

# camera lucida

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

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 **UC San Diego | Department of Music**



Summerfest. In 2008 he was Guest Principal Bassoon with the LA Philharmonic under Esa-Pekka Salonen, and in 2010 he was Guest Assistant Principal Bassoon with the Cincinnati Symphony under Paavo Jarvi. This coming season he has chamber music concerts at SDSU, Riverside Community College, Lake Mammoth, and at UCSD. He is on the faculty of SDSU and plays on a 1985 Heckel Biebrich.

Dear Musical Friends!

We are thrilled to be back with you for a third season of Camera Lucida! Extraordinary music lies ahead, rich and thought-provoking.

The musical journey begins with the enigmatic opening gestures of Beethoven's last string quartet. Like the uneasy stirrings of a distant memory, the viola gently tosses a falling motif into the silent space, answered by a single ornament in the violin. Beethoven bids farewell to the safe haven of Viennese classicism, and we move on into an open-ended and uncertain future, which is where we find ourselves tonight.

Over the next seven months we will hear Bach and Fauré, Brahms and Stravinsky, Mozart and Bruckner, and Janacek. The enigma of Beethoven hovers in the room over all of this music - even the music which preceded Beethoven! - and with it the enigma of chamber music, and its remarkable effect on us.

Tonight's program is a feast, a celebration - and like any great feast, it is not going to be over quickly. The Schubert Octet is nearly an hour long. The fourth movement of the Octet, a set of variations marked Andante, takes its theme from an obscure operetta of Schubert's called "The Friends from Salamanka". The theme is from a duet called, in a rough translation, "Camping under the bright canopy of the trees, near the silvery brook". Schubert's music is so often about being somewhere, staying there, in no hurry to move on, relishing and listening and reposing. The variations themselves are long, florid, full of gratuitous repetitions, breathing the satisfying air of simply continuing. At moments such as these, one might imagine Schubert's response to the urgent question posed by Beethoven: Must it be? Well, not necessarily. Let's hang out a bit first.

This is the space that chamber music offers us. In our lives full of urgent concerns, deadlines and worries, Schubert creates his bright canopy of sound, a kind of chamber of light. And we can reside there for a while, stopping and listening on our way. And it's only the fourth movement of the Octet, followed by two more! an exquisite Menuet, and a dazzling Finale.

As always, we thank Sam Ersan for the extraordinary gift which makes these concerts possible, and we thank you for sharing your presence with us at Camera Lucida!

Charles Curtis  
Artistic Director

**String Quartet in F major, opus 135** [1826]

Ludwig van Beethoven  
(1770-1827)

- I. Allegretto
- II. Vivace
- III. Assai lento, cantante e tranquillo
- IV. Der schwer gefasste Entschluss: Grave, ma non troppo tratto; Allegro

**Mládi (“Youth”)** [1924]

Leoš Janáček  
1854-1928)

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante sostenuto
- III. Vivace
- IV. Allegro animato

- intermission -

**Octet in F major D. 803, opus posthumous 1666** [1824]

Franz Schubert  
(1797-1828)

- I. Adagio; Allegro
- II. Adagio
- III. Allegro vivace
- IV. Andante (Theme and Variations)
- V. Menuetto: Allegretto
- VI. Andante molto; Allegro; Allegro molto

Jeff Thayer and Jisun Yang, violins  
Che-Yen Chen, viola  
Charles Curtis, cello  
Sam Hager, contrabass  
Demarre McGill, flute  
Andrea Overturf, oboe  
Anthony Burr and Curt Miller, clarinets  
Benjamin Jaber and Julie Thayer, horns  
Valentin Martchev, bassoon

Institute, the Pacific Music Festival, and the Marlboro Music Festival. He has also been active as a freelancer in the recording studios of Los Angeles, adding many different projects to his credit. Mr. Jaber received his training at the Interlochen Arts Academy, Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music, and the Colburn Conservatory where he was the first hornist ever to be graduated from the school. He studied with William Ver Meulen, John Zirbel, David Jolley, and Bruce Henniss.

