Beethoven Center acquires rare first edition inscribed by Beethoven to Antonie Brentano (his “Immortal Beloved?”)

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WHO: The Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies and the School of Music and Dance, San Jose State University, and the American Beethoven Society
WHAT: Celebration and performance of Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony
WHEN: Saturday, October 6, 2018, 2:30 p.m.
WHERE: Hammer Theatre Center, 101 Paseo De San Antonio, San Jose, CA 95113
WHY: To celebrate the acquisition by the Beethoven Center of one of the most important Beethoven documents to come to market in decades: a first edition of the 7th Symphony personally inscribed by Beethoven to Antonie Brentano, the woman widely regarded as Beethoven’s “Immortal Beloved.” This extraordinary score will be on display, and the SJSU Symphony will perform the work following a pre-concert lecture by incoming director of the Beethoven Center, Dr. Erica Buurman. The performance to be followed by a reception at 3:45 p.m.

FREE, no tickets required.
RSVP for the reception by email to Janice.Zelaya@sjsu.edu or call 408-808-2058. Convenient parking is available nearby at the 2nd and San Carlos Garage. There’s a $5 flat-rate all day Saturday. Also visit San José’s parking map to see a list of other conveniently located parking garages near the Hammer Theatre.

PROGRAM:
2:00 p.m. Doors open; exhibit available for viewing in lobby
2:30 p.m.: “‘For my highly esteemed friend’: a newly discovered Beethoven dedication.” Pre-concert lecture by Dr. Erica Buurman, incoming Director of the Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies
3:00 p.m. Performance of Symphony no. 7 by Ludwig van Beethoven by the SJSU Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Dr. Fred Cohen
3:45 – 4:30 p.m. Reception and exhibition
MORE INFORMATION: In the summer of 2017, Patricia Stroh (Curator and Interim Director of the Beethoven Center) received a stunning announcement: a first edition score of Beethoven’s Symphony bearing Beethoven’s handwritten inscription to Antonie Brentano – the woman some scholars believe was Beethoven’s “Immortal Beloved” – was discovered in a private collection in the U.S. The Beethoven Center, with the help of the American Beethoven Society, immediately launched a fund-raising campaign to acquire this important score from its owners, so that it would not be put on the auction block and potentially disappear back into private hands. With the success of the campaign, the Beethoven Center was able to bring the score permanently to San Jose in September 2018.

This Beethoven treasure is particularly important to the Beethoven Center for several reasons:

The inscribed score directly relates to an original manuscript letter maintained in the Center’s collection, written by Beethoven to Franz Brentano, dated February 15, 1817, in which Beethoven mentions sending “several musical works to recall myself to your friendly remembrance.” Beethoven is likely referring to this score, among others.

Beethoven’s handwritten inscription on the score translates as “For my highly esteemed friend Antonia Brentano from the author.” Many scholars believe that Antonie was Beethoven’s Immortal Beloved, the mysterious woman to whom Beethoven wrote heartfelt love letters in July of 1812. Beethoven completed the 7th Symphony in April 1812, just three months earlier.

Although other scores inscribed to Antonie exist, this particular score was completely unknown until the owner contacted the Beethoven Center last Fall. The inscription has been authenticated by Beethoven scholars and was vetted by a well-established music antiquarian.

ABOUT THE PRESENTERS

Dr. Erica Buurman is currently Senior Lecturer at Canterbury Christ Church University, just outside London. She received a Diploma in Violin from the Royal Northern College of Music; and a Bachelor of Music, Master of Music, and PhD in Musicology from the University of Manchester. She has published articles on Beethoven’s sketches in his multi-movement works; a second area of research examines music for social dancing in early 19th century, particularly in Vienna and London. She will move to the Bay Area and officially take over as Director of the Beethoven Center in January 2019.

The San José State University Symphony Orchestra performs a rich diversity of orchestral, operatic, and orchestral-choral repertoire. It is comprised of student instrumentalists, many of whom are music majors, and is open for membership by audition for students across the University as well as community volunteers. The mission of the orchestra is to deliver an outstanding music education for our students, and to perform at the highest levels with passion, energy, and commitment.

Dr. Fred Cohen is Director of the School of Music & Dance and Music Director of the SJSU Symphony Orchestra at San José State University. Dr. Cohen has been associated as a conductor with such organizations as the Richmond (VA) Symphony, the Youth Orchestra of Caracas (Venezuela), the Williamsburg Sinfonietta, the Richmond Philharmonic, and many youth and honor orchestras. He has been the Music Director/Conductor of the Schwob School of Music
Philharmonic Orchestra, the University of Richmond Orchestra, the Montclair State University Orchestra, CURRENTS—a professional new-music ensemble—and the sold-out SJSU production of In The Heights at the Hammer Theater in spring 2018. Patricia Stroh has been Curator of the Beethoven Center since 1986 and Interim Director since fall 2016 following the retirement of William Meredith. Her research interests focus on the printing/publishing of music in early 19th century Europe. She has curated many exhibits, most recently including the Beethoven Pop-Up display devoted to Beethoven’s Nine Symphonies at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, Canada (September 13-22, 2018). She negotiated the purchase of the 7th Symphony score, organized the fund-raising campaign, and created the exhibits.

About the exhibits

A temporary exhibit at the Hammer Theatre (for the Oct. 6 event only) will include the score inscribed by Beethoven, the autograph manuscript letter written to the Brentanos in which he mentions the gift, and images of Beethoven and Antonie Brentano. A larger exhibition, “Beethoven Loves the Brentanos,” which opens at the Beethoven Center on October 8. Curated by Patricia Stroh, this exhibit will place these manuscripts in context by exploring Beethoven’s relationship with the Brentano family, the Immortal Beloved question, and the connections with the 7th Symphony.

Exhibition: October 8 – December 15, 2018
Hours: M-Th 11–6 Fri 11–5 Sat 1-5
Location: Beethoven Center, Room 580, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library, 150. E. San Fernando St., San Jose CA 95112

About The Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies
The Center is an extensive library and museum devoted solely to the life, works, and accomplishments of Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827). Established in 1983 when Ira F. Brilliant (1922-2006) donated his extensive collection Beethoven first editions to San José State University, the Center officially opened in September 1985 with a gala co-sponsored by the San Jose Symphony. Building on Ira Brilliant's original donation, the Center now owns the largest collection of Beethoven materials outside of Europe and participates in major exhibitions, Beethoven research projects, educational programs, and concerts. More information: www.sjsu.edu/beethoven/about/

About The American Beethoven Society
The American Beethoven Society is an international organization dedicated to the creative genius of Beethoven, whose music speaks to the heart and mind of humanity. The Society co-publishes the internationally acclaimed Beethoven Journal, which appears two times a year and contains a wide range of articles, reviews of books, sound recordings, and videos, bibliographies of new books, and news of interest to all Beethoven lovers. The Society also co-sponsors exhibitions and events in conjunction with the Beethoven Center and other organizations. More information: americanbeethovensociety.org