“The appeal of Rosenbaum’s playing is in his musical temperament, in which fervor and gentleness are happily combined and in the velvet of his tone.....he makes up for all the drudgery the habitual concert-goer has to endure in the hope of finding the real, right thing”.

That’s how the Boston Globe described American pianist Victor Rosenbaum, an artist whose playing has been called “magisterial” with a “piano touch [that] encompasses bravura, delicacy, and many variations between”.

Rosenbaum has concertized widely as soloist and chamber music performer in the United States, Europe, Israel, Brazil, Russia, and Asia (including 25 annual trips to Japan) in such prestigious halls as Tully Hall in New York and the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, Russia. He has collaborated with such artists as Leonard Rose, Paul Katz, Arnold Steinhardt, Robert Mann, Joseph Silverstein, James Buswell, Malcolm Lowe, and the Brentano, Borromeo, and Cleveland String Quartets. Festival appearances have included Tanglewood, the Rockport Chamber Music Festival, Kfar Blum and Tel Hai (in Israel), Yellow Barn, Kneisel Hall (Blue Hill), Musicorda, Masters de Pontlevoy (France), the Heifetz Institute, the International Keyboard Institute and Festival in New York, the International Music Seminar in Vienna, the Bowdoin International Music Festival, the Festival at Walnut Hill School, the Puerto Rico International Piano Festival, and The Art of the Piano Festival in Cincinnati. Concert appearances have brought him to Chicago, Minneapolis, Tokyo, Beijing, St. Petersburg (Russia), Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and New York, among others. In addition to his absorption in the music of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (in particular Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin, and Brahms), Rosenbaum has performed and given premieres of works by many contemporary composers, including John Harbison, John Heiss, Peter Westergaard, Norman Dinerstein, Arlene Zallman, Donald Harris, Daniel Pinkham, Miriam Gideon, Stephen Albert, and many others. A musician of diverse talents, Rosenbaum is also a composer and has frequently conducted in the Boston area and beyond.

Rosenbaum, who studied with Elizabeth Brock and Martin Marks while growing up in Indianapolis, and went on to study with Rosina Lhevinne at the Aspen Festival and Leonard Shure (while earning degrees at Brandeis University and Princeton) has become a renowned teacher himself. A member of the faculty of New England Conservatory in Boston since 1967, he chaired its piano department for more than a decade, and was also Chair of Chamber Music. Also on the faculty of Mannes School of Music in New York from 2004-2017, he has been Visiting Professor of Piano at the Eastman School of Music, a guest teacher at Juilliard, and presents lectures, workshops, and master classes for teachers’ groups and schools both in the U. S. and abroad, including London’s Royal Academy of Music, Royal College of Music, and Guildhall School, the conservatories of St. Petersburg and Moscow, Beijing Central Conservatory, Shanghai Conservatory, the Toho School in Tokyo, Tokyo Ondai, most major schools in Taiwan, and other institutions such as the Menuhin School near London, and the Jerusalem Music Center. Rosenbaum was also Director and President of the Longy School of Music from 1985-2001.

A CD of the last piano pieces of Brahms has just been released on Bridge Records; three other discs on the same label include a Schubert disc (described as a “powerful and poignant record of human experience”) and two Beethoven recordings, named by the American Record Guide as among the top classical recordings of 2005 and 2020. He has also recorded three discs for the Fleur de Son label — two of Schubert and one of Mozart.

The Jerusalem Post wrote of Rosenbaum: “His obvious consciousness of everything he was doing....resulted in rich and subtle nuances of dynamics and shadings and in organically shaped, well-
rounded phrases; [while] there was refreshing spontaneity and genuine temperament....the reign of intellect never faltered”.

The New York Times put it succinctly after his performance at Tully Hall: Rosenbaum “could not have been better”.

