THE NEW YORK TIMES: “The music’s moody outbursts and vivacity come fully alive in elegant readings that are attentive to quicksilver changes in dynamics and articulation... the Sonata No. 4 in A minor is darkly playful, their ‘Kreutzer’ Sonata brilliant and stormy.”

THE STRAD: “Their trim, alert reading of Op. 24 arguably provides their most effective and expansive vehicle yet... It combines an appropriate sense of idiom with an abundance of vitality, sensitivity and insight, and furnishes Beethoven’s textures with a clarity rarely achieved.”

GRAMOPHONE: “There’s something positively gleeful about the way the pair deliver the opening gambit of Op. 30 No. 8, and the same sonata’s Haydn-esque finale practically swings.”
In our final instalment of the works of Beethoven for fortepiano and violin, we end our series where the great composer began – with the first of his penned compositions for this genre: the Op. 12 Sonatas. Although these works reveal a young composer, with the influence of Mozart’s and Haydn’s voices fresh in his mind, Beethoven’s extraordinary expressive gifts and individuality are obvious from the first notes of these captivating works.

Looking back to the first of these sonatas, we likewise reflect on the beginning of our own path to record these works. What started as an idea in 2012 has grown into a project encompassing new friendships and alliances across New England and beyond. From the loud bang of a broken fortepiano string during final moments of our last recording session, to synchronized, foot-stomping applause after our European debut, to hearing children’s laughter as they tried to find the fortepiano’s hidden pedals, this course has revealed to us countless memories and friendships we will treasure. The music additionally continues to reveal yet greater treasures, and we continue to discover these works anew using our period instruments.

This series would not be possible without a synergy of supporters who have helped bring our work to fruition. We are very grateful to Harry Christophers, Cath Edwards, and the team at CORO who have so vividly made our efforts to record the complete set a reality. There are many fond recollections of days spent making this series in Mechanics Hall with our recording team headed by Jesse Lewis. Their dedication to recording our work with authenticity and with the vibrancy of a live performance has been an extraordinary venture, and we are deeply appreciative of our collaboration. Very special thanks goes to Tim Hamilton for graciously contributing his McNulty fortepiano along with moving, tuning, and maintaining the instrument for all these recordings. We are humbled by all the support of those who have backed us along the way, especially David Snead and Ira Pedlikin of the Handel and Haydn Society, Teresa Neff and Charles Shadle at MIT, Kathy Weld, Nicholas and Paula Gleysteen, James and Christina Nicolson, and Mary Briggs and John Krzywicki. Deepest appreciation also goes to our families for supporting this journey, including our spouses, Amy Rawstron Watson, Megumi Stohs Lewis, and George Ogata.

Susanna Ogata, Ian Watson and Jesse Lewis
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN  
(1770-1827)

Sonata for Fortepiano and Violin No. 1 in D major  
Op. 12
1. Allegro con brio 8.56
2. Tema con Variazioni. Andante con moto 6.45
3. Rondo. Allegro 4.49

Sonata for Fortepiano and Violin No. 2 in A major  
Op. 12
4. Allegro vivace 6.38
5. Andante, più tosto Allegretto 5.04
6. Allegro piacevole 5.33

Sonata for Fortepiano and Violin No. 3 in E flat major  
Op. 12
7. Allegro con spirito 8.41
8. Adagio con molta espressione 5.35
9. Rondo. Allegro molto 4.25

Total Running Time 56.32

Thanks not least to Mozart, the violin sonata had become a popular genre by the end of the 18th century, whether in gilded aristocratic salons or middle-class drawing rooms. Publishers did a brisk trade in what were conventionally billed as ‘sonatas for harpsichord or fortepiano, with the accompaniment of a violin’. In most late-18th-century sonatas the role of the violin is indeed discreetly decorative. With his love of dialogue and quickfire repartee, Mozart was the first composer to promote the violin to equal status, in his six sonatas, K.301-306, written in Mannheim and Paris in 1778. Early critics duly noted the parity and independence of the two instruments, and the need for ‘just as skilful a player on the violin as on the clavier’. Two decades later, Beethoven would follow Mozart’s example in his own violin sonatas, nine of which were written in fairly quick succession between 1797 and 1803, the year of the flamboyantly extrovert ‘Kreutzer’, Op. 47. One final sonata, the intimate G major, Op. 96, followed in 1812.

