

Pianist **REIKO UCHIDA** enjoys an active career as a soloist and chamber musician. She performs regularly throughout the United States, Asia, and Europe, in venues including Suntory Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, Alice Tully Hall, the 92nd Street Y, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Kennedy Center, and the White House. First prize winner of the Joanna Hodges Piano Competition and Zinetti International Competition, she has appeared as a soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Santa Fe Symphony, Greenwich Symphony, and the Princeton Symphony, among others. She made her New York solo debut in 2001 at Weill Hall under the auspices of the Abby Whiteside Foundation. As a chamber musician she has performed at the Marlboro, Santa Fe, Tanglewood, and Spoleto Music Festivals; as guest artist with Camera Lucida, American Chamber Players, and the Borromeo, Talich, Daedalus, St. Lawrence, and Tokyo String Quartets; and in recital with Jennifer Koh, Thomas Meglitoranza, Anne Akiko Meyers, Sharon Robinson, and Jaime Laredo. Her recording with Jennifer Koh, “String Poetic” was nominated for a Grammy Award. She is a past member of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center Two. As a youngster, she performed on Johnny Carson’s Tonight Show. Ms. Uchida holds a Bachelor’s degree from the Curtis Institute of Music, a Master’s degree from the Mannes College of Music, and an Artist Diploma from the Juilliard School. She studied with Claude Frank, Leon Fleisher, Edward Aldwell, Margo Garrett, and Sophia Rosoff. She has taught at the Brevard Music Center, and is currently an associate faculty member at Columbia University.

Violinist **JEFF THAYER** is currently the concertmaster of the San Diego Symphony. Previous positions include assistant concertmaster of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, associate concertmaster of the North Carolina Symphony, concertmaster and faculty member of the Music Academy of the West (Santa Barbara), and concertmaster of the Canton (OH) Symphony Orchestra. He is a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music, the Eastman School of Music, and the Juilliard School’s Pre-College Division. His teachers include William Preucil, Donald Weilerstein, Zvi Zeitlin, Dorothy DeLay, and James Lyon. He has appeared as soloist with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the San Diego Symphony, the Jupiter Symphony, the North Carolina Symphony, the Canton Symphony Orchestra, the Pierre Monteux School Festival Orchestra, the Spartanburg Philharmonic, the Cleveland Institute of Music Symphony Orchestra, The Music Academy of the West Festival Orchestra, the Williamsport Symphony Orchestra, the Nittany Valley Symphony Orchestra, and the Conservatory Orchestra of Cordoba, among others. He attended Keshet Eilon (Israel), Ernen Musikdorf (Switzerland), Music Academy of the West, Aspen, New York String Orchestra Seminar, the Quartet Program, and as the 1992 Pennsylvania Governor Scholar, Interlochen Arts Camp. Through a generous loan from Irwin and Joan Jacobs and the Jacobs’ Family Trust, Mr. Thayer plays on the 1708 “Sir Bagshawe” Stradivarius.

A native of Taiwan, **MANN-WEN LO** has been playing the violin since the age of five. She made her orchestral debut performing Mozart’s Violin Concerto No. 2 at age eleven at the National Concert Hall in Taipei. She has received numerous awards at various competitions and auditions such as Toyama Asian Youth Competition (Hong Kong), Taipei Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competition (Taipei), and the International Chamber Music Ensemble Competition (New York). Mann-Wen has been featured on radio stations such as NPR’s From the Top and WGBH. She has collaborated in chamber music concerts with artists such as Glenn Dicterow, Ettore Causa, David Shifrin, Frank Morelli, William Purvis, and Hye-Sun Paik. Her chamber music mentors include members of the Tokyo, Borromeo, Juilliard and Takacs String Quartets. She has also studied chamber music with artists such as Peter Frankl, Daniel Phillips, Kim Kashkashian and Lucy Chapman. Mann-Wen’s festival appearances include the Gstaad String Academy at the Menuhin Festival, Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, Music Academy of the West, Franco-American Chamber Music Festival, Saito Kinen Festival Seiji Ozawa’s Young Musician Study Group, New York String Orchestra Seminar and Orford Arts Academy. Aside from classical music, Mann-Wen also performs jazz and various other genres with the Kaleidoscope Trio, an innovative group with the creative combination of guitar, clarinet and violin. Mann-Wen received her Bachelors degree from the New England Conservatory of Music and her Masters from the Yale School of Music. Her

principal teachers include Masuko Ushioda and Syoko Aki. She has recently earned her Graduate Certificate from USC Thornton School of Music, and is currently a Doctor of Musical Arts candidate under the tutelage of Glenn Dicterow. Mann-Wen plays on a 1925 Guiseppe Fiorini violin on generous loan from the Chi Mei Culture Foundation in Taiwan.