~Program Notes~
Berkshire Symphony Orchestra
October 1, 2021

Giovanni Gabrieli (1557-1612)
Canzon septime toni No. 2

GIOVANNI GABRIELI was born c.1554-57 in Venice and died there in August 1612. He published his vocal and instrumental collection “Sacrae symphoniae,” from which the present work is taken, in 1597; the individual works were presumably performed in Saint Mark’s Basilica, Venice, where Gabrieli served as organist from 1585 until his death. THE “SACRAE SYMPHONIAE” consists of forty-five motets (vocal works) plus sixteen canzonas and sonatas (instrumental works). Instrumentation for the canzonas and sonatas is frequently not specified, though Gabrieli would have expected a mixed ensemble of wind and string instruments, plus one or two organs. (The high parts in these pieces were often intended for violas, given their virtuosity compared to high wind-instrument contemporaries.) The Canzon septimi toni No. 2, Canzon noni toni, are for eight voices (divided into two groups, antiphonally placed—that is, on opposite sides of the performance space)... Brass arrangements of this music have been popular for generations; the present arrangement is by Robert King.

Steven Ledbetter

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor, Opus 37

Beethoven’s Third Piano Concerto is often called a transitional work between the more conservative first two piano concertos and the high-Beethoven masterpieces to come, the Violin Concerto and last two piano concertos. The picture is not quite that simple, however. The fascinating but stylistically unique Triple Concerto was still forthcoming, and what definitively cries “Beethoven” in the Third Concerto is not the first movement but the sublime middle movement. Why are some early Beethoven works bold and distinctive in voice, and others, like the first three concertos, more traditional? Part of the reason has to do with medium and genre. In those years Beethoven composed with an intense awareness of the past, not only as inspiration but as competition. The past that concerned him most was the immediate: Haydn and Mozart, both of whom he knew personally. In the genres where those masters were supreme—Haydn with string quartets, for example, and Mozart with piano concertos—Beethoven tended to enter the arena cautiously. With genres in which his predecessors had left him more room—say, piano sonata and cello sonata—he was bold from the beginning.

All of which is to say that Beethoven took up each musical genre separately and attacked it distinctively, with regular glances over his shoulder. So a second aspect bearing on his piano concertos, beyond the overwhelming challenge of Mozart, was that for virtuoso performer-composers like himself, concertos were designed as personal showpieces. For that reason, the dynamic of performance and publication was different with concertos than with other genres. A string quartet or symphony or sonata was a work to finish, get premiered, perhaps polish a bit more, then to get published as soon and as profitably as possible. In contrast, Beethoven would write a concerto, play it around revising as he went, the solo part evolving, the cadenzas left for improvisation. Only when a concerto had been heard enough to become familiar to audiences did he publish it and write a new one. Thus the deceptively late opus number for the
Third Concerto, which was finished around late 1802 into 1803 but not published until 1804 (though this was considerably quicker than the earlier concertos). In fact, when the Third was premiered the solo part had not been written down at all, as a well-known story relates. Everybody nominally played from music in those days, so at the performance Beethoven carefully placed the solo part on the piano’s music stand. He was flanked by a young page-turner, who discovered that the pages were mostly blank, with only occasional “hieroglyphics” as reminders. The young man spent the performance anxiously watching Beethoven, waiting for his solemn nods to turn the empty pages. At a dinner afterward, Beethoven was roaring with laughter over the youth’s distress. Even though much of the Third Concerto is audibly indebted to Mozart, in his handling of color and material Beethoven is playing sophisticated games of his own. The quiet unison opening in C minor recalls Mozart’s great C minor concerto, K.491, of which Beethoven once said—after hearing a performance in Vienna’s Augarten in summer 1799 (see illustration on page 37)—“[I’ll] never do anything like that!” Still, even in relatively backward-looking works like this one. Beethoven possesses a mature mastery of form and conception. Like many pieces of the “First Period,” the Third Concerto is more than beautiful; it is a remarkable essay in musical form and logic. The beginning sets a tone dark and dramatic, with a certain military-march aspect familiar in concertos by Beethoven and many others. This, his only minor-key concerto, does not really have the driving and demonic tone of the Fifth Symphony’s first movement and other examples of his “C minor mood”; neither is this concerto the full-blown “heroic” style of the Middle Period. As such, it has a distinctive voice in Beethoven’s orchestral music. The entire concerto will turn around a few ideas from the beginning. The first measure is a rising figure, the second measure a down-striking scale, the third measure a martial drumbeat by way of what musicians call a “dotted” rhythm. Separately and together, these ideas will pervade the first movement and beyond. The most important, as it turns out, is not one of the melodic motifs but rather the drumbeat rhythm. The opening string phrase is echoed a step higher by the winds, who add another fundamental idea: a line that rises up to a piercing dissonance on A-flat. In various guises, that dissonant A-flat will resonate throughout the piece and find its resolution only at the end.

