

# The Ph.D./D.M.A. Programs in Music

November 22, 2016 7:30 p.m.

*Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall*



## Nora Bartosik, piano

Piano Sonata in A-flat Major, Op. 110 (1821)      Ludwig Van Beethoven  
*Moderato cantabile molto espressivo*      (1770-1827)  
*Allegro molto*  
*Adagio ma non troppo - Fuga: Allegro ma non troppo*

Piano Sonata no. 2 in D Minor, op. 14 (1912)      Sergei Prokofiev  
*Allegro, ma non troppo*      (1891-1953)  
*Scherzo: Allegro marcato*  
*Andante*  
*Vivace*

## INTERMISSION

Piano Sonata no. 3 in F minor, op. 5 (1853)      Johannes Brahms  
*Allegro maestoso*      (1833-1897)  
*Andante: Andante espressivo*  
*Scherzo: Allegro energico - Trio*  
*Intermezzo (Rückblick): Andante molto*  
*Finale: Allegro moderato ma rubato*

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the D.M.A. degree.  
Please switch off your cell phones and refrain from taking flash pictures.

## Notes on the Program

The last three piano sonatas composed by **Ludwig van Beethoven** stand at the heart of the piano repertoire as masterpieces of emotional depth and musical expressivity. The three sonatas, Op. 109, 110 and 111, were composed in response to a commission in 1820 from the Berlin publisher Adolf Martin Schlesinger for a set of three piano sonatas. The **Piano Sonata No. 31 in A-flat Major, Op. 110** was completed in 1821 as the second of the set. It falls within the compositional period at the end of Beethoven's life known as his 'late style,' in which his music often conveyed complex themes with a transparent, almost simplified writing style that used increasingly compact forms. The Sonata Op. 110 seems to transcend form itself, with only the first movement standing independently of the following movements. From the second movement, each section proceeds directly into the next without significant demarcations, such that there has been debate over whether this sonata comprises three or four movements.

The opening direction, *con amabilità* (amiably), of the Moderato cantabile molto espressivo embodies the sentiment of this gentle first movement. The delicate, lyrical opening suggests a mood of reflection and introspection, while graceful, arpeggiated passages flowing across the keyboard characterize its effortless nature. The Allegro molto is a scherzo movement with punctuated chords and an unyielding drive that contrast strongly with the serene quality of the previous movement. Despite its passionate character, this scherzo betrays a sense of humor in its leaping notes and stumbling accents. Two of its main motives are derived from popular folk songs of the time, "Unsa Kätz häd Katzln ghabt" (Our cat had kittens) and "Ich bin lüderlich, du bist lüderlich" (I am sloppy, you are sloppy), that further underline the boisterous character of this movement. The poignant Adagio includes an Arioso dolente (lamenting song) that is a tragic expression of grief and longing, out of which the hopeful Fuga (fugue) rises, gathering confidence and intensity before falling hopelessly back into a more mournful and exhausted recurrence of the Arioso. This lament ends with a stunning shift to a radiant G major chord that is resolutely repeated nine times with growing intensity. The final recurrence of the fugue, stated upside down in inversion, emerges from this chord with the direction "little by little coming alive again." The triumphant ending concludes with a brilliant, sweeping arpeggio that recalls the very beginning of the sonata.

The **Piano Sonata No. 2 in D Minor, Op. 14** is one of nine completed piano sonatas written by **Sergei Prokofiev**. The significance of the piano sonata for Prokofiev can be measured by his continual return to the form throughout his lifetime: he wrote his first piano sonata, opus 1, in 1909 at the age of 18, with plans for his last, unfinished eleventh sonata arising in 1953, the last year of his life. While the Sonata No. 1 is a one-movement work considered to predate Prokofiev's mature style, the Sonata No. 2, composed only three years later in 1912, is a fully-developed four-movement work that includes many stylistic traits characteristic of Prokofiev's later compositions. The Sonata No. 2, like the Sonata No. 4 and the Piano Concerto No. 2, is dedicated to Prokofiev's close friend and colleague at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, the pianist Maximilian Schmidthof, who committed suicide in 1913. Prokofiev himself premiered the second sonata in Moscow in 1914, and performed it in his solo debut in New York City in the Aeolian Hall on November 20, 1918. The Aeolian Hall was located in Midtown on West 42nd Street in the Aeolian Building, which housed the Graduate Center at CUNY from 1961-1999. Prokofiev met his future wife Carolina Codina, a Spanish-born singer who grew up in Brooklyn, after another recital at the Aeolian Hall.

