

BACKSTORY

YOUR GUIDE TO TIMELINE PRODUCTIONS

CHICAGO PREMIERE

33 Variations

BY MOISÉS KAUFMAN

directed by Nick Bowling



YESTERDAY'S STORIES.
TODAY'S TOPICS.

TimeLine
Theatre Company

PRESENTED AT



a message



Dear Friends,

Welcome to TimeLine's 16th season! We can't wait to share this collection of four plays with you—all brand new to Chicago—and to ignite new conversations about how these historical stories resonate with today's social and political issues.

Once again we find ourselves launching the season outside our normal home on Wellington Avenue, this time at Stage 773 on Belmont. While there's no place like home, producing at a second venue enables us to continue expanding our audience, and hopefully makes it easier for you to experience our work and to introduce TimeLine to others. We've benefited from an astonishing increase of more than 150% in our subscriber base over the last few years. Producing in two venues is a short-term solution for managing that growth while we plan for what our long-term facility needs may be.

As we explore ways for TimeLine to broaden its reach and artistic scope, it is important to stress what is at the heart of all our considerations—fostering the intimacy and innovation that is critical to TimeLine's work. How we connect with you is at the center of everything we do, regardless of venue, size or address. So, as we find ourselves in new surroundings, we hope you'll share with us your ideas about how we can make your experience better and more enriching.

This venture beyond home is also a fitting metaphor for the plays we're exploring during our 2012-13 season, which push us into eras, cultures and genres somewhat foreign to TimeLine. As TimeLine's Company Members looked to plan season 16, with more than 50 productions behind us, we were eager to find plays that took us to places we hadn't been before. That same quest for discovery is at the heart of

each story, with Americans abroad in search of understanding, fulfillment and a grasp of the unknown.

The journey this season will take us to an underground cell in Vietnam in the world premiere of *Wasteland*, as two soldiers seek connection in the face of the greatest of differences and obstacles.

We'll also venture to Japan and back, during both the 1880s and present day, in the Chicago premiere of *Concerning Strange Devices from the Distant West*, as the invention of the camera unlocks new worlds of intrigue and exploration.

Finally, we'll go undercover in Afghanistan in the 1980s with the Chicago premiere of the spy thriller *Blood and Gifts*, exploring power struggles and under-the-table transactions that have shaped the international landscape for decades.

But we start here, with Moisés Kaufman's waltz through time in *33 Variations*.

Kaufman shows us beauty where we often miss it: In the mundane. In the seemingly mediocre. In ourselves. And in those we love and take for granted.

As TimeLine's Company Members looked to plan season 16, we were eager to find plays that took us to places we hadn't been before.

In *33 Variations*, a modern-day musicologist travels to Germany to better understand her idol, Ludwig van Beethoven. Even with her health crumbling because of a debilitating battle with ALS, she immerses herself in the Beethoven archives. She is determined to understand why he composed 33 variations on a seemingly trivial piece of music while his own health, finances and state of mind deteriorated.

As he did with some of his other historically inspired plays, such as *Gross Indecency: The Trials of Oscar Wilde* and *The Laramie Project*, Kaufman conducted copious research, going to the source in search of authenticity and understanding. And then he used that data as a launching pad to craft a play that blends critical analysis with surprising emotional impact.

As Beethoven's music unfurls throughout the play's 33 scenes, Kaufman shows us beauty where

we often miss it: In the mundane. In the seemingly mediocre. In ourselves. And in those we love and take for granted.

Not unlike the variations themselves, Kaufman's play sneaks up on you, packing an unexpected emotional punch. It urges us to reexamine that which we overlook, underestimate or undervalue, and reminds us of the fragility of life and death.

I've now experienced this play numerous times, first seeing it in 2009 and reading it many times over the last couple of years as we prepared to produce it. And yet last night when I watched this cast's first run-through in our rehearsal room, I was struck by so many things I've seen before, read before, known before, and then forgotten. Not necessarily about the play, but about the tedium of life and work and the toll it takes on being able to stop and pay attention to what is really around you.

Watching the decline of a loved one's health is the

ultimate wake-up call and equalizer, reminding us of our own mortality and the pettiness that gets in the way of truly embracing what is most dear to us—the beauty that exists around us. That beauty is the heart of *33 Variations*.

We're delighted to take you on Moisés Kaufman's journey, partnering with the International Beethoven Project (founded by pianist George Lepauw), under the always inspiring direction of my trusty colleague Nick Bowling, with a dynamic cast led by Janet Ulrich Brooks and Terry Hamilton.

