

upcoming concerts

may 14 (tuesday)

mozart: string quintet in b-flat k. 174
bach: brandenburg concerto no. 5
beethoven: quartet in a minor, opus 132

artistic director - charles curtis
executive coordinator - colin mcallister
program notes - charles cross
recording engineer - tom erbe
production - jessica flores

tonight's concert will be broadcast saturday, april 13th at 9 pm on
kpbs-fm 89.5 or streaming at kpbs.org

for more information:
<http://www.cameralucidachambermusic.org>

we now have an official camera lucida kpbs email address for
listener questions or comments!
cameralucida@kpbs.org

Taiwanese-American violist **Che-Yen Chen** has established himself as an active performer and educator. He is a founding member of the Formosa Quartet, recipient of the First-Prize and the Amadeus Prize winner of the 10th London International String Quartet Competition. Since winning the First-Prize in the 2003 William Primrose International Viola Competition and the "President Prize" of the Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition, Chen has been described by the Strad Magazine as a musician whose "tonal distinction and essential musicality produced an auspicious impression" and by San Diego Union Tribune as an artist whose "most impressive aspect of his playing was his ability to find not just the subtle emotion, but the humanity hidden in the music." Principal violist of the San Diego Symphony and Mainly Mozart Festival Orchestra, Chen has appeared as guest principal violist with Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra. Summer of 2013 will commence the inaugural year for the Formosa Quartet's Formosa Chamber Music Festival in Taiwan.

Gareth Zehngut joined the viola section of the San Diego Symphony in the fall of 2007. He earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees at the Juilliard School, studying with Heidi Castleman, Hsin-Yun Huang, Misha Amory and Steven Tenenbom. Zehngut has served as principal violist of the Festival Mozaic Orchestra and the California Chamber Orchestra and has also performed with the Mainly Mozart Festival Orchestra. One of the founding members of the Busoni String Quartet, Zehngut is also an avid chamber musician. He has performed at Carnegie Hall's Weill Hall, Alice Tully Hall, the Kennedy Center, Hearst Castle, in venues across Europe and is a frequent performer on the San Diego Symphony's chamber music series. Zehngut was recently appointed to the faculty of the Luzerne Music Center, where he will teach and perform this summer.

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. Curtis is artistic director of San Diego's Camera Lucida chamber music ensemble and concert series.

Turkish pianist **Özgür Aydin** made his major orchestral debut in 1997 in a performance of Brahms' Piano Concerto No.1 in D minor with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra. In the same year, he won the renowned ARD International Music Competition in Munich and the Nippon Music Award in Tokyo – recognition that has since served as the basis for an active and diverse international performing career. Mr. Aydin has appeared as soloist with numerous orchestras in Germany and Turkey, as well as with the BBC Concert Orchestra London, the Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela, Slovak State Philharmonic and Canada's Calgary Philharmonic. Frequently invited to summer music festivals, he has appeared at Salzburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Rheingau, Ravinia and Edinburgh. Born in Colorado to Turkish parents, Mr. Aydin began his music studies at the Ankara Conservatory in Turkey. He subsequently studied with Peter Katin at the Royal College of Music in London and with Karl-Heinz Kammerling at the Hanover Music Academy. Özgür Aydin lives in Berlin. His website is ozguraydin.com



 UC San Diego | Department of Music



camera lucida

chamber music concerts at uc san diego

2012-2013 season

sponsored by the sam b. ersan chamber music fund

wednesday, april third
two thousand and thirteen
7:30pm

Ten Variations on Wenzel Müller's Song Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
"Ich bin der Schneider Kakadu", Opus 121a

Introduzione: Adagio assai
Thema: Allegretto
Adagio espressivo; Presto

Quintet for Strings in C minor, K. 406 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-91)

Allegro
Andante
Menuetto in canone; Trio in canone al roverscio
Allegro

intermission

Quartet for Piano and Strings