**Julie Thayer** joined the Houston Symphony as fourth horn in the Fall of the 2009/2010 season. A native of Atlanta, Ga, Julie attended The Eastman School of Music as an undergraduate where she studied with W. Peter Kurau. It was in Rochester that Julie began playing the horn professionally, first as a substitute with the Syracuse Symphony and then as acting fourth horn of the Rochester Philharmonic. Julie continued her studies at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music as a student William VerMeulen. While at Rice, she further honed her orchestral skills while subbing with orchestras such as the Philadelphia Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony, San Diego Symphony and the Houston Grand Opera. Julie has also performed at the Kennedy Center where she was a featured artist in the first ever “Conservatory Series”, a series of concerts meant to highlight young talent from the top music schools in the country. After winning the low horn competition at the International Horn Society’s annual horn convention in Lahti, Finland in 2004, Julie began to focus her studies and auditioning on low horn. While a student, Julie participated in numerous summer festivals including Breckenridge Music Institute, National Orchestral Institute, and Music Academy of the West, where she met her violinist husband in the summer of 2003. Julie enjoys cooking, quilting, running and especially traveling; she also enjoys keeping Southwest Airlines in business with frequent trips to San Diego to visit her husband, who is currently the concertmaster of the San Diego Symphony.

**Valentin Martchev** was born in Stara Zagora, Bulgaria, and started playing the bassoon at age 10. He went to the State Academy of Music in Sofia and Duquesne University, studying with Yordan Metodiev, Tony Komitoff, and Nancy Goeres. During his student years in the states he attended the Aspen, Tanglewood, Music Academy of the West, and Marlboro Music Festivals. Valentin was a tenured member of the Bulgarian State Radio Orchestra and the Charlottesville Symphony in Virginia, where he was also on the university faculty. In 2001 Mr. Martchev joined the San Diego Symphony as their principal bassoonist. The SD Union Tribune said his 2007 performance of John Williams’ bassoon concerto “Five Sacred Trees” “.... made this bassoonist a star.” He has performed multiple times with the Charlottesville Chamber Music Festival, the Mainly Mozart Festival, and La Jolla

Anderson and many others. Ongoing projects include a duo with Icelandic bassist/composer Skúli Sverrisson, The Clarinets (a trio with Chris Speed and Oscar Noriega), a series of recordings with cellist Charles Curtis and a series of live film/music performances with experimental filmmaker Jennifer Reeves. Since 2000, he has created series of epic scale mixed media pieces, including Biospheria: An Environmental Opera (a collaboration with artist Steve Ausbury, performed in San Diego in 2001 and featured in the 2003 Cinematexas Festival); and The Mizler Society, a burlesque on early modern music theory, J.S Bach and the Art of Fugue (a collaboration with John Rodgers, presented by the Australian Art Orchestra at the Melbourne Museum in 2002 and currently being developed further). He has produced and/or engineered records for La Monte Young, Charles Curtis, Skúli Sverrisson, Ted Reichman and many others. Upcoming releases include a new Anthony Burr/Skúli Sverrisson double CD with guest vocalists Yungchen Lamo and Arto Lindsay and a recording of Morton Feldman's Clarinet and String Quartet. His primary clarinet teachers were Chicago Symphony principal Larry Combs and David Shifrin.

**Curt Miller** seeks to collaborate in the exploration of the clarinet and its repertoire with multiple generations of musicians. To this end he has premiered new chamber music by Rebecca Saunders and Lewis Nielson, worked closely with Helmut Lachenmann on performances of his solo and chamber music for clarinet, and presented numerous new works by peer composers during his time at Oberlin Conservatory. This work often extends to chamber music with electronics, including premieres at the 2009 SEAMUS National Festival and the Oberlin College Electronic Music Festival as well as masterclasses in performance with electronics by members of the Ensemble Intercontemporain and IRCAM. As a member of the Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble and new music sextet Echoi he has presented inventive programs around the United States at venues such as the Kennedy Center and Miller Theater. Also active as an orchestral musician, Curt most recently performed in the Lucerne Festival Academy Orchestra under the direction of Pierre Boulez. He currently studies with Anthony Burr in the Masters program at UCSD.

