

JANE FONDA 33 VARIATIONS WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY MOISÉS KAUFMAN

"Let us begin with the primary cause of things. Let us begin with how something came about. Why it came about in that particular way and became what it is."

—Ludwig van Beethoven

Welcome to Center Theatre Group and *33 Variations*. Two-time Oscar winner Jane Fonda heads a cast of eight in this new American play written and directed by Moisés Kaufman (author of *The Laramie Project* and director of *I Am My Own Wife* and *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*).

BEETHOVEN SCHOLAR Katherine Brandt is driven to solve the mystery behind one of Beethoven's greatest compositions while coping with the recent diagnosis of a serious illness. A live pianist shares the stage and gracefully underscores her journey. Spanning 200 years, *33 Variations* is a sublime waltz between past and present, fact and speculation, art and life, mother and daughter.

Before we tell you more, take a moment to think about art and inspiration. Why do we create? What is the initial spark that puts everything in motion? Do only artists have the impulse to create? What do you think inspired Beethoven? Why do you think his music continues to move people centuries later?

Turn the page to learn more about *33 Variations*. Dig into the real-life mystery that inspired Kaufman to create Katherine Brandt and her world. Follow Katherine as she struggles to understand Beethoven's choices, the time in which he lived and the health challenges he overcame. Discover the language of music and its many distinct forms. Explore the impact illness can have on an individual, their work and the people who support them.

Theatre raises questions while challenging audience members to discover their own answers. See what questions this information raises for you and what questions and answers the performance provides. Thank you so much for joining us for *33 Variations*. We look forward to seeing you at the theatre! ●

January 30 – March 6, 2011
Ahmanson Theatre

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ABOUT THE PLAY

MUSICOLOGIST DR. KATHERINE BRANDT is obsessed with an obsession. She's an expert on Ludwig van Beethoven, but one thing baffles her — Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations*. In *33 Variations*, writer/director Moisés Kaufman allows past and present to intertwine, bringing two people, separated by centuries but united by a shared passion, close enough to touch.

In 1819, music publisher Anton Diabelli invited 50 of Europe's most respected and accomplished composers to create a variation on a waltz he had written. Everyone accepted the commission right away. Everyone, that is, but Beethoven. History records that Beethoven felt the piece was beneath him, or “schusterfleck” (cobbler's patch). For some reason, though, he changed his mind. Interrupting work on his *9th Symphony* and *Missas Solemnis*, Beethoven spent four years exploring and transforming every note of Diabelli's waltz until he had not one but 33 variations on the seemingly simple theme. What compelled Beethoven to put so much of himself into this commission when he had nobler works to complete and rapidly deteriorating health to contend with?

Katherine has a theory. She believes that Beethoven wanted to show the world how he could make something magnificent out of something trivial. That is her hypothesis but she wants to be sure. The only way to do that is to see, first hand, Beethoven's original sketchbooks — the journals of his ideas, impulses and revisions — all in his most casual, unselfconscious handwriting. Katherine hopes Beethoven's pencil marks will reveal the truth to her across time, through the dusty stacks of books in his official archive, the Beethoven-Haus in Bonn, Germany.

For Katherine, a trip to Bonn is the pinnacle of her life's work. Not even the diagnosis of ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) will stop her from going. Her daughter, Clara, is terrified and wants Katherine to stay in New York. When Katherine

refuses, Clara and her boyfriend Mike — a nurse with experience treating ALS patients — follow Katherine to Bonn. Clara knows her mother is running out of time and hopes to repair their strained relationship before it's too late.

In Bonn, Katherine meets Dr. Gertrude (Gertie) Ladenburger, Beethoven-Haus Librarian. They pour over every page of Beethoven's sketchbooks. As they piece together clues from those pages — mysterious stains and missing passages — the past opens up to reveal Beethoven's world in 1820's Germany and Austria. We see Beethoven rage, create and battle the pressures of time. His struggles are made bearable by a unique support system — an unpaid secretary, Anton Schindler, and an impatient (albeit often accommodating) music publisher, Anton Diabelli.

Katherine hopes Beethoven's pencil marks will reveal the truth to her across time.