Taiwanese-American violist **CHE-YEN CHEN** has established himself as an active performer. He is a founding member of the Formosa Quartet, recipient of the First-Prize and Amadeus Prize winner of the 10th London International String Quartet Competition. Since winning First-Prize in the 2003 Primrose Competition and “President Prize” in the Lionel Tertis Competition, Chen has been described by San Diego Union Tribune as an artist whose “most impressive aspect of his playing was his ability to find not just the subtle emotion, but the humanity hidden in the music.” Having served as the principal violist of the San Diego Symphony for eight seasons, he is the principal violist of the Mainly Mozart Festival Orchestra, and has appeared as guest principal violist with Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and Canada’s National Arts Centre Orchestra. A former member of Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society Two and participant of the Marlboro Music Festival, he is also a member of Camera Lucida, and The Myriad Trio. Chen is currently on faculty at USC Thornton School of Music, and has given master-classes in major conservatories and universities across North America and Asia. In August 2013, the Formosa Quartet inaugurated their annual Formosa Chamber Music Festival in Hualien, Taiwan. Modeled after American summer festivals such as Ravinia, Taos, Marlboro, and Kneisel Hall, FCMF is the product of long-held aspirations and years of planning. It represents one of the quartet’s more important missions: to bring high-level chamber music training to talented young musicians; to champion Taiwanese and Chinese music; and to bring first-rate chamber music to Taiwanese audiences.

Cellist **CHARLES CURTIS** has been Professor of Music at UCSD since Fall 2000. Previously he was Principal Cello of the Symphony Orchestra of the North German Radio in Hamburg, a faculty member at Princeton, the cellist of the Ridge String Quartet, and a sought-after chamber musician and soloist in the classical repertoire. A student of Harvey Shapiro and Leonard Rose at Juilliard, on graduation Curtis received the Piatigorsky Prize of the New York Cello Society. He has appeared as soloist with the San Francisco, National and Baltimore Symphonies, the Symphony Orchestra of Berlin, the NDR Symphony, the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, the BBC Scottish Symphony, the Janacek Philharmonic, as well as orchestras in Italy, Brazil and Chile. He is internationally recognized as a leading performer of unique solo works created expressly for him by composers such as La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela, Éliane Radigue, Alvin Lucier, Christian Wolff, Alison Knowles and Tashi Wada. Time Out New York called his recent New York performances “the stuff of contemporary music legend,” and the New York Times noted that Curtis’ “playing unflinchingly combined lucidity and poise... lyricism and intensity.” Recent seasons have included solo concerts at New York’s Issue Project Room and Roulette, the Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, the Sub Tropics Festival in Miami, the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, the Angelica Festival in Bologna as well as solo performances in Brussels, Metz, Paris, Mexico City, and Athens. Last summer Curtis led four performances of the music of La Monte Young at the Dia Art Foundation’s Dia:Chelsea space in New York.

Camera Lucida takes great pleasure in thanking all our supporters for their generous support, in particular pH Projects, Carol, Lanna, Eloise, Mary and Michael, David, Julia, Evelyn, Marion, Pauline, Harry, Georgiana, Irene, Amnon, Geoff, Donald, Laurette, Stephan and Civia, Bob and Ginny, Caroline, Suzanne, and John and Pauline.

