

camera lucida

chamber music concerts at UC San Diego
sponsored by the Sam B Ersan Chamber Music Fund

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tonight's concert will be broadcast saturday, april 24th at 7 pm on
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program design and layout by Aaron Helgeson



UC San Diego | Department of Music



Dear Musical Friends,

Spring is here, and the world is young. Tonight we present music by two very young composers, Ludwig van Beethoven and Richard Strauss. The works on tonight's program were created by these composers in their mid-twenties, both of them just on the brink of emerging into the public limelight. Strauss' beautiful Violin Sonata in E-flat major, opus 18, takes up the second half of the program; while two works of Beethoven from the mid-1790's, the Duo "With Two Obligato Eyeglasses" for viola and cello, and the monumental String Trio Opus 3, fill the first half.

Beethoven arrived in Vienna from Bonn in 1792, 22 years of age, the stipendiary of Max Franz, Elector of Cologne. As such he was an employee of the Elector, and received quarterly payments from him. The Opus 3 String Trio may have been sent back to his patron in Bonn as demonstration of Beethoven's progress under his new teacher, Haydn, and as proof of the continued worthiness of the Elector's support of the young composer. Beethoven himself never returned to Bonn. The Duet "With Two Obligato Eyeglasses" is an unfinished gem, a fragment possibly intended for private use by Beethoven and a close friend.

In these works, Beethoven is not just on the brink of personal success; he is on the brink of the decisive breakthrough into what is called Romanticism, which in the case of Beethoven is a personal articulation of something like Individualism, the ideal of answering more to his own ambition and intuitive calling than to the expectations of courtly or bourgeois society. Strauss, on the other hand, if we are to believe the probing program notes of Charles Cross, conceived of music composition as a confirmation of the musical and social order into which he was born. Both composers brought to their projects immense craft and talent; and even if Strauss is involved in the triumphant confirmation of musical culture as he found it in the 1880's, still he stands at the threshold of modernism, and contributes to the passage into modernism in his own special ways.

Thus both composers are at crossroads in their own lives and in the course of music history. And these junctures are captured in the remarkable, extraordinary works of youth transformed into sound in tonight's performances.

That all these works happen to be in the key of E-flat major is pure coincidence, and the fascinating accounts of signification in the tonality of pitch developed in the program notes by Professor Cross are not to be construed as having a programmatic function in the curating of the Camera Lucida programs.

We are close to disclosing the dates and programs for next season, so please do hold your breath. But be sure to breathe out in time to come to our May 24 season finale, with beautiful, expansive late works of Schubert and Brahms.

Charles Curtis, Artistic Director

Duet 'With Two Obligato Eyeglasses' (1797)

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

String Trio in Eb major, op. 3 (1793)

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

- I. Allegro con brio
- II. Andante
- III. Menuetto I: Allegretto
- IV. Adagio
- V. Menuetto II: Moderato
- VI. Finale: Allegro

- intermission -

Sonata for Violin and Piano, op. 18 (1887)

Richard Strauss
(1864-1949)

- I. Allegro, ma non troppo
- II. Improvisation: Andante cantabile
- III. Finale: Andante - Allegro

Jeff Thayer, violin
Che-Yen Chen, viola
Charles Curtis, cello
Jonathan Feldman, piano

A program all in E-flat major? Can we stand so much E-flat major all at once?

Or will we be transformed and improved by prolonged exposure to its magical qualities?

Or will the tonality even register with us?

Musical Keys

From our own historical perspective, today, it might seem strange to suggest that a musical key, a tonal center, even a particular note or degree of the Western scale as we know it, could function as a noticeable factor in a chamber music program. But for centuries, the identification of particular affects, moods, social functions and even spiritual states with particular pitch centers follows a rich and many-layered history. It could be that the general auditory fatigue to which we are all subject in this age of musical ubiquity has de-sensitized us to the possible significance of tonal values, and the ways in which they operate in "tonal" music. But this was not always so.

