant,
G, the whole becoming ever more ethereal, followed by a
short coda ending in a mood of calm contentment.

Jeremy Denk is one of America’s foremost pianists. Winner
of a MacArthur “Genius” Fellowship, and the Avery
Fisher Prize, Denk was recently elected to the American
Academy of Arts and Sciences. Denk returns frequently to
Carnegie Hall and in recent seasons has appeared with the
Chicago Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles
Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, and Cleveland
Orchestra, as well as on tour with Academy of St Martin in the
Fields, and at the Royal Albert Hall as part of the BBC Proms.
In 2019-20, until the COVID-19 pandemic led to the shutdown
of all performances, Denk toured Bach’s Well-Tempered
Klavier Book 1 extensively, and was to have performances
culminate with Lincoln Center in New York and the Barbican
in London. He returned to Carnegie Hall to perform
Beethoven’s Choral Fantasy with Orchestra of St. Luke’s, and
made his solo debut at the Royal Festival Hall with the London
Philharmonic performing Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No.
4. He also made his solo recital debut at the Boulez Saal in
Berlin performing works by Bach, Ligeti, Berg, and Schumann,
and returned to the Piano aux Jacobins Festival in France,
as well as London’s Wigmore Hall. Further performances
abroad included his debut with the Bournemouth
Symphony, his returns to the City of Birmingham Symphony
and the Piano Espoo Festival in Finland, and recitals of
the complete Ives Violin Sonatas with Stefan Jackiw.
Highlights of the previous season included a three-week recital
tour, culminating in Denk’s return to Carnegie Hall; play-directing Mozart Concerti on an extensive
tour with Academy of St Martin in the Fields; and a
nationwide trio tour with Joshua Bell and Steven Isserlis.
He also performed and curated a series of Mozart
Violin Sonatas (‘Denk & Friends’) at Carnegie Hall.

Denk is also known for his original and insightful writing
on music, which Alex Ross praises for its “arresting
sensitivity and wit.” He wrote the libretto for a comic
opera presented by Carnegie Hall, Cal Performances,
and the Aspen Festival, and his writing has appeared in
the New Yorker, The New Republic, The Guardian, and
by Random House in the U.S., and Macmillan in the UK.

Denk’s recording of the Goldberg Variations for Nonesuch
Records reached No. 1 on the Billboard Classical Charts.
His recording of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata No. 32 in C
minor, Op. 111 paired with Ligeti’s Études was named one
of the best discs of the year by the New Yorker, NPR,
and the Washington Post, and his account of the Beethoven
sonata was selected by BBC Radio 3’s Building a Library as
the best available version recorded on modern piano. Denk
has a long-standing attachment to the music of American
visionary Charles Ives, and his recording of Ives’s two
piano sonatas also featured in many “best of the year” lists.
His recording c.1300-c.2000 was released in 2018 with
music ranging from Guillaume de Machaut, Gilles Binchois
and Carlo Gesualdo, to Stockhausen, Ligeti and Glass.

Jeremy Denk graduated from Oberlin College, Indiana
University, and the Juilliard School. He lives in New York
City, and his website and blog are at jeremydenk.net.

Exclusive Management: imgartists.com
The Philharmonic Society is excited to announce its inaugural lineup of virtual Artists-in-Residence for Fall 2020: violinist Hilary Hahn, and cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason with pianist Isata Kanneh-Mason. Spanning October to December, Artists-in-Residence will curate, organize, and produce a series of three intimate, virtual performances.

HILARY HAHN PERFORMS AUERBACH, ABELS AND GINASTERA
Saturday, December 12, 7pm PST
AUERBACH: Lonely Violinist (Ballet for a Lonely Violinist), Op. 70
MICHAEL ABELS: New Work (World Premiere)
GINASTERA: Violin Concerto, Op. 30: I. Cadenza
On-demand streaming available for 1 week after each concert premiere

SHEKU KANNEH-MASON & ISATA KANNEH-MASON PERFORM BARBER
Sunday, November 22, 3pm PST
BARBER: Sonata for Cello and Piano, Op. 6