Upcoming Camera Lucida performances:  
April 2, 2018  
April 30, 2018

# *camera lucida*

Sam B. Ersan, Founding Sponsor

Chamber Music Concerts at UC San Diego  
Monday, January 29, 2018 – 7:30 pm  
Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

Sonata in g minor for Piano and Violoncello, Ludwig van Beethoven  
Opus 5 Nr. 2  
Adagio sostenuto e espressivo; Allegro molto piu tosto presto  
Rondo: Allegro

Sonata Nr. 2 in G major for Violin and Piano, Opus 13 Edvard Grieg  
Lento doloroso; Allegro vivace  
Allegretto tranquillo  
Allegro animato

*intermission*

Quartet in C major, Opus 59 Nr. 3 “Razumovsky” Beethoven  
Andante con moto; Allegro vivace  
Andante con moto quasi Allegretto  
Menuetto grazioso  
Allegro molto

Reiko Uchida, piano  
Jeff Thayer and Mann-Wen Lo, violins  
Che-Yen Chen, viola  
Charles Curtis, violoncello

## Beethoven: Sonata for Piano and Violoncello in g minor, Opus 5 Nr. 2

Beethoven’s second sonata “pour le Clavecin ou Piano-Forte avec un Violoncelle obligé,” like its companion in F major, takes as its format two expansive movements: the first fusing an introductory Adagio with a Sonata-Allegro, and the second a Rondo of ingratiating themes and dazzling passagework. But in Opus 5 Nr. 2, this strict bipartite layout results in two movements which seem to have nothing more to do with each other than the nominal tonic note of G, so different in expressive character are they. The *Adagio sostenuto e espressivo* begins with an explosion, a shock, a tremor: we are in the world of the Gothic horror story, the *Schauerroman* of Ludwig Tieck and E. T. A. Hoffman. Insistent dotted rhythms hearken back to the French overtures of the Baroque period, and a sense of gloom, the classic temperament of *melancholia*, shrouds the music. Just before the introduction gives way to the main *Allegro* movement, Beethoven rigorously notates rests of unusual duration. If counted out in full, these silences provide the ultimate drama: absence, the chill of the sepulchre, listening for an echo and hearing none. But without transition we are abruptly swept into an *Allegro* of muscular, driving momentum in 3/4 time; *Allegro molto piu tosto Presto*, in other words, “a very fast *Allegro*, or even *Presto*.” Rippling triplets in the piano part and relentless repetitions, *sforzandi* and ominous chromatic motifs in both parts give this movement at times the sensation of a maelstrom or a storm at sea. Yet when all is said and done, as the movement crashes to its conclusion in a sudden shift to G- major, Beethoven seems to be grinning from the wings: it was all just a macabre joke.

Indeed, this ironic shift may be the link to the Rondo, which proceeds in a kind of *opera buffa* character, immediately presenting themes of simplistic, bucolic, even boorish cast, frequently ornamented with ostentatious flourishes. A Rondo is a kind of medley, and in early Beethoven the rotating appearances of Rondo themes evoke the entrances of actors on a stage. Their great virtue lies in their stubborn consistency: they are stock characters, like those of the *commedia dell’arte*. Each time they return the listener is reassured and reminded of their immediately recognizable comedic features. Towards the end, as the movement winds down after a reflective solo piano episode, the cellist seems to take on the role of master of ceremonies, stomping through a sequence of awkward octave leaps, as if to incite all of the cast members to return to the stage for one last rousing round of applause.

## Grieg: Violin Sonata No. 2 in G major, Op. 13

Grieg composed his second violin sonata in 1867, while on his honeymoon. This was by all accounts a blissful moment in his life, and yet the work itself, while certainly not without moments of sincere joy, is tinged with an undercurrent of tragedy. The Danish composer Niels Gade accused the work of being “too Norwegian.” Interpreting Gade’s accusation is problematic: is he referring to the work’s affect, or perhaps its themes and harmonic progression and modal mixture reminiscent of folk-music? Neither of these would seem sufficient to justify Gade’s comment, as the reappropriation of folk-music to chamber music has a well established precedent going back at least as far as Haydn, and while Scandinavian music is often associated with a certain melancholic affect, melancholia in music is certainly not unique to Scandinavia. It perhaps also worth bearing in mind that the second half of the 19th century saw many composers turning towards more personal idioms informed by ethnic nationalism (Dvořák, Smetana, Sibelius, Elgar, Balakirev, Mussorgsky, Wieniawski, among others). Regardless of the reason, Grieg was sufficiently riled by Gade’s comment that the composer resolved to make his third violin sonata even more ‘Norwegian’.

