

# American Beethoven Society Convention July 24-25, 2015

## Schedule of Events

Friday, July 24, 2015

***Beethoven Center open to ABS members from 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.***

**5:30-10:00 p.m. 30th Anniversary Gala (reservation required\*).**

**\* Please note that if you are attending the gala you should allow an hour to travel to the Silver Creek Country Club. The event is sold out, but if you want to be placed on the waiting list, please call the Beethoven Center at 408-808-2058.**

Saturday, July 25, 2015

**9:00-9:30 a.m.** Coffee, tea, and sweets

### **MORNING SESSION: Beethoven and Literature**

**Chair: William Meredith**

**9:30-10:15** John Clubbe (Santa Fe, NM): “Beethoven’s *Fidelio*, the Immortal Beloved, and Homer’s *Odyssey*”

This paper focuses on *Fidelio*'s two main themes: the importance of freedom and justice, and the realization of a steadfast love. First, I take up Beethoven's thinking about prisons and prison life during his lifetime and compare it to that in works by, among others, Beccaria, Piranesi, Schiller, and Byron and discuss as well how it differs from modern concepts of imprisonment. I then consider how the nature of love expressed in the opera relates to that expressed in Beethoven's letter to his Immortal Beloved.

In my view, Beethoven's repeated readings of Homer's *Odyssey* stand behind the composition of *Fidelio*. Beethoven read and reread the *Odyssey* in Johann Heinrich Voss's magnificent translation and several times expressed a hope that he could write an opera based on it. A number of passages contain markings or marginal comments by Beethoven that are fortunately recorded and published in Ludwig Nohl's *Beethovens Brevier* (1870, 1901).

The frequency of Beethoven's comments suggest that he responded far more to the second half of the *Odyssey* than to the first. The second half presents Odysseus finally having landed in Ithaca, his home. He responded particularly to passages that take up Telemachus, Odysseus's son; Penelope, Odysseus's wife; and Odysseus himself, whose character greatly intrigued Beethoven. His markings and marginal comments on the *Odyssey*, interpreted in conjunction with Homer's narrative as translated by Voss, sometimes read like the autobiography he never wrote.

John Clubbe was trained in history and literature at Columbia. Published books include studies or editions of Thomas Hood, Thomas Carlyle, James Anthony Froude, English Romanticism, and Byron. An interest in architecture and urban history led to a volume on the architecture and history of Cincinnati. An interest in art and the nature of portraiture led to his most recent book, a study of Thomas Sully's hitherto unknown portrait of Byron. His lifelong interest in music, especially that by Beethoven, has resulted in his *Beethoven: The Relentless Revolutionary* (forthcoming, W.W. Norton) and a number of essays on the composer, three of which—dealing with Beethoven's Brutus, Rilke's interest in Beethoven, and Beethoven's awareness of the writings of Johann Gottfried Seume—were published in *The Beethoven Journal*.

**10:15-11:00** Donna Beckage (Los Angeles, CA): “Beethoven as Literary Muse”

Since Beethoven's own time, countless poets, novelists, and dramatists have looked to the composer and his music for inspiration. This talk will focus on a few examples of literary expression in which the composer plays a significant role. In “Moonlight Sonata,” Greek poet Yannis Ritsos uses the first movement of Beethoven's Fortepiano Sonata, Opus 27, no. 2, heard in the background, to enhance the atmosphere and emotions of a crucial moment in a woman's life. A character in *An Equal Music* by Indian novelist Vikram Seth finds deep personal meaning in several musical works, especially Beethoven's Fortepiano Trio, Opus 1, no. 3, and its transcription as a string quintet, Opus 104. American poet Rita Dove's *Sonata Mulattica* is a book-length sequence of poems and a short play interpreting moments in the life and career of violinist George Augustus Polgreen Bridgetower. His friendship with Beethoven and his performance of the violin sonata that would later be known as the “Kreutzer” are portrayed in several poems and the play.