SHEKU KANNEH-MASON & ISATA KANNEH-MASON PERFORM RACHMANINOFF
Sunday, December 20, 3pm PST
RACHMANINOFF: Sonata for Piano and Cello, Op. 19
On-demand streaming available for 24 hours after each concert premiere

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DECEMBER

STEPHEN HOUGH, PIANO
Friday, December 11, 2020, 7pm PST
Virtual Concert

BACH/BUSONI: Chaconne from Partita No. 2 in D minor, BWV 1004
SCHUMANN: Fantasie in C major, Op. 17
LISZT: Funérailles
LISZT: Mephisto Waltz No. 1, S. 514

JANUARY

ORPHEUS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
Branford Marsalis, saxophone
Saturday, January 9, 2021, 7pm PST
Virtual Concert

ROSSINI: Overture to The Barber of Seville
RODRIGO: Suite from Soleriana
DEBUSSY: Rhapsody for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra
IBERT: Concertino da Camera
TURINA: La Oración del Torero (The Bullfighter’s Prayer), Op. 34
BRYAN: Carmen, Jazz suite on themes by Bizet (Orpheus Commission)
ASTOR PIAZZOLLA AT 100 WITH PHILIPPE QUINT AND MEMBERS OF THE JOFFREY BALLET
Philippe Quint, violin
Members of the Joffrey Ballet*
Additional artists to be announced
Tuesday, February 23, 2021, 8pm PST
Irvine Barclay Theatre
Co-presented by Irvine Barclay Theatre
Concert sponsored by Steven M. Sorenson MD
Additional support provided by the Ibex Foundation
*Appearance courtesy of the Joffrey Ballet, Ashley Wheater, Artistic Director
Multi-Grammy-nominated violinist Philippe Quint and members of the world-class, Chicago-based Joffrey Ballet celebrate the centennial of tango legend Astor Piazzolla in a performance of music and dance.

MARCH
SMETANA TRIO
Tuesday, March 2, 2021, 8pm PST
Samueli Theater
RACHMANINOFF: Trio élégiaque No. 1 in G minor
MARTINŮ: Piano Trio No. 3 in C major, H. 332
SMETANA: Piano Trio in G minor, Op 15

GEORGE LI, PIANO
Thursday, March 4, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall
BEETHOVEN: String Quartet No. 15 in A minor, Op. 132
BEETHOVEN: Große Fuge, Op. 133
BEETHOVEN: String Quartet No. 13 in B-flat major, Op. 130

FEBRUARY
JOSHUA BELL, VIOLIN
Wednesday, February 10, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall
Grammy Award-winning violinist Joshua Bell returns to Orange County in a recital that will enchant audiences with his breathtaking virtuosity and captivating stage presence. Program to be announced.

VADYM KOLODENKO, PIANO AND BROOKLYN RIDER
Sunday, January 24, 2021, 3pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall
The 2013 Cliburn Piano Competition Gold medalist Vadym Kholodenko teams up with string quartet Brooklyn Rider, which has been hailed as “the future of chamber music” (Strings) and continues to draw rave reviews from classical, world, and rock critics alike, in a chamber performance highlighting the performers’ commanding technique and creative interpretations. Program to be announced.

TETZLAFF QUARTET
Saturday, January 16, 2021, 7pm PST
Virtual Concert
BEETHOVEN: String Quartet No. 15 in A minor, Op. 132

LEIF OVE ANDSNES, PIANO
Thursday, January 21, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall
SCHUMANN: Three Romances, Op. 28
JANÁČEK: On an Overgrown Path, Volume 1
BARTÓK: Three Burlesques, Sz. 47
SCHUMANN: Carnaval, Op. 9

LEIF OVE ANDSNES, PIANO
Thursday, January 21, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall
SCHUMANN: Three Romances, Op. 28
JANÁČEK: On an Overgrown Path, Volume 1
BARTÓK: Three Burlesques, Sz. 47
SCHUMANN: Carnaval, Op. 9

TETZLAFF QUARTET
Saturday, January 16, 2021, 7pm PST
Virtual Concert
BEETHOVEN: String Quartet No. 15 in A minor, Op. 132
BRENTANO QUARTET
Friday, April 9, 2021, 8pm PST
Venue TBD

HAYDN: String Quartet No. 6 in D major, Op. 17
BARTÓK: String Quartet No. 5, Sz. 102
BRAHMS: String Quartet No. 2 in A minor, Op. 51

