

Minnesota Orchestra

Kerem Hasan, conductor

Jon Kimura Parker, piano

In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre

Friday, July 22, 2022, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall
 Saturday, July 23, 2022, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall

Ludwig van Beethoven	Sonata No. 14 in C-sharp minor for Piano, Opus 27, No. 2, <i>Moonlight</i> (Quasi una fantasia) Adagio sostenuto Allegretto Presto agitato <i>Jon Kimura Parker, piano</i>	ca. 15'
Anna Thorvaldsdottir	<i>Metacosmos</i>	ca. 14'
Bedřich Smetana	<i>The Moldau</i> , No. 2 from <i>Má vlast</i> (My Homeland) <i>In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre</i>	ca. 11'
	I N T E R M I S S I O N	ca. 20'
Ludwig van Beethoven	Symphony No. 6 in F major, Opus 68, <i>Pastoral</i> Allegro ma non troppo: Awakening of happy feelings on getting out into the country Andante molto moto: By the brookside Allegro: Merry gathering of the country folk Allegro: Thunderstorm Allegretto: Shepherds' Song; Happy and thankful feelings after the storm	ca. 40'

Kerem Hasan's profile appears on page 47; Jon Kimura Parker's on page 8; In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre's on page 47. Lighting design by Michael Murnane.

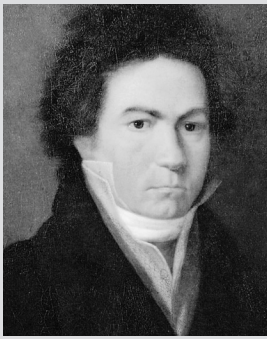
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Ludwig van Beethoven

Born: December 15, 1770,
Bonn, Germany
Died: March 26, 1827,
Vienna, Austria

**Sonata No. 14 in C-sharp minor
for Piano, Opus 27, No. 2,
Moonlight (Quasi una fantasia)**
Composed: 1801

much of Beethoven's most beloved music is famous for dispensing with conventions, so it's fitting that this summer's "Beethoven Influence" concerts deliver the unexpected as well—in tonight's case, beginning with a work for solo piano rather than orchestra.

an audience favorite

As a young man in Vienna, Beethoven first made his name as a piano composer, performer and improviser, gaining a reputation for pushing the evolving instrument to its sonic limits—and occasionally beyond, as repairs were sometimes needed during and after his piano performances. He remained associated with the instrument even as his ambitions broadened, and his output for the piano is towering, including 32 numbered sonatas, six concertos (five solo concertos plus a triple concerto for violin, cello and piano), more than 50 chamber works with piano, and dozens of variations and shorter solo works.

The Piano Sonata No. 14 dates from 1801, still relatively early in Beethoven's career—20 sonatas were composed before the premiere of his Second Symphony—and it quickly stood out as an audience favorite, leaving the composer flustered. "Everybody is always talking about the C-sharp minor Sonata! Surely I have written better things," he once remarked to a pupil, the composer Carl Czerny. The talking continued after Beethoven's passing in 1827; in 1832 the German critic and poet Ludwig Rellstab compared the first movement to the moonlight shining upon Switzerland's Lake Lucerne, and the moniker *Moonlight* was soon affixed to scores by publishers. This posthumous rebranding has sidelined the composer's actual subtitle for the sonata, *Quasi una fantasia*, Italian for "in the manner of a fantasy."

breaking with tradition

The *Moonlight* Sonata, which Beethoven dedicated to his piano student Giulietta Guicciardi, is notable for its free-flowing qualities—particularly the opening movement, which at times sounds almost improvised—in contrast to more rigidly structured Classical sonatas. The key selection of C-sharp minor is unusual, and the overall structure also breaks tradition, with the slow

movement positioned first rather than in the middle. After the hypnotic arpeggios of the famous opening comes a charming middle movement, described by Franz Liszt as "a flower between two abysses" and flavored with syncopated rhythms, then a ferociously difficult *Presto* finale with waves of crescendos that are survivable by modern pianos, but reportedly left Beethoven's with broken strings at the premiere.