The first Allegro, *ma non troppo* movement of the Sonata No. 2 employs sharp contrasts between lyrical lines and percussive rhythms over biting harmonies to express a wide range of fleeting emotions. The outer sections of the following Scherzo are written in a percussive, toccata-like style with fast,

accented patterns that require the hands to crisscross and leap over each other. The enigmatic, ethereal middle section provides a striking contrast to the insistent outer sections. The third Andante movement is a representation of a skazka, or Russian fairy tale, a form that Prokofiev used often. The music evokes a more somber, melancholy mood with a constant, repeated inner line forming an ostinato throughout the movement. The final Vivace begins in the style of an energetic tarantella incorporating fine lines and sweeping gestures in a dance-like manner. A serene passage quoted from the first movement appears as a surprising memory in the middle of this movement, which also includes swift contrasts and humorous, stumbling figures. The underlying rhythmic drive of this movement proceeds without pause through increasingly complex, almost schizophrenic leaps across the keyboard to dramatically conclude the sonata.

In 1853, at the age of 20, **Johannes Brahms** composed his largest work for solo piano, the **Piano Sonata No. 3 in F minor, Op. 5**. This year was a turning point for the young composer, who received effusive public accolades from Robert Schumann in the latter's influential music journal, the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, in October 1853. Brahms had been introduced to Schumann only one month earlier through his lifelong friend, the violinist Joseph Joachim. The Sonata No. 3 was completed during Brahms' stay with Robert and Clara Schumann in Düsseldorf during this time, and is his last piano sonata. Brahms' first sonata was dedicated to Joachim and his second to Clara Schumann, while the third sonata carries a dedication to the Countess Ida von Hohenenthal, a prominent figure in Leipzig who employed Brahms' brother Fritz as a music teacher for her children. Brahms considered these works unworthy of a dedication to Robert Schumann himself. In the same year in Weimar, Franz Liszt was completing his momentous Piano Sonata in B minor, which he dedicated to Robert Schumann.

Brahms' Sonata No. 3 is a tumultuous and triumphant work spanning five movements that each transform and develop common themes. The first Allegro maestoso juxtaposes despair, tragedy and soft tranquility, in strong contrasts that characterize much of Brahms' music. In the Andante, long, flowing melodic lines express great tenderness and passion, with no memory of the storm in the first movement. This second movement is inscribed with a verse from a poem by Otto Inkerman (1823-1862) under the pseudonym C.O. Sternau entitled "Young Love":

Der Abend dämmert, das Mondlicht scheint,  
Da sind zwei Herzen in Liebe vereint  
Und halten sich selig umfangen.

The evening falls, the moonlight shines,  
There are two hearts united in love  
And holding one another in a blissful embrace.

Following this expression of timeless beauty, the Scherzo interrupts with a fragmented, boisterous dance filled with dramatic flourishes. A contemplative chorale-like middle section provides a respite from the dance before returning with renewed force to the opening. The Intermezzo, subtitled "Rückblick" (looking back), transforms the melody from the second movement into a foreboding, hopeless statement of tragedy. The Finale alternates uncertainty and restlessness with shimmering passages of hope and tenderness that include the F-A-E "frei aber einsam" (free but lonely) motive cherished by Joachim. An exuberant coda concludes this towering work with a triumph of glory and joyous celebration.

## About the Artist

**Nora Bartosik** was born in Rome, Italy to an American father and a Japanese mother. She began playing the piano at the age of three and gave her first public performance two years later at the Ecole d'Humanité in Switzerland. She holds a Bachelor's degree cum laude in Music and German Literature from Harvard University, a Master's degree in piano performance from the Mozarteum University in Salzburg, and a Konzertexamen degree in solo piano from the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Leipzig. She was a two-time recipient of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Fellowship and received scholarships from Yehudi Menuhin Live Music Now Germany.

Nora Bartosik's primary teachers have included Jacques Rouvier in Salzburg, Karl-Heinz Kämmerling in Hannover, Gerald Fauth in Leipzig, Patricia Zander and Robert Levin in Boston, and Jan Gottlieb Jiracek in Vienna. She has performed in masterclasses with pianists including Daniel Barenboim, Leon Fleisher, Paul Badura-Skoda, Dmitri Bashkirov, Arie Vardi, Yoheved Kaplinsky, Menahem Pressler and Alexander Jenner. She has performed as a soloist and in chamber ensembles in the United States, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Austria, Portugal, Spain, and Switzerland, and with orchestras including the Philharmonic Orchestra Altenburg-Gera and the Harvard Bach Society Orchestra. She has won prizes at several international competitions, including first prize at the International Piano Competition Teresa Llacuna in Valence, France, and third prizes at the International Blüthner Piano Competition in Vienna, Austria and the Val Tidone International "Silvio Bengalli" Competition in Val Tidone, Italy. She was recently a jury member for the 2017 Suffolk Piano Teachers Foundation Piano Competition held in Melville, NY. She has performed in international festivals including the prestigious Aspen Music Festival and School in Aspen, Colorado, the Saoû Chante Mozart Festival in Saoû, France and the HARMOS Festival in Porto, Portugal. She has also organized and performed solo recitals in Harvard's historic Sanders Theatre to benefit community arts programs for children in the Boston area. Nora Bartosik is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Musical Arts in Piano Performance at The Graduate Center under the guidance of Professor Ursula Oppens.