Donna Beckage received her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of California, Riverside in 1977 with a dissertation on “Beethoven in Western Literature,” and taught literature courses at UCR and Vanderbilt University. Since 1986 she has worked in several departments of the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles. Her personal research centers on the relationships among literature and the arts, especially music. She took part in the American Beethoven Society's superb tour to Austria in 2011 and looks forward enthusiastically to the upcoming 2015 tour.

**11:00-11:15 Break**

**11:15-12:00** Howard Jay Smith (Ojai, CA): “Employing the Tools of Fiction to Offer Insight Into the Life of the Historical Beethoven”

Can a novel be a collection of lies that tells a greater truth? In his last seconds of consciousness before death, Beethoven shakes his fist at his Creator. Why has he been cast out as history's cruel joke, a deaf composer who was also denied family and love? He pleads with Providence to grant him one final wish— a single day of pure joy.

*Beethoven in Love; Opus 139* begins and ends at that moment. Inbetween we travel with him through a fog of memories during which he must confront his many failings before he can pass through the Gates of Elysium and find the happiness he seeks. By exploring Beethoven's life through fiction can we better comprehend the man behind the music and in so doing find universal truths that illuminate our own lives? How do any of us come to terms with the failings of our life and find peace at the moment of our death?

Howard Jay Smith is an award winning writer from Ojai, California. *Beethoven in Love; Opus 139* is his third book. Smith has published or has had produced numerous short stories, articles, screenplays and works for radio and TV. He taught for five years at the Writers' Program at UCLA and is on the Board of Directors of the Santa Barbara Symphony Orchestra.

**12:00-1:00** Lunch (Included)

**1:00-1:45** Exploring the exhibit *Beethoven's Politics, Politics' Beethoven: Two Centuries of Revolution, Wars, Tyrants, Censorship, 1789-1989* with William Meredith

### **AFTERNOON SESSION I: Beethoven Biography**

**Chair: Patricia Stroh**

**1:45-2:30** Adriana Ratsch-Rivera (Moraga, CA): "Beethoven's 'Non Plus Ultra'"

This research explores the fund raising efforts Beethoven undertook to help Regina Bach, who lived in poverty and was the last living next of kin to the composer Johann Sebastian Bach. Beethoven had been a great admirer of J.S. Bach since childhood. Bach's music autographs and manuscripts were widely distributed, collected, and owned among musicians and lovers of his music from London-Hamburg-Berlin-Bonn-Frankfurt to Vienna. Beethoven's efforts to solicit money for the last living daughter of his "hero of harmony" were problematic and not well supported. Modern literature gives no explanation as to why this problem existed. The answer to the problem lies in the way women were valued and how the laws of the time did not give them the rights to own or inherit property. German law was written by men and favored only male descendants. Some of these problems still exist to this day in modern German society but many laws have changed over the years. Comparing the discriminatory practices toward women of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German speaking countries with contemporary practices will shed light on the problems that Beethoven faced during his time to support the last relative of Johann Sebastian Bach.

Adriana Ratsch-Rivera is from Berlin, Germany. Her father was stationed in Berlin with the US Army and her mother is German. Her family moved to the US when she finished her high school education. She studied at the University of Hawaii specializing in classical guitar performance and composition. After receiving her Bachelor of Music in 1985, she moved to the San Francisco Bay Area and studied at the California State University, East Bay earning a Master of Arts in Music with an emphasis in Music History and Literature. Her life-long interest in Beethoven inspired her to write her graduate thesis titled *The Genesis of Beethoven's Fifth*

*Symphony* for which she was awarded an Outstanding Thesis Award from the Music Department in 2004. Her concert career includes performing the Vivaldi Concerto in D at Miller Outdoor Theater in Houston, Texas, and Bay Area recitals. She also worked as adjunct faculty at Contra Costa College teaching History of Western Music. Presently, she is active as guitarist for dance concerts and teaches vocal music at Civic Arts Education in Walnut Creek.