The second theme of the opening movement is, as expected, a lyrical contrast to the sternly militant opening, and brings us to the piano’s entrance on an explosive upward-rushing scale (an idea that will mark the solo voice throughout). Rather than entering with a new and distinctive theme as in many concertos, the soloist then takes up the main theme, establishing a commanding personality in the dialogue with the orchestra. It is as if the music has found its leader. With piano and orchestra in close cooperation, the effect is rather more symphonic than concerto-like. (In Beethoven’s next concerto, the Fourth, solo and orchestra will be steadily at odds.) Much of the music from the solo entrance on, especially the middle development section, is dominated by the drumbeat figure in constantly new forms—but never, so far, played by an actual drum. After the piano’s concluding cadenza, however, the rhythmic motif finally turns up in the timpani, as if emerging as a “real” drumbeat, in a duet with the piano. That moment of piano and timpani together appears to be the first idea Beethoven jotted down for the concerto, in 1796: “For the Concerto in C minor, kettledrum at the cadenza.” Here was the generating conception from which the work developed. The second movement is in a striking E major, about as far from C minor as a key can be. But the first note in its solemnly beautiful opening theme is G-sharp, the same pitch as A-flat. The starring pitch continues to resonate. The form is a simple ABA, the piano still the commanding presence, now with an air of rapturous improvisation. Beethoven’s student Carl Czerny said that this movement should evoke “a holy, distant, and celestial harmony.” That quality was admired from the beginning. The very first review called the middle movement “one of the most expressive and richly sensitive instrumental pieces ever written.” It remains something of that order. The final chord of the second movement places G-sharp on the top in strings. The piano picks up that note and turns it back into A-flat to begin what will be a lively and playful rondo, despite the C minor tonality. Again the piano leads the symphonic dialogue; we hear steady echoes of the first movement in dotted rhythms, down-striding figures, up-rushing scales from the soloist. A couple of times the piano interrupts with mini-cadenzas before the middle section in A-flat major—the starring note now with its own key. As a kind of musical joke, Beethoven turns the A-flat back into G-sharp and on that pivot shoves us for a moment into
E major, the key of the slow movement. Another mini-cadenza from the piano brings in the expansive and surprising coda, where the 2/4 main theme is transformed into a Presto 6/8, driving to the end in pealing C major high spirits. The main feature of this new incarnation of the rondo theme is a wry flip on G-sharp–A, the last disguise of the starring pitch, finally resolving into C major. And there in a nutshell is Beethoven, obsessed with technique and organic unity at the same time as he was always powerfully expressive. He never sacrificed feeling for form or form for feeling, but rather made sure they both worked together in transcendent harmony.

