

樂曲介紹

貝多芬 (1770-1827)

D 小調第十七鋼琴奏鳴曲，作品三十一之第二首，「暴風雨」

最緩板 — 快板

柔和慢板

稍快板

對貝多芬來說，鋼琴是他的一個「他我」，也是他的實驗室，讓他可以作最大膽、最天馬行空的實驗。除此之外，鋼琴也是一件工具，讓他把自己的藝術家身分作最親密的反映。貝多芬一生共創作了三十二首鋼琴獨奏曲，分佈在他的音樂事業中，由他最初博得鋼琴高手的聲譽起，到後期充滿前瞻夢想的風格，只因失去了聽力才中斷了演奏生涯。伊戈·利維特今晚演奏的四首奏鳴曲，是貝多芬用了十多年寫成的作品。

《D 小調奏鳴曲》寫於 1801-02 年，有一個別名「暴風雨」（德語 *Der Sturm*）。不過這曲名並不是貝多芬自己起的，而是出自他的私人秘書安東·辛德勒，據辛德勒記錄，他曾問貝多芬：如果要明白這首奏鳴曲表達甚麼，應怎麼辦？貝多芬告訴他：「去讀讀莎士比亞的《暴風雨》吧！」這說法甚為可疑，因為舒特拉是出了名說話不可信的，但不管是否屬實，從《D 小調奏鳴曲》可見貝多芬喜歡為鋼琴奏鳴曲尋找新意，有意要為這樂種探出不凡的潛能。

樂曲一開頭的〈最緩板〉似乎在暗示這是一段緩慢的序曲，但其實這是激動的〈快板〉的對應部，兩者不可分割。而那段〈快板〉，又的確像「暴風雨」。兩個樂旨一慢一快，形成兩極，一極沉思，一極驚恐。第一樂章嘗試走出傳統的奏鳴曲設計，把樂曲營造成有強烈的對比與音樂懸疑的凝重戲劇感。〈柔和慢板〉開始了，全曲開頭豎琴聲似的和弦在這裡得到迴響，但很快就把我們的注意力轉走，去到一個寧謐如歌的夢境——可那是暴風雨的風眼！焦慮不安的氣氛就在終曲返回；音樂不斷向前急衝。在這個悸動亢奮的樂章裡，貝多芬用音樂向我們展示他怎樣在一場又一場的私人演奏會中，以他拿手的即興演奏，把他在維也納的第一批樂迷完全迷得不能自己。但這只不過是作曲家借高超的鋼琴演奏技巧把心裡強烈的感受盡情發揮而已。

C 小調第八鋼琴奏鳴曲，作品十三，「悲愴」

極緩板 — 很快又燦爛的快板

柔和慢板

快板迴旋曲

《悲愴奏鳴曲》是今晚節目中貝多芬最早完成的奏鳴曲，寫於 1798 年，那時貝多芬還未到 30 歲。不過，他已經把 C 小調變成他的個人標誌，任何時候他想表達昂然面對悲劇的情緒，就用上 C 小調。最著名的例子是《第五交響曲》的主調。《悲愴》是貝多芬第一首有別名又為大眾所熟知的奏鳴曲。曲名的法語形容詞是來自出版商的建議，以喚起聽眾留意這首樂曲明顯的情緒特質。同時，起頭〈極緩板〉的慢速引子，那些附點節奏與莊重的悲劇色彩，的確帶點古老的法國巴羅克時期的手法。這段慢引子跟《暴風雨奏鳴曲》一樣，並非只是段「引子」，貝多芬在急速的〈很快又燦爛的快板〉中，數次把慢引子加插在其中。他這個素材拼接的手法，幾乎是預告了日後電影中換場景的技巧。有力地強調音符與和弦，是貝多芬的獨有特色，而他把這種手法運用得出神入化，效果驚人。

如歌的〈柔和慢板〉，叫人無法不牢記貝多芬的抒情才華，甚至流行音樂也借用。在這個慢樂章的中間，貝多芬突然爆發了短短的有如暴風雨的情緒，不過當動聽的起首旋律再度奏起時，風暴就平息了下來。來到終曲的〈快板迴旋曲〉，作曲家很聰明把第一樂章那段激動的 second 主題召回來。有位與他同期的樂評家這樣形容：「一顆堅決的心藉著強勁卻又優美的表達方式再次宣告崇高的意志，結合了溫柔的感覺與力量。」

G 大調第二十五鋼琴奏鳴曲，作品七十九

德國風的急板

行板

活板

這首奏鳴曲寫於 1809 年，是本晚節目中最後撰成的一首，驟聽上去似像是較為省力之作，是貝多芬所有奏鳴曲之中，篇幅最短的，雖然也有三個樂章。從表面看，似乎有重返貝多芬早期作品之嫌。但其實，這首曲內有很多細節，不過濃縮在簡約的結構中。整段呈示部不足一分鐘就奏完。起首時表現得像開朗的外向型，情緒卻數度轉變，本來的大調也不時突然換成小調。貝多芬甚至預先把《第八交響曲》開頭的幽默寫了出來；那是另一套被世人低估的作品，裡面的「回望前塵」隱藏了一股創新的精神。