**2:30-3:15** Barbara Hassid (Albany, CA) and Alice Derry (Port Angeles, Washington):  
“Becoming Beethoven: The Formative Years in Bonn 1770-1792”

This presentation will begin with a brief review of a forthcoming book (title above) on Beethoven's life and musical compositions during his Bonn years 1770-1792 edited by Barbara Hassid in collaboration with Patricia Stroh. Following this overview, Alice Derry will discuss her contribution to the book: the challenging process of translating the first English version of the Fischer Manuscript, specifically, Margot Wetzstein's edition entitled: *Familie Beethoven im kurfürstlichen Bonn: Neuauflage nach den Aufzeichnungen des Bonner Bäckermeisters Gottfried Fischer*. Bonn: Verlag Beethoven-Haus, 2006. Wetzstein's scholarship has established the value of Fischer's descriptions of the milieu in which Beethoven came to manhood. Derry's translation includes Wetzstein's 503 scholarly footnotes on the history of Beethoven's Bonn.

Lastly, Barbara Hassid will discuss her research for her contributing article which focuses on the text of *Beethoven's Cantata on the Death of Joseph II* and its significance in the historical context of the German Aufklärung, during the reign of Emperor Joseph II, 1780-1790. Specifically Ms. Hassid will explore how the text of the Joseph Cantata coincides with the beliefs of liberal Catholics in Bonn who railed against the "crude, uncouth manners and great stupidity of the monks" in conservative Cologne, and the historical process by which Bonn became the most Enlightened ecclesiastical city in Germany; i.e., the "Bastion of the Aufklärung on the Rhine," which consequently impacted Beethoven's religious and political beliefs.

Alice Derry has published four collections of poetry, as well as translations from the poetry of Rainer Rilke. Two manuscripts are in preparation. She earned her M.F.A from the program originating at Goddard College (Vermont) and now housed at Warren Wilson College (North Carolina). Derry studied *Germanistik* for a year at the Free University in Berlin (then West Berlin) in 1967-68 and taught German to beginners for more than three decades. During that time she visited and studied in Germany about fifteen times. Her poetry collection, *Strangers to their Courage*, traces her connection to the language and people, through the lens of the post-World-War II years. Derry taught English and German at Peninsula College in Port Angeles, Washington, for thirty years, retiring in 2009. Most recently, she delivered the keynote address at the Raymond Carver 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration in 2013. Her website is [www.alicederry.com](http://www.alicederry.com).

Barbara Hassid received her MA in Humanities from San Francisco State University, and is an independent scholar and former adjunct professor of interdisciplinary studies at San Francisco State University. Ms. Hassid has studied choral conducting and piano with Earl Rymer at the

University of Minnesota and piano at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music with Josepha Heifetz.

### **Break 3:15-3:30**

## **AFTERNOON SESSION II: Beethoven's Music**

**Chair: Patricia Stroh**

**3:30-4:15** Amy Carr-Richardson (Greenville, NC): "Beethoven's Opus 102/2 and Music Modeling after Works by J.S. Bach, Haydn, and Mozart"

Beethoven's two Sonatas for Violoncello and Fortepiano, Opus 102, have been described as harbingers of the composer's late style. The fugal finales of these sonatas, in particular, mark the emphasis on counterpoint associated with his late works. However, the other movements are also characterized by a significant inclusion of contrapuntal technique. One contemporary critic (1818) noted how the Opus 102 sonatas differed from the current musical style and compared them in a general way to J.S. Bach's keyboard sinfonias. This paper proposes that Beethoven was not only assimilating general aspects of Bach's style, but that he was also modeling his own sonatas after specific motivic content and contrapuntal techniques from selected fugues in Bach's *Well Tempered Clavier*, and perhaps from specific string quartets by Haydn and Mozart, as well. The main goals of this paper are to explain the proposed voice-leading techniques by which models are adapted and to focus on correlations between Opus 102, no. 2, and selected fugues by Bach. The paper will also propose the possibility of connections between Beethoven's sonata and string quartets by Haydn and Mozart, including Mozart's K. 387, the score for which Beethoven copied around 1798. Sketches for Opus 102, no. 2, will support specific proposed musical connections.

