

Myriad Trio

presented by the uc san diego department of music
sponsored by the sam b. ersan chamber music fund
monday, october eleventh
two thousand and ten

Myriad Trio

Demarre McGill, flute
Che-Yen Chen, viola
Julie Smith, harp

Cinquième Concert (Fifth Concert in d minor)

Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764)

Commentaires Sentimentaux

Serge Natra (*1924)

Prelude and Entr'acte from *Carmen*

Georges Bizet (1838-75)

intermission

Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)
arr. Dan Reiter

Trio

Laszlo Lajtha (1892-1963)

About Tonight's Program

The great French Baroque composer Jean-Phillipe Rameau (1683-1764), best-known for his solo harpsichord music as well as his operas, composed only one work of chamber music, the "Pieces De Clavecin En Concerts." The "Pieces" consists of six separate Concerts, or works. **Concert No. 5** was originally scored for harpsichord, violin, and viola da gamba and was arranged for flute, viola and harp by the Myriad Trio. Rameau worked on the Pieces de Clavecin from 1737-1741, while he had already begun composing the operas that would make him famous. The work was inspired by the sonatas for violin and harpsichord by a now-forgotten composer, Jean-Joseph Casanea de Mondonville. The work also represents a break with earlier French chamber works in that Rameau gave equal roles to the three instruments. In particular, Rameau gave a large part to the harpsichord (harp) which in earlier ensembles tended to be limited to an accompaniment role. Concert No. 5 works beautifully for this ensemble with each of the three instruments having solo moments as well as moments of intricate group playing.

Israeli-based composer Serge Natra was born in Romania and is best known for his orchestra and chamber works as well as his numerous harp compositions. A student of Leon Klepper, Natra attended the National Music Academy in Bucharest and received various important composition prizes including the George Enesco (1945) and the Romanian Government Prize (1951). In 1961, Natra and his wife decided to settled in Israel. Sharing a pragmatic point of view with "The Six" which include composers such as Honegger and Milhaud, Natra's music exemplifies his belief in avoiding sentimentality and impressionism. **Commentaires Sentimentaux** was written in 2002 and premiered by Turner Trio in 2006 at the 8th World Harp Congress in Geneva, Switzerland. Commissioned by Radio France for the Tuner Trio (Isabelle Perrin, harpist, Sabine Toutain, viola, Philippe Pierlot, flute), the melody throughout the work weaves intricately between each member of the trio. After an array of musical statements in the opening movement, the second movement begins with the opening theme from before. However, there is a concentrated intensity within this serene, hymn-like section. The return of quick, sharp attacks in the third movement are contrasted and complimented by running sixteenth notes and linear, softer lines. Intermittently, throughout the entire piece indi-

vidual solos, mainly in the viola and harp, act as interludes between sections and serve as moments to develop new thematic ideas.

Carmen was an opera written by the famous French composer Georges Bizet in 1875. It is Bizet's best-known work and is based on a novella of the same title written in 1846 by the French writer Prosper Mérimée. Although Carmen was not initially well-received, praise for it eventually came from well-known contemporaries including Claude Debussy, Camille Saint-Saëns and Pyotr Tchaikovsky. Their views proved to be prophetic, as Carmen has since become one of the most popular works in the entire operatic repertoire. Bizet, however, did not live to see its success, as he died from a heart attack at the age of 36, three months after the opera opened. The two works being performed tonight were arranged for the Myriad Trio by up-and-coming composer, Chiayu Hsu. Ms. Hsu has had her works performed by the Detroit Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, among others.