Beyond *33 Variations*, we hope you'll join us for the entire extended exploration of 2012-13. I look forward to discussing all the places we will venture, and I thank you for being such a huge part of pushing TimeLine to new places.

Fondly,

the play



Moisés Kaufman

Moisés Kaufman is a Tony and Emmy award-nominated director and playwright. He is perhaps best known for the plays *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde* and *The Laramie Project*, which are among the most performed plays in America over the last decade.

Gross Indecency ran more than 600 performances in New York starting in 1997. Kaufman also directed it in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Toronto and London's West End, receiving the Lucille Lortel Award for Best Play, Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Off-Broadway Play and Los Angeles' Garland Award for Best Play, among other honors.

The Laramie Project—a play developed by Kaufman and his company Tectonic Theater Project from hundreds of interviews exploring reaction to the 1998 murder of gay

“The important thing in an archeological dig is not only the objects that are found, but looking at the dig itself, and seeing where every shovel came onto the earth. All of the marks are part of the thing that was rescued.”

— Moisés Kaufman quoted on National Public Radio

student Matthew Shepard in Laramie, Wyoming—opened at The Denver Theater Center in February 2000 and moved to New York in May 2000. *TIME Magazine* called the play “one of the 10 best plays of 2000” and it was nominated for the Drama Desk Award for Unique Theatrical Experience. In November 2000, the play was performed in Laramie.

Kaufman also directed the film adaptation of *The Laramie Project* for HBO. It received multiple honors, including two Emmy Award nominations, for Best Director and Best Writer.

Kaufman's other credits include directing *The Nightingale* (La Jolla Playhouse) and *The Common Pursuit* (Roundabout Theatre Company). He also directed his adaptation of Tennessee Williams' screenplay *One Arm* and the opera *El Gato con Botas* (*Puss in Boots*). In 2004 Kaufman directed

the Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award winning play *I Am My Own Wife*, earning him an Obie Award for his direction as well as Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle and Lucille Lortel nominations.

He was nominated for a Drama Desk Award for directing *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* on Broadway in 2011. Other recent credits include *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* (Mark Taper Forum); *Macbeth* (Public Theater); *This Is How It Goes* (Donmar Warehouse); *One Arm* (Steppenwolf Theatre); *Master Class* (Berkeley Repertory); and *Lady Windermere's Fan* (Williamstown Theater Festival).

He is the Artistic Director of Tectonic Theater Project and a Guggenheim Fellow in Playwriting.

Tectonic Theater Project

Tectonic Theater Project, founded in 1991 by Moisés Kaufman and Jeffrey LaHoste, is an award-

winning company whose plays have been performed around the world.

“Tectonic” refers to the art and science of structure and was chosen to emphasize the company's interest in construction—how things are made, and how they might be made differently.

Tectonic creates its work collaboratively, with company members often operating outside their area of specialization over a long workshop process. For example, actors and designers might become writers and dramaturgs, directors become designers and actors. These techniques have created some of the most unique and innovative works on the American stage. For more information, visit tectonictheaterproject.org.

Opposite: Playright Moisés Kaufman.

Below: Jane Fonda as Katherine Brandt and Zach Grenier as Beethoven in *33 Variations* on Broadway, 2009. (Photo by Sara Krulwich/The New York Times)



Production History

Initially developed by Moisés Kaufman and Tectonic Theater Project, *33 Variations* premiered at Washington, D.C.'s Arena Stage in 2007 and was performed at La Jolla Playhouse in 2008. The play premiered on Broadway in 2009, starring Jane Fonda in her first stage role in 46 years. The Broadway production was nominated for five Tony Awards, including Best Play, and received the award for Best Scenic Design. A 2010 production at Center Theater Group's Ahmanson Theatre also starred Fonda. TimeLine's production is the play's Chicago premiere.

Note on Structure

The play is written in 33 scenes that Kaufman calls “variations.” Characteristically for Kaufman and Tectonic, the play experiments with theatrical forms from scene to scene. Action shifts from past to present, and repetitions, music, singing and even a fugue are built into the play's structure. Scenes do not correlate with Beethoven's Variations; rather, Kaufman uses them as a catalyst to think about form and explore theatrical themes.