In *33 Variations*, Beethoven struggles with chronic poor health, progressive deafness and a set of variations whose end elude him. Katherine pushes through rapidly degenerating motor control, disappointment in her daughter and the mystery of Beethoven's obsession. Clara tries to make sense of her life choices, her mother's lack of affection and the possibility of love. Three people. Three intertwined sets of challenges. Relationships in alternating pairs and triangles, revolving around each other and through time. ●

THE IMPULSE TO

Create

IN *33 VARIATIONS* writer/director Moisés Kaufman explores the mystery of the creative impulse. Why do we create? What is the spark that puts everything in motion?

Kaufman's impulse to create *33 Variations* came from a sales clerk at Tower Records who told him of the mystery behind the *Diabelli Variations*. Kaufman's curiosity about Beethoven's obsession began a five-year journey across the globe, through thousands of primary source documents in libraries and archives; and into theatres and rehearsal rooms with actors, musicians, writers and artists. Every new discovery fed his curiosity and ultimately compelled him to create this play — a play about the impulse to create. ●

Think of something you have created in your own life: music, art, a school project, a meal, a friendship, a fashion style.

Can you remember your initial inspiration?

Where did that inspiration take you?

“Variation form
allows Beethoven to
do the miraculous and
slow down time,
to pierce the waltz
and enter the minutia
that life
in its haste,
robs us of.”

—Dr. Katherine Brandt in *33 Variations*

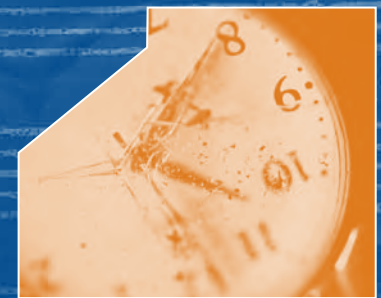
Time

WE LIVE IN A FAST PACED WORLD. Information can be relayed instantly. We can travel across the world in hours rather than months. Deadlines and pressures of modern life can result in the common feeling of “not enough time.”

**In *33 Variations*, the characters plead,
“I NEED MORE TIME. THERE IS NOT ENOUGH TIME.”**

Time to create, to be with the one you love, to solve a mystery, to repair a relationship or to complete your life’s passion. Time before the human body or an outside deadline stops the clock.

Despite the pressures of failing health, publishing deadlines and several incomplete compositions, Beethoven took his time creating the *Diabelli Variations*. Diabelli’s initial waltz is less than a minute long, but Beethoven spent close to five years exploring every single note and produced hours of music. Variation form allows Beethoven to slow down time and expose subtleties and nuances most listeners race past without ever noticing. This masterpiece gives the listener an opportunity to connect deeply and appreciate all the original theme had to offer. ●



**What would you do if
you had more time?**

**What slows down time
for you?**

**When time does slow
down, what do you
experience that you
don’t ordinarily?**



“Although this play is based on an historical event, namely the birth of the *Diabelli Variations*, I have chosen to explore this story from a fictional perspective. Thus, this play is not a reconstruction of an historical event; rather, it’s a series of variations on a moment in a life.”

—Moisés Kaufman’s writer’s note in *33 Variations*

BEETHOVEN & HIS CONTEMPORARIES

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Ludwig van Beethoven was born in Bonn, Germany in 1770. Even as a toddler he had a great affinity for the piano. Taught by his father, a pianist at the Court of Bonn, Beethoven’s musical genius flourished. At the age of eight he gave his first public piano performance. By 12 he composed and published his first piano sonatas, *Nine Variations on a March by Dressler*. After hearing the prodigy improvise on the piano, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart predicted, “Watch out for that boy. One day he will give the world something to talk about.”

Mozart was absolutely right. Beethoven would go on to become one of the world’s greatest musical composers. In every genre — symphony, sonata, quartet and beyond — Beethoven pushed past the conventions of the day, taking the forms to previously unimagined levels. His compositions were unique — different from any penned before him or after. Almost 200 years after his death, his works still captivate audiences and inspire composers all over the world.

Beethoven’s tremendous accomplishments are made even more impressive by the fact that he battled deafness his entire adult life, along with a string of painful and crippling illnesses. First signs of hearing loss began in 1797 and by 1818 Beethoven could hear so little that, until he learned to read lips, he resorted to “conversation books” — pads of paper where questions or comments were written down for Beethoven to read.