**Benjamin Jaber** has been Principal Horn of the San Diego Symphony Orchestra since May 2009, serving the same capacity since 2008 on an acting basis. He has also performed with the IRIS Orchestra, the Louisiana Philharmonic, the Houston, Richmond and New World Symphonies, and the Houston Grand Opera Orchestra. As a soloist, Mr. Jaber received first prize at the university division of the 2003 American Horn Competition and was the winner of the Aspen Music Festival's 2004 brass concerto competition. He was also a featured artist at the first-ever Conservatory Project series held at the Kennedy Center in Washington. He has spent his summers at the Aspen Festival, the National Orchestral

Listening to music invites contemplation. Music sticks to your life and to your emotions, focusing, clarifying, and fertilizing seeds sewn by daily living. This is a commonplace for which we should be thankful, but what's remarkable about these three particular invitations to reflection is that they were born in reflection, that they inhabited a contemplative space in their authorship: In Beethoven's final string quartet, Op. 135 in F Major, the composer reflects upon a style of the past by colliding it with his own radically new language; next, Janáček contemplates his early life from the age of seventy in his wind sextet, *Mladí (Youth)*; finally, we come full circle – both harmonically and topically – as Schubert, with his F Major Octet, fulfills his patron's request to reflect musically upon Beethoven's style. This is an overlooked beauty of our literate musical tradition: One person's contemplative activity, thanks to the technology of musical notation, may scaffold another reflective space, arcing over years and miles.

*Most honored Dr. Smettana! A great misfortune has happened, which Karl accidentally inflicted on himself; I hope he can still be saved, especially by you, if you will but come quickly. Karl has a bullet in his head, how, you will soon learn. Only quickly, for God's sake quickly.*

Yours respectfully, Beethoven

At last, Beethoven's style was a mess. In his professional life, he fought with commissioning princes, deceived publishers, obsessed over the minutiae of his physical and financial health, and composed by sketching onto errant scraps of paper; his dress was so unkempt that the composer's appearance once started a cattle stampede; in his personal life, the deaf and chronically sick composer could communicate with others only through "conversation books," into which interlocutors wrote to each other in journaled succession, while his apartment was a disaster area, despite the intervention of numerous paid servants and willing friends, most of whom drifted away gradually over time. The pathetic exception to this abandonment was his nephew, Karl, whose custody Beethoven won via a long and arduous battle against the young man's vilified mother and whose well-being Beethoven assailed daily with overbearing, paternal suspicion and demand. (Beethoven once accused young Karl of having stolen the manuscript copy of the "Kyrie" from his *Missa Solemnis*, only to discover it shortly thereafter, in the kitchen, wrapped around the butter.) Between his uncle's assaults and Vienna's exceptionally demanding university courses, Karl found more than enough justification to fire two bullets into his temple on July 31, 1826.

The musical style in most of Beethoven's final string quartets can be equivalently disconcerting. Compared to the composer's middle period works, the shapes of which favor an Olympian commitment to a small reservoir of compositional materials wrought in steered, coherent wholes, the late works are fractured landscapes. Jagged unisons interrupt intricate polyphonies. Traditional classical movement and phrase structures topple in favor

## The Arc of Reflection

By Jeff Treviño

**String Quartet in F major,  
opus 135**

of extended, collage-like developments, allowing traditional genres with three or four movements to distort into forms with irregular numbers of movements (in some cases two, or seven), and for a rashly improvisational agenda to dominate with a succession of juxtaposed styles, overlapping phrase boundaries, and sudden dynamic changes.

Far from the glib biographical equation proposed here, much has been made of these musical characteristics as symptoms of a late style, of a style that issues from its creator's awareness of impending mortality. Theodore Adorno explains poetically, "Touched by death, the hand of the master sets free the masses of material that he used to form; its tears and fissures, witnesses to the finite powerlessness of the I confronted with Being, are its final work." Edward Said devotes a large part of his discussion in *On Late Style* to an elaboration of Adorno's analysis, in which he heaps layers of alienation and impending catastrophe onto an ailing, aging Beethoven and the works that express his state.