One of the most straightforward consequences of a piece being in a certain key is the way that key makes the instruments sound. In E-flat major, for example, none of the open strings of the string instruments ring sympathetically with the main notes of the piece. And, the hand of the string player must stop the notes higher on each string, stretching and reaching to achieve the legato which is almost automatic in keys which employ more open strings. Violin music in the key of E benefits from the repeated activation of the open E string and its harmonics, and a resultant brilliance; and works in G, D or A tend to make all the string instruments ring with an attractive harmonic aura: Mozart's marking of *Allegro Aperto* ("open") for the A-major violin concerto describes as much the open sonority of that key as it does his desired tempo. By contrast, E-flat major, or other keys with even more flats, will tend to sound occluded, darker, woodsier, dappled, even muted (an effect specifically sought by composers like Dvorak and Janacek).

Different for the piano: Liszt loved the tonality of D-flat major, as it promotes a certain kind of facility in performance, using all of the black keys neatly adjacent to each other. A continuously rippling quality could be achieved, as in the Etude "*Un Sospiro*".

Wind instruments are built in a key, and their special timbral qualities - their "character traits" - are inseparable from the key to which they are pitched. An E-flat clarinet sounds strident, and is used, for instance by Shostakovich, to portray something like screaming. The A clarinet, pitched a tritone lower and proportionately larger, conveys warmth and fluidity; a major third lower (and larger) we find the basset horn, pitched in F, and the epitome of calm breath, aura, atmosphere.

Closely aligned with these "character traits" are the settings composers place them in. The English horn (so-called because of a mix-up between the terms "angelic" and "English") is pitched in F, and the pastoral scene in Berlioz' *Symphonie Fantastique* which features this pastoral-sounding "alto oboe" is naturally in the key of F-major; it turns out that historically, musical evocations of the bucolic and pastoral tend to be in F-major, as for instance Beethoven's "Pastoral" Sixth Symphony.

Musical Icons

This borders on the iconographical, and indeed there is a great deal of iconography in musical tonality. Connections have been suggested between the horn and the image of the unicorn, and further between the unicorn and Christ, and hence between the horn and Christ. While horns exist in various sizes and keys, the typical key for the horn is E-flat, therefore E-flat major and the sound of the horn could both symbolize Christ. Going past the aspects which are audible, since E-flat major uses three flats in the key signature, it has been seen as the key of the Holy Trinity. If this sounds far-fetched, it may well be; but for Bach, this was a normal part of composing. In the Matthew-Passion, the chorale *Herzlich thut mich verlangen* appears five times, each time in a different key: first with 4 sharps (C-sharp minor), then with 3 flats (C minor), then with 2 sharps (B minor), then with 1 flat (D minor), and finally with no accidental (A minor): this process is meant to symbolize the falling away of earthly things, shedding, the *verlangen* a longing for the pure unencumbered state of death and immateriality. The symbolic falling away of accidentals is a process which remains a notational feature and has no audible correlative; but the contour of the key sequence, theoretically audible, moving down from C-sharp, to C, to B, back up to D, and finally falling down once again to A, mimics a sinking to the earth, a letting go, a descent to the final earthly state of ashes and dust, in which weightless state the soul might then ascend to its rightful, celestial destination. To these lengths the old masters would frequently go in their conflation of meaning, symbolism and tonal key.

E-flat major appears to have held a remarkable sway over European composers. Thomas Mann provides us with a striking insight into the possible significance of E-flat major through the fictional voice of Wendell Kretzschmar, the youthful lecturer on music in *Doktor Faustus*. In a lecture on "Music and the Elemental" he puts forward the idea that music "celebrates its capacity for cosmic metaphor, since those elements were, so to speak, the world's first and simplest building blocks, a parallel that a philosophizing artist of recent memory - and again, it was Wagner of whom he spoke - had cleverly put to use

in his cosmogonic myth, *The Ring of the Nibelung*, by equating the basic elements of music with those of the world itself. For him the beginning of all things had its music - it was the music of the beginning and likewise the beginning of music, the E-flat major triad of the surging depths of the Rhine, the seven primitive chords, like cyclopean stones hewn from primeval rock, out of which the fortress of the gods rose up."

(Wagner and Schumann probably hated each other, but Schumann's "Rhenish" Third Symphony is also in E-flat major.)