Despite deafness and often debilitating illness, the last 10 years of Beethoven’s life produced many of his most inventive and celebrated works: *Missa Solemnis*, *9th Symphony*, *String Quartet op.130*, *Piano Sonata op.111* and, of course, the *Diabelli Variations*.

TIME AND PLACE BEETHOVEN’S WORLD

Ludwig van Beethoven was born in Germany and grew up in Austria. His entire adult life would be set against a backdrop of constant geopolitical conflict. From the beginning of the French Revolution in 1789 to the defeat of Napoleon in 1815, Europe weathered nearly 26 continuous years of violent and unrelenting war.

The response by the newly established German Confederation was harsh and deeply oppressive. The Carlsbad Decrees were issued in 1819, prohibiting any agitation against the government; censoring the press; and restricting freedoms of speech and protest. The Decrees were made permanent in 1824 and remained in place until 1848.

The government’s crackdown on the slightest rumblings of dissent created a climate of intense suspicion and paranoia. (Composer Franz Schubert and four of his friends were arrested in 1820 because the police thought their gathering was suspicious.) This was a time when self-expression came with great risk and everyone had to be cautious about what they said and to whom it was said. In one of Beethoven’s conversation books from 1824 an interaction ends abruptly with the note, “Another time — just now the spy Haensl is here.” ●

Anton Schindler (1795-1864)

His book, *Beethoven As I Knew Him*, published in 1840, made Anton Schindler perhaps the most influential biographer of Beethoven and the primary source for how the great composer was seen by others. It came as a great surprise, then, in the late 1970’s, when research revealed major errors in his facts, exaggerations of his relationship with Beethoven and downright falsifications. For example, it was discovered that he inserted passages in the conversation books after Beethoven’s death, glossed over his and Beethoven’s extremely volatile relationship, and often incorrectly dated key events.

While Schindler’s reliability as a witness to Beethoven’s life and career is certainly questionable, other sources confirm Schindler was indeed committed and loyal. Even Beethoven’s often humiliating treatment — calling Schindler an “arch blackguard” and “contemptible object” — did not deter him from caring for Beethoven when he was most in need. Until the very end, this unpaid servant stayed with his self-selected master.

Anton Diabelli (1781-1858)

Anton Diabelli is best known as a music publisher and the catalyst for Beethoven’s *Diabelli Variations*. His career as a musician and composer is often overlooked. Born in Mattsee, Austria, Diabelli learned to play piano and guitar in the seminary and was quite accomplished, composing several masses, songs and operettas. His numerous compositions for piano and classical guitar are still popular among amateur musicians honing their craft.

Diabelli’s career as a musician was successful but not lucrative. He turned to publishing and found his calling. With an astute business mind, an eye for talent and the temperament to manage unruly musical geniuses, Diabelli became very wealthy — he died one of the richest musicians of his time.

It is not exactly known what motivated his variations project. Theories vary from pure self-promotion, to patriotism, to an act of charity. Whatever the reason may be, in 1819 Diabelli put out the call to Austria’s greatest composers and several important non-Austrians, inviting them to write a variation on a waltz he composed for the purpose.



ANTON DIABELLI



ANTON SCHINDLER

W.I.C.

“Don’t you see? This music will free people from all the misery and all the indignities that shackle other human beings.”

—Beethoven in *33 Variations*

CLASSICAL MUSIC

is around us every day — in the background when we go shopping or to a doctor’s office, underscoring our favorite movies, TV shows and video games. You probably know it when you hear it, but what makes it classical?

Like any other musical genre, it follows certain conventions. Most of the instruments used were invented centuries ago and have changed very little: strings and winds, percussion and the piano. Other genres like folk, pop and jazz are suited to “song form” — a repetition of verses and choruses. Classical music, however, can take on a wide variety of forms — for example, opera, symphony, sonata, dance, Gregorian chant and the Mass. When written, classical music composers use very specific notations to indicate exact notes, pitch, speed, meter and rhythm, leaving little room for improvisation.