With stylistic expectations from the circumstances of the composer's life – one of Karl's bullets missed, the other sent him to the hospital, and Beethoven wrote his last quartet during the two months of his nephew's recovery – from life's impending and catastrophic end, or even from the stylistic propositions of the other last string quartets, it is in this context of disarray and fragmentation that Beethoven's final string quartet, by making much more sense than the other late quartets, makes especially little sense. Compared to its immediate forerunners, it is substantially shorter. Much of its material, bafflingly, is characteristic of early classical compositions, and some phrases might even be mistaken for the work of Haydn, already considered by 1826 the grandfather of the string quartet as a genre. Far from a wild oat, the incomplete sketches for what would have been a subsequent string quartet betray a similar return to early classical economy, suggesting that this radical synthesis of the composer's late style with something definitively early may have been the composer's next artistic path. The specific ways in which Beethoven engages an earlier classical style and metabolizes it into the late language of the quartets immediately preceding Op. 135 provide a fascinating frame for listening.

Still more tangled, separating the new style from the late style, in order to more palpably differentiate old and new, causes unexpected and complicating similarities between the two poles to arise – similarities that may be precisely the reason why Beethoven took a newly referential interest in this style at such a late point in his work. Haydn's style is called the "gallant" style, for its exceptionally elegant, clear, and considerate affect. In its standard incarnation, it is the paragon of classical balance; its song-like phrases, grouped neatly in eight measure units, complement one another effortlessly. Even in its more experimental vein, in the works of C.P.E. Bach, Haydn, and Mozart, this elegant patina of style can leave even the most jarring phrase compressions and deceptive cadences with an air of calculated

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.

**Andrea Overturf** currently serves as English Horn of the San Diego Symphony, a position she previously held with The Florida Orchestra. Equally adept at the oboe, she received second prize in the 2007 International Double Reed Society Gillet-Fox Solo Oboe Competition. She has presented solo recitals throughout the United States and Asia and has appeared as guest soloist with the San Diego Symphony, Rochester Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony, and Aspen Music Festival, among others. Ms. Overturf has performed with numerous summer festivals including La Jolla Summerfest, the Mainly Mozart Festival, the Tanglewood Music Center, National Repertory Orchestra, and the Aspen Music Festival where she held the English horn fellowship for three years. As a chamber musician she has collaborated with artists such as James Conlon, Lorin Maazel, John Harbison, and James Levine, including the American stage premiere of Elliott Carter's Opera "What Next?" Ms. Overturf is the first oboist in the history of the Juilliard School to graduate from the prestigious solo-intensive Artist Diploma Program where she also received her Masters Degree. She received her Bachelors Degree from the Eastman School of Music graduating with the Performer's Certificate, the highest performance distinction awarded to undergraduates. Her principal teachers include Elaine Douvas, Pedro Diaz, Nathan Hughes, Richard Killmer, Richard Woodhams, and Rebecca Henderson. Originally from Seattle, Ms. Overturf rides and shows American Quarter Horses in her free time. For more information, please visit <http://www.andreaoverturf.com>.

**Anthony Burr** has been an assistant professor of music at the University of California, San Diego since 2007. As a clarinetist, composer and producer, he has worked across a broad spectrum of the contemporary musical landscape with groups and artists including: Alvin Lucier, Jim O'Rourke, John Zorn, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Laurie

associations have taken him to the Marlboro, Ravinia, Wolf Trap, La Jolla Summerfest and Victoria Festivals, among many others. Curtis has recorded and performed widely with soprano Kathleen Battle and harpsichordist Anthony Newman, as well as with jazz legends Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter and Brad Mehldau. He is internationally recognized as a leading performer of unique solo works created expressly for him by composers such as La Monte Young, Éliane Radigue, Alvin Lucier, Alison Knowles and Mieko Shiomi as well as rarely-heard compositions by Terry Jennings, Richard Maxfield, Cornelius Cardew, Christian Wolff, Morton Feldman and John Cage. Recent performances have taken him to the Angelica Festival in Bologna, the Guggenheim in New York, the MaerzMusik Festival in Berlin, Dundee Contemporary Arts, the Auditorium of the Musée du Louvre in Paris, the Kampnagel Fabrik in Hamburg, as well as Philadelphia, Austin, Ferrara, Chicago, the Konzerthaus Dortmund, Brooklyn's Issue Project Room and Harvard University. In the Bavarian village of Polling Curtis performs and teaches every summer at Kunst im Regenbogenstadl, a space devoted to the work of La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela. Last spring an in-depth interview with Curtis appeared on the online music journal Paris Transatlantic. Curtis is artistic director of San Diego's Camera Lucida chamber music ensemble and concert series.