TIMELINE: Beethoven's Life and Times

- **1733** Beethoven's grandfather Ludwig van Beethoven (1712-1773) is appointed to the Bonn electoral choir, first as a bass, then in 1761 as the court musical director (Kapellmeister).
- **1756** Beethoven's father Johann (c. 1740-1792) helps out in the court choir. From 1764 he holds a post as tenor.
- **December 17, 1770** Ludwig van Beethoven is baptized. He likely was born on Dec. 16.
- **March 26, 1778** Beethoven undertakes his earliest known public performance. Billed as a child prodigy, he plays “various piano concertos and trios” in Cologne.
- **1782** Beethoven's first publication is released: *Nine Variations* on a March by Dressler.
- **1783** Beethoven dedicates three Piano Sonatas to his patron, the Elector of Cologne and Münster, Maximilian Friedrich.
- **1784** Beethoven is appointed deputy court organist.
- **1786** Between January and April, Beethoven travels to Vienna, intending to study with Mozart. While a meeting with Mozart may have been arranged, it is not clear whether or not Beethoven is able to study with Mozart.
- **July 17, 1787** Beethoven's mother dies.
- **1789** Beethoven becomes a member of the Bonn court chapel as violist.

the composer

Ludwig van Beethoven was born in Bonn, at the time part of the electorate of Cologne and a principality of the Holy Roman Empire. He likely was born on December 16, 1770, to a court singer, Johann van Beethoven, and his wife, Maria Magdalene (née Keverich). Ludwig had two younger brothers who survived to adulthood: Caspar (b. 1774) and Johann (b. 1776).

Beethoven's father, an abusive alcoholic, often put the family in difficult financial situations. But Beethoven's grandfather and namesake was a well-known and respected musician. Young Ludwig was initially trained by his father and had his first public piano performance at age 8 as his father tried to establish his son as a musical prodigy.

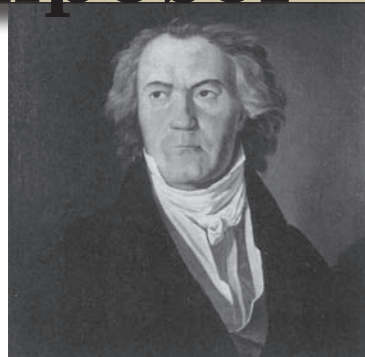
He was not particularly good at school and in 1781, at age 10, he withdrew from school to study with the court organist Christian Gottlob Neefe. Soon, he was filling in as organist.

Neefe also helped with the publication of Beethoven's first composition (at age 12), *Nine Variations on a March by Dressler*. In 1784, Beethoven was appointed Assistant Court Organist and began supporting his family as his father's alcoholism worsened.

Beethoven's plans to study with Mozart were cut short by the illness and death of his mother in 1787. In 1792, he travelled to Vienna to study with Haydn. He was still in Vienna when, in 1794, Napoleonic forces swept through Bonn, removing the Elector under whom Beethoven had received his posting. Beethoven decided to remain in Vienna, where he studied vocal composition with Antonio Salieri and counterpoint with Johann Albrechtsberger while establishing himself as a virtuoso pianist.

Deafness

Beethoven began to suffer from hearing loss as early as 1801. He described tinnitus, a ringing in the ears that made it hard to hear music.



Ludwig van Beethoven, circa 1823.

His deafness eventually made it impossible for Beethoven to perform publicly. As a result he lost a significant source of income even as he continued to compose. By 1814, he was entirely deaf, and relied on conversation books to communicate with others. The causes of Beethoven's symptoms are contested. Childhood typhus, lead poisoning, and venereal disease have all been suggested as causes; an autopsy showed that he had a distended inner ear and lesions in the ear.

While Beethoven was often temperamental and rude to his patrons and friends, his inability to hear them clearly may have increased his reputation for rudeness. It certainly kept him from attending social functions, and he wrote about contemplating suicide while struggling with frustration over his worsening deafness.

He feuded with his brothers, publishers and patrons, reputedly calling one of his staunchest patrons, Prince Lichnowsky, a "donkey."

Beethoven's moodiness, depression and unattractive personal appearance may have contributed to his never marrying, although he did fall in love with a series of his female pupils, often dedicating compositions to them. He also addressed an unsent letter to his "immortal beloved," a mysterious woman who some scholars believe to have been a married woman named Antonie Bretano.

In 1815, after the death of his brother Caspar, he began a legal battle with his sister-in-law Johanna to obtain custody of his nephew Karl. The ugly litigation lasted seven years before Beethoven succeeded in gaining custody of his nephew.

Composition

Beethoven's life as a composer is generally divided into early (1783-1803), middle or heroic (1803-1812), and late (1812-1827) periods. The heroic period is particularly notable for the rapid pace of his compositions even as he was losing his hearing. Many scholars consider

the late period of his life to be one of his most creative and innovative periods of composition: the *Missa Solemnis*, the *Ninth Symphony* with its famous chorale rendition of the Schiller poem "Ode to Joy," *String Quartet No. 14* and the *Diabelli Variations* were all composed during this period. Scholars view Beethoven's work as a link between the Classical and Romantic periods of music.