Later in the same passage Mann has the lecturer expand on E-flat major and purity, speaking of "certain revelations of the elemental in the art of pure musicians, of Beethoven and Bach, in the latter's prelude to the cello suite, for example - likewise in E-flat major and built on primitive triads, with references to only the most closely related keys, while the cello's voice spoke only the most basic, fundamental, and simple truth with, one might also say, nascent innocence. In order to prove receptive for the utter and unprecedented uniqueness of this creation - the lecturer told us from the piano, which he used to verify his words - the heart needed to be, as Scripture says, 'swept with the besom', to be brought to that state of perfect emptiness and readiness that mystic instruction says is a condition for receiving God." (translation: John E. Woods)

Die Zauberflöte

Something like "nascent innocence" might have guided Mozart in his celebration of the kind of child-like but august ritualism of "The Magic Flute", a work that marked E-flat major with a very special hue for certainly all European composers that followed, and Beethoven in particular. Again the three flats might have symbolized the magical numeral of Mozart's Masonic brotherhood; but if the choice of E-flat major begins with a secret code recognizable only to the reader of the music - a sonically neutral signifier, with no equivalent anchor in the audible experience of the listener - by the time the work enters the cultural consciousness, and is heard, performed, studied and absorbed, the *sound* of E-flat major, the way the orchestra and its instruments behave in that key, has taken over and become inseparable from the atmosphere of Mozart's cultic masterpiece.

Beethoven first presents himself to the public in E-flat major with his self-designated "Opus 1 No. 1": an impish, comedic, bouyant piano trio, echoing some of the comic elements of Mozart's Singspiel if not its intriguing combination of mysticism and self-conscious innocence.

Heroes with Eyeglasses

For a near-sighted person, eyeglasses are always *obligato*, obligatory, whether playing a duet by Beethoven, driving, or doing most anything else. With his sub-title, could Beethoven have meant that this piece will require a very close examination? That the players will have to put their glasses on to get the details, or to get the notes right?

For Beethoven, E-flat tends to be a heroic key, as witnessed by the "*Eroica*" symphony and the "imperial" fifth piano concerto, "The Emperor". And here, indeed, we have a duet which features a theme that could be characterized as heroic, as well as the strange fact of the instrumentation, in which the two heroes are highly unlikely ones, a viola and a violoncello. He does send them into realms of virtuosity which were nearly unprecedented at the time of composition, requiring a kind of heroism, or at least recklessness, on the part of the near-sighted protagonists.

The Duet was almost certainly written around 1796 or 1797 for Baron Nikolaus Zmeskall von Domanovecz, a cellist and functionary at the Viennese court. The Baron was a close friend of Beethoven's; and since he was an accomplished amateur musician, he may have helped Beethoven by correcting proofs for his published editions. Could the "eyeglasses" reference have been a humorous hint that the Baron was not the best proof-reader? Zmeskall is known to have also helped procure living arrangements for Beethoven, and supplied him with wine (probably Hungarian). Both of these conditions provide the background to the obvious use of the Duet, as a piece that the two friends would play at home for their own amusement: we know that Beethoven was a rather good violist.

This might also account for the fact that the manuscript is unfinished: perhaps Beethoven considered it a private composition, and did not intend it to be published. In any event, the score lacks dynamics, articulations and slurs, all elements which the performers must decide upon themselves. The soaring opening theme, launched with a crashing first-inversion chord in the viola and gently settling over a march-like staccato harmonization in the cello, gives way to myriad transitional themes that feature humorous repetitions and accompaniment figures which turn out to have thematic function when they reappear (a distinctly Beethovenian strategy). Towards the end of the development, emerging from a patch of stormy C-minor, there is a startlingly beautiful passage which clearly foreshadows the ethereal style of middle Beethoven, specifically the opus 74 "Harp" quartet (also in E-flat major); consequently the performers tonight have decided to play the concluding chords of the development pizzicato, as a reference to the corresponding passage in the "Harp" quartet, from which that string quartet gets its nickname.

Opus 3

The Abbé, who never travelled without his violin, had luckily put into his fiddle-case a trio composed by Beethoven just before he set off, which thus, in the year 1793, found its way to Leicester. This composition, so different from anything I had ever heard, awakened in me a new sense, a new delight, in the science of sounds. Beethoven was the son of a tenor singer in the cathedral of Bonn, and, as a lad, was patronized by my friend [the Elector of Bonn], and afterwards placed by the Elector under Haydn, at Vienna. This composition opened to me a new view of the art. It was a language that so powerfully excited my imagination, that all other music appeared tame and spiritless. When I went to town, I enquired for the works of this author, but could learn nothing more than that he was considered a madman, and that his music was like himself.