**Samuel Hager** has been a double bassist with the San Diego Symphony since 2007. In addition to performing chamber music and teaching privately, Mr. Hager has played with many other orchestras in Southern California including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Long Beach Symphony and Riverside Philharmonic. Before moving to San Diego, Mr. Hager held a one year position with the Oregon Symphony. He earned his graduate degree from the University of Southern California, studying with David Moore, and his bachelor's degree from the Indiana University, in the studio of Bruce Bransby. Mr. Hager also spent six summers as a full scholarship Orchestral fellow at the Aspen Music festival.

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 No. 2 as well as on an Angel Records CD playing Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 with pianist Awadagin Pratt and the St. Lawrence String Quartet. Mr. McGill has participated in the Music from Angel Fire, Santa Fe,

arrangement; they are the exceptions that prove the rule, that reinforce the classical values of order and balance with an affect of cherished composure, even in the face of witty and irregular choice.

Haydn's contribution to the string quartet genre is especially relevant to Beethoven's last quartet, as it ventures into a kind of hypergallantry: The requirements of clear phrase demarcation restrain the material almost comically in the face of idiosyncratic construction. The basic materials of each phrase are what Leonard Ratner calls "small talk," extremely short phrases with clearly articulated, sometimes heavily accented cadences, often followed by silence. Sometimes these phrases are so short that the material of composition itself seems to be either the arrangement of a sequence of cadences, or even one's expectations regarding this sequence's arrangement, and it is here that the values of gallantry, in their maximal phase, intersect the fragmentary games of the late Beethovenian style.

Although the last quartet obviously uses "Haydnesque" materials at certain points, another clearly blurred line here is the dominance at any one point of a given style. Adorno, in his analysis of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, a composition from the same period, asserts that the piece's "alienated" affect comes primarily from its use of "archaisms." In the last quartet, though, the classical materials sound occasionally integral, and occasionally borrowed or ornamental, deployed alternatively as depths and as surfaces in a kind of stylistic instability. The same goes for typically Beethovenian gestures, which sometimes sound like commentaries attached to the classical materials.

And so we begin, in the first movement allegretto, with an ambiguous introduction that trades gallant winks with a moody Beethovenian gesture, followed by a pristine, six-bar gallant phrase, clearly in F major. The phrase's consequent shrinks this six-bar phrase into two beats and repeats it successively in various warped intervallic sizes, in bombastic unison, as if Beethoven frenetically tests the pliability of his material, destabilizing the harmonic context to resemble the introduction. What follows is a kind of warped gallant, a succession of Haydnesque phrase extensions in which strangely placed chromatic accents and harmonic instabilities propose something more like a fusion of authentic style and Beethoven's meddling compressions thereof, rather than a discourse between the two. As for the expected sonata form of the first movement, it remains more or less intact, but in a perverse way: Beethoven places an accented wrong note exactly at the expected border between the exposition and recapitulation sections, and the recapitulation, rather than a structurally significant return, feels like a formality, as though the genre has asked a codetta to bear more weight than would be customary.

**first movement**

## second movement

While the first movement proposes but leaves unconsummated a dialectical synthesis of paradigmatic gallant style and brooding Beethovenian commentary, the second movement vivace manages to fuse the two. A swift *alla breve* begins the chase, with high octaves destabilizing the meter. In Haydn, this kind of ambiguity would be cute, an eyebrow lift to be passed over in conventional flow, but instability matters in this late and catastrophic dialect: The scherzo slams headlong into an Eb unison that echoes away and halts the entirety. The development builds through key areas around F, G, and A – also the notes that make up the main pitch material of the movement’s themes – only to arrive at another kind of rut, this time in A major. Here, in one of his strangest ideas, Beethoven repeats the same measure of music almost fifty times, the first violin dancing up and down a major arpeggio throughout. Unlike the first rut, which acts like an abyss, the glorious and raw energy of this moment spins itself gradually and smoothly back into the opening scherzo. But this innovative shape skins a classical skeleton, and, in a complement to the addressed stylistic duality, the large shape of this movement is really two different musical forms: First, more traditionally, a scherzo-trio-scherzo form, in which the trio is normally more “rustic” (if the catatonic fiddling episode on A major may be called this) than its bookending scherzi, and second, a kind of dialectic form, in which the poles of stasis and directed motion fuse into a spinning, centripetal motion.

