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[Press Room](#)



Images of Jonathan Biss are available for download from the Cal Performances [press room](#).

**CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS
JONATHAN BISS
IN A SEVEN-CONCERT CYCLE OF THE
COMPLETE BEETHOVEN PIANO SONATAS
SEPTEMBER 21–22; OCTOBER 12–13; DECEMBER 15; MARCH 7–8**

Berkeley, August 15, 2019 — Cal Performances at UC Berkeley welcomes internationally renowned pianist **Jonathan Biss** for a season-long, seven-concert cycle of the complete Beethoven piano sonatas. Biss will begin the ambitious series by performing nine Beethoven sonatas over two days in Hertz Hall, on Saturday, September 21 at 8pm, and Sunday, September 22 at 3pm. In celebration of Beethoven’s 250th birth anniversary, the series continues with concerts in Hertz Hall on Saturdays, October 12, and March 7 at 8pm; and Sundays, October 13, December 15, and

March 8 at 3pm. Cal Performances is one of only two US presenters (and the sole West Coast presenter) with whom Biss will perform the cycle this season, as he nears the end of his ambitious 10-year, nine-volume recording project of the composer's 32 sonatas. The final volume is scheduled to be released on the Orchid Classics label in November. A complete box set will become available in 2020.

With these concerts, Biss continues his long relationship with both Beethoven and Cal Performances—in his most recent Berkeley visit, during the 2017–18 season, he performed three Beethoven piano concertos with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. The Biss Beethoven cycle exemplifies Cal Performances' commitment to deep immersion in the works of classical masters and to the most compelling performers of our time, and follows on the heels of recent performances of the complete Beethoven string quartets (Takács Quartet), the Prokofiev piano sonatas (Yefim Bronfman), and the Bach cello suites (Yo-Yo Ma, Alisa Weilerstein). The Takács Quartet will perform the complete Bartók string quartets in December.

Beethoven composed the 32 piano sonatas over the course of most of his adult life, from 1795 to 1822, and the works are credited with transforming the expressive potential and technical powers of the instrument. In turn, the fiercely challenging sonatas have provoked generations of pianists to rise to a new ideal of musicianship, control, and interpretive range in their playing. In the sonatas Beethoven brought a sweeping symphonic sensibility and grand rhetorical heft to a genre that had previously been associated with private parlor recitals, often played by amateur musicians.

For the past decade, Jonathan Biss has been fully immersed in Beethoven's music—exploring the composer's works and musical thought through projects including his recording cycle and a popular free online course offered through the Curtis Institute of Music, *Exploring Beethoven's Sonatas*, which has attracted more than 100,000 students from 160 countries. Biss' writings include *Beethoven's Shadow* and *Coda*.

He has written, "Our relationship to Beethoven is a deep and paradoxical one. For many musicians, he represents a kind of holy grail: his music has an intensity, rigor, and profundity which keep us in its thrall, and it is perhaps unequalled in the interpretive, technical, and even spiritual challenges it poses to performers.... Beethoven's sonatas have been a constant presence in my life for nearly as

long as I have been playing the piano. ‘Presence’ is too mild a word, though: ‘force’ comes a bit closer to conveying the space he occupies in my heart and head.... The intensity of my current immersion with his music has become one of the most profound experiences of my life.”

Related events rounding out Biss’ residency at Cal Performances include his addressing a UC Berkeley Music Department class on the history of European and American music in Morrison Hall at 2pm on Thursday, September 19, and coaching students in a Master Class of works by Mozart and Beethoven in Hertz Hall at 4pm on Thursday, September 19. Both events are free and open to the public. UC Berkeley music professor Nicholas Mathew will give pre-concert talks at 2pm prior to each of Biss’ Sunday performances (September 22, October 13, December 15, and March 8). The talks are free to all ticket holders.