貝多芬把第一樂章標示為〈德國風的急板〉（德國風是指一種三拍子的德國土風舞，速度飛快），不過，整首奏鳴曲卻以「杜鵑」這個別號最為人認識，全因開展部到處是小三度，令人想起杜鵑這種鳥的唱歌特色。在《田園交響曲》，貝多芬又引用杜鵑的另一種聲音來宣告夏天來臨。

本曲三個樂章都是以 G 這個基音為中心，外圍兩個樂章是 G 大調，中間的〈行板〉是 G 小調，日後浪漫時期的音樂就用上這個手法來暗示情慾幻想。最後的樂章〈活板〉一片歡樂，裡面的迴旋曲主題返回 G 大調，其後貝多芬把這個樂思循環再用在作品一〇九的奏鳴曲中，不過那已是十一年後的事了。

C 大調第二十一鋼琴奏鳴曲，作品五十三，「華德斯坦」

燦爛的快板

慢板序樂

中庸的快板迴旋曲 — 最急板

這是貝多芬的劃時代奏鳴曲，草稿記載在一本筆記本中，貝多芬同時用這本簿記下《「英雄」第三交響曲》的樂思。兩套作品寫於同一個時期，也是在 1804 年完成。奏鳴曲題獻給華德斯坦伯爵，這位貴族是貝多芬初到維也納時的第一批支持者之一，所以這曲有「華德斯坦」這個別號。貝多芬寫下了《海利根施塔特遺囑》後，重新恢復創作力，這首樂曲就是從這股衝力而生。（《海利根施塔特遺囑》是貝多芬寫的一封信，記錄自己怎樣克服自殺的念頭，決定接受自己日趨失聰的命運。）

引發貝多芬創作《華德斯坦奏鳴曲》的另一道靈感，來自一件當時最先進的樂器，那是巴黎一位鋼琴製作人從埃拉爾寄給他的新鋼琴。這件樂器備有多種新能力，讓貝多芬可以大加探索，單利用一排琴鍵就可發出類似交響樂的聲音。不過，這首樂曲既有點像交響樂，卻同時又是不折不扣的鋼琴曲。在〈燦爛的快板〉的開頭和結尾，一陣陣穩定如脈沖的和弦顯示出貝多芬思想的動力，就如一股電流，似乎無窮無盡地可以更新的精力，堪可以與《英雄交響曲》起頭那些脈動相比擬。只是在首個完整句子剛說完，很戲劇式的停頓就把這個前進行動戛然中斷。貝多芬運用和聲安排，與把音域與聲量戲劇性地走向兩個極端，營造出第一樂章的雄偉結構。

貝多芬起初的計劃，是寫一段長篇的〈行板〉，以便與首尾兩個樂章的篇幅相約，但後來，他用〈序樂〉取代了。這篇〈序樂〉，就像一段歌劇似的間奏曲，把前後兩個樂章接駁起來，直接領出龐大的迴旋曲終樂章。就如第一樂章那樣，迴旋曲靜靜地開始，然後在強大的力量推動下膨脹起來。最後貝多芬用尾奏把全曲終結，速度快得令人神馳目眩，藉此為鋼琴的多種能力重新立下定義。

伊戈·列維特縱觀貝多芬的作品，留意到「裡面異乎尋常的人性手法」。他表示：「這些音樂並不是要高高站在我們所有人之上，而是訴說我們所有人。他把一些關於我們自己的事告訴我們，難怪是如此鮮活，如此切合當代。這也是我總感到與貝多芬是如此親近的原因。」

Programme Notes

Ludwing van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Piano Sonata No. 17 in D minor, Op. 31, No. 2, “The Tempest”

Largo - Allegro

Adagio

Allegretto

For Beethoven, the piano was an alter ego as well as a laboratory where he could conduct some of his boldest, wildest experiments but also a vehicle for his most intimate reflections on his identity as an artist. His 32 solo piano sonatas span nearly the entirety of Beethoven’s career, from his first claim to fame as a virtuoso to his visionary late style, when deafness had long since brought his performance career to an end. The four sonatas we hear on Igor Levit’s recital cover a little over a decade.

Written in 1801-02, the *D minor Sonata* has become known by a nickname, “The Tempest” (*Der Sturm* in German), which did not originate with Beethoven. His personal secretary, Anton Schindler, is responsible, since he reported that the composer told him to “read Shakespeare’s *Tempest*” if he wanted to understand what the sonata intended to express. Regardless of this questionable assertion (Schindler was notorious for purveying unreliable claims), the *Sonata in D minor* reveals Beethoven’s interest in exploring new, ambitious potential for the piano sonata.

The opening *Largo* might suggest a slow introduction, but it is an integral counterpart to the agitated (indeed, “tempestuous”) *Allegro*. These two ideas, respectively slow and fast, form a polarity of contemplation and terror. The first movement ventures beyond conventional sonata design to build a powerful drama of dramatic contrasts and musical suspense. The harp-like chord that begins the sonata is echoed at the start of the *Adagio* but shifts our view now to a serenely songful dream — the eye of the storm before the mood of restless anxiety returns in the forward-rushing finale. Beethoven’s music in this thrilling movement suggests the improvisational genius with which he had captivated his first fans in Vienna during spellbinding private recitals. But the virtuoso pianism is all in the service of a riveting psychological intensity.