## Beethoven: String Quartet in C major, Op. 59 Nr. 3

The first mention we have of the three Op. 59 Quartets is a letter from Beethoven, travelling in the Prussian province of Silesia, to his publisher, dated July 5, 1806. In this letter the composer promises the delivery of a number of manuscripts (which incidentally were never delivered), including the Fourth Piano concerto (op. 58), by Beethoven’s brother Caspar Carl. Beethoven, unable to contain his enthusiasm, writes: “Furthermore,

you may discuss with [Caspar Carl] the question of new violin quartets, one of which I have already finished; and indeed I am thinking of devoting myself entirely to this type of composition.” Beethoven’s excitement seems to have not been without reason: Op. 59 redefines the string quartet in much the same way that the ‘Eroica’ redefined the symphony (composed not long before); and in their epic scope, density, and complexity, these quartets seem almost like miniature symphonies compared to their predecessors. In this music Beethoven, by pushing the envelope, seems to be redefining not only the genre of string quartet but also music itself - the Italian violinist Felix Radicati, on first encountering the Razumovsky quartets, insisted to Beethoven: “You surely do not consider these works to be *music*.” Much of Beethoven’s excitement seems to have been related as much to his patron, the Russian Count Andrei Razumovsky (also the Russian Ambassador), as to Razumovsky’s personally sponsored quartet (aptly called the “Razumovsky Quartet”), a professional quartet composed of renowned musicians of the highest caliber. The virtuosity of the Op. 59 quartets seems to be dramatically raising the stakes not only in terms of the technical demands, energy, and stamina required by the performers, but (as with the Eroica Symphony), also through their musical density and experimentalism, substantial demands on the sustained close attention and open-mindedness of the audience, whether through sudden explosive climaxes or hypnotic meditations. Like much of Beethoven’s more radical music, many critics were left confounded. Of the Op. 59 quartets, this last quartet seems to contain the most contempt for convention, and is perhaps therefore frequently regarded as the most confounding.

The C major quartet, while occasionally bearing the subtitle “Heroic” begins, not as the Eroica Symphony with a pair of full chords built on the tonic, but rather its seeming opposite - a diminished chord build on F#, which leads into a lengthy introduction in which the listener is invited (or perhaps even forced) into Beethoven’s creative process as he searches for the tonic in a quasi-improvisatory fashion, as if groping in the dark for a light switch. This “search for the tonic” is an introductory technique featured in Mozart’s famous K. 465 quartet (also in C major) as well as in the opening of Haydn’s “Die Schöpfung” Hob. XXI, although Beethoven’s is somewhat more radical, in that whereas Mozart and Haydn establish the tonic weakly with a single note only to leave it far behind a short moment later, Beethoven sets himself the task of responding to one of the most dissonant and unstable chords found in music up to that time (a trope which appears throughout his music), which makes a tempting allegory for his personal triumph over deafness. In this way Beethoven seems to be commenting on the creative process, endowing the music with a vivid and fascinating self-awareness. By acknowledging the nothingness that precedes the work, Beethoven is incorporating the preceding silence into the music itself. In so doing Beethoven seems to imagine a composer who does not merely imitate God through the act of creation, but in effect becomes a kind of God himself - creating chaos out of nothingness, and then patiently sculpting chaos into his own personal universe (each of the Razumovsky quartets combines vastness, intricacy, and density in a way that allows one to study and listen to them inexhaustibly). In the first of many subversive twists, the first theme enters not heroically, but rather shyly. Initially, It is played solo by first violin with an articulation emphasizing a falling motion which is iterated twice. This strange moment, seeming to reflect the inexplicability of a sudden epiphany, or perhaps a flash of divine inspiration, then catalyzes the surging climax marking beginning of the quartet, in which the violins and viola simultaneously take up the theme (this time with the articulation inverted, emphasizing an ascending motion) while the cello creates a massive pedal tone on the tonic, utilizing the open C-string.