When Beethoven composed his three Op. 12 violin sonatas in the winter and early spring of 1797-8, he had established himself as Mozart’s successor in Vienna, dazzling the cognoscenti with his keyboard improvisations and a stream of brilliant compositions involving his own instrument. Diplomatically dedicated to the influential opera composer and court Kapellmeister Antonio Salieri (with whom Beethoven later studied Italian word-setting), the Op. 12 sonatas are among the young firebrand’s most genially Mozartian works. Or so they seem to us. After hearing them in 1799, the conservative-minded critic of the Leipzig Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung wrote that he ‘felt like a
man who had hoped to walk with an amiable friend through an enticing forest and found himself impeded every minute by hostile barriers, finally returning exhausted, without having experienced any pleasure. It is undeniable that Hr. Beethoven has his own gait; but what a bizarre and singular gait it is! Learned, learned and always learned – and nothing natural, no song... a striving for strange modulations... a heaping up of difficulties till one loses all patience and enjoyment' – a foretaste here of the incomprehension that would initially greet the ‘Razumovsky’ Quartets a few years later.

It seems, though, that the exasperated critic was in a minority. By 1799, when the Op. 12 sonatas were published by the Viennese firm of Artaria (still with the traditional designation ‘for the harpsichord or fortepiano, with a violin’), Beethoven’s popularity extended far beyond a ‘fringe’ group of aristocratic connoisseurs. Talented amateurs throughout northern Europe were now eager to snap up his latest compositions; and within a few years Artaria had brought out eight further editions, and the sonatas had appeared in Paris, London and several German cities. Beethoven himself gave the first public performance of at least one of the sonatas, probably with the violinist Ignaz Schuppanzigh, at a benefit concert for the soprano Josefa Dusek on 29 March 1798.

Although Mozart’s influence is ever-present in Op. 12, Beethoven’s rhetoric, as ever, tends to be that much more emphatic than his great predecessor’s. No. 1, in the violin’s most brilliant and sonorous key of D major, is the most assertive of the three sonatas. After a trumpeting fanfare, like an in-tempo introduction, the first theme sets a sustained melody, beginning with an octave leap, against a piano counterpoint in smoothly flowing quavers. Beethoven is particularly lavish with his themes in the ‘second subject’ group. This begins with a lyrical recasting of the flowing quaver motif and continues with a dolce melody (linked to the opening theme by its initial rising octave) that develops into an urgently modulating dialogue between the two instruments. The exposition closes with yet another theme, beginning in heroic vein and ending with a display of virtuoso brilliance. In the development Beethoven works the two elements of the opening theme in ingenious new combinations, and then counterpoints the quaver motif (on the violin) with a variant of the trumpeting fanfare in a tense build-up to the fortissimo recapitulation.

For his second movement, in A major, Beethoven writes a set of four variations on an ambling, folk-like theme. Variations one and two are gracefully decorative, the first led by the keyboard, the second by the violin. The third variation then turns to A minor for a dramatic deconstruction of the theme, complete with volleys of fortissimo triplets and slashing offbeat chords - just the sort of music to drive the Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung’s critic to apoplexy. After this cosmic battle between the two instruments, the poetic fourth variation (with both instruments marked dolce) provides much-needed balm. Amid gently pulsing keyboard syncopations, the theme is ‘hidden’ in an inner part, while the violin provides a delicate descant. The pianissimo coda then muses tenderly on the first two bars of the theme.
With its breezy 6/8 motion and off-beat sforzando accents, the Rondo finale is first cousin to the finale of Beethoven’s B flat Piano Concerto, published as No. 2. The first episode counterpoints a chorale-like theme on the piano with a skittish dance, while in the second, in F major, violin and piano in turn present a leisurely pastoral tune with a distinct Mozartian flavour. As in the piano concerto, Beethoven reserves his most puckish inventiveness for the coda, slipping into outlandish keys, playing teasingly with the main theme’s short-long rhythm, and then, out of the blue, building a fragment of the Mozartian pastoral tune to a brilliant flourish.

The second of the Op. 12 sonatas, in A major, opens with a scherzo-like movement of airborne grace and wit, with the two instruments swapping roles in a spirit of bantering give-and-take. As in the finale of No. 1, Beethoven turns the violin into a percussion instrument in the staccato double-stopped chords that accompany the main theme. The second group of themes, as richly endowed as in Op. 12 No. 1, includes a melody that modulates capriciously from F sharp minor, via G major, E minor and F major, to E major, and a mysterious, tonally ambivalent theme played by the two instruments in octaves. In the development and the coda, full of teasing cross-rhythms, Beethoven exploits the piano’s opening ‘flicking’ figure with a zest and impish humour worthy of his one-time teacher Haydn.