Instrumentation: solo piano

Program note by *Carl Schroeder*.

The Creative Partner for Summer at Orchestra Hall position is supported by Marilyn and Glen Nelson.



Anna Thorvaldsdottir

Born: July 11, 1977,
Borgarnes, Iceland

Metacosmos

Premiered: April 4, 2018

Anna Thorvaldsdottir, whose music is being heard at Orchestra Hall this weekend for the first time, is one of Iceland's most widely performed and internationally renowned classical composers. Her innovative approach to sound, texture and color has earned her multiple international prizes, commissions and widespread critical acclaim. She describes her works as "an ecosystem of sounds, where materials grow in and out of each other...inspired...by nature and its many qualities." Among the orchestras that have commissioned her work are the Berlin Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Orchestre de Paris and Munich Philharmonic. She currently resides in London and teaches composition in a variety of settings. Since 2018 she has served as the composer in residence for the Iceland Symphony Orchestra, writing for the orchestra and performing her own works.

balancing "beauty and chaos"

The work featured at this weekend's concerts, *Metacosmos*, was commissioned by the New York Philharmonic and funded by the Marie-Josée Kravis Prize for New Music, as a part of Thorvaldsdottir's prize for being named the New York Philharmonic's Kravis Emerging Composer in 2015. Across a 15-minute span, the work's carefully crafted balance of beauty and chaos feels as if it has existed for as long as the cosmos themselves. "Beauty and chaos" are the exact words



Thorvaldsdottir herself used to describe this piece, further stating in her own program note that it was written to explore how two opposing ideals “can come together in (seemingly) utter chaos to create a unified, structured whole.” Cast in one movement, this symphonic poem explores extreme uses of orchestral timbre, texture and color, and tests the ensemble’s ability to trade musical ideas seamlessly between sections of instruments.

This last point is especially important. In her composer’s note in the beginning of the score, Thorvaldsdottir writes to the performers that “[A]s you play a phrase, harmony, texture, or a lyrical line it is being delivered to you, passed on from another performer—or performers—for you to carry on until it is delivered to another. All materials grow in and out of each other, growing and transforming throughout the process.”

The delineations between different sections of *Metacosmos* are blurred. This music unfurls like a stream of consciousness, or rather like a dream; musical ideas appear, distort themselves across the ensemble, then dissolve back into the eternal vastness of the unconscious. At times equally terrifying as it is beautiful, *Metacosmos* represents, according to the composer, “the speculative metaphor of falling into a black hole—the unknown—with endless constellations and layers of opposing forces connecting and communicating with each other, expanding and contracting, projecting a struggle for power as the different sources pull on you and you realize that you are being drawn into a force that is beyond your control.” The piece’s opening minutes are the first of many instances in which this idea is represented sonically. A seemingly innocuous brass motif eventually becomes a terrifying pulsing, a dreadful march that overtakes the orchestra with its oppressive weight.

The beauty that Thorvaldsdottir promises comes in brief glimpses throughout, most recognizable by clear pronunciations of a B-flat major harmony played across the orchestra. Brief melodic fragments appear in these episodes, but flicker back into the darkness. These episodes foreshadow the final section of the piece where, in the end, beauty fully emerges from chaos. A simple, cathartic melody gets traded among the orchestra’s players, against the backdrop of long sustained harmonics and chirping woodwind figures. The piece ends with one long glissando (a slide from pitch to pitch) beginning in the cellos and ending with a solo violin, gliding into the unknowable ether.

a note on the title

“Metacosmos” is not a word that appears in English dictionaries. Thorvaldsdottir seems to have created her own portmanteau out of *meta*, which has multiple meanings, and *cosmos*, meaning the universe. “Meta” sometimes denotes position behind, after, or above, as in metacarpus. Thus the title may mean that the unification of

beauty and chaos, as the composer imagines it in this piece, occurs *beyond* the universe, perhaps even beyond our consciousness. The breakthrough of the melodic material occurs at the end of the piece, and at this arrival, she writes: “Beyond—arriving on the other side.” Though it seems Thorvaldsdottir wants to keep the meaning of the title ambiguous to her audience, there are clear indications given to the musicians as to what she may ultimately mean to convey through this description written in the score.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, alto flute, 2 oboes, English horn, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 4 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, tenor tuba, bass tuba, bass drum, 2 cymbals, 2 large bossed gongs, tamtam, 2 tom-toms and strings

Program note by **Michael Divino**.