Jan Swafford

**Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)**

**Symphony No. 2 in D, Opus 36**

Beethoven’s Second Symphony in D major, finished in 1802 when he was thirty-one, has long been a model of creative detachment. This most brash, rollicking, youthful, and nearly carefree of his symphonies was written in some of the darkest months of his life—when he could no longer deny that his hearing was going, that his health would never be good again, that pain was likely to be his closest companion. For good reason as he worked on the D major symphony, Beethoven was near suicide. Somehow, out of that anguish came an explosion of high spirits on the page, and soon after that an explosion of imagination. It would not be the last time in his life to see such a connection of misery, joy, and historic creative growth. In terms of his career, in 1802 Beethoven was as hot as hot gets. When Beethoven was twenty, Joseph Haydn had prophesied that as composer and pianist, this youth was going to be one of the most famous musicians in Europe. With his Second Symphony, Beethoven was on the verge of fulfilling that prophecy. In the next year he started the revolutionary Third Symphony, the Eroica; its premiere brought Western music to a new era. As a pianist in those days, Beethoven was the rage of Vienna, above all because of the fire and imagination of his improvisations. He was becoming the essential musician for the Romantic sensibility; if his own sensibilities were formed in an earlier generation, Beethoven wrote the main musical accompaniment to the burgeoning Romantic movement. At the same time, for all the unbridled imagination of his playing and all the capriciousness of his personality, he was an infinitely painstaking artist. At thirty-one he was still feeling his way, but a central pattern of his life was already set: the expressive and the technical always worked together, neither sacrificed to the other. In his time everybody said his music was wild, demonic, a revelation, a force of nature, a threat to youth—those sorts of things. Only a few saw the implacable control, the command of form, the impeccable skill in writing for every instrument and medium. In his physical being Beethoven was a mess, in his practical dealings with the world more or less the same, in his musical voice unprecedentedly personal and passionate. As a musician he was the careful, consummate professional. In the works of his twenties, notably the first set of string quartets, we hear Beethoven patiently grappling with media and genres that the previous generation had perfected. His task in those years was to hone his craft, assimilate the lessons of Haydn and Mozart, and at the same time to escape them and find his own voice. With the genre of the symphony it was thus only to a degree. Our idea of a symphony as the king of instrumental forms is what Beethoven made of the symphony, starting with the Eroica. Certainly late Haydn and Mozart pointed the way to symphonies of larger scope, weight, and ambition. But for Beethoven this genre seemed to have been less fraught than the Classical ones of, say, opera and string quartet. He found his voice first on his own instrument, the piano, where his improvisations could lead directly to work on the page. But already in the first two symphonies he is more aggressive, more willing to take chances than in other early orchestral and chamber works. In its time, the First Symphony was a stunner from the opening chord: it begins with a dissonance, and in the wrong key. So if in his first two symphonies Beethoven did not quite know yet where he was headed, he seemed to understand that this field was his to conquer and claim. It is no accident that the Eroica, originally dedicated to Napoleon, rose from a military metaphor. At least in his youth, Beethoven saw his position in music as he saw that of Napoleon in the world: not just a conqueror, but a remaker of things for the better. The first two
symphonies reveal another pattern that carried into Beethoven’s full maturity—a serious, intense symphony followed by a lighter one: the revolutionary Eroica, the graceful Fourth; the stormy Fifth, the gentle Sixth, and so on. The First Symphony is not always sure of itself, but it is a serious and searching piece. Then came the Second, with its jokes and games, its skitters and yawps. Beethoven tends to establish a mood at the beginning of a work and to follow it through, with variation and contrast, relatively clearly to the end. The keynotes of the Second are good cheer and eruptive wit. The music constantly jumps from soft to loud, the loud usually being fortissimo, a volume indication Mozart and Haydn rarely used at all. (They used forte. Merely loud was loud enough for them, but not for Beethoven.) The first movement begins with a fortissimo stroke, a soft answer, another fortissimo. The tone of the slow introduction is hardly violent despite its contrasts, though—rather warm, expansive, and lighthearted. The Allegro con brio that breaks out in due course is a familiar world, recalling, say, the overture to a Mozart comic opera, one with lots of intricate scheming in the plot, the music full of kicks in the pants and faux pathos. Don Giovanni and Leporello linger in the wings here. Yet nobody would mistake this piece for its models in Mozart and Haydn. There is a driving nervous energy unprecedented in the literature to that time, and the orchestral sound is likewise bigger, more sonorous than any before. The first theme is darting and vigorous, the second hardly contrasting—something of a dancing march. There is a long, intense, fully Beethovenian development section prophetic of many to come, and a big coda as well. In both, the expected dramatic gestures are more in the line of jokey melodrama. In this symphony the spirits stay high: the momentary clouds of the coda are pierced by sunshine, and the movement ends on joyous gestures sounding more like the ending of a whole symphony. In its gentle songfulness the second movement recalls the delicate, perfumed ironies of the Classical galante atmosphere. Beethoven’s rich scoring, though, takes most of the preciousness out of that tone. The movement is summery, relaxed, one of the sheerly loveliest he ever wrote—predictive of the Ninth Symphony’s slow movement, if without the ethereal mystery of the late work. For now, Beethoven sticks with gemütlichkeit, that untranslatable German word indicating something on the order of cozy, sanguine, wine-enhanced good cheer among friends. The darting scherzo is in love with its own quirkiness, the nimble banter between the sections of the orchestra, and naturally the eruptive jumps from soft to loud. (History used to claim that Beethoven invented the symphonic scherzo—the word means “joke”—in this symphony. As usual, it was really Haydn’s idea.) A folksy Trio is at least a bit more flowing; we have to stop jumping around sometime, but obviously in this case, as little as possible. Our rondo finale starts out with an absurd whooping fillip, which dissolves into skittering comedy. As it turns out, that little two-note fillip is actually the main motive of the movement; it keeps coming back, getting funnier every time. There’s a flowing theme for contrast, but again, only enough relaxation to keep the excitement fresh. The Beethovenian gift for generating relentless energy has arrived on the scene. The coda, of course, is a romp. So Beethoven composed in the summer of 1802 in the beautiful old village of Heiligenstadt outside Vienna. And as he shaped this marvelous and masterful foolery he was writing down his despair in a document known as the Heiligenstadt Testament.