The general term “Classical” actually refers to several styles, roughly divided by time period: Baroque (1600-1750), Classical (1750-1800), Early Romantic (1800-1850), Late Romantic (1850-1900), 20th Century (1900-2000), Contemporary (1975-present) and 21st Century (2000-present). There is a great deal of overlap but for the most part each era has its own distinct style. When a composer writes in the style of an earlier era, the prefix “neo-” is added.

Beethoven is the quintessential Early Romantic composer. He represents the transition away from the Classical Era, which focused on technical skill, precision and simplicity. Music of the Romantic Era was more emotionally expressive and characterized by experimentation with rhythms, dissonance, layered tones and unusual instrumentation.

VARIATION FORM

From the Latin “change,” a variation is a composition in which a theme — either made up by the composer or given by someone else — is altered and adapted in a series of different versions. It is similar to sampling (taking a portion of a song, such as a break or chorus, and using it in another song) or a mash-up (a seamless blend of the instrumental and vocal tracks of two or more songs). Variation form allowed Beethoven to pull apart and reassemble every nuance of Diabelli’s original waltz. He had only been asked for one variation but he knew one was not enough to accommodate all that the waltz had to offer. He’d complete one variation then find something new, over and over again until, after 33 variations, every possibility was exhausted, the ending became clear and the piece was completed.

MUSIC AS COMMUNICATION

Music is a language. It can be written and read. Unlike spoken language, though, music doesn’t have to be translated. Staffs, bars, time signatures, notes and rests are written exactly the same in Russian, Egyptian, Japanese, English and throughout the world. If you can read music, you don’t have to speak the composer’s language to play their composition. You can play with other musicians and not speak their languages either!

This universality makes music a great unifier. Crossing the barriers of language, culture and geography, it brings musicians together in their common passion. Music also offers listeners a shared experience. Joy, sorrow, despair and awe are universal emotions that can be hard to express verbally. Through music, however, these complicated and intimate feelings transcend the limitations of spoken language.

Why do humans need music in their lives?

How might music free people from misery or indignity?

How has music freed you?

Have you ever used music to communicate something you couldn’t say with words?

What style of music best expresses your thoughts and feelings?

Can you remember when music brought you together with people you wouldn’t ordinarily spend time with?

How did the music unite you?

Beethoven’s sketches. Set design by Derek McLane.

“I WISH I KNEW MORE ABOUT WHAT I’M LISTENING TO. IT ALL SOUNDS LIKE CLASSICAL MUSIC TO ME.” —Mike in *33 Variations*

FRAGILITY AND RESILIENCE

ALS / LOU GEHRIG'S DISEASE

*"I might have been given
a bad break, but I've got
an awful lot to live for."*

—Lou Gehrig, July 4, 1939

IN *33 VARIATIONS*, THE CHARACTER Dr. Katherine Brandt has been diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). It is a progressive and invariably fatal disease that attacks the nerves responsible for voluntary muscle activity. As the nerves degenerate they stop sending information to the muscles, which then weaken, atrophy and twitch. The brain eventually loses its ability to stop, start or control voluntary movements altogether. Difficulty chewing and swallowing greatly increase the risk of choking. When the muscles in the chest and diaphragm fail, breathing without a ventilator becomes impossible. 20,000-30,000 people in the United States have ALS and as many as 5,600 a year are newly diagnosed. As of today, there is no cure for ALS and average life expectancy after diagnosis is between two and five years. Treatments — such as medication and physical therapy — are aimed at managing symptoms and improving quality of life.

ALS is often called Lou Gehrig's Disease after one of America's most beloved baseball players. From 1923 to 1939 Gehrig, nicknamed "The Iron Horse," played first base for the New York Yankees, holding records for consecutive games, batting average, home runs, runs batted in and career grand slams. Often overshadowed by his flamboyant teammate, Babe Ruth, for 16 years Lou Gehrig was the guy the team could count on.

In 1938 Gehrig began to experience weakness and lack of coordination. He played the first eight games of the 1939 season but retired that summer when symptoms became debilitating. He was diagnosed with ALS a few months later. In the summer of 1941, Lou Gehrig passed away at the age of 38. He is remembered fondly for dominating the ball field for nearly two decades, bringing the reality of ALS into the open, and doing it all unselfishly, with courage, humility and grace.