Bedřich Smetana

Born: March 2, 1824,
Litomyšl, Czech Republic
Died: May 12, 1884,
Prague, Czech Republic

The Moldau, No. 2 from Má vlast (My Homeland)

Premiered: April 4, 1875

during the second half of the 19th century, the countries we now know as Slovakia and the Czech Republic were part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, ruled by Hapsburg monarchs. Nationalism in music was largely a reaction to German and Austrian dominance of musical forms. Across Europe, many nations were discovering in their native folk music and dance rhythms the materials for an individual musical style that could also serve as a powerful reminder of national identity. A staunch patriot, Bedřich Smetana found in composing the outlet for his deep love of his native Bohemia. Most of his compositions were inspired by an event in his life or an extra-musical association with his homeland.

a cycle of nationalist tone poems

Smetana’s greatest work is *Má Vlast (My Homeland)*, a series of six orchestral tone poems composed over a period of several years in the 1870s and dedicated to the city of Prague. It is the quintessential nationalist work, celebrating the rich Bohemian heritage and land of which Smetana was so proud. Heard in its entirety, *Má Vlast* is a unified cycle both musically and spiritually. It encompasses Czech legend, landscape, geography and history, evoking both people and places. All are represented in Smetana’s section titles: *Vyšehrad*, the half-legendary rock towering above the river; *Vltava* (the Moldau River); *Sárka* (after both a valley

and an Amazon woman in ancient Czech legend), *From Bohemia's Woods and Fields*; *Tábor* (a town in southern Bohemia that was the headquarters of the religious and political reformer Jan Hus); and *Blaník* (a continuation of *Tábor*). Best known by far is its second movement, *The Moldau*, a favorite of most symphony-goers and performed more frequently than any of the other segments.

the music: following the river's course

Vltava ("Moldau" in German-speaking lands) is the river originating in southern Bohemia, converging with the River Elbe in the north. Smetana's *The Moldau* is a series of episodes freely following the river's course from its origins until the point where it joins the Elbe. It begins with the orchestra's first and second flutes representing the two springs—one warm water, the other cold—that feed the river, joining to run through rustic countryside. The flutes' sinuous, liquid lines constitute one of the most ingenious evocations of nature in all of classical music.

The flutes are joined by the clarinets, and eventually by strings, as the forest streams join forces to become a mighty river, whose full majesty is declaimed by a famous E-minor melody. Notes in the score indicate the Moldau's path as it meanders. Smetana next takes us past a scene of hunting in the forest, a rustic village wedding (signaled by a change to duple meter and a peasant dance), moonlight and the dance of water sprites, rapids, and a final salute as the river passes by Vyšehrad, the massive rock that overlooks Prague (which is also the subject of *Má Vlast's* first segment).

The Moldau's musical form has some of the rhetorical inevitability of the river itself; on a more technical basis, Smetana provides unity by re-introducing the *Moldau* theme in the final sections, this time in rich E major that celebrates the river's power.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, suspended cymbal, triangle, harp and strings

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Ludwig van Beethoven Symphony No. 6 in F major, Opus 68, Pastoral

Premiered: December 22, 1808

The Sixth Symphony is unique among Beethoven's symphonies because it appears to be program music. Beethoven himself gave it the nickname *Pastoral* and further headed each movement with a descriptive title that seems to tell a story: the arrival in the country, impressions beside a brook, a peasants' dance which is interrupted by a thunderstorm, and a concluding hymn of

thanksgiving once the storm has passed. Some have claimed that Romantic music begins with the *Pastoral* Symphony—they see it as a precursor of such examples of musical painting as Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, Mendelssohn's fairyland scenes and Liszt's tone poems, while others have tried to stage this music, complete with characters, costumes, and scenery.