“I was on the brink of taking my life,” he wrote. Then he realized the one thing that might make the suffering and loneliness worth it: “Art alone stopped me. It seemed inconceivable that I should leave this world without having produced all that I felt I must. And so I go on leading this miserable life.” He was not indulging in self-pity or dramatics here; he was only writing the truth. He kept that piece of paper with him for the rest of his life, to remind himself of what his life was all about. Out of that despair and that resolution rose one of the most powerful and innovative floods of work in the history of human creativity: the Second Period, his full maturity, which from the Eroica history has also been called the Heroic period. When that had run its remarkable course, Beethoven fell into years of illness and despondency—and once again pulled himself out of it to create something new in the world, the sublime late works that include the Ninth Symphony’s Hymn to Joy. Our greatest heroes tend to be characterized by a union of brilliance, courage, the right historical moment, and suffering. Between the Heiligenstadt Testament and the Second and Third symphonies we see that archetype in its tragic and admirable essence.

Jan Swafford
Violin I
Muneko Otani, concertmaster
Christopher Chung ‘22, asst. concertmaster
Deanna Baasch
Audry Shadle ‘24

Violin II
Melanie Dexter, principal
Nicole Zhou ‘25
Heather Munch
Owen Kolean ‘25
Harriet Welther

Viola
Ah Ling Neu, principal
Ray Wang ‘25
Chad Topaz
Jessie Burdette ‘25
Leo Goldmakher

Cello
Julian Müller, principal
Caroline Tally ’22
Rachel Broweleit ‘24
Arianna Suarez ‘25
Nathaniel Kirby ‘24
EB Diallo ‘25

Double Bass
Robert Zimmerman, principal
Matthew Williamson ‘22
Gregg August

Flute
Jacqueline DeVoe, principal
Hanbin Koo ‘22 π
Elizabeth Kwon ‘23 f

Oboe
Charles Huang, principal
Kiri Fitzpatrick ‘25 f
Quentin Funderburg ‘25 π

Clarinet
Paul Green, principal
Minjun Kim ‘22

Bassoon
Stephen Walt, principal
Nathaniel Tunggal ‘25

Horn
Victor Sungarian, principal
Protiku Majumder

Trumpet
Steve Felix, principal
Artie Carpenter ‘25 f π
Andrew Muhareb ‘25
Joel Bishop ‘25
Nico Cavalluzzi ‘23
Paul Kim ‘24

Trombone
Travis Dobson, principal
Jonathan Myers

Tuba
John Bottomly, principal
Gwyn Chilcoat ‘24

Timpani/Percussion
Matthew Gold, principal
Jacob Fanto ‘25

Orchestra Manager
Jeff Miller

Librarian
Susanna Niu ‘24

Stage Managers
Francesca Hellerman ‘23
Anna Leedy ‘22

f = playing on Symphony
π = playing on Concerto