-William Gardiner, "Music and Friends", memoir published in 1853

It is notable that Beethoven composed five substantial - even exhaustive - string trios before even trying his hand at a string quartet. The number of string trios from this early period is surprising. The string trio as a medium is harder to succeed at, but for Beethoven, as a genre, it was not saddled with the burden of precedent that the quartets of Haydn and Mozart represented. It could be that he did not want to risk comparison with the acknowledged masters of the string quartet until he could outdo them; such was his ambition. He may have been very consciously biding his time, and learning his trade, before bursting upon the scene with his six quartets, opus 18. As the quote above, from stocking manufacturer and music enthusiast William Gardiner (who in his old age had gotten the date quite wrong) demonstrates, in his very first string trio, Opus 3, Beethoven succeeded in astonishing his listeners; and the pointers to his aberrant personality were also already in place.

Opus 3 is a six-movement marathon comprising an opening Sonata-Allegro, an Andante, a first Menuetto, an Adagio, a second Menuetto, and a concluding Rondo-Allegro. Beethoven could as well have called it a Divertimento, or a Serenade, both popular forms of the era which seem to have been intended to take up time at social gatherings, possibly as background music, as accompaniments to eating, drinking, socializing or games. It is hard to escape the suspicion that works like this were intended, first and foremost, to be long; and that the young composer, newly arrived in Vienna, felt the need to demonstrate his ability to engineer a work of such scope and length, with its attendant virtues of contrast, drama, humor, the spinning out of narrative detail, dance-like élan, introspection, and brashness; and anything else he could think of to put before his new audience.

The End of the Rococo

At one point it was thought that Opus 3 had been composed in Bonn, before Beethoven even came to Vienna, but this theory is now discounted. The work shows the definite influence of Haydn, Beethoven's teacher in Vienna, as well as the confidence and expansiveness of the great central European metropolis. The trio breathes the air of unhurried cosmopolitanism, of evening entertainments in which *time* was not of the essence, but rather *space*: the space of ornate and lofty rooms, fluted columns crowned with Rococo figure, carved furniture with turned and voluted finials, the hangings of tapestries and draperies; space re-drawn in the *chiaroscuro* of flickering candle-light, and made audible in the rippling reflections of E-flat major sonorities. Aristocratic space in the late 1700's was demarcated in almost infinite facets through a compulsive recursiveness, through scalloping, scrolling, ordering, stuccoing, through the variegated decoration of gently billowing surfaces. From today's perspective, one could think of the design space of the Rococo as proto-psychedelic: in its copiousness and sheer joy in detail, reflection and endless self-propagation, there is an unmistakably hypnotic turn. It is a space in which time stands still, and images linger; and a space that finds its perfect apposite in the blandishments of Beethoven's melodic conversations, the imaginary movements and approaches of the imaginary *Menuetto*-dancing guests, and the leisurely filigree of the *Adagio*'s languid embellishments. The very idea of embellishment as a timeless moment is captured in the musical term *appoggiatura*, the characteristic ornamental note leaned upon and delaying the main note in the classical style: from the Italian *appoggiare*, to rest, to lean on, to linger.

But the space of Beethoven's early music is, likewise, the space of ambition and officiousness, advancement at court and failure at court; intrigue, and the rigid architectonics of repression. And far from hiding this, the intricacy of embellishment indeed corresponds to the infinitely nuanced spiderweb of Viennese bureaucracy, and to the arcane details of military, aristocratic, clerical and bourgeois hierarchies. The space of the evening entertainment is articulated equally by who is sitting closest to the Archduke, and who is whispering in the ear of the Baroness; spacings that are none-too-voluntary, and scripted through unspoken, pernicious laws.

Beethoven, of humble German-Dutch origins, was as ambitious as anyone of his time in Vienna. He must have identified more with the behind-the-scenes workers, cooks, journeymen and craftspeople, upon whom the functioning of the Court depended, and who drew their own social and physical spaces out of what was possible. But he shuttled