## third movement

Like the two Eb Quartets, Op. 74 and Op. 127, the unstable dynamism of the second movement balances the preternatural resolution and quietness of the third movement. Like many of Beethoven’s slower string quartet creations, there seems, at first, to be little more to notice than sublime beauty, the simple and perfect motion of four voices. Color is paramount: Just as the C major finale of Op. 59, no. 3 gains resonance from the open strings of the cello, the darkly serene key of Db major assures a muted and reflective mood for structural harmonies, while accenting with poignant brightness many of the movement’s appoggiaturas and non-chord ornaments, which occur on the instruments’ open strings. The instability of these bright ornaments creates an environment in which a theme and four variations threaten to, but do not perturb an initial peace. A first variation decorates with appoggiaturas, a second marches, a third imitates voices like a vocal motet, and a fourth returns to the appoggiatura ornaments with quick alternations between parts (hocket); like the duality of the second movement’s form, the key scheme of the movement arches a *de capo* aria, the theme and first variation heard as an A section in Db, the next variation as a B section in c# minor, and the last two variations – especially the melodic and recapitulatory third variation – as a return to A, both in the key of Db. What’s left of the first movement’s fissures do not disturb the placid surface; grotesque contortions and runs-off-cliffs have been converted into gently bowing decorations.

## fourth movement

The most enigmatic choices of all come in the fourth movement. Beethoven has titled the

Luther Adams. Recent chamber music collaborations include Ivan Chan, Steve Copes and Anne-Marie McDermott. In this upcoming year she will be performing with Orli Shaham in the Chamber Music Series for the San Diego Symphony. Festival appearances include La Jolla Music Festival, Music Academy of the West, Festival Mozaic, Encore School of Music, Spoleto Music Festival, Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, and Bowdoin Music Festival.

Taiwanese violist **Che-Yen Chen** has established himself as a prominent recitalist, chamber, and orchestral musician. Principal violist of the San Diego Symphony, he captured the first prize of the 2003 William Primrose Viola Competition and “Yuri Bashmet prize” of the 2003 Lionel Tertis Viola Competition and will be making his New York concerto debut with the New Amsterdam Symphony Orchestra as the winner of NASO Concerto Competition. He has performed throughout United States and abroad in venues such as the Alice Tully, Carnegie, Jordan, Merkin, Snape Malting Concert, Taiwan National Concert, Weill Recital, and Wigmore halls, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Library of Congress, and Kimmel Center. An advocate of chamber music, Mr. Chen is a founding member of the Formosa Quartet, was a member of Chamber Music Society Two at Lincoln Center, a Jupiter Chamber Player, and took part in Musicians from Marlboro and Musician from Ravinia tours. His festival appearances include Chamber Music International, the Aldeburgh, Bath International Music, Kingston Chamber Music, Marlboro, Primrose, and Ravinia festivals, La Jolla SummerFest, International Viola Congress, Mainly Mozart, and Taiwan Connection. Mr. Chen began studying viola at the age of six. A four-time winner of the National Viola Competition in Taiwan, he came to the United States and studied at the Curtis Institute of Music and the Juilliard School under the guidance of Michael Tree, Joseph de Pasquale, and Paul Neubauer.