Born in 1862 in St-Germain-en-Laye, France, Debussy entered the Paris Conservatoire at the age of ten, where he both excelled and startled professors with his defiance; he would reportedly sit at the piano and play chords that rejected all the textbook rules. Like many composers before and since, Debussy's work was greatly inspired by poetry. The composer was also friends with many of the day's poets, including Stéphane Mallarmé. It was Mallarmé's poem *L'après-midi d'un faune* (The Afternoon of a Faun) that inspired Debussy to write what was probably meant to be a three-part orchestral work with the titles *Prélude*, *Interlude* and *Paraphrase finale*. Debussy completed the **Prelude** in 1894 – as just a one-movement work. He revised it up until the very last minute and the premiere was at the Société Nationale de Musique in December 1894, with Gustave Doret conducting. The flute's theme, recurring throughout the work, represents the faun, though it is not intended as a literal translation of the poem. The line – solo at the very start – moves chromatically down to a tritone below the original pitch, then ascends back to the original pitch. The line progresses throughout the piece and its metamorphoses account for the Prelude's richness of texture and harmony. We even hear Debussy's increasing interest in non-Western scales and timbres (he would use the sounds of the Indonesian gamelan more in his later works, and continued to write using the whole-tone scale). Mallarmé's

poem – about “a faun dreaming of the conquest of nymphs” – transitions between dream and reality, giving Debussy the perfect arena to explore his new language. Prelude stands as a turning point in music history and had profound effects on the generation of composers that followed. Debussy had established an incredibly innovative style – both in terms of the way the orchestra is treated, and in his approach to harmony and musical structure. In so doing, Debussy found the perfect way to capture the dream-state of the afternoon of the faun. This flute, harp and viola (or cello) version was transcribed and arranged by Dan Reiter in 1994. With the presence of the flute and harp, the essence of the original work, combined with the myriad color of the viola, this special instrumentation captures the spirit of the orchestral prelude, expressing this masterwork with a touch of intimacy.

Laszlo Lajtha (1892-1963), although an unknown name to most in the musical scene, is regarded as one of the most important symphonic composers to emerge from Hungary, writing nine orchestral works over a period of 25 years (1936-1961) as well as numerous chamber and choral pieces. Born into a wealthy industrialist family, Lajtha attended the Academy of Music in Budapest where he studied piano. In 1908 Lajtha began studying composition with Viktor Herzfeld and Zoltan Kodaly and, following the example led by Bartok, began to take interest in the folk music of his country. Lajtha headed out on his first collecting trip to Transylvania in 1910 before going to study with Vincent d'Indy in Paris. During World War I hit, Lajtha served as an artillery officer and afterwards earned his doctorate in political science and law, requested by his parents. After the war, Lajtha taught at the National Music School in Budapest, where his students included Janos Starker and conductor, Janos Ferencsik. Within the next three years, he had two sons who grew up to be quite successful [the older son is a cancer researcher, the younger a world renowned brain researcher] and his work relationship and friendship with Bela Bartok also flourished during this time. By 1930 Lajtha was going out with Bartok collecting more folk songs as a team, defining more the individual style for which Lajtha is known. Although folk songs are an influence in his works, Lajtha is clear that they are only inspiration: I am greatly attracted by the myriads of melodic principles, rhythms, structures, the

spontaneity of expression, the musical instinct that manifests itself in folk songs – without, however, wanting to use them in my works. (Claude Chamfray: “Lajtha”, Beaux-Arts 1936). Lajtha’s **Trio**, written in 1935, was originally scored for harp, flute and piano. Revised for flute, cello and harp, the piece was premiered in 1937 in London & Paris. Between 1935-1941 Lajtha wrote several chamber works with harp, one of which was a part of the soundtrack for *Murder in the Cathedral* by T. S. Eliot. Clearly evident in his works and the **Trio** are the Hungarian, French and neo-classicism influences. By 1929 Lajtha was known on the international scene thanks to his *Strings Quartet No. 3* winning the Coolidge Prize. The piece was performed all around the world and, in addition, Lajtha’s music was heard all around Europe. After World War II, however, Lajtha is banned, his music rarely heard on the radio, and only in 1961 is he reissued a passport where he gets to travel and see his family again. Lajtha soon has a series of heart attacks and dies in 1963.