between these spaces, lionized in Viennese society as much for his talent as for his bad manners, with friends in very high places. In Opus 3 we find a work that bridges manifold circumstances in Beethoven's nascent career. We see the imitator, the willing student of Haydn and worshiper of Mozart, striving to match these older masters on their terms. We see the brusqueness of his thematic bent: a short, vigorous first theme driven by syncopations, bracketing its last four notes and repeating them three times verbatim. We see his humor, and we remain uncertain whether or not he is already poking fun at the very tradition he inherits. (Most probably he is, and he will do so throughout his life, most remarkably in his late works, which reduce the idea of a theme to a sort of persiflage, to be systematically distorted and refracted to the very limits of composerly invention.) In a work like Opus 3, we have to wonder if its sheer length, which often seems manufactured, is not meant to satisfy a perverse urge to annoy. And we see a new notion of musical beauty, angular, with harder surfaces and tending to upset the ethereal balance of the Mozartean ideal. The very voicings of Beethoven's chords, spread over a wider range than his predecessors', often lacking the binding element of inner voices studiously filled in, but rather embracing gaps and the harsh feel of splayed constituents, work against, but in tandem with, the gallant style he is emulating. This is why he is often compared to Goya, whose courtly portraits do not flatter. It is as though he needed to master, and simultaneously reject, the Apollonian style of Mozart, replacing it with the Dionysian, and at times even the Plutonian (as in *Fidelio*). He certainly mastered the Apollonian, and even became entrapped in it during the middle period (in works like the opus 74 "Harp" quartet or the Waldstein sonata, with its foggy heights); but the blatant ugliness of parts of the *Grosse Fuge*, or the unbearable and incomprehensible racket of much of the *Hammerklavier* Sonata, are thrilling because they reflect a kind of anti-establishment, destructive, plebeian or proletarian sympathy that we easily associate with Truth. It might just have been neurosis, but in its advancement as a kind of musical style there may be something like truthfulness at work.

More Opus 3

The second movement of Opus 3, *Andante*, is an example of the clock-like, mechanical music beloved of the Enlightenment; it resembles both the second movement of Opus 18 No. 4 and the "clock" movement of Haydn's "Clock" symphony. The A-flat major *Adagio* begins with a bar of accompaniment only, as if lighting up an empty stage; the theme then "enters" in the second bar, and the movement spins out a calm, sustained, almost meditative atmosphere, rarely approaching the dramatic: a kind of night music reminiscent, at times, of the nocturnal atmosphere of Boccherini or Cimarosa. The Trio of

the second *Minuetto* is remarkable for its plaintive, Hungarian-tinged expostulations in the violin, clearly borrowed from Haydn, but placed in the highest register of the violin against low, sometimes dissonant pedal tones in the viola and cello. The strangeness of this sonority represents a decisive break with Beethoven's predecessors.

The striking character of the theme of the Rondo-Finale is that it is a cadential figure, a terse, one-measure ending as opening phrase; and this ending functions not only as beginning of the movement, but repeatedly as beginning of the Rondo (returning) material each time it recurs. This gives a special meaning to the idea of Rondo, a round-form, making the beginning each time a thing that emerges seamlessly (as part of a continuous circle) from whatever music precedes it. Thus in the course of the Finale the theme keeps reappearing at moments when one least expects it, without preparation, simply appearing again and again from behind the shrubbery, as it were, often surprising, or ambushing, even the musicians who are responsible for playing it. Here it is again, Beethoven seems to be saying; I tricked you again!

A Century Later

Richard Strauss is the product of the marriage (literally) between the economic aspirations of the classical music scene in Germany and the wealthy merchant class emerging in the decades following industrialization. Strauss' father, born illegitimate and in poverty, worked his way up to Principal Horn in the court orchestra of King Ludwig of Bavaria; and his mother was a daughter of the Bavarian beer dynast Georg Pschorr. The father, called "the Joachim of the horn" by von Bülow for his unparalleled skill and mellifluous sound, was a reactionary in musical matters, detesting Wagner both as a man and a composer; in fact, following Wagner's death in 1883, when Hermann Levi asked the court orchestra to rise to their feet in his memory, Franz Strauss was the only orchestra member to remain seated. Josephina, Richard Strauss' mother, led a retiring life marked by depression and insecurity, eventually submitting to God knows what sorts of primitive treatment in nineteenth-century psychiatric institutions.