On November 27, 1826 Beethoven returned from his brother's house in an open carriage. He contracted pneumonia after exposure to the cold, inclement weather. Beethoven's health continued to decline. He had symptoms of dropsy, jaundice and liver disease. He had four surgeries to remove fluid from his body.

Beethoven died on March 26, 1827 at the age of 56. His autopsy revealed cirrhosis of the liver as well as lesions on the inner ear. A family friend, Gerhard von Breuning, reported that on his deathbed Beethoven quoted the phrase with which classical comedies concluded: "Plaudite, amici, comedia finita est." ("Applaud, friends, the comedy is over.")

February 20, 1790

Emperor Joseph II (a brother of the Bonn Elector Maximilian Franz) dies. Beethoven composes a cantata on his death and another cantata for the coronation of Leopold II. Joseph Haydn visits Bonn and Beethoven is introduced to him.

■ **1792** Beethoven goes to Vienna to study with Haydn, and later with Johann Baptist Schenk, Johann Albrechtsberger and Antonio Salieri.

■ **1794** French troops occupy the Rhineland. The Electorate in Cologne is dissolved and the Elector flees. Beethoven thus loses his post in Bonn; what was to have been a study trip to Vienna now becomes a permanent move.

■ **March 29, 1795** Beethoven undertakes his first public performance in Vienna—a piano concerto in the Hofburg Theatre in a concert organized by Haydn.

■ **1796** Beethoven performs a concert tour through Prague, Dresden, Leipzig and Berlin.

■ **1798** Beethoven composes Piano Sonata op. 13 "Pathétique."

■ **1799** In a coup d'état, Napoléon Bonaparte becomes first consul of France.

■ **April 2, 1800** Beethoven holds the first concert for his own benefit in Vienna with the première of the *First Symphony*.

■ **1801** Beethoven describes the first symptoms of his deafness in letters to friends.

■ **1802** Beethoven writes the "Heiligenstadt Testament," a letter to his brothers, reflecting on his increasing deafness.

"My heart is full of so many things to say to you—ah—there are moments when I feel that speech amounts to nothing at all— Cheer up — remain my true, my only love, my all as I am yours."

— From Beethoven's letter to the "Immortal Beloved"



Portion of Diabelli's Waltz.

Anton Diabelli (1781-1858)

Anton (Antonio) Diabelli was a Viennese music publisher, singer and composer of Italian descent. In 1818, he partnered with Pietro Cappi to form Cappi & Diabelli, a music arranging

and publishing firm. Diabelli is best known as a music publisher and the author of the waltz that is the source for Beethoven's Variations.

Anton Felix Schindler (1795-1864)

Schindler's calling card read "a friend of Beethoven." He was in fact Beethoven's associate and secretary. Schindler wrote the earliest biographies of Beethoven. However, his account was called into question when inconsis-

tencies with the historical record came to light.

Schindler appears to have exaggerated the length of his acquaintance with Beethoven (it was six years, not the 12 that he claimed) and may have made false entries into his conversation books to suggest a greater length of friendship with the composer. The unreliability of his accounts and the pervasiveness of some of the myths he established about Beethoven continue to complicate Beethoven's biography.

A variation is a composition or compositions in which a given theme is repeated in an altered form. Variations can include much humor through the juxtaposition of different variations and references to other pieces of music, or to earlier variations.

In early 1819, Anton Diabelli asked 50 composers to contribute variations based on a waltz of his composition. At this point the story becomes somewhat contested.

Beethoven apparently refused, deriding the waltz as a "cobbler's patch," but then changed his mind and went on to compose 33 variations. Because the Diabelli Variations are so difficult to perform, they are not as well-known as some of Beethoven's other works, although scholars consider them a masterpiece of innovation in the variation form.

Beethoven's writing desk and memorabilia.



Creative intent is difficult to establish unless a composer has written about the impulses behind a work. Beethoven may have agreed to write the variations for a variety of reasons: for money; to best Bach, who wrote 32 Goldberg Variations; or because he found something appealing in the waltz itself.

Beethoven wrote many other variations for piano, including Variations and Fugue for Piano in E flat major, op. 35, and by adding variations as movements to nine other works. He often chose a portion of the music that was not the melody and expanded it into a full variation. The Diabelli Variations feature many musical forms—including a march, an arietta and a fugue—that differ decidedly from the original waltz.