Beethoven would have been astonished. He had no use for program music or musical portraiture, which he considered cheap trickery. His Sixth Symphony is in classical symphonic forms throughout. Even its "extra" movement, the famous thunderstorm, can be understood as a brief transition between the scherzo and the rondo-finale. And while this symphony refers to something outside the music itself, Beethoven wanted it understood as "an expression of feelings rather than painting."

the symphony in brief

The first movement ("Cheerful impressions on arriving in the country") is built on two completely relaxed themes; these do not offer the contrast that lies at the heart of sonata form, but instead create two complementary "Cheerful impressions." The second movement ("Scene by the Brook") is also in a sonata form built on two themes. Over murmuring lower strings, with their suggestion of bubbling water, the two themes sing gracefully. The movement concludes with three brief bird calls, which Beethoven names specifically in the score: nightingale (flute), quail (oboe) and cuckoo (clarinet). The scherzo ("Peasants' merrymaking") is a portrait of a rural festival; its vigorous trio echoes the heavy stamping of a peasant dance.

Just as the scherzo is about to repeat, it suddenly veers off in a new direction. Tremulous strings and distant murmurings lead to the wonderful storm. Gradually the storm moves off, and the music proceeds directly into the last movement, where solo clarinet and horn outline the tentative call of a shepherd's pipe in the aftermath of the storm. Beethoven then magically transforms this call into his serene main theme, given out by the violins. If ever there has been music that deserved to be called radiant, it is this singing theme, which unfolds like a rainbow spread across the still-glistening heavens.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, timpani and strings

Program note by Eric Bromberger.



Karem Hasan, conductor

British conductor Kerem Hasan commenced his third season in 2021-22 as chief conductor of the Tiroler Symphonieorchester Innsbruck. In summer 2017, he won the Nestlé and Salzburg Young Conductors Award. Prior to this, he had already attracted attention as a finalist in the Donatella Flick Conducting Competition in London and as associate conductor of the Welsh National Opera. Kerem also returns this season to the Tiroler Landestheater in Innsbruck to conduct Rossini's *L'italiana in Algeri* and Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. Further highlights of his 2021-22 season include opera productions at the English National Opera and in Glyndebourne as well as concerts with the Tonkünstlerorchester Niederösterreich, Borusan Philharmonic Orchestra and Antwerp Symphony Orchestra. Furthermore, he debuts with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia and returns to the ORF Radio Symphonieorchester Wien, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Noord Nederlands Orkest. June 2022 saw him making his U.S. debut with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, followed by concerts at the Aspen Music Festival. More: kdschmid.de.



Gilda Houck-Markovits, American Sign Language interpreter

Gilda Houck-Markovits received a bachelor of arts in Deaf education from Evergreen State College. Prior to graduating in 2000, she was a student teacher at the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind. She later dove into the interpreting field and in 2015 graduated from Saint Paul College with an associate of applied science in interpreting and transliterating. Since then, she has had her hands in education, community, theater and video relay work. She has also volunteered throughout the community, and in addition to being a Sign Language interpreter, she is also a DeafBlind Intervener.

In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre

In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre (HOBT) produces original plays, hosts puppet shows and workshops and leads residencies throughout the Midwest. For many years it produced the MayDay parade, which is now transitioning to a celebration throughout May. Its most recent production was *Impact Theory* in June 2022 at the Avalon Theater. HOBT has often collaborated with the Minnesota Orchestra for Young People's Concerts and *Hansel and Gretel* productions. Its puppets were also featured at 2011 performances of Mozart's *The Magic*

Flute. HOBT has traveled throughout the U.S., Sweden, South Korea and the Dominican Republic. Its many honors include a UNIMA-USA for the 2007 production *We the People, Wake!* More: hobt.org.