We can easily imagine, then, the neurotic, Ur-German, music-obsessed household in which Strauss grew up, and the pressures and expectations levied on the young Richard. And he did not disappoint. Music as the ticket to social advancement was not a new idea; certainly Beethoven rode about as far as one could on that ticket. But Strauss, starting the journey already at a point of bourgeois respectability and considerable wealth, could be seen as engaged in a mission of preservation, of maintaining and bolstering both his own status, and by extension, the viability of music itself as a stanchion of the moral, aesthetic

and cultural *good*. Strauss seems to have understood this situation intuitively, and his music stands as a brilliant affirmation of the German status quo, expressed through its very own, proprietary cultural form, classical music. Works like the *Sinfonia Domestica*, *Ein Heldenleben*, or the *Alpensinfonie*, address these matters explicitly, glorifying aspects of German lifestyle and aspiration; and even in Strauss' brief expressionist period, he seems to want to temporarily ratify what must have appeared to him a legitimate outgrowth of German culture - particularly in literature - by participating in that new trend with his two experimental operas, *Elektra* and *Salomé*.

Classical Music: A Fantasy

He stands at the point at which a term like "classical music" begins to make sense: he is one of the first to cast music composition as the spinning out of cultural fantasies, mostly retrospective in nature. Stravinsky referred to Strauss' post-expressionist period - inaugurated with his ultimate success story, *Der Rosenkavalier* - as "time-travelling". And certainly he was not being catty, the neo-classicism and neo-baroque-ism of Stravinsky's own middle period following shortly thereafter. That the cultural fantasy which Strauss spins out is that of the German status quo makes it no less a fantasy. The early E-flat major Horn Concerto, written for his father, may be the first example of his ongoing desire to please, expressing the dream of reconciliation with his distinguished but demanding and truculent father. That he would have been claimed by the Nazis, for a time, evidently without either his approval or over his objections, seems not so surprising. After 1935, when he was removed from his post as president of the *Reichsmusikkammer* due to his ongoing relationship with and support for Stefan Zweig, he retreated into a life of seclusion, tolerated by the regime but kept under surveillance. Little by little the dream of reconciliation seems to be aimed at music itself, the dream of finding a welcoming and well-appointed home in the presence of Mozart, which the D-major Oboe Concerto of 1945 and the opera *Capriccio* would appear to poignantly and lovingly construct. In his day, Strauss was considered perhaps the pre-eminent conductor of Mozart's symphonies and operas. With his final, justly celebrated orchestral songs on texts of Eichendorff and Hesse, the fantasy extends to Strauss' own works, as if he was embracing Music as a heavenly realm to which his very own musical production would gain him admittance. In the last of these "Last Songs", "*Im Abendrot*", at the point when the voice intones its salutation of death, "*Ist dies etwa der Tod?*", Strauss' own "transfiguration" motive from "Death and Transfiguration" emerges from the depths of the strings, in the "unreal" tonality of C-flat major, working its way then through a tortuous and many-chambered passageway via B-flat major, E-flat minor, D major, F major, A-flat major, D minor and

finally C-flat major again, to the heavenly resting-place of E-flat major. Evidently Strauss felt he needed to present the talisman of his own youthful theme at the portal.

Chamber Music: the Violin Sonata

His few works of chamber music almost all date to the 1880's, when Strauss was putting the finishing touches on his immense compositional craft. The significant chamber works are the Cello Sonata, opus 6, the Piano Quartet, opus 13, and the Violin Sonata, opus 18. The Violin Sonata, however, is the only one that fully reflects the ease of composition and originality of the mature Strauss. It directly precedes the symphonic poems *Don Juan* and *Death and Transfiguration*, works that established Strauss' fame as a mere twenty-five-year-old. One could regard the Violin Sonata as the last composition of his preparatory phase, and simultaneously as the first work of his maturity.

The opening piano chords would seem to evoke a brass section, gleaming and punctuated with the appropriate dotted rhythms of countless E-flat major horn fanfares. Dense, convoluted melodic strains mark the violin writing, layered with a piano part that favors the middle register, and achieving a sonority near to the thickness and opacity of Strauss' early orchestral sound. The rapid rate of modulation in certain sections, in which Strauss emulates Wagner, adds to the sense of a ripeness and complexity verging on the decadent. Strauss is laying out his own unique principles of counterpoint, the co-existence of multiple, equally-important individual lines flowing around and on top of each other; even individual voices, through the characteristically Straussian deployment of very wide melodic leaps (as in the theme of *Heldenleben*), seem to be composites of more than one linear thread. These elements are present in incipient form in the Violin Sonata, and come into their own in the works of the following decade. The slow movement could as well be a *Lied*, with the violin a surrogate soprano. In the middle section, the violin dons a mute and demures. Hints of *Till Eulenspiegel* and the comedic grace of *Rosenkavalier* mark the finale, which gets under way with a dramatic explosion in the violin after a quiet, meditative introduction, almost a transition from the slow movement, by the piano alone.