Cellist **Charles Curtis** has been Professor for Contemporary Music Performance 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. He holds the Piatigorsky Prize of the New York Cello Society, and received prizes in the Naumburg, Geneva, Cassado and Viña del Mar (Chile) 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. His chamber music

## 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.

**Jisun Yang** has been the Assistant Concertmaster of the San Diego Symphony since 2005. Before coming to San Diego she was a violinist in the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra. She also held the position of Concertmaster of the Spoleto Festival and Opera Orchestra in 2003. Jisun is a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music and the Oberlin College Conservatory where she studied with David Cerone, David Updegraff, William Preucil, and Almita and Roland Vamos. Ms. Yang grew up in Chicago, Illinois and began playing violin at the age of six. In 1999 she was a recipient of a Nicolò Gagliano violin from the Stradivari Society which enabled her to appear as a soloist and chamber musician all over the United States and Europe. She has been a finalist in many competitions including the Carl Nielsen International Violin competition held in New York City. The performance, held at Merkin Hall, was broadcast live on National Public Radio. She has also won numerous competitions including the Cleveland Institute of Music Concerto Competition (2002), The American Opera Society (1997), American String Teacher's Association Competition (1996), G.D. Searle National String Competition (1996), and the Chicago Institute of Music Concerto Competition (1995). While being Concertmaster of the Oberlin Contemporary Ensemble, her quartet recorded a CD premiering "White Silence" for quartet and orchestra by John

movement, "The Difficult Resolution." In the movement's notation, under its first motive, an ambiguously chromatic lift up, the composer has written, "Must it be?," and under the piece's second motive, a sing-song response in clear key, "It must be." Scholars have hazarded various explanations that link these words to the composer's life. They run the gamut from Karl's suicide to Beethoven's business negotiations. Author Milan Kundera even made the puzzling appellations the main theme of his fifth novel, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984). All of it is postulation. It can at least be said that Beethoven's musical settings of these labels makes sense in a general way: The initially low scoring of the "Must it be?" motive links it to the fragmented, unison commentaries of the first movements, even to the first Eb rut in the second movement. Its exposition twists the composition's first gallant cadence into stabbing shrieks so forceful they must be followed by silence and reattempted, only to become still more dissonant.

"It must be," the consequent, sunny gesture of the two, develops toward the affect of its question throughout the movement. In approach to the roughly-sonata-shaped movement's coda, this naïve gesture bends into strange key areas, and, via three successive restatements that end with fermatas – as though the answer had become a new question – the theme finds itself in eb minor, the catastrophic note of the second movement's rut. In one last enigma, a cloying, unbearably light codetta of pizzicati, improvisationally reverses and dismisses any accumulated gravity with a flick of the wrist.

"He was Age masquerading as Juvenility, and doing it so badly that his real self showed through crevices. A ground swell from ancient years of night seemed now and then to lift the child in this his morning-life, when his face took a back view over some great Atlantic of Time, and appeared not to care about what it saw. When the other travelers closed their eyes, which they did one by one — even the kitten curling itself up in the basket, weary of its too circumscribed play — the play remained just as before. He then seemed to be doubly awake, like an enslaved and dwarfed Divinity, sitting passive and regarding his companions as if he saw their whole rounded lives rather than their immediate figures." Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*

Unlike Bartók, who gained international fame sometime in his forties, Janáček didn't see widespread recognition until his late sixties. He wrote the wind sextet *Mládí* (*Youth*) (1924, flute/piccolo, oboe, French horn, clarinet, bass clarinet, and bassoon) several months before his seventieth birthday. Besides nostalgia, or the possibility that increased professional recognition lead the composer to feel newly young, a long friendship may also have been a youthful influence: As documented in over seven hundred letters from Janáček between 1917 and 1927, he was in love with Kamila Stösslová, the wife of an antiques dealer who he had met on vacation in 1917; when they met, she was 26 and Janáček was 62.

**Mládí ("Youth")**

Despite frequent visits between the Janáček and the Stössels during this time, she kept him at arms length through this lengthy correspondence. Janáček responded with a gorgeous sublimation, his string quartet, *Intimate Letters* (to be performed this season on Monday, April 11).