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

Grave - Allegro di molto e con brio

Adagio cantabile

Rondo. Allegro

The *Sonata Pathétique* is the earliest sonata we hear on the programme. It dates from 1798, when Beethoven was still in his late 20s. Already he was making the key of C minor a personal signature — above all for when he wanted to evoke a defiantly tragic pathos. This is the key he later famously chose for the *Fifth Symphony*, for example. The *Pathétique* is the first of Beethoven’s sonatas to carry a familiar nickname. The French adjective was suggested by the publisher to evoke the music’s particular emotional quality. There is indeed a hint of old French Baroque devices in the dotted rhythms and dignified tragic air of the opening slow introduction (*Grave*). As with the first movement of *The Tempest*, the slow opening music is not a mere “introduction”: Beethoven embeds it several times within the rapidly paced *Allegro di molto e con brio*. His manner of splicing this material in almost foreshadows the technique of cinematic scene changes. A distinctively Beethovenian feature is the powerful accentuation of notes and chords, to startling effect.

The *Adagio cantabile* gives us an unforgettable example of Beethoven’s lyrical gift and has been borrowed by pop music as well. In the midst of this slow movement, he unleashes a brief tempest, but the storm here is soothed by the return of the beguiling opening melody. With the theme of the *Allegro Rondo* finale, the composer cleverly recalls the agitated second theme from the first movement. Here, wrote a contemporary critic, “the high-mindedness of a resolved heart is announced again in a powerful and beautiful expression, uniting tender feeling and energy within itself.”

Piano Sonata No. 25 in G, Op. 79

Presto alla tedesca

Andante

Vivace

Dating from 1809, and the latest piece on our programme, this sonata seems like a comparatively modest effort: it ranks among the shortest of the sonatas, though it unfolds in three movements. On the surface, its manner even suggests something of a reversion to early Beethoven. Yet a great deal of event is condensed into its miniature framework — the entire exposition lasts under a minute — and the extroverted attitude of the opening gesture leads to moody detours and sudden shifts from major to minor. Beethoven even anticipates the humour of the opening of his later *Eighth Symphony*, another underestimated work whose “backward glances” conceal an innovative spirit.

Beethoven titles the first movement *Presto alla tedesca* (referring to a German folk dance in triple meter that moves rapidly), but the sonata as a whole has become known by the nickname “Cuckoo” because of the minor thirds that pervade the development section, which recall the song characteristic of this bird. (In the *Pastoral Symphony*, Beethoven had introduced another voice of the cuckoo to herald the summer.)

All three movements are centered on the tonic G — the major outer movements framing G minor in the *Andante*, which looks ahead to the Romantic era with its hints of erotic escape. The *rondo* theme of the *Vivace* finale returns to mirthful G major with an idea that Beethoven later recycled in his *Op. 109 Sonata* — 11 years later.

Piano Sonata No. 21 in C, Op. 53, “Waldstein”

Allegro con brio

Introduzione. Adagio molto

Rondo. Allegretto moderato - Prestissimo

Beethoven's sketches for this landmark sonata can be found in the same notebook he used to work out ideas for the contemporaneous *Eroica Symphony No. 3*; he completed both works in 1804, dedicating the sonata to Count Ferdinand Ernst Gabriel von Waldstein — the nobleman who was among his earliest supporters when Beethoven first set off for Vienna (thus the nickname). This music is animated by the surge of renewed creativity following Beethoven's *Heiligenstadt Testament* — the will in which he documented overcoming his thoughts of suicide and resolving to accept the fate of his worsening deafness.

The *Waldstein Sonata* was partially inspired by the gift of a new, state-of-the-art instrument Beethoven received from the Parisian piano makers at Erard, and its new possibilities led him to explore a quasi-symphonic approach to the keyboard. Yet this music manages to sound both symphonic and quintessentially pianistic. Steadily pulsing chords at the outset of the *Allegro con brio* indicate the dynamism of Beethoven's thinking. They establish an electrifying current of seemingly endlessly renewable energy. (Compare this with the similar pulsation at the start of the *Eroica*.) A dramatic pause brings the forward motion to an abrupt stop at the end of the first full statement. Beethoven's harmonic planning and dramatic use of extreme contrasts of range and volume shape the first movement's magnificent architecture.

Initially, Beethoven planned a substantial *Andante* to correspond to the proportions of the outer movements, but later he replaced this with the “Introduzione” — a quasi-operatic intermezzo that bridges the outer movements and leads directly into the massive *rondo* finale. Like the first movement, the *rondo* opens quietly before it swells with immense energy. Beethoven brings it all to a close with a coda of dizzying speed — in the process redefining the piano's powers.

Igor Levit observes that “there is an incredibly human approach” in Beethoven's oeuvre. “It is music that does not stand above all of us, yet is about all of us. He tells us something about ourselves: that is why it is so incredibly alive, contemporary. And that is why I have always felt so close to him.”