One of the joys of the Violin Sonata is in experiencing the full-fledged style of Strauss articulated by only two instruments. Strauss in his mature period is an almost exclusively symphonic and operatic composer; he all but abandoned chamber music from this point on, apart from the *Lied*; the beautiful string sextet in *Capriccio*, for example, is a reminiscence of the idea of chamber music, a gesture back to a lost world, and not a direct

engagement with the genre. There are times in the Violin Sonata when we feel we are in the midst of a symphonic poem, but the symphonic poem has been moved from its native arena to the smaller confines of the piano and violin duo and the chamber music hall. It might be a little like encountering Kobe Bryant and Lebron James playing one-on-one at the Rec Center playground: one does a double-take. The content is the same, but the scale has changed dramatically.

Charles Cross studied music at the Navy School of Music at Little Creek Amphibious Base in Norfolk, Virginia, and held the position of Acting Associate Director of "The President's Own" Marine Band for a number of years. Subsequently he acted as Repetitor for various German opera houses, including Greifswald and Wilhelmshaven. Cross is a gourmand and writes occasionally for the online journal sumptuousness.com.

About the Performers

Violinist **Jeff Thayer** is Concertmaster of the San Diego Symphony as well as Concertmaster and guest artist of the Music Academy of the West (Santa Barbara). Previous positions include assistant concertmaster of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, associate concertmaster of the North Carolina Symphony, 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, and Dorothy DeLay. A native of Williamsport, Pennsylvania, Mr. Thayer began violin lessons with his mother at the age of three. At fourteen, he went to study with Jose Antonio Campos at the Conservatorio Superior in Cordoba, Spain. 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. Other festivals include La Jolla Summerfest, the Mainly Mozart Festival (San Diego), Festival der Zukunft, and the Tibor Varga Festival (Switzerland). Through a generous loan from Irwin and Joan Jacobs, Mr. Thayer plays on the 1708 "Sir Bagshawe" Stradivarius.

Taiwanese violist **Che-Yen Chen** (also known as "Brian Chen"), described by the Strad Magazine as a musician whose "tonal distinction and essential musicality produced an auspicious impression", has established himself as a prominent recitalist, chamber, and orchestral musician. He is the first-prize winner of the 2003 William Primrose Viola Competition, the "President prize" of the 2003 Lionel Tertis Viola Competition. Currently the principal violist of San Diego Symphony, Mr. Chen has appeared as guest principal violist with Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, and Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. He has performed throughout the US and abroad in venues such as Alice Tully Hall, Merkin Hall, Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Jordon Hall, Library of Congress in D.C., Kimmel Center, Taiwan National Concert Hall, Wigmore Hall, and Snape Malting Concert Hall, among numerous others. A founding member of the Formosa Quartet, the first prize the Amadeus prize winner of the 10th London International String Quartet Competition, Mr. Chen is an advocate of chamber music. He is a member Myriad Trio, Camera Lucida, Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society Two, the Jupiter Chamber Players, and has toured with Musicians from Marlboro after three consecutive summers at the Marlboro Music Festival. A participant

at the Ravinia Festival, Mr. Chen was featured in the festival's Rising Star series and the inaugural Musicians from Ravinia tour. Other festival appearances include the Kingston Chamber Music Festival, International Viola Congress, Mainly Mozart, Chamber Music International, La Jolla Summerfest, Primrose Festival, Bath International Music Festival, Aldeburgh Festival, Seattle Chamber Music Society Summer Festival, Taiwan Connection, and numerous others. Mr. Chen has also taught and performed at summer programs such as Hotchkiss Summer Portal, Blue Mountain Festival, Academy of Taiwan Strings, Interlochen, Mimir Festival, and has given master-classes at the Taiwan National Arts University, University of Missouri Kansas City, University of Southern California, University of California Santa Barbara, and McGill University. Mr. Chen began studying viola at the age of six with Ben Lin. A four-time winner of the National Viola Competition in Taiwan, Mr. Chen came to the US and studied at The Curtis Institute of Music and The Juilliard School under the guidance of Michael Tree, Joseph de Pasquale, and Paul Neubauer. Mr. Chen had served on the faculty at Indiana University-South Bend, San Diego State University, McGill University, where he taught viola and chamber music. Mr. Chen is currently teaching at UC San Diego.