After this dancing exuberance, the following Andante, piu tosto Allegretto in A minor combines a mood of wistful pathos with a briskish walking pace.

Schubert, barely a year old when the sonata was written, surely enjoyed this music. Beethoven casts the movement as a three-part (ABA) structure, with a central episode in F major built on graceful imitative exchanges between violin and piano. The opening section is expanded and elaborated on its return, while the coda puts a dreamy, Romantic cast on the imitations of the central episode.

Opening with a tender, syncopated theme that drifts from A major to B minor, the finale is a transfigured pastoral minuet that lives up to its unusual marking ‘piacevole’ – ‘pleasantly’. A Beethovenian subtlety in the main theme is the way the piano’s left-hand accompaniment becomes a violin counterpoint when the melody is repeated an octave higher. The second of its two episodes presents a new, dolce theme in the violin against an accented four-note figure deep in the piano bass that derives from the violin’s cadence in the main theme. At the climax Beethoven develops this figure through a series of remote keys, first quizzically, then with a fortissimo ferocity that contrasts startlingly with the movement’s prevailing amiability - another moment in these sonatas that doubtless had that early Leipzig reviewer fuming.

With its cascades of triplets and sextuplets, No. 3 in E flat is the most pianistically brilliant of the Op. 12 sonatas, and would have challenged all but the most accomplished amateurs in Beethoven’s day. Yet as ever, the violin – again, often used as a quasi-percussion instrument – has an equal share in the musical discourse. Offsetting the prevailing spirit of elegant swagger, the development introduces a new cantabile theme in the darkly remote key of
C flat, played by violin and piano in octaves above a mysterious, deep-lying tremolo accompaniment. Beethoven would remember this haunting melody a few years later when he recast it as the second subject of his C minor Piano Concerto, No. 3.

There is a foretaste of the Third Piano Concerto, too, in the mingled solemnity and Romantic warmth of the C major Adagio con molt’ espressione. (Haydn and Mozart never used such an overtly emotional tempo indication.) In essence the whole movement is a soulful meditation on a single, long-arched melody, proposed by the piano and then revealing its full lyric beauty on the violin. At the movement’s centre the music drifts, via F minor, to the rich and strange key of D flat major, with the violin’s rapt song, pianissimo, cushioned by deep, shadowy piano figuration.

The Rondo finale breaks the spell with a lusty, popular-style contredanse tune which Beethoven proceeds to treat with Haydnesque wit and élan. The theme of the first episode, linked to the opening by its repeated-note upbeat, is equally catchy, while the second episode plunges to E flat minor for some strenuous contrapuntal argument. Just as we seem to be nearing the final cadence, Beethoven launches into a long and elaborate coda, turning the contredanse theme into a mock-serious fugato and introducing a breezy new tune before the jokily abrupt close. Haydn, you feel, would have approved.

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We are grateful to all our donors.
In particular, we would like to recognise the following individuals:

Mary Briggs and John Krzywicki
Kathy Weld
Emily F. Schabacker
Yoshihiro and Mariko Hirata
Michiyo Ogata
Ronald Ouellet
Margaret E. Thomas and Gilbert Pemberton
Barbara and John Cortesio
Jackie Lenth and Andy Falender
Nicholas and Paula Gleysteen
Don and Gina Halsted
Paul Lazay and Kathleen Huber
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Todd Estabrook
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Dean Farwood
Chris and Iris Harlan
Roger and Barbara Kohin
Paulette B. LaBarre
Lew and Rosemary Lloyd
Richard Mandelkorn
Joan Mansfield
Dave and Cherry Russell
Peter W. Shea and Suzan Smith
Stanley and Jody Smith
Charlie and Lea Anderson
Michelle, Richard and Christine Binzel

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Richard Mandelkorn
Joan Mansfield
Dave and Cherry Russell
Peter W. Shea and Suzan Smith
Stanley and Jody Smith
Charlie and Lea Anderson
Michelle, Richard and Christine Binzel
For this project, Ian Watson is performing on a fortepiano that was built by Paul McNulty in 2000. This fortepiano is modelled after the Walter and Sohn pianos of the early 1800s. Anton Walter (1752-1826) is considered to be the foremost maker of Viennese style fortepianos of his time. His improvements to the Viennese fortepiano action remained a standard for many years. He built about 700 instruments, which were praised for their quality by Mozart, who bought a Walter in 1782, and by Beethoven, who played on one as well.