Scholar William Kinderman has written extensively about the Diabelli Variations. Through his research of Beethoven's original composition sketchbooks, he discovered that Beethoven had conceived about two thirds of the Diabelli Variations in 1819, and then set them aside for a time before finishing them in 1823.

- **1803** Beethoven's Second Symphony, Third Piano Concerto and the Oratorio Christus on the Mount of Olives premiere on April 5 at the Academy in the Theater an der Wien.
Beethoven composes the "Kreutzer Sonata" op. 47.
- **April 18, 1804** Napoléon proclaims himself Emperor of France. Deeply disappointed by this, Beethoven does not name the Third Symphony "Bonaparte" as originally planned. He later calls it the "Eroica Symphony."
- **1805** The British Navy defeats the French at Trafalgar.
French troops occupy Vienna for the first time. The nobility leaves the city. On November 20, the première of the opera *Fidelio* (first version under the title *Leonore*) is not a success.
- **1806** From August to October, Beethoven stays with Prince Lichnowsky, one of his important patrons, at the Prince's castle in Grätz (Silesia). He returns to Vienna following a dispute with Lichnowsky.
Commissioned by Count Rasumovsky, Beethoven composes String Quartets op. 59.
- **1807** Beethoven composes Mass in C Major op. 86 for Hungarian Prince Nikolaus II Esterházy.
- **1808** Beethoven's Fifth and Sixth Symphonies premiere on December 22 at the Academy in the Theater an der Wien.
Beethoven composes the Fourth Piano Concerto and the Choral Fantasia, op. 80.
- **1809** After Archduke Rudolph, Prince Lobkowitz and Prince Kinsky guarantee Beethoven an annuity, the composer rejects the post of court

Special Events and Resources

the conversation

TimeLine looks forward to engaging our audience in conversations inspired by our productions. We hope you will participate in the array of additional resources and online communities available:

SUNDAY SCHOLARS

Sunday, Sept. 30 is Sunday Scholars, a one-hour post-show panel discussion featuring experts talking about the play's themes and issues. **Admission is free.** Visit timelinetheatre.com for panelists and more.

COMPANY MEMBER DISCUSSION

Our Company Members shape the artistic vision and choose programming for TimeLine. On **Sunday, Sept. 9**, join them for a free post-show discussion.

POST-SHOW DISCUSSIONS

On **Wednesdays, Sept. 5 and 19 and Oct. 3; Thursdays, Sept. 13, 20 and 27; and Sundays, Sept. 16 and Oct. 7**, moderated by a TimeLine Company member and featuring cast and production staff.

STUDY GUIDE

A **study guide** is available at timelinetheatre.com.

BLOG AND MORE!

Find behind-the-scenes insight and conversation on our blog, **Behind the 'Line**, via timelinetheatre.com.



For the latest, "like" us on Facebook (**TimeLine Theatre**), follow us on Twitter (**@timelinetheatre**) and visit our YouTube channel (**youtube.com/timelinetheatre**).

the illness

In *33 Variations*, the lead character Katherine Brandt is diagnosed with ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease.

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) is a progressive disorder caused by the destruction of nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord, which results in the degenerative loss of muscle control. In the United States ALS is often called Lou Gehrig's disease after baseball player Lou Gehrig, whose death from ALS brought greater public awareness of the disease.

Symptoms of ALS include muscle weakness and loss of muscle strength and coordination affecting the shoulders, arms, hips and thighs, progressing to difficulty lifting, climbing stairs, muscle cramps, speech impairment and difficulty swallowing or breathing. When the



Baseball legend Lou Gehrig, who died of ALS in 1941.

muscles in the chest stop working it becomes difficult or impossible for someone with ALS to breathe without mechanical assistance. Some patients suffer from "emotional incontinence" and may have trouble controlling crying or laughter. Death usually occurs within two to 10 years; only about 20% of people with ALS live longer than five years.

There is no known cure for ALS. Current treatments focus on controlling or delaying symptoms. Physical therapy and the use braces or a wheelchair may become necessary.

The cause of ALS is unknown. Approximately 10% of cases have a genetic component.

ALS affects nearly 30,000 Americans, and 2 out of 100,000 people per year worldwide.

Orphan Disease

ALS is known as an "orphan disease," the term for rare diseases and disorders that affect fewer than 200,000 people in the United States. Because there are few individuals with the disease, pharmaceutical companies are unlikely to invest in researching and developing new drugs. There are about 6,000 orphan diseases. In 1983, Congress passed the Orphan Drug Act, which offers tax credits and other financial incentives to encourage research on medication for orphan diseases.

some music theory and music skills classes in college, but abandoned it because the pace of learning was very slow. I figured I'd learn more on my own.