JERUSALEM QUARTET WITH PINCHAS ZUKERMAN, VIOLIN AND AMANDA FORSYTH, CELLO
Wednesday, April 21, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

BRUCKNER: Adagio from String Quintet in F major, WAB 112
DVOŘÁK: Sextet for Strings in A major, Op. 48
BRAHMS: Sextet for Strings No. 1 in B-flat major, Op. 18

JEAN-YVES THIBAUDET, PIANO
Saturday, April 24, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

DEBUSSY: Préludes Books 1 and 2

MAY

DANISH STRING QUARTET
Sunday, May 16, 2021, 3pm PST
Samueli Theater

Grammy-nominated Danish String Quartet makes its second appearance in the 2020-21 season with a performance showcasing its players’ masterful technique and heartfelt expressivity. Program to be announced.
SERGIO ASSAD, CLARICE ASSAD, AND THIRD COAST PERCUSSION
Sergio Assad, guitar
Clarice Assad, piano/voice
Third Coast Percussion
Friday, May 28, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

In an exploration of global music traditions, legendary guitarist Sergio Assad, along with Clarice Assad’s spellbinding vocals and the rhythms of Grammy-winning Third Coast Percussion, will take audiences on a vast musical journey grounded in familiar stories.

JUNE

AUGUSTIN HADELICH, VIOLIN AND ORION WEISS, PIANO
Monday, June 14, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

BEETHOVEN: Violin Sonata No. 4 in A minor, Op. 23
DEBUSSY: Sonata in G minor, L. 140
COLL: Hyperlude No. 5 for Solo Violin
YSAŸE: Sonata No. 6 in E major for Solo Violin
BRAHMS: Sonata No. 2 in A major, Op. 100
DEBUSSY: L’isle joyeuse, L. 106
ADAMS: Road Movies

RENÉE FLEMING, SOPRANO
Thursday, June 17, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

In a rescheduled performance from the previous season, four-time Grammy winner and legendary soprano Renée Fleming appears in a program of beloved songs and arias.

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All artists, dates, times, venues, programs, and prices are subject to change.
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The Philharmonic Society’s campaign is the first of its kind in the organization’s history. It will grow the Society’s endowment—providing greater opportunities for the presentation of the world’s leading orchestras and other musical performances while expanding our educational and community outreach—and also establish a current needs fund for organizational sustainability and flexibility. We are proud to recognize those who are helping secure the Society’s future with a gift to the Philharmonic Forward Campaign. We are grateful for their support, which will help fuel the Society’s growth and provide a legacy of incomparable music and superb music education programs in perpetuity.

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ABOUT US

Founded in 1954 as Orange County’s first music organization, the Philharmonic Society of Orange County presents national and international performances of the highest quality and provides dynamic and innovative music education programs for individuals of all ages to enhance the lives of Orange County audiences through music.

For more than 65 years the Philharmonic Society has evolved and grown with the county’s changing landscape, presenting artists and orchestras who set the standard for artistic achievement from Itzhak Perlman, Gustavo Dudamel, Yo-Yo Ma, and Renée Fleming to the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and many others. In addition, the Philharmonic Society celebrates multi-disciplinary performances under its Eclectic Orange brand and embraces music from a wide range of countries with its World Music performances. Its celebrated family concerts introduce children to classical music with creative and inspiring performances, instilling music appreciation for future generations.

The Philharmonic Society’s nationally recognized Youth Music Education Programs, offered free of charge, engage more than 100,000 students annually through curriculum-based music education programs that aim to inspire, expand imaginations, and encourage learning at all levels. These programs are made possible by the Committees of the Philharmonic Society comprised of 700 volunteer members who provide more than 90,000 hours of in-kind service each year.

As a key youth program, the exceptional Orange County Youth Symphony and String Ensemble provide top-tier training to the area’s most talented young musicians through multi-level ensemble instruction, leadership training, touring opportunities, challenging professional repertoire, and performances in world-class venues. The Philharmonic Society also promotes life-long learning by connecting with colleges and universities to conduct masterclasses and workshops and providing pre-concert lectures to introduce audiences to program selections.

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