About the Performers

Winner of a 2003 Avery Fisher Career Grant, flutist **Demarre McGill** has performed concerti with the Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Baltimore Symphony and Milwaukee Symphony, among others. An active chamber musician, Mr. McGill is a member of the Jacksonville, Florida based Ritz Chamber Players and has been a member of Chamber Music Society Two, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's program for emerging young artists. He has been featured on a PBS "Live From Lincoln Center" broadcast with the Chamber Music Society performing Bach's Brandenburg Concerto #2 as well as on an Angel Records CD playing Bach's Brandenburg Concerto #5 with pianist Awadagin Pratt and the St. Lawrence String Quartet. Mr. McGill has participated in the Music from Angel Fire, Santa Fe, Kingston, Cape Cod, Music@Menlo, Bay Chamber Concerts, Mainly Mozart, La Jolla and Marlboro music festivals. He has also performed on the Ravinia Festival's "Rising Star" series, the A&E Network Series "The Gifted Ones," and was special guest on the Mr. Roger's Neighborhood television program. Currently principal flutist of the San Diego Symphony, Mr. McGill has held the same position with The Florida Orchestra and the Santa Fe Opera Orchestra. He also served as acting principal flutist of the Pittsburgh Symphony during the 2005-06 season. In addition to his performance schedule, Mr. McGill is the co-founder and Artistic Director of Art of Élan, a chamber music organization in San Diego that aims to expose new audiences to classical music. Mr. McGill received his Bachelor's Degree in Flute Performance from The Curtis Institute of Music where he studied with Julius Baker and Jeffrey Khaner. He continued his studies with Mr. Baker at the Juilliard School, where he received a Masters of Music degree.

Described by the Strad Magazine as a musician whose "tonal distinction and essential musicality produced an auspicious impression", Taiwanese violist **Che-Yen Chen** (also known as "Brian Chen") 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, Jordan 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 and 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, University of California San Diego, San Diego State University, McGill University, where he taught viola and chamber music.

Principal Harpist of the San Diego Symphony, **Julie Ann Smith** is one of the most prominent young harpists today, performing as both an orchestral musician and concert artist. Gaining international recognition for her performing style and diverse repertoire, Ms. Smith was the Silver medalist winner in the 2004 USA International Harp Competition and Bronze medalist in 2001. She made her National Symphony Orchestra debut in 2003 and has been honored in numerous competitions throughout the country. She is an active recital-

ist and soloist with orchestras across the country, enchanting audiences with her dramatic presence and engaging style. Her appearances include performances with the San Diego Symphony, the New World Symphony Orchestra, the South Dakota Symphony, the West Los Angeles Symphony, the Corpus Christi Symphony Orchestra, the National Repertory Orchestra, and the Cleveland Institute of Music Orchestra. She has been the featured recitalist for the 2006 American Harp Society National Conference, the 2007 USA International Harp Competition and guest artist for the 2010 Young Artist Harp Seminar in Rabun Gap, GA. Equally experienced as a chamber and orchestral musician, Ms. Smith collaborates with renowned musicians across the country. A founding member of the San Diego-based Myriad Trio, she regularly appears in chamber concerts and festivals and has performed abroad in Italy and Japan. During the 2006-07 season she was the Acting Principal Harpist of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and prior to that held the position of Principal Harpist for the New World Symphony Orchestra. As a teacher, Ms. Smith maintains a harp studio and works with students of all ages. A trained instructor in the Suzuki method, she has served on faculty at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp and regularly gives master-classes across the county. Ms. Smith released her first album, *The Rhapsodic Harp*, which is available from her website, www.harpjas.com. Attending the Cleveland Institute of Music, she received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in harp performance where she studied with Yolanda Kondonassis. Her other primary teachers have included Alice Chalifoux and Patrice Lockhart. A native of Hastings, NE, Ms. Smith began studying the harp at age eleven.

KPBS™



 UC San Diego | Department of Music