Charles Curtis has been a professor in the Music Department of the University of California, San Diego, 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. He holds the Piatigorsky Prize of the New York Cello Society, and received prizes in the Naumburg, Geneva and Cassado international competitions. He has appeared as soloist with the San Francisco Symphony, the National Symphony, the Baltimore Symphony, the Symphony Orchestra of Berlin, the NDR Symphony, the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, the Orquestra de la Maggio Musicale in Florence, the Janacek Philharmonic, as well as orchestras in Brazil and Chile; under the baton of distinguished conductors such as André Previn, Herbert Blomstedt, Max Rudolf, John Eliot Gardiner and Christof Eschenbach. His chamber music associations have taken him to the Marlboro, Ravinia, Wolf Trap, La Jolla Summerfest and Victoria Festivals, among many others. He has recorded and performed widely with soprano Kathleen Battle and harpsichordist Anthony Newman, as well as with jazz legends such as Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter and Brad Mehldau. A leading interpreter of new and contemporary music, Curtis performs a unique repertoire of major solo works created expressly for him by La Monte Young, Alvin Lucier, Éliane Radigue and Alison Knowles, rarely-heard compositions by Terry Jennings and Richard Maxfield, and works by Cornelius Cardew, Christian Wolff, Morton Feldman and John Cage. Curtis' solo performances this past year have taken him to the Angelica Festival in Bologna, the Guggenheim in New York, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Bordeaux, the Galerie Renos Xippas in Paris, the

MaerzMusik Festival in Berlin, Dundee Contemporary Arts, as well as Chicago, Austin, Hamburg and Ferrara. Last fall he performed in the Auditorium of the Musée du Louvre in Paris, in the long-awaited Paris premiere of Éliane Radigue's Naldjorlak trilogy, a nearly three-hour work for solo cello and two basset horns.

Recognized by colleagues and critics worldwide as a leading chamber musician and accompanist, **Jonathan Feldman** has performed on four continents with some of the world's greatest instrumentalists, among them the legendary Nathan Milstein, Itzhak Perlman, Gil Shaham, James Galway, Sarah Chang, and Joshua Bell. He performs regularly with the New York Philharmonic as their orchestral keyboard player. As a chamber musician, he appears in concert as a member of the trio Zephyr. He has also performed with the New York Philharmonic Chamber Ensembles and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He was a featured performer in a recent Live From Lincoln Center with Gil Shaham, which was broadcast throughout the United States on PBS. A graduate of The Juilliard School, Mr. Feldman joined the Juilliard faculty in 1989 and today chairs the school's collaborative piano department. He has given master classes throughout the United States and the Far East and has lectured at international festivals and competitions. His regular summer festival appearances include Tanglewood, Bridgehampton, Music from Angel Fire, the Hidden Valley Music Seminars, the Cape Cod Chamber Music Festival and the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara California, where he is currently Director of the Collaborative Piano department. Mr. Feldman's most recent recording is with his wife, New York Philharmonic Principal Bassoonist Judith LeClair, which is available on Avie Records. He has also recorded for Angel/EMI, Columbia Masterworks, DGG, RCA Red Seal, Naxos, Nonesuch, Summit, and CALA records. He can be heard on soundtracks to many movies, the most recent being Music of the Heart with Meryl Streep and The Man Who Wasn't There, directed by the Coen Brothers.

ANTIQUES ROADSHOW Wants to Get into Your Drawers

ANTIQUES ROADSHOW is coming to San Diego and **NOW** is the time to apply for tickets and submit pictures of your furniture!

You can apply for tickets to the San Diego show by visiting pbs.org/antiques.

Ticket recipients are selected by random drawing and tickets will not be available at the door. Each ticket holder may bring two objects for appraisal. The **deadline** for online ticket applications is 11:59 p.m. ET, **Monday, April 19, 2010**.

In addition, The ROADSHOW Furniture Roundup is seeking large pieces of furniture within 50 miles of San Diego! If your furniture is selected you'll get two tickets to the show! For more information and complete furniture submission rules visit pbs.org/antiques.

Good luck! And hope to see you on **June 12** at ANTIQUES ROADSHOW in San Diego!



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