Jessica Rivera, soprano

Possessing a voice praised by the *San Francisco Chronicle* for its "effortless precision and tonal luster," Grammy Award-winning soprano Jessica Rivera is one of the most creatively inspired vocal artists before the public today. The intelligence, dimension and spirituality with which she infuses her performances on great international concert and opera stages has garnered Rivera unique artistic collaborations with many of today's most celebrated composers, including John Adams, Osvaldo Golijov, Gabriela Lena Frank, Jonathan Leshnoff, Nico Muhly and Paola Prestini, and has brought her together with such esteemed conductors as Sir Simon Rattle, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Robert Spano, Markus Stenz, Bernard Haitink and Michael Tilson Thomas. An advocate of new music, Rivera has lent her voice to a plethora of world premieres, including Adams' opera *A Flowering Tree*, Frank's *Conquest Requiem*, Golijov's opera *Ainadamar*, Muhly's song cycle *The Adulteress*, and Spano's *Hölderlin Lieder*, a song cycle written specifically for her. More: jessicarivera.com.

profile Jon Kimura Parker, creative partner for Summer at Orchestra Hall

Known for his passionate artistry and engaging stage presence, pianist Jon Kimura Parker has performed regularly at the Berlin Philharmonie, Carnegie Hall, London's South Bank, the Sydney Opera House and the Beijing Concert Hall. In 2019 he was appointed the Minnesota Orchestra's first-ever creative partner for Summer at Orchestra Hall, a new role in which he is serving as a creative force behind the Orchestra's summer festival and appearing each summer as a host, performer and personality. He is also artistic director of the Honens International Piano Competition and artistic advisor for the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival.

Highlights of Parker's 2021-22 season included concerto appearances with the Phoenix, Peninsula, San Antonio, Rhode Island and Kansas City orchestras, a special appearance with the Galilee Chamber Orchestra in Toronto, recitals including Portland Piano International, and performances with Cho-Liang Lin at Chamber Music International in Dallas and with Paul Huang at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in New York. He also tours as a member of the Montrose Trio, which he founded with Martin Beaver and Clive Greensmith. Following their first tour in 2015, *The Washington Post* described them as "poised to become one of the top piano trios in the world."

A collaborator in a wide variety of styles, Parker has performed with Doc Severinsen, Audra McDonald, Bobby McFerrin, Pablo Ziegler and Sanjaya Malakar, among many others. As a founding member of Off the Score, he also performed with Stewart Copeland—the legendary drummer of The Police—for the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival's 20th Anniversary Season, featuring his own arrangements of music by Prokofiev, Ravel and Stravinsky. He has accompanied Frederica von Stade, Susan Graham and Luca Pisaroni in recital.

A committed educator, Parker is professor of piano at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. His students have won prizes in major competitions internationally and given concerto performances in the U.S., Europe, Russia and China. He has also lectured at the Juilliard School and given master classes at Yale. This season he chaired the jury of the Hilton Head International Piano Competition.

Parker's discography of a dozen albums features music ranging from Mozart and Chopin to Barber, Stravinsky and John Adams. His most recent recording *Fantasy*, built around William Hirtz's *Wizard of Oz Fantasy*, was described by *Musical Toronto* as giving "a big, clear picture window of a rich soul and great artistic depth." His YouTube channel features a series of *Concerto Chat* videos that explore the piano concerto repertoire. In addition, his *Whole Notes* series, featuring performances of great composers, is available on Amazon Prime Video. He is now



Tara McMullen

recording master class videos for Tonebase on major works of the piano concerto repertoire.

Parker studied with Edward Parker and Keiko Parker, Lee Kum-Sing at the Vancouver Academy of Music and the University of British Columbia, Marek Jablonski at the Banff Centre and Adele Marcus at the Juilliard School. Winner of the Gold Medal at the 1984 Leeds International Piano Competition, Parker is an Officer of The Order of Canada and has received honorary doctorates from the University of British Columbia and the Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto.

Known to friends—new and old—as “Jackie,” Parker is married to violinist/violist Aloysia Friedmann, and their daughter Sophie graduated from Rice University in 2021. For more information, visit jonkimuraparker.com.

Jon Kimura Parker, creative partner for Summer at Orchestra Hall, holds the Marilyn and Glen Nelson Chair.