Ticket Information

Tickets for *Jonathan Biss, The Complete Beethoven Piano Sonatas* on Saturdays, September 21, October 12, and March 7 at 8pm; and Sundays, September 22, October 13, December 15, and March 8 at 3pm in Hertz Hall are \$68 (prices subject to change). Half-price tickets are available for UC Berkeley students. Tickets are available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, at (510) 642-9988, at calperformances.org, and at the door. For more information about discounts, go to calperformances.org/discounts.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Saturday, September 21, 8pm
Sunday, September 22, 3pm
Saturday, October 12, 8pm
Sunday, October 13, 3pm
Sunday, December 15, 3pm
Saturday, March 7, 8pm
Sunday, March 8, 3pm

**Hertz Hall
Bancroft Way at College Ave.
UC Berkeley Campus**

Recital

Jonathan Biss, *piano*

The Complete Piano Sonatas of Ludwig van Beethoven

Programs:

Saturday, September 21 (concert 1 of 7)

Piano Sonata No. 1 in F minor, Op. 2, No. 1
Piano Sonata No. 9 in E major, Op. 14, No. 1
Piano Sonata No. 13 in E-flat major, Op. 27, No. 1, *Quasi una fantasia*
Piano Sonata No. 12 in A-flat major, Op. 26, *Funeral March*
Piano Sonata No. 21 in C major, Op. 53, *Waldstein*

Sunday, September 22 (concert 2 of 7)

Piano Sonata No. 4 in E-flat major, Op. 7
Piano Sonata No. 17 in D minor, Op. 31, No. 2, *Tempest*
Piano Sonata No. 5 in C minor, Op. 10, No. 1
Piano Sonata No. 23 in F minor, Op. 57, *Appassionata*

Saturday, October 12 (concert 3 of 7)

Piano Sonata No. 15 in D major, Op. 28, *Pastoral*
Piano Sonata No. 20 in G major, Op. 49, No. 2
Piano Sonata No. 3 in C major, Op. 2, No. 3
Piano Sonata No. 27 in E minor, Op. 90
Piano Sonata No. 28 in A major, Op. 101

Sunday, October 13 (concert 4 of 7)

Piano Sonata No. 6 in F major, Op. 10, No. 2
Piano Sonata No. 10 in G major, Op. 14, No. 2
Piano Sonata No. 18 in E-flat major, Op. 31, No. 3, *The Hunt*
Piano Sonata No. 29 in B-flat major, Op. 106, *Hammerklavier*

Sunday, December 15 (concert 5 of 7)

Piano Sonata No. 25 in G major, Op. 79, *Cuckoo*
Piano Sonata No. 11 in B-flat major, Op. 22
Piano Sonata No. 14 in C-sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2, *Moonlight*
Piano Sonata No. 24 in F-sharp major, Op. 78, *À Thérèse*
Piano Sonata No. 30 in E major, Op. 109

Saturday, March 7 (concert 6 of 7)

Piano Sonata No. 19 in G minor, Op. 49, No. 1
Piano Sonata No. 16 in G major, Op. 31, No. 1
Piano Sonata No. 7 in D major, Op. 10, No. 3
Piano Sonata No. 2 in A major, Op. 2, No. 2
Piano Sonata No. 31 in A-flat major, Op. 110

Sunday, March 8 (concert 7 of 7)

Piano Sonata No. 8 in C minor, Op. 13, *Pathétique*
Piano Sonata No. 22 in F major, Op. 54
Piano Sonata No. 26 in E-flat major, Op. 81a, *Les adieux*
Piano Sonata No. 32 in C minor, Op. 111

Tickets: \$68 (prices subject to change)

Residency Activities

Music Department Class

Thursday, September 19, 2pm

125 Morrison Hall, UC Berkeley

Pianist Jonathan Biss addresses Prof. Nicholas Mathew's class on the history of European and American music, with the intention of helping participants develop a more intimate relationship with Beethoven's music. Free and open to the public.

Master Class

Thursday, September 19, 4pm

Hertz Hall

Pianist Jonathan Biss coaches students from the Department of Music in piano works by Beethoven and Mozart. Free and open to the public.

Pre-performance Talks

Sunday, September 22, 2pm

Sunday, October 13, 2pm

Sunday, December 15, 2pm

Sunday, March 8, 2pm

Hertz Hall

With Professor Nicholas Mathew, UC Berkeley Department of Music. Free to concert ticketholders.