Amy Carr-Richardson serves as Associate Professor of Music Theory at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina. Her primary research interests include the study of musical borrowing in Beethoven's music and the analysis of his late works.

**4:15-5:00** Peter Ballinger (Albany, CA): "Cobbler's Patch—or Manna in the Wilderness?"

Beethoven's "Thirty-three Variations on a Waltz by Diabelli," Opus 120, have generated an enormous critical literature. Stemming from an account of it by Schindler, the waltz has been described in pejorative terms as a trite piece unworthy of the astonishing genius displayed by Beethoven in his treatment of it. Schindler's account has been discredited, but the term "Schusterfleck" allegedly applied by Beethoven to a characteristic of the piece has persisted as a musical condemnation of the entire waltz. The harsher the criticism, the more astonishment is expressed at Beethoven's reaction—the enthusiastic composition of not just the one variation requested by Diabelli, but a total of 33, in fact more than 33 if unused sketches are included. My aim is to focus not on Beethoven's treatment of the waltz, as this has been thoroughly explored, but on the waltz itself; Diabelli's construction, his possible motives for submitting it, and his astute evaluation of Beethoven's character in

doing so. I explore the origin of segments of the waltz, as dissected by many of the critics, and attempt to show that each of them could have been assembled by Diabelli from Beethoven's own compositions extant prior to 1819, the year of his proposal. The waltz, far from being a despicable "cobbler's patch," served as "manna"— spiritual and musical refreshment that stimulated Beethoven's invention and humor, at a time when his resources were at an ebb.

Peter Ballinger (b. 1932, London, UK) was educated in England. He discovered the recorder at the age of 13 and later played clarinet and timpani in orchestras in London. In 1955 he was General Manager of a revival of Rossini's *Il Turco in Italia* with Marcus Dods as conductor, at University College, London, while simultaneously carrying out research there for a Ph.D. in Chemistry (1957). After a two-year fellowship in chemistry at Cornell, he joined Chevron where he worked as a Senior Research Associate, retiring in 1987. In 1960 he founded a recorder quartet, the Marin Recorder Consort, played recorder frequently in concerts at the Old Spaghetti Factory and with the Goliard Players, performing early music with Young Audiences in schools throughout the Bay Area. He was a soloist (Brandenburg 4) in the 1970 Carmel Bach Festival, performed with the recorder quartet, Pipers' Fancy, in the 80s, and appeared occasionally as sopranino recorder soloist in Rinaldo with Pocket Opera. He arranges and composes chamber music for recorders and for viols, winning prizes for his Double Quartet for recorders and for a Six-part Viol Consort. His bass voice may be detected in CDs of several works by Handel recorded when he sang with the UC Berkeley Chamber Chorus directed by John Butt in the 90s: he also sang in concerts with Michael Senturia's Coro d'Amici early in this century. He and his wife, Leslie Gold (who also plays viol) publish music together as PRB Productions ([www.prbmusic.com](http://www.prbmusic.com)), now celebrating its 25th year in Albany, California, with upwards of 300 titles of music of the 17th-18th and 20-21st centuries including the first printed editions of a cantata cycle by Telemann, and vocal music by J.C. Bach and Daniel Purcell. His watercolors have appeared in shows throughout the Bay Area since 1990.

**5:00-7:00** Dinner before Symphony Silicon Valley concert  
(on your own—we'll supply lists of restaurants nearby!)

**7:00-9:00** Symphony Silicon Valley Celebrating the Beethoven Center's 30th Anniversary Concert featuring the *Prometheus* Overture, the Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-flat Major ("Emperor"), and selections from Beethoven's First, Fifth, Seventh, and Eighth Symphonies (see enclosed flyer on back of campus map)  
Reserved seating on Tower Lawn