Anton Walter was born near Stuttgart in 1752 and became active in Vienna in 1778. When his stepson joined the company in 1800, the firm name was changed from "Anton Walter" to "Anton Walter und Sohn". This instrument has the increased compass of five and a half octaves which came into use around 1800.

Susanna Ogata performs on a Joseph Klotz violin built in 1772. Joseph was from a family of 'Klotz' instrument makers from Mittenwald, Germany, who were, and continue to be, highly regarded for their craftsmanship. Mozart most likely performed on an instrument built by a member of the Klotz family. The bow she is using is an original, unlabeled Pre-Tourte style model, most likely from France in the early 1800s.
Ian Watson fortepiano

Multi-talented Ian Watson has been described by The Times in London as a “world-class soloist” and a keyboard performer of “virtuosic panache” and by the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung as “a conductor of formidable ability.” He is currently Artistic Director of Arcadia Players Period-Instrument Orchestra, Artistic Director of the Connecticut Early Music Festival, and was appointed Associate Conductor of Boston’s Handel and Haydn Society in September 2016.

Born in England in the Buckinghamshire village of Wooburn Common, Ian won a scholarship at age 14 to the Junior School of the Royal Academy of Music in London, later winning all the prizes for organ performance, including the coveted Recital Diploma. He completed his studies with Flor Peeters in Belgium. In 1993, in recognition of his services to music, he was honoured with an Associateship of the Royal Academy of Music. Ian's first major appointment was as Organist at St Margaret’s, Westminster Abbey, at the age of 19, a position he held for ten years. He also served as Music Director of the historic Christopher Wren church, St James's Piccadilly.

Ian has appeared as soloist or conductor with the London Symphony, London Philharmonic and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras, the Scottish, English, Polish, Irish and Stuttgart Chamber Orchestras, Bremen Philharmonisches Gesellschaft, Rhein-Main Symphony, Colorado Symphony, the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, the Handel and Haydn Society, English Baroque Soloists, and The Sixteen, among many others. He has also been featured on many recordings and film soundtracks including Amadeus, Roman Polanski’s Death and the Maiden, Restoration, Cry the Beloved Country, Voices from A Locked Room, and the BBC’s production of David Copperfield.

Since moving to the USA, Ian has immersed himself in the great musical culture of the City of Boston, working notably with the Boston Symphony and the Handel and Haydn Society amongst many others. He has directed the Handel and Haydn Society on many occasions and was appointed Associate Conductor in 2016. In honour of their 200th anniversary in 2015, Ian conducted an outdoor performance of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony in Boston’s Copley Square. The audience was estimated at 6,000 people. In 2016, Ian was honoured to be appointed Artistic Director of the Connecticut Early Music Festival.

Susanna Ogata violin

Susanna Ogata enjoys an active performance schedule in greater New England and beyond. She has been praised for “expressive melting between notes”, her sound described as “warm and rich of tone” (Fanfare Magazine), “totally convincing, spontaneous and free-flowing playing” (The Berkshire Review), and “playing of electrifying energy, awesome technical command and rollicking dialogue” (Arts Fuse Magazine) where her concert appearance was distinguished as “Best Solo Performance of 2016.”
Dedicated to exploring music on historical instruments, Susanna has participated and soloed with the Handel and Haydn Society, where she serves as Assistant Concertmaster, as well as with Arcadia Players, Bach Ensemble, Sarasa, Boston Early Music Festival, and Blue Hill Bach Festival. She is an active chamber musician and founding member of The Boston Classical Trio and Coriolan String Quartet. Recent solo appearances include performances of Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons* and Beethoven’s *Violin Concerto*.

Susanna has embarked with fortepianist Ian Watson on “The Beethoven Project” to survey and record the complete *Sonatas for Fortepiano and Violin* of Beethoven on period instruments. They have received accolades for their recordings in such publications as *Fanfare Magazine*, *BBC Music Magazine*, *The Strad*, *Limelight Magazine* and *Early Music Review*. A recent review in *The New York Times* praised them for “elegant readings that are attentive to quicksilver changes in dynamics and articulation. Their performance of the *Sonata No. 4 in A minor* is darkly playful, their ‘Kreutzer’ *Sonata* brilliant and stormy.” They have recently finished a two year residency at The Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Susanna’s teachers have included Charles Castleman, Laura Bossert and Dana Maiben who all supported her curiosity of period instrument performance. She also worked extensively with Malcom Bilson and Paul O’Dette while completing her undergraduate and graduate studies at the Eastman School of Music.