



Proudly Presents

ROB KAPILOW'S  
What  
Makes  
It  
Great?<sup>®</sup>

with

IGAL KESSLEMAN, PIANO

VOLUME 1

Beethoven's Appassionata Sonata

Recorded Live at M&I Recording Studios, NYC



# All you have to do is listen

During my freshman year at college, I was fortunate enough to take an inspiring Art History course with a wonderful professor named Robert Herbert. Before taking the class, I had enjoyed going to museums, liked certain paintings, didn't like others, but overall hadn't given much thought or attention to why. I knew what I liked, and that was enough.

In addition to classroom lectures, every Friday we would go to the Yale Art Gallery and spend an entire session on a single painting. These sessions were a revelation to me. I realized that I had never really looked closely at a painting before. I was astonished week after week to realize how much I had completely missed in paintings that I thought I knew. Each week, prodded by the professor's careful attention, a painting would materialize before my eyes as if for the first time. The course began to teach me the difference between looking and seeing.

The idea behind my **What Makes It Great?**® series began for me with that course. In some ways music poses even more challenges than art because it refuses to sit still for us. It

happens in time. And in great music, so much goes by so quickly that it requires careful attention to hear it all.

That is what this program and this entire series is all about—listening. Paying attention. Noticing all the fantastic things in great music that race by at lightning speed, note by note, and measure by measure. Listening to a piece of music from the composer's point of view—from the inside out.

During the first half of each program, we will look at selected passages from the piece under discussion, and I will do everything in my power to take you deeply inside it to hear what makes it tick and what makes it great. Then on the second half of the program, you will get to hear the piece in its entirety, and you will hopefully listen to it with a whole new pair of ears. If my art history class was about the difference between looking and seeing, then these programs are about the difference between hearing and listening. I am delighted to be sharing this great music with you. All you have to do is listen. **RK**

# Rob Kapilow



For over 25 years, Rob Kapilow has brought the joy and wonder of classical music – and unraveled some of its mysteries – to audiences of all ages and backgrounds. Characterized by his unique ability to create an “aha” moment for his audiences and collaborators, whatever their level of musical sophistication or naiveté, Kapilow’s work brings music into people’s lives: opening new ears to musical experiences and helping people to listen actively rather than just hear. As the Boston Globe said, “It’s a cheering thought that this kind of missionary enterprise did not pass from this earth with Leonard Bernstein. Rob Kapilow is awfully good at what he does. We need him.” The range of his activities is extremely diverse, ranging from What Makes It Great?® to Family Musik® to residencies with schools, orchestras, performing arts centers and corporations.

Kapilow’s What Makes It Great?® (WMIG) made its auspicious debut on NPR’s Performance Today over 25 years ago, and with its accessible ten-minute format it quickly attracted a wide base of fans and followers. What Makes It Great?® has sold out regular subscription series in places as diverse as Kansas City, MO, Cerritos, CA, as well as at New York’s Lincoln Center, the Celebrity Series of Boston, and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. the National Gallery of Canada and the Toronto Symphony. In 2008, PBS’s Live From Lincoln Center broadcast a special What Makes It Great?® show, bringing it to TV screens throughout the US; world-wide audiences were also able to see and experience Kapilow’s trademarked presentations when Lincoln Center inaugurated a series of WMIG video podcasts.

An award-winning composer, he was the first composer to be granted the rights to set Dr. Seuss’s words to music, and his *Green Eggs and Ham* has been called “the most successful piece written for families this half century”. A new CD featuring Nathan Gunn and Isabel Leonard in two more of his popular Family Musik® compositions, Chris van Allsburg’s *Polar Express* and Dr. Seuss’s *Gertrude McFuzz*, was released in November 2014 on GPR Records.

Kapilow has conducted many of North America’s finest orchestras including the Philadelphia Orchestra, the National Symphony, and the St. Louis, Atlanta, and Detroit Symphonies. He is also the author of two highly popular books: the award-winning *All You Have To Do Is Listen*, and *What Makes It Great?*

# Igal Kessleman



Praised for his “kaleidoscopic” playing by the *New York Times*, pianist Igal Kesselman is one of today’s most forward-thinking performers and music educators. After making his American debut with the Washington Chamber Symphony at the Kennedy Center, he has performed throughout the country in such venues as Alice Tully Hall, Symphony Space and Merkin Concert Hall in NYC; the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C.; and the Kravitz Center in West Palm Beach. Dr. Kesselman was a top prizewinner at “Citta de Marsala” International Piano Competition in Italy and has performed as a soloist with many orchestras, including the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra and the Israeli Camerata.