The Second movement is a morose, yet stoic, meditative contemplation of folklike themes. While, unlike the first two Razumovsky quartets, Beethoven does not make explicit reference to Russian folk-music, this movement has a vaguely “Russian” character; the Cello pizzicato is perhaps vaguely reminiscent of the balalaika; the movement’s structure doesn’t fit the mold of any traditional classical forms. Overall, it’s difficult to think of a precedent for this kind of music in the Classical quartet tradition. The musicologist Daniel G. Mason criticizes the second movement in particular for its lack of dynamism and drama, and a certain monotony, which according to him conflicts with the works “heroic” narrative. Yet Beethoven’s “heroic” narrative (assuming that such a narrative

exists and assuming that it can be applied to Op. 59 No. 3) often seems to incorporate disconcertingly anti-heroic moments, as in the funeral march of the “Eroica” symphony or the slow movement of the Fifth Piano Concerto and most prominently in late works such as the Arietta of the Op. 111 Piano Sonata. This kind of intense contrast between movements and the disruption of narrative seems to be not only deliberate on Beethoven’s part but also part of a calculated (and effective) way of heightening both the “heroic” elements of his music (as well as the anti-heroic) through the use of contrast. In fact, the “hero” narrative itself is problematic with regard to Op. 59 No. 3 because the structure and thematic development of the quartet, and Beethoven’s music in general, seem to lie closer to the ideal of “Absolute” music than to “Programmatic” music. It is worth noting that, unlike the third symphony, Beethoven himself did not assign a subtitle to this quartet.

Beethoven maintains a vivid contrast between movements in the third movement, which is a short minuet that would hardly seem out of place in a quartet of Haydn’s (apart from the short stepwise-ascending motif which binds together the main themes of each movement). The movement’s most interesting feature is its ending, which pauses on a G-dominant-seven chord, and launches straight into the opening of the epic finale: a manic fugue based on a hyperactive, 10-bar subject that comes at first as an awkward sputtering (descending) followed by a steady stream of eighth-notes (ascending), seeming to relate to the first movement’s main theme. Beethoven frequently seems to choose unwieldy fugue subjects (as in the finale of the “Hammerklavier” sonata and the scherzo of the 9th symphony), and it is interesting to speculate as to why. Certainly having such a subject creates a powerful sense of dramatic tension. Moreover, Beethoven the composer often seems to thrive in the face of adversity, and maybe the choice of such a subject represents a kind of adversity, whether it be self-imposed or not. In such situations Beethoven always inevitably fails to sustain the contrapuntal texture, despite keeping it alive longer than one might expect given such an absurd task. The primary tension in the finale seems to be between a polyphonic texture and a homophonic one, together encapsulating the struggle of the the composer in the Herculean task he has set himself. Thus, the unfolding of the fugue, and its disintegration and reintegration, seem to be emblematic of the creative process as in the first movement; the music takes on a self-aware, recursive quality such that by progressing it seems to be discussing the process by which the music itself progresses. There are moments in the development when Beethoven seems to run into a brick wall and smashes his head against it until the wall eventually collapses, only to be confronted by another wall. Beethoven transforms his own failures into triumphs by simply refusing to acknowledge them as such (which ironically contrasts his famously self-critical, perfectionist work ethic), and in the recapitulation he finally triumphs as the the battered, mutilated fugue subject seems to close in on a final cadence several times, but Beethoven, seemingly unsatisfied, always manages to evade it at the last possible moment. At one point the ‘ending’ finally arrives, cued in by a cadential formula approached by stepwise contrary motion, and we are left waiting for a final dominant-tonic cadence, which is avoided by the first violin stepping slyly from F, to F#, to G, and resuming the fugue subject. Beethoven finishes the quartet by approaching the final cadence using the same sequence iterated thrice over three octaves in a way that not even he can resist.

Particularly in the outer movements, the vivid emergence of a kind of “musical consciousness,” that is, of a music that seems to be aware of itself, summons the specter of Beethoven himself, temporarily resurrected for the duration of the performance. Thus, by infusing his own consciousness (or perhaps only the illusion of consciousness) into the music Beethoven seems to have inserted himself as a kind of ghostly presence onto the stage, presiding over the musicians who summon him, in effect establishing himself as an immortal god of his own making. Chillingly, Beethoven’s alleged response to Radicati’s assertion that the Op. 59 quartets were “not music” was: “They are not for you, but for a later age.”

– program notes by Amir Moheimani and Charles Curtis