Since then I've done a lot of reading on composition, harmony, counterpoint, orchestration, and the like. I'm still reading about it. I also do score analysis, which is examining scores by established composers to see how they do what they do. And I listen to a wide range of styles.

There are lots of gaps in my knowledge, but the main thing I lack is expert feedback on my own work—someone to point out ways I can improve. Every year I think about going back to school to get formal one-on-one instruction, but I have yet to do it.

(PJP) How did you get started doing sound design and music composition for theatre?

(AH) I was a film major in college and wrote scores for student films. At one point, a friend of mine asked me to write a theme for a one-act play he'd written, which I did.

Fast forward many years and that same friend, Christopher Tiffany, asked me to

"I was a kid who liked recording things and liked sound effects records and making homemade radio dramas with sound effects. I've been a sound geek for a long time."

come to Chicago to write the music for an adaptation of Machiavelli's *The Mandrake* that he'd written, which I did. It was produced by Greasy Joan & Co. in 1999 and was my first show in Chicago. I've been doing it ever since.

As far as sound design goes, I was a kid who liked recording things and liked sound effects records and making homemade radio dramas with sound effects. I was also very, very interested in how the sounds were made for films and it took off from there. I've been a sound geek for a long time.

(PJP) *33 Variations* marks your 13th TimeLine production working with director Nick Bowling, dating all the way back to *Gaslight*, our first show in our home on Wellington Avenue. Tell me about how your collabora-

musical director in Kassel offered to him by Napoléon's brother.

On May 4, the Emperor Napoléon's family leaves Vienna and the city is once again occupied by French troops. The departure of Archduke Rudolph occasions Beethoven to write the Piano Sonata op. 81a "Das Lebewohl."

■ **1810** Beethoven composes music for Goethe's play *Egmont*.

■ **1811** King George III of England is deemed unfit to rule. His son is appointed Prince Regent.

■ **1812** In poor health, Beethoven goes to Teplitz for hydrotherapy. He writes a letter to the "Immortal Beloved," whose identity is unknown. He meets Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

■ **1813** Beethoven composes Wellington's Victory or the Battle of Vittoria op. 91 in honor of a decisive victory over Napoléon. It is first performed, together with the Seventh Symphony, on December 8.

■ **1814** The Congress of Vienna opens in September, to settle issues arising from the French Revolution and the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire. Beethoven enjoys great success with occasional works (Congress Cantata "The glorious moment"), performances of his Seventh and Eighth Symphonies and the new version of *Fidelio*, due to the interest shown by international high society.

In March, Paris falls and Napoléon is exiled to the Mediterranean island of Elba.

Sound Designer Andrew Hansen

the interview

During rehearsals for *33 Variations*, TimeLine Artistic Director PJ Powers (PJP) talked with TimeLine Associate Artist and Sound Designer Andrew Hansen (AH) about his work

at TimeLine, which has spanned 13 years and 24 productions—nearly half of TimeLine's shows—and his love for Beethoven.

(PJP) I've been working with you since 1999 and I just

realized that I have no recollection of what your musical training has been. Can you answer this mystery?

(AH) I'm semi-formally trained. I've had a few years of piano lessons. I took

tion has evolved over 13 years and 13 productions.

(AH) From the beginning, it felt very much like we were on the same page.

My favorite thing about working with Nick is that he is constantly trying new things—new kinds of shows, new approaches to design.

We also bicker like a married couple, but it's never personal—it's always about the design and the show.

Nick is innately musical, which is always a pleasure to work with. I remember on *Streeterville* he was convinced that "My Country Tis of Thee" could be sung as a round, and I was not. He was right.

(PJP) Now you get to work on a show about Beethoven—a composer I've heard you mention countless times. Why has he been an inspiration to you?

(AH) I am obsessive—I get deeply interested in something and consume everything about it that I can get my hands on. Beethoven was my first obsession.

When the kids on my block were listening to Kiss and *Saturday Night Fever*, I asked my parents to buy me the *Time/Life* boxed set of Beethoven. It was my first classical music collec-



TimeLine Associate Artist and 33 Variations Sound Designer Andrew Hansen.

tion, and the first time I understood that it's ok to like things because you like them, not because other people tell you to like them. I was 7 years old. That he was first, I think, is what makes him a significant influence.

He is not my favorite. He is not the composer whose works I listen to most. But he is consistently the guy I go to for comfort. Angry? Beethoven's 9th, 2nd movement. Sad? 5th Piano Concerto, 2nd movement.