Highlights from the last season include performance of Mozart Double Concerto with pianist Orli Shaham and Vancouver Symphony Orchestra USA, solo recital for subscription series of Tel Aviv University and Masterclasses at Buchmann-Mehta School of Music at Tel Aviv University, Boston University Tanglewood Institute in Lenox, MA and the Colburn School in Los Angeles.

Dr. Kesselman is a past recipient of ten America-Israel Cultural Foundation Scholarships. He received his B.M. degree, cum laude, from S. Rubin Academy of Music in Tel Aviv, and his M.M. and D.M.A. degrees from Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore. His teachers have included Yoheved Kaplinsky, Emanuel Krasovsky and Irina Zaritskaya. Currently, he serves as the Director of the Lucy Moses School at the Kaufman Music Center, the largest music school for children in Manhattan, and serves as the Chair of the New York chapter of the National Guild for Community Arts Education. Dr. Kesselman serves frequently as a judge in international competitions and auditions, including Concert Artist Guild, Astral Artists, Five Towns and Boston University. He is also the Founder and Artistic Director of Kaufman Music Center International Youth Piano Competition. Dr. Kesselman is a member of the piano faculty at the Lucy Moses School, and at the Special Music School, New York’s public school for musically gifted children.

# The Appassionata Sonata

1802 is a key year in Beethoven's life. October 1802 is the date of the famous Heiligenstadt Testament, Beethoven's despairing quasi-suicide letter to his brothers, and shortly after writing this letter something radically shifts in Beethoven's compositional vocabulary. The period from 1802-1806 is one of the most exciting times in the history of classical music. During these years, Beethoven single-handedly reinvents the principal genres of the classical style and creates works that fundamentally alter these genres forever. The *Eroica Symphony*, the *Razumovsky* string quartets, the Fourth Piano Concerto, the *Kreutzer Sonata*, and the *Waldstein* and *Appassionata* piano sonatas were all written during these years, and these pieces are all, to use the critic Joseph Kerman's phrase, "pointed individuals" in ways that make Beethoven's earlier works in these genres seem almost neutral in comparison.

But what is it that these works have in common? What is the nature of their newness, the principles underlying the revolution? In Milan Kundera's fascinating book, *Testaments Betrayed*, he talks about Beethoven's artistic testament addressed to all the arts which he sums up as the idea that "a composition (the architectural organization of a work) should not be seen as some preexistent matrix, loaned to an author for him to fill out with his invention; the composition should itself be an invention, an invention that engages all the author's originality." Kundera says that rather than filling out a pre-established, tradition-determined pattern—"allegro in sonata form; lied in a slow tempo, minuet or scherzo in a faster tempo; rondo in a rapid

tempo," the goal became to shatter the pattern entirely and to invent each piece fresh, to "make composition radically individual."

What does it mean to "make composition radically individual?" For Beethoven, a radically individual piece is one that feels self-created, one of a kind. It seems to be propelled by its own rules and inner logic, not the logic of tradition. It is a piece that generates its own world, and for Beethoven the creation of that world IS in fact the topic of the piece, visible on the surface of the music, and at the core of the work's technique.

From this perspective, the *Waldstein* and *Appassionata* sonatas are the two first radically individual piano sonatas in music history. They create their own world, and to compose them, Beethoven had to overcome devastating disappointments in love, painful and debilitating illness, and the tragic decline of his hearing. The brilliant writer on mythology, Joseph Campbell said that "Opportunities to find deeper powers within ourselves come when life seems most challenging. Negativism to the pain and ferocity of life is negativism to life. What we are really living for is the experience of life, both the pain and the pleasure. The warrior's approach is to say yes to life, and we are not there until we can say yes to it all." The music of the *Appassionata* says yes to life, with all its difficulties, uncertainty, pain and suffering. Though it surely is one of the supremely tragic pieces in all musical literature, there is enormous vitality in every measure and not a moment of resignation. The *Appassionata*, like Beethoven himself, says yes to it all.

## TRACK LISTINGS

**1. Introduction 0:56**

**2. The Lecture 49:13**

### The Performance of the Sonata

**3. Movement 1. *Allegro assai* 9:58**

**4. Movement 2. *Andante con moto*/3. *Allegro ma non troppo-Presto* 11:17**

**Total Time 71:24**

**Produced by** Glen Roven

**Executive Producers** Mitch Yuspeh and Ira Yuspeh

**Mixed and Mastered** by Ira Yuspeh

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