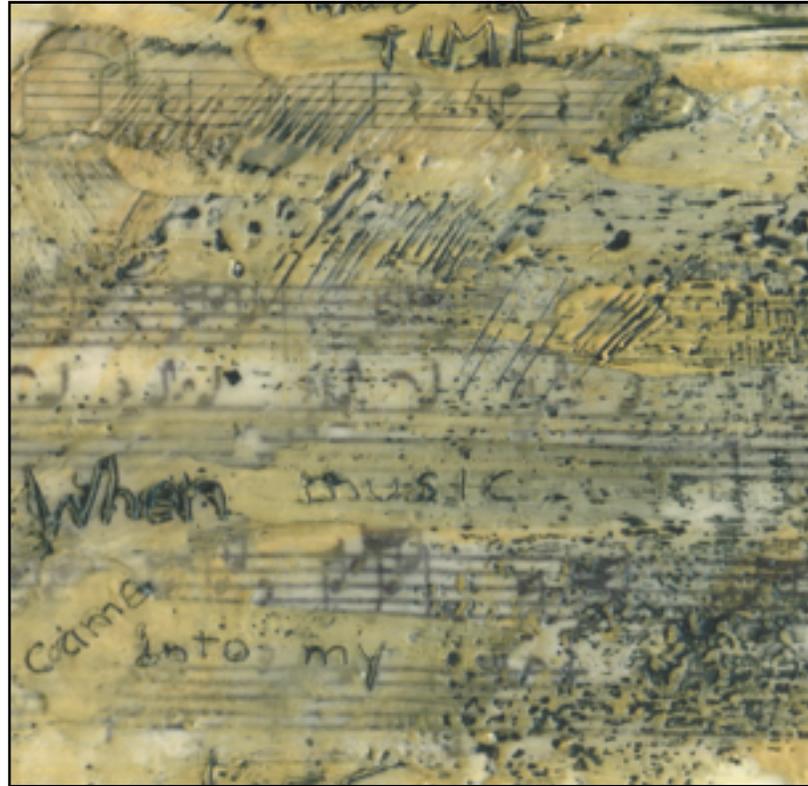


# Musica Viva!



Fragment—Marilyn Banner

Saturday, April 16, 2016  
7:30 PM

7502 Flower Avenue  
Takoma Park

<http://www.dcmusicaviva.org>

# PROGRAM

**Ludwig Van Beethoven** (Dec. 17, 1770-March 26, 1827)  
**Sonata for piano & cello #2, in G minor, Op.5**  
**No 2** (1796)  
I. Adagio sostenuto e espressivo  
II. Rondo. Allegro vivace

**Sonata for piano & cello #5, in D major, Op. 102**  
**No 2** (1815)  
I. Allegro con brio  
II. Adagio con molto sentimento d'affeto-Attacca  
III. Allegro-Allegro fugato

**Carl Banner, piano and Jodi Beder, cello**

## PROGRAM NOTES

**Beethoven, Sonatas for piano & cello, Nos. 2 & 5**— Beethoven's personality has dominated the imaginations of music-lovers for the past 200 years. Even during his lifetime, when he was writing music that was so many light years ahead of its time that it must have sounded like gobbledygook to the vast majority of listeners, he was recognised as the embodiment of creative genius. There is really no more powerful figure in the history of the arts. Beethoven is and has been just 'there', and, if we are to understand anything about music, we have to attempt to come to terms with him as a person and as an artist.



For conductors, the nine symphonies represent perhaps the greatest challenge he or she will face during their career. For pianists, it is the 32 sonatas. Daring to play these works in public makes a statement; even not playing them makes a statement, defining the pianist's limits. Violinists and cellists—with their pianistic partners, of course—have slightly less enormous tasks. Beethoven left 10 violin sonatas and only five cello sonatas, but they are every bit as central to their respective repertoires.