When understood in its historic context, Janáček's style appears more remarkable for its omissions rather than its inclusions. Although aware of various systemic and technological propositions afoot during the 1920s, Janáček partook of neither the serial techniques of the Second Viennese School nor the tone cluster antics of internationally famous composers like Henry Cowell. Despite the absence of these exported innovations, the composer's style is not without exploration. Janáček's inventive forms and highly idiosyncratic use of dissonance, for example, reveal a searching musical mind, and other works of this period demonstrate an penchant for unintelligibility: His *Glagolitic Mass* of the same period is set entirely in an ancient, unspoken language.

Nostalgia, reflection, and play build the musical language of *Mládí*. Like a child plays with a toy, the music organizes the simple repetition of motivic statements. Especially between the program's other compositions, one feels the absence of typically continental Strive in favor of a modal, object-like disposition. The music is about what themes are, not how they change. They do change, but in a casual way: It happens here. It happens another place, with another harmonization. The succession reminds one of a childhood willingness to play a game all day, the endless enjoyment of moving a plaything to a new context, only to act out exactly what happened before and watch it take on a new light. The composition wears its immaturity unapologetically on its sleeve, juxtaposing it with the reveries of late life in unexpected, intruding commentary, issued appropriately by the French horn, the sole brass instrument in the ensemble and the traditional musical symbol of reveries pastoral and otherwise.

There is ultimately a kind of development, though, although it finds itself more in attention rather than the music itself, much like watching a group of people playing a game, the rules to which are unknown. A feeling of distance gradually decreases with time, as a memory may become vivid again if focused upon. This musical logic is not the logic of talking or of argument; it is the logic of reflection.

### Octet in F major D. 803

"Beethoven's music goads people to madness instead of dissolving them in love."

—Franz Schubert, age 19, 1816

"To Ludwig van Beethoven, by his Worshipper and Admirer, Franz Schubert."

—dedication to op. 10, 1822.

It's nothing new for a young composer to oust the old guard in a pithy opposition, but Schubert's early dislike of Beethoven's music was, at the time, also more widely popular: Beethoven was associated politically with a bygone, Napoleonic era, and his music went correspondingly out of fashion. So Schubert set off on a course of dissolving his listeners in love, cultivating for several years a sophisticated, entertaining style that was adventurous but not expressionistically jarring. Six years later, however, Schubert had rediscovered Beethoven's compositions and had begun to integrate his observations into his own style. The 1824 octet is a special case, as patron-clarinetist Ferdinand Troyer asked Schubert explicitly for a work similar to Beethoven's op. 20 (septet).

In the context of the evening's program, the compositional task of the octet bears notable similarity to that of Beethoven's last string quartet. As in the string quartet, the composer engages the materials and developmental ideas of an admired forebear; however, the experienced results of the two stylistic amalgams could not be further from one another: Whereas Beethoven distorts, wastes, discards, mocks, and collages Haydn's materials with an improvisational and fragmented confusion of style, Schubert keeps his stylistic identity intact while paying occasional homage, decorating his style with Beethovenisms rather than lending them a substantial enough narrative force to challenge or destroy the normal arrangement of his rhetoric. There is a palpable dissonance between the form and scale of the piece, on the one hand, and the Schubertian materials within them on the other. At first, the musical materials seem to acknowledge an ambitious, multi-movement undertaking by sustaining a wide interval, within which appear the first string figurations. But one is left finally with an affect more of humble entertainment rather than of transcendent, epic journey. Schubert composed several (failed) operas around this time, borrowing freely from them for his instrumental writing, and much of the music interacts vocally, conversationally according to each instrument's comportment, whether hunting horn or melancholy clarinet.

Perhaps again the legacy of Haydn's hypergallantry, one of the piece's Beethovenian experiments is with the relationship between interrupted cadences and musical form. In the first movement, a long clarinet note sustains through an otherwise final cadence, breaching a shadow world and recapitulating the previous material in a much less stable tonal area. The second movement loses course in plummeting chromatic descent and must be recovered by a naked violin. In the sixth, the final chords of cadences simply fail to sound. The music just stops. As in the first movement, the consequence is tonal destabilization. These experiments tend to occur in the outer movements, with a more traditionally agreeable Schubert at his entertaining best in the inner movements, lively and vocal. Although firmly within Schubert's style, the whole composition shapes an arc, framing rhetorical experiment over the center movements' joyous song and dance.

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