BEETHOVEN'S HEALTH

*"The barriers are not erected
which can say to aspiring
talents and industry,
'Thus far and no farther.'"*

—Ludwig van Beethoven

BEETHOVEN STRUGGLED WITH DEAFNESS most of his life, losing his hearing by the age of 48. This alone makes his musical genius quite extraordinary. It is less commonly known that his hearing did not degrade in a gradual, consistent way. For almost 25 years Beethoven's hearing capacity ricocheted between basically functional and completely deaf. From the first symptoms in 1796 to his death in 1827, Beethoven was plagued by a constant ringing and buzzing in his ears that was often excruciatingly loud.

Deafness was not Beethoven's only health concern. Serious stomach problems followed him his whole adult life, along with rheumatism, eye pain, jaundice and gout. In 1926, he experienced his last serious illness — cirrhosis of the liver. Five operations to drain the fluid had no effect. Beethoven died on March 26, 1827 at the age of 57.

The isolation caused by his health was frustrating and often depressing. In letters he writes of being ashamed of his deafness and deeply afraid that his many ailments would never be cured. He longed for a social life and was often lonely. Yet he did not give up on his art and continued to compose until the very end. Spirit, stubbornness and unwavering commitment to music allowed Beethoven to carry on and ultimately compose many of the world's most revered masterpieces. ●

**"AFTER 25 YEARS ... I BECAME COMPLETELY DEAF
... And lo and behold, I was able to create music that would have
never been possible had I been in the world of the hearing.
The thing I'd feared most had happened and yet it allowed me
to be with my music in the most intimate of ways."**

—Beethoven in *33 Variations*

ILLNESS impacts not only the patient but family and friends. It can be hard to know what to say or how to offer your support. In *33 Variations*, Katherine doesn't want to be seen as a patient, she wants to be known as a musicologist and gets angry when she feels defined by her illness. Clara struggles to make sure that her mother is getting the support and treatment she needs despite Katherine's resistance.

Have you ever had to support someone through an illness or emotional challenge?

How did you support them?

Who supports you during challenging times?

How do they show their support?

IN *33 VARIATIONS*, we are witness to Katherine losing the ability to walk, to speak, to scratch her own nose, all while vigilantly continuing her research. Beethoven loses his hearing even as he creates majestic music for others to hear. We often take our bodies for granted. Sometimes we don't appreciate good health until we are injured, ill or our strength starts to disappear.

How might witnessing or experiencing illness increase our appreciation of health?

How can illness help us realize what matters most?

What gives us the strength to continue on in the face of illness, loss or fear?

What gives us the courage to pursue love and create beauty in an uncertain world?



A CONVERSATION

with writer/director

MOISÉS KAUFMAN

and Center Theatre Group Teaching Artist Marcos Najera

MARCOS NAJERA: Moisés, what is a typical day like for you?

MOISÉS KAUFMAN: I am a playwright and director. Before rehearsals begin you can find me going on long walks and writing. Spending a lot of time at the typewriter or computer, writing. But then once we begin rehearsals, I'm in the rehearsal from ten in the morning 'til six in the afternoon working with the actors, working with the designers. So that everything that the audience sees onstage, you know, the sets, the lights, the costumes, you know, the blocking of the actors, the understanding of the text — that's what the director does. The director is responsible for creating a coherent and cohesive world that makes the play come alive.

That's very cool that you start the process by walking. Why is that important to you?

Clears my mind! (Laughing)

(Laughs) Talk about that.

I think better on my feet. So, I find that sitting at a desk in front of a computer is not as helpful. I like to be on my feet. Sometimes I call actors into a rehearsal room when I'm still in the process of writing the play. Then I give them the text and I say "Can you read this for me, so I can hear the text out loud?" And I can work with actors on scenes and improvise.

Is this part of the process you've created called "Moment Work?"

It is. "Moment Work" is a kind of improvisational technique that allows the writer, the director, the designers and the actors to be in one room writing performance. Creating work together. And we're spending a lot of time teaching [it] around the country because it's a process that really allows [artists] to create work that is very theatrical. Because as opposed to just going into a room and writing a play, you are in the rehearsal room with actors and designers and you are all together coming up with a play. So that creates work that is much more exciting visually, much more exciting in terms of theatricality.