One wonderful aspect of the sonatas is that they represent all of Beethoven's three major creative periods. The first two, in F major and G minor, Op 5, were written at a time when the composer was carving out a career for himself as a virtuoso pianist; in those days, of course, most performers composed.

Beethoven performed these pieces with the famous French cellist Jean-Pierre Duport in Berlin, at the court of King Friedrich II of Prussia (an amateur cellist himself, for whom Haydn and Mozart had written quartets). This was in 1796, when Beethoven was just 25 years old, not yet suffering from the deafness that would transform his whole existence.

The two sonatas are real concert pieces, large in scale, full of exciting effects that would have left the Berliners gasping. They are really sonatas for piano with cello, not the other way round; although there are unexpected flights to high registers for the cello (as there are in all three sets of variations for cello and piano that Beethoven wrote between 1796 and 1801), there is no question as to which instrument gets the lion's share of virtuosity here. Beethoven was not going to let himself be overshadowed by a mere cellist!

The "late" period of Beethoven's creative life is generally said to have begun around 1815. If so, the two cello sonatas Op 102, both dating from that year, would be among the first examples of that miraculous group of masterpieces. They certainly exude the atmosphere of other-worldliness, of transcendent spirituality, that

characterize his last utterances. The difference between these two sonatas and their predecessors are immediately striking. For a start, they are far shorter—approximately half as long as either of the first two. Everything here is concentrated, each gesture kept to its bare essentials. They are also far more closely argued, each note occupying an important place in the overall structure.

The fourth sonata, in the "basic" key of C major, opens with a simple two-bar phrase. It is from this apparently straightforward beginning, however, that the entire work develops; practically every note is derived from those two bars. The last sonata, in D major, takes off in other new directions. After the dramatic opening movement, Beethoven gives us, for the first time in these works, a full slow movement, a prayer that must surely be the most beautiful movement ever written for cello and piano. But after that glimpse of eternity, he returns us to earth with a fugue that is positively rollicking.

And yet for all its sense of fun—and it is fun—the fugue also conveys a strong sense of achievement, of defiant finality; after struggles that would have destroyed a lesser being, Beethoven has emerged in heroic triumph and we can hear him exulting as he bids farewell to the cello sonata.

Abridged from an essay by Steven Isserlis (2007)

## THE ARTISTS

**Jodi Beder** is a cellist and former principal with the Princeton Symphony Orchestra and plays with the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia and other ensembles from NYC to Washington. Her performances on baroque and classical cello have included work with Berkshire Opera, Opera Antica, Fuma Sacra, and the Washington Bach Consort. She



performed at the Spoleto Festival Italy as continuo cellist in Cavalli's L'Ormindo.

A committed interpreter of contemporary music, she has been a frequent soloist at the American Festival of Microtonal Music, playing works written quarter-tones and even sixth- and eight-tones. Since 1997 she has been the cellist of the 5-member cabaret-rock ensemble Zen for Primates (recording on the Bummer Tent label). In 2000 she worked with the Sun Ra Arkestra in Philadelphia, and she has collaborated with the Multigravitational Aerodance Company, CSC Repertory Theater, and recently, Nancy Havlik's Dance Performance Group in Washington, DC. For more than 20 years, she has been the solo cellist for the Brooklyn Heights Synagogue in NYC.

Ms. Beder carries her interest in artistic collaboration to her instruments: with her 1876 cello of Czech origin, she plays a modern bow custom-made for her by NJ bowmaker Ron Forrester, who worked closely with her to match the bow to her playing style and sound preferences; her amplified cello is a 100-year-old German instrument custom-painted by NJ artist Linda Ganus.

She holds a Ph.D. in music from CUNY, and attended the Professional Studies Program of Mannes College of Music, where she studied cello with Paul Tobias. For many years she also studied theory and composition with Miriam Gideon.

**Carl Banner** began his musical career at age 7, taking piano lessons with his aunt, 'a well-known DC piano teacher, chamber musician and dance accompanist.' Her husband was a violist, and the couple held weekly chamber music performances in their DC home, that Carl 'often listened to, sometimes from under the piano.'

