

INTERMEZZO
AFTERNOON

Dr. Scott Watkins, piano
Professor of Music

September 5, 2024 – 5:00pm
Terry Concert Hall, Lobby

MOZART Sonata No. 17 in B-flat major, K. 570

Allegro
Andante
Allegretto

HANSON Three Pieces, Op. 18

Rhythmic Etude: Moderato, ma con moto
Melodic Etude: Andante teneramente
Idyllic Poem: Un poco lento, ma liberamente

Mozart's Piano Sonata No. 17, with its perfect equilibrium of form, expression, and technicality, continues to captivate musicians and audiences alike. The sonata serves as a benchmark in piano literature, embodying the elegance and expressivity of Mozart's mature musical language. Its appeal lies not only in the beauty of the music itself but also in the challenges and rewards it presents to pianists, both technically and emotionally.

Although Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in 1756, nearly 25 years after Haydn's birth, he would die in 1791, well before the elder composer's death in 1809. Mozart's entire life and career were encompassed by Haydn's fruitful longevity. And while Haydn was credited with pioneering such musical forms as the keyboard sonata or the string quartet, it was Mozart who refined them, and to many minds, perfected them. The Sonata in B-flat, K. 570, written in 1789, adopts the familiar three-movement structure of two faster outer movements and a central slow movement.

Sonata forms (first movements) usually present two contrasting themes. This contrast is often the spark of great ingenuity (such as is seen in the music of Beethoven). But Mozart breaks this formal structure and gives us the same theme as both this sonata's first and second subjects – a rare example of monothematicism. While this movement begins with a simple outline of a triad, the music quickly becomes glittering display of passagework. And if that weren't enough, Mozart gives us a jarring key change unlike anything had ever done.

The slow movement, a kind of musical time machine looking both backward and forward. Backward to a Baroque counterpoint, and forward to an operatic style featuring the virtuoso soprano. The elegiac style of this movement is present in Mozart's chamber music of this period (1789) such as the Quintet in G minor (K514) for two violas, two violins, and cello, and the Quintet for clarinet and string quartet.

The final movement is a humorous operatic episode which exudes charm and wit, and the whole Sonata ends quietly with a touch of elegance.

Howard Hanson composed his Three Pieces, Op. 18, in the winter of 1920. He played them himself many times while on the faculty of the College of the Pacific (then located in San Jose, California). His students often played them as well. Hanson's most memorable performance, however, took place in Rome, Italy in March, 1922. Hanson was a Fellow at the American Academy in Rome and, in a concert he shared with pianist and composer Ottorino Respighi, Hanson played his Three Pieces for Vittorio Emmanuel III, King of Italy. The King was so delighted with the music that Hanson had his Three Pieces attractively bound and presented to the King. The