How did you use that process for 33 Variations in the rehearsal room?

33 Variations started with the music of Beethoven. And I used to spend a lot of time with the music and with the actors creating moments and improvising. And out of those improvisations, the play came out. So you would see music and dances happening together. You would see music and scenes happening together. And you would see, you know, actors working with a piece of costume or actors working with a set piece or with a prop to help us find the story.

Is there a moment in 33 Variations that the students will see that is a favorite moment for you that came out of this process?

There are several. One of them is when Katherine Brandt is getting her x-ray, because it's a moment with no text. Another one is a moment when a character from the present talks to the character from 200 years ago!

How different is what we see on stage from what happened in the rehearsal process with this work around moments?

What people see on stage is usually the tip of the iceberg. And what you were doing in the rehearsal room is that you were carving the iceberg. So you spend all this time carving the iceberg, and then basically what you see is just the tip of it because you only have two hours! (Laughs)

(Laughs) If we had many, many more hours to watch a show [on stage] we would see the entire iceberg, I imagine? Then you would come to rehearsal!

That sounds like it would be a theatrical experience, no doubt. How did you get your start as an artist, Moisés?

Well, my parents wanted me to study business administration and when I went to college in Caracas, Venezuela I really didn't know what I wanted to do so, so I did go for business administration but after a few classes I realized it wasn't what I wanted. So I went to the office for extra curricular activities and I asked if they had a theater company. And they had. And I became an actor in that theater company. For the next five years of my life, I was an actor. But soon, when I was acting, oftentimes I thought "Oh, I am much more interested in creating the whole stage event, than I am interested in creating one character." And that's how this idea [entered] that I wanted to be a writer and director, instead of an actor. Your palette is a little bigger. You have control over the words and the event. An actor creates a character. A writer-director creates a world.

And for 33 Variations, one of the things that I thought that was really great, specifically for students who all have homework when they are in school, is that you actually had to do quite a bit of homework to write this play. Can you tell us how you went in search of information before sitting down to actually write?

Because *33 Variations* deals with one bit of music that Beethoven composed, I needed to profoundly study that piece of music and really understand it. So I read every book that was ever written about this piece of music. And then not happy with that, I decided to go to Germany and find the sketches that Beethoven had made for the composition. You

know, some composers write in their heads. And some composers write on paper. Beethoven wrote on paper. That means that there are thousands of sketches. So he would write on something and then he would toss it out and write something else. He worked things out on paper. So the sketches are in Bonn (Germany), so I got permission to go and study these 200 year old pieces of paper. Very moving and very beautiful because Beethoven first wrote in pencil. And when he was certain he wanted to keep something, he would go over it in ink. So, in a page, you would see what he started with and what he finished with. Often the paper would be stained, because he was eating as he was composing. So there would be food stains. Sometimes he would write, you know, "This piece of music, it has to be played this way — *lento maestoso* (slow and majestic in Italian)." And right next to it he would say "I need to buy cheese and milk."

"I THINK THAT REALITY IS MORE BAFFLING THAN FICTION. AND I AM INTERESTED IN THE BAFFLING."

Really?

Yes, so the banal coexisted with the sublime.

I'm wondering what was going through your mind as you were coming across these soup stains, and these Beethoven 'Post-it' notes from the past, as it were, about grocery shopping along with these ideas about music?

I felt like I was sitting behind him, watching over his shoulder as he composed. It was a very intimate connection with Beethoven. At times I felt like I was witnessing something that I shouldn't be witnessing. I felt that I was seeing something so personal that I shouldn't be privy too. At times, I would think, I would see, you know, how tortured he was in how he was writing. At times, I was jealous of how quick the compositions came to him.

Did you feel like you were snooping or being a voyeur?

Yes, many times I felt that. But the play is hopefully an ode to Beethoven, so the ends justify the means.

One of the things that we love about this play is that you really went back to the primary texts. Students, in school,

if they are going to do a research paper or any type of project, they are asked to go back to primary texts. Can you tell us how you define 'primary text' and its importance for you in creating this story?