When the family relocated to St. Louis, Carl continued his



lessons, and also began competing. In 1962, he performed the Schumann Piano Concerto with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. This achievement was, he reflects, 'a significant milestone for me in many ways.' He stayed in St. Louis to study for a year after his parents returned to DC. He joined his family the next year, but traveled by train twice a month to St. Louis for lessons.

In 1964, he won the National Society of Arts and Letters Competition; his prize was a scholarship to study with Leonard Shure in New York, which he claimed upon graduating from Woodrow Wilson High School. After study at Yale, Washington University in St. Louis, the Music Academy of the West in California and SUNY Buffalo, he returned to DC in 1970. 'Around this time,' Carl says, 'I decided to give up music and get a real job of some sort.' Following a degree in zoology at the University of Maryland and a doctorate in cell biology at Harvard, he worked for a small biotech company in Gaithersburg, later as a researcher, then as a grants administrator at NIH. But he never completely abandoned music, and gradually he realized 'I would have to make it once again central in my life.' After returning to DC in 1988, he 'assembled groups of very good amateurs,' among them the NIH Chamber Players and the Rock Creek Chamber Players, with whom he performed. Three years later, he formed the Millennium Ensemble and the Cezanne Trio, and initiated a regular concert series at several area venues.

In 1988 Carl and his wife formed the nonprofit Washington Musica Viva, of which he is the Music Director 'to bring the kind and quality of chamber music that I dreamed of to the public.' He feels he is 'bringing some new life to the form' of the piano recital. He credits his approach 'more to my chamber music experience and exposure to non-classical music than to my pedagogical training.' He has departed from 'the assumptions, traditions and expectations' of the solo

piano repertoire 'in ways that none of my teachers would have countenanced.'

'Music has a shamanic and poetic role ...,' he explains. "I like music from the heart, music with passion, music that comes from deep within ... perhaps I love the piano because it is the romantic instrument par excellence, and I am a 19th century romantic at heart. I am more interested in depth than brilliance, in emotion than impression, in truth than illusion—I encourage the audience to close their eyes and relax into their own emotional space.'

**Marilyn Banner.** Marilyn is the artist whose music-related paintings grace the cover of these programs each month. She is a rising star among the artists who work in the "Encaustic medium" in the DC area. Spend a little time during intermission browsing her works on display in the music room, then see more on her web site at [marilynbanner.com](http://marilynbanner.com). Marilyn has participated in many individual as well as juried shows of her work, in the DC area and in New York. She will be showing at the RiverArts Festival in Chestertown on May 6. Also, her work is featured in the recently published **Encaustic Art in the 21st Century** by Anne Lee and Ashley Rooney and her painting "Take Your Pick," graces the cover of a recent book by musicologist Larisa Loginova.



In addition to providing the visual diversion at her Flower Avenue studio, Marilyn also finds time to preside over the Board of Directors of Musica Viva, as well as participate in the annual Takoma Park Art Walk.

**Washington Musica Viva** produces high quality, unpretentious public performances of a broad range of classical, jazz-based, and contemporary chamber music. WMV began as a monthly multi-disciplinary performance series in the Kensington studio of visual artist Marilyn Banner. Now in our 15th season, WMV has produced more than 200 programs, including performances at the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage, the Czech Center in NY, the Embassy of the Czech Republic, the Embassy of Austria, Busboys and Poets, Twins Jazz Club, and the Brooklyn Conservatory. WMV is directed by pianist Carl Banner. Participants include professional musicians from Washington, Baltimore, New York, and elsewhere.

Washington Musica Viva, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization, and all contributions are fully tax deductible. WMV can be reached at 301-891-6844 or [dcmusicaviva@verizon.net](mailto:dcmusicaviva@verizon.net). Our mailing address is WMV, 7502 Flower Ave, Takoma Park, MD 20912.

Program notes and composer pictures from Wikipedia