This course explores some of the main interpretive challenges confronting the modern performer. To give a small sampling:

**Tempo**
Rudolf Serkin famously said with reference to Beethoven’s music: “a tempo that is not unified is a crime.” Yet our natural instinct is to treat tempo flexibly over the course of a movement.

**Structure**
Beethoven’s music is particularly associated with abstract notions such as “structure” and “organicism.” But what could they mean, especially for performers?

**Dynamics**
Our musicality often leads us to crescendo and diminuendo even when they are not notated on the score. Should we only do what is on the page?

**Bowing**
Many slurs in Beethoven’s string writing are unrealistic as bowings. Most players view them as “phrasing” marks, freely using multiple bows under one slur. Still, slurs may be trying to tell us something about bowing.

**Pedaling**
We pedal in response to the pianos we have at hand, yet we know that they were very different in his time. What insights can we gain from the pianos Beethoven knew and how might we “translate” these insights onto the modern piano?

The goal of this course is to provide performers with tools—analytic and historical—to approach performance issues critically, flexibly, and most important, artistically on the basis of musical meaning and context.

**Course Format**
Each student will be assigned a chamber group to be formed with other members of the class. The class will be made up of several such groups, whose repertoire will form the core of the semester. Class time will be divided into:
- discussion of analytic and performance issues around a work
- in-class coaching of the work discussed

The course culminates with an end-of-semester chamber concert (date and location TBD).

**Featured Pianos**
Students will have the opportunity to rehearse and perform on:
- a replica of a 1780s 5-octave piano by Anton Walter (suitable for Op. 1 piano trios, Op. 5 cello sonatas, and all violin sonatas except Op. 96)
- an original 6-octave piano by Wilhelm Leschen from 1825 (suitable for all middle- and late-period works)

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