Well for me, being able to see Beethoven's sketches was a window into his soul. A window not only into his creative process, but into his emotional process of composition. So being able to see those documents really taught me about, about, about — not only what Beethoven was thinking when he was creating, but what he was feeling when he was creating.

So, without these primary texts (Beethoven's original music sketches), this story wouldn't have been grounded in the same way, I imagine, for you?

Absolutely not. Also, you can see we project a lot of the sketches (on a video screen on the stage) so it's like the spine of the play. I hope [the audience] will be as fascinated with them as I was. These are the actual, original documents that Beethoven wrote.

You studied a man (Beethoven) who is well known and real. And you are known for taking a look at real people. What draws you to real people and real events? And the desire to put them onstage in a theatrical way?

I think that reality is more baffling than fiction. And I am interested in the baffling. You know, (laughs), I think that G_d is a better writer than all of us. And I am just curious about the relationship between what occurs on the stage and life. I think I've devoted my entire life to exploring that question.

And lastly, what do you hope students take away from the play? And what do you hope students do to prepare to come see the show even before they sit down in the theater, to be thoroughly present for 33 Variations?

That's a good question—I think anything they can find out about Beethoven helps them appreciate the piece. But, you know, it's been written so you don't need to know a single word about it to be able to appreciate it. But like any other work of art, the more you know about it, the more you enjoy it. As for what I would like [students] to take out with them, I think *33 Variations* looks at what happens to us when we become obsessed. What happens to us when we want to create. When we want to make something that didn't exist in the world before. And I think if they can recognize a little of themselves in the play, then that'll be enough.

Thank you, Moisés. Good luck and we'll see you at the show.

Wonderful. Thank you, Marcos. ●

HERE BE DRAGONS

MEDIEVAL MAPMAKERS used to draw serpents and monsters in the blank spots of their maps. The drawings were later replaced by the phrase “Here Be Dragons,” and used to indicate dangerous or unexplored territories. One of the earliest recorded uses of the phrase is in Latin, “Hic Svnt Dracones,” on a globe from the early 1500’s. The letters hover over the coast of Asia and may be a reference to the greatly feared komodo dragons.

In the play, Katherine uses the phrase when thinking of her daughter, Clara, “My own daughter is a mystery to me! Children! Here be dragons!” She is disappointed and confused by the way Clara lives her life, and doesn’t know what to do about it. The “Here Be Dragons” sentiment surfaces throughout the play and not just in Katherine and Clara’s relationship. Again and again the characters face the unknown. Katherine and Beethoven, coping with declining health and

facing their mortality, offer the most intense and obvious illustrations of this. But in *33 Variations*, we also see the subtler aspects of going somewhere previously unexplored. Whether by unraveling a historical mystery or allowing for the possibility of love, the unknown offers adventure and promise. The struggle is to keep fear from preventing the journey. Katherine articulates this beautifully when describing Beethoven’s opening variation:

*“Even if we begin this journey with trepidation,
even if we may not know where it will take us,
we must nevertheless embark on it with
COURAGE AND DETERMINATION.”*

Center Theatre Group Education and Community Partnerships

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Center Theatre Group’s mission is to serve the diverse audiences of Los Angeles by producing and presenting theatre of the highest caliber, by nurturing new artists, by attracting new audiences, and by developing youth outreach and education programs. This mission is based on the belief that the art of theatre is a cultural force with the capacity to transform the lives of individuals and society at large.

Education and Community Partnerships

Theatre is an enduring and powerful tool for communicating ideas, stories, emotions and beliefs that fuel the intellect, imagination and creative spirit. Center Theatre Group believes that stimulating awareness, creativity, dialogue and an inquisitive mind is integral to the growth and well-being of the individual and the community; and that nurturing a life-long appreciation of the arts leads inextricably to an engaged and enlightened society.

Center Theatre Group’s education and community partnership programs advance the organization’s mission in three key ways:

Audiences: Inspiring current and future audiences to discover theatre and its connection to their lives;

Artists: Investing in the training, support and development of emerging young artists and young arts professionals who are the future of our field; and

Arts Education Leadership: Contributing to the community-wide efforts to improve the quality and scope of arts education in Los Angeles.



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