A few years back I was on the last day of a five day hike to Machu Picchu. I was tired of walking and ready to quit. So I "played" the entire 5th Symphony in my head from memory, and everything was right again.

(PJP) What is the difference between sound design and original composition?

(AH) If the characters can hear it, it's sound. If only the audience can hear it, it's music.

If you have a scene in a house where a radio is playing, the characters can hear it, so it's sound design. If at the end of the scene the music on the radio gets louder and plays on the theater sound system instead of the radio, it becomes something the audience hears in a way the characters don't. It becomes "music." An abstract tone that adds tension to a scene is music, even though it may seem like "sound design." The characters can't hear it and it provides emotional information directly to the audience. The job of sound design also covers speaker selection and placement, volume levels, and other technical elements.

Original composition is where it gets harder for an audience to track. "Original" means it is unique to the production, having been written specifically by the person credited for writing it. This is easy to understand but hard to identify because many productions intermingle original music with pre-existing music.

Personally, I do not like to blend the two. If the credit in the program says "Original Music by," then I want every piece of music the audience hears to have been written by me.

(PJP) Can you talk about how you approach a full musical composition? Where do you start and how does it evolve?

(AH) Structure is the most important thing to me, more than specific themes or styles. In classical music, a piece is often structured with a fast section followed

by a slow section, or a major key followed by a minor key. The contrast gives the work as a whole a sense of movement.

Structural decisions for a theater score are essential for the same reason. If you start with something fast, loud, and aggressive, at some point in the show you need to have something that balances it. Where and when you change is dictated by the emotional changes in the script. If everything has the same drive and intensity, the composer isn't telling the story and the music is nothing more than noise between scenes to cover shifts.

I almost always have an A theme and a B theme that contrast each other. They exist as guiding ideas until I start writing, at which point the structural needs of the play take priority.

Also, I find it easier to write music once I've seen the play on its feet. I have tried repeatedly to write a complete score before rehearsals begin, but it is difficult because I rely on details about staging, choices actors make, and logistics.

Read the complete interview online at TimeLine's blog Behind the 'Line, available via timelinetheatre.com.

"I 'played' the entire 5th Symphony in my head from memory, and everything was right again."

■ **1815** In March, Napoléon escapes Elba, gathers an army and marches on Paris.

On June 18, in the Battle of Waterloo, Napoléon is defeated with heavy losses on both sides. Napoleon is imprisoned on the Atlantic island of St. Helena.

■ **1818** As a consequence of his increasing deafness, Beethoven starts using conversation books to communicate. Beethoven composes Hammerklavier Sonata op. 106.

■ **1819** Anton Diabelli writes to 50 composers requesting variations on a waltz of his own composition.

■ **1820** In March, the Archduke Rudolph is enthroned as the Archbishop of Olmütz. Beethoven starts writing the Missa Solemnis for this occasion, but does not complete it until 1823.

■ **1821** Napoléon dies on May 5.

■ **1822** Beethoven composes his last Piano Sonata: op. 111.

■ **1823** Beethoven completes his Diabelli Variations.

■ **May 7, 1824** The Ninth Symphony premieres. Beethoven begins work on the last String Quartets.

■ **1826** Beethoven's nephew Karl attempts suicide on Aug. 6. Beethoven's completes his last work, a new Finale for the String Quartet op. 130.

■ **March 26, 1827** Beethoven dies in the "Altes Schwarzspanierhaus" in Vienna after a protracted illness and four surgeries to remove fluid from his abdomen.

backstage

Behind the scenes with five of Chicago's acclaimed actors

At TimeLine we have the pleasure of working with some of the city's most extraordinary actors, getting to know them through their work on our stage and behind the scenes as regular people. Recently more than 40 TimeLine supporters gathered to hear all about "an actor's life" on and off the stage at an intimate fundraising event—a TimeLine Actors Salon.

Guests began the evening mingling over cocktails while taking in the stunning

views from the beautiful Gold Coast home of Board Member Paul Knapp and his wife Nancy.

The panel, led by TimeLine co-founder and Associate Artistic Director Nick Bowling, featured TimeLine actors of the past, present and future—Karen Janes Woditsch (*To Master the Art*), Bret Tuomi (*Enron*), Kareem Bandealy (*Blood and Gifts*), Mildred Marie Langford (*In Darfur, My Kind of Town*) and Cliff Chamberlain (*Dolly West's Kitchen*). These hot Chicago

actors, who manage busy careers at some of the city and country's most reputable theatres, discussed with guests the ins, outs, ups and downs of "an actor's life."

