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presents

EMANUEL AX, PIANO

This evening marks Emanuel Ax's 16th appearance with the Harriman-Jewell Series.
His first appearance with the Series was with cellist Yo-Yo Ma in 1984.

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3:00 P.M., SUNDAY, APRIL 7, 2024
FOLLY THEATER
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

Emanuel Ax, piano

EMANUEL AX, PIANO

Piano Sonata No. 8 in C minor, Op. 13, "Pathétique"

- I. Grave - Allegro di molto e con brio
- II. Adagio cantabile
- III. Rondo (Allegro)

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
(1770–1827)

Drei Klavierstücke (Three Piano Pieces), Op. 11 (1909)

- I. Mässige
- II. Mässige
- III. Bewegte

ARNOLD SCHOENBERG
(1874–1951)

Piano Sonata No. 2 in A Major, Op. 2, No. 2

- I. Allegro Vivace
- II. Largo appassionata
- III. Scherzo: Allegretta
- IV. Rondo: GraviOSO

BEETHOVEN

–INTERMISSION–

Drei Klavierstücke (Three Piano Pieces) (1894)

- I. Andantino
- II. Andantino grazioso
- III. Presto

SCHOENBERG

6 Little Piano Pieces, Op. 19

- I. Leicht, zart
- II. Langsam
- III. Sehr langsame
- IV. Rasch, aber leicht
- V. Etwas rasch
- VI. Sehr langsam

SCHOENBERG

Piano Sonata No. 23 in F minor, Op. 57, "Appassionata"

- I. Allegro assai
- II. Andante con moto
- III. Allegro ma non troppo - Presto

BEETHOVEN



Photo by Nigel Parry

EMANUEL AX

■ Born to Polish parents in what is today Lviv, Ukraine, Emanuel Ax moved to Winnipeg, Canada, with his family when he was a young boy. Mr. Ax made his New York debut in the Young Concert Artists Series, and in 1974 won the first Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Competition in Tel Aviv. In 1975 he won the Michaels Award of Young Concert Artists, followed four years later by the Avery Fisher Prize.

The 2023/24 season will focus on the world premiere of Anders Hillborg's piano concerto, commissioned for him by the San Francisco

Symphony and Esa-Pekka Salonen with subsequent performances in Stockholm and New York. A continuation of the 'Beethoven For 3' touring and recording project with partners Leonidas Kavakos and Yo-Yo Ma will take them to the mid-west in January. In recital Mr. Ax can be heard on the west coast in the fall and mid-west/east coast in the spring, culminating at Carnegie Hall in April. An extensive European tour will include concerts in Holland, Italy, Germany, France and the Czech Republic.

Mr. Ax has been a Sony Classical exclusive recording artist since 1987 and following the success of the Brahms Trios with Kavakos and Ma, the trio launched an ambitious, multi-year project to record all the Beethoven Trios and Symphonies arranged for trio of which the first two discs have recently been released. He has received GRAMMY® Awards for the second and third volumes of his cycle of Haydn's piano sonatas. He has also made a series of Grammy-winning recordings with cellist Yo-Yo Ma of the Beethoven and Brahms sonatas for cello and piano. In the 2004/05 season Mr. Ax contributed to an International EMMY® Award-Winning BBC documentary commemorating the Holocaust that aired on the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. In 2013, Mr. Ax's recording Variations received the Echo Klassik Award for Solo Recording of the Year (19th Century Music/Piano).

Mr. Ax is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and holds honorary doctorates of music from Skidmore College, New England Conservatory of Music, Yale University, and Columbia University.

For more information about Mr. Ax's career, please visit www.EmanuelAx.com.

PROGRAM NOTES

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) and Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951) may at first glance seem an odd pairing; however, for all their striking compositional differences, these two composers valued many of the same musical ideals. They shared a respect for musical traditions, an understanding of structural forms, and humorously in retrospect, reputations as poor composition students by their respective teachers. Both composers successfully bridged musical eras as well: Beethoven from the Classical to Romantic eras and Schoenberg from the Romantic to the Contemporary.

Additionally, these men hold significance in the historical and theoretical realms, each ascribed as members of two specific schools of composition: the First Viennese School and the Second Viennese School. The First Viennese School (1750–1830) recognized the contributions Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven made, with such notable characteristics as the development of formal musical structures such as the Sonata, the prioritization of a clear melodic line with predictable harmonic progressions, and the establishment of secular musical ensembles. Defining features of the Second Viennese School (1910–1930), of which Schoenberg is considered the father, are an adherence to traditional formal structures, the forgoing of tonality in favor of compositional techniques such as the 12-tone row and serialism, and the supremacy of musical expression through timbre and color over traditional melodic and harmonic devices.

Beethoven Piano Sonatas

Beethoven's music epitomizes the shift in musical structure and style from the Classical to the Romantic eras and these three sonatas, written only 7 years apart, trace his expansion of the Classical sonata form both in number of movements and in length.

Sonata No. 2 in A Major, Op. 2, No. 2, dedicated to Haydn, is a four-movement work that explores key relationships of thirds, a tonal exchange that was important to Beethoven in his later creative life. Unusual for piano sonatas of this time, the four movements follow a standard string-quartet form with an *Allegro vivace*, *largo appassionato*, *scherzo*, and a seven-part *Rondo*.

Sonata No 8 in C Minor, Op. 13 (*Pathétique*) demonstrates Beethoven's development of the traditional three-movement sonata model in both length and emotional depth. The melancholy intensity suggested by the sonata's nickname is on display with fervidly

contrasting themes in the first movement followed by one of Beethoven's most recognizable second movements. A stormy seven-part *Rondo* concludes the poignant work.

Sonata No. 23 in F Minor, Op. 57 (*Appassionata*) embodies Beethoven's mature compositional style, showcasing his mastery of balancing tumult and tranquility within a significantly lengthened and virtuosic three-movement sonata. The musical narrative is intensified with motivic material stated in both the first and third movements in chromatic, mixed-modal relationships, first in the key of F minor, then in G-flat major.

Schoenberg Piano Works

Like Beethoven, Schoenberg embodied a desire to uphold historical and structural musical traditions alongside an aspiration for new sounds, which he created through his exploration of atonality and expressionism. His compositions eschew many devices that give listeners a sense of familiarity: repetition, recurring motives, cadences, symmetrical phrase lengths, and key signatures, while at the same time adhere to formal structures established in the Classical and Romantic eras. The three works presented reflect the composer's larger musical journey from the influences of traditional Romanticism to atonality.

Drei Klavierstücke (1894) exemplifies Schoenberg's early compositional style, effecting a strong sense of tonality with clear, simple melodies and traditional harmonic progressions. The set indicates a young composer still under the influence of his mentors with the final movement paying homage to the Romantic etude.

Op. 11 (1909) represents Schoenberg's transition from tonality to atonality. The result is a set of three short pieces that require the listener to engage with music in registral and color palates previously unconceived. Each piece is a compact study in motives interrupted by bursts of virtuosic flourishes widely distributed across the instrument's registers.

The six short pieces that comprise Opus 19 (1911), like Opus 11, were composed during the time period in which Schoenberg was moving away from tonality, but before he fully embraced serialism. Each movement is economically composed, with the final movement featuring a tolling-bell motive and an inscription indicating it was composed for the death of Gustav Mahler, a source of inspiration for Schoenberg.

—Notes by Jessica Koebbe, DMA

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