Thank you to everyone who chose to support TimeLine in this unique way by participating in A TimeLine Actors Salon! We look forward to providing other opportunities throughout the year for our donors to support TimeLine while going behind-the-scenes to be even closer to the art.



Opposite, from left to right: TimeLine Artistic Director PJ Powers; actors salon panel Kareem Bandealy, Cliff Chamberlain, Mildred Marie Langford, Karen Janes Woditsch and Bret Tuomi; and TimeLine Associate Artistic Director Nick Bowling.

Above, clockwise from top: Kareem Bandealy and Cliff Chamberlain; TimeLine Artistic Director PJ Powers chats with TimeLine supporters; Karen Janes Woditsch and Bret Tuomi; Kareem Bandealy with supporters William and Wendy Spatz; TimeLine Board Member and host Paul Knapp talks with a guest; Mildred Marie Langford.

BACKSTORY: THE CREDITS

Dramaturgy @ Historical Research by Maren Robinson

Written by Maren Robinson, PJ Powers, Lydia Swift and Lara Goetsch

Edited by Kerri Hunt and Lara Goetsch

Photography by Lara Goetsch

Graphic Design by Lara Goetsch

33 Variations Photo Illustration by Ryan Robinson

Backstory is published four times each season.

Pictured on front cover (from left): Director Nick Bowling and assistant director Lauren Sheely; set model by scenic designer Brian Sidney Bembridge; actors Juliet Hart and Janet Ulrich Brooks; actor Terry Hamilton.

Pictured on back cover (from left): Actor Matthew Krause; scenic designer Brian Sidney Bembridge; costume designer Alex Wren Meadows; actors Janet Ulrich Brooks and Terry Hamilton; actor Michael Kingston; actor Jessie Fisher; actor Ian Paul Custer.

Our Mission:

TimeLine Theatre presents stories **inspired by history** that connect with today's social and political issues.

Our collaborative artistic team produces provocative theatre and educational programs that engage, entertain and enlighten.

the production



August 24 - October 21, 2012

by **MOISÉS KAUFMAN**
directed by **NICK BOWLING****CHICAGO PREMIERE**

TimeLine's 2012-13 season opener is an elegant waltz between past and present, fact and speculation, a mother and daughter, and art and life. One of classical music's enduring riddles is why Ludwig van Beethoven devoted four years of his diminishing life writing 33 variations of a mediocre waltz. Two hundred years later, a modern-day music scholar is driven to solve the mystery even as her own health and relationship with her daughter crumbles. The result is an extraordinary new American play—accompanied throughout

by a live pianist playing the variations themselves—about passion, parenthood, and the moments of beauty that can transform a life.

Cast

Janet Ulrich Brooks**
Ian Paul Custer
Jessie Fisher
Terry Hamilton
Juliet Hart
Michael Kingston
Matthew Krause
George Lepauw
Igor Lipinski

Production Team

Brian Sidney Bembridge, U.S.A.:
Scenic Designer
Alex Wren Meadows:
Costume Designer

Keith Parham, U.S.A.:
Lighting Designer
Andrew Hansen:
Sound Designer
Julia Eberhardt:
Properties Designer
Mike Tutaj:
Projections Designer
Dina Spoerl:
Lobby Designer
Maren Robinson:
Dramaturg
Ana Espinosa**:
Stage Manager
John Kearns:
Production Manager

**Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers.

Those designers and scenic artists identified by U.S.A. are members of United Scenic Artists, IATSE Local 829, AFL-CIO

AUGUST 2012

SU	M	T	W	TH	F	SA
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

SEPTEMBER 2012

SU	M	T	W	TH	F	SA
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

OCTOBER 2012

SU	M	T	W	TH	F	SA
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21						

NOTE ALTERNATE LOCATION!

Stage 773
1225 W. Belmont Avenue, Chicago
Directions, parking and dining
information at timelinetheatre.com

SPONSOR

33 Variations is supported
in part by **Steinway Piano Gallery**
of Northbrook.

- Regular Performance**
- Preview Performance**
- Opening Night *Sold Out***
- Post-Show Discussion** with cast & production crew **Free**
- Sunday Scholars** a one-hour post-show panel discussion with experts on the themes and issues of the play **Free**
- Company Member Discussion** a conversation with TimeLine's Company members **Free**

SHOW TIMES

PREVIEWS 8 PM
(Except 2 pm & 7 pm on 8/26)
OPENING NIGHT 7:30 PM
WEDNESDAYS & THURSDAYS 7:30 PM
FRIDAYS 8 PM
SATURDAYS 4 PM & 8 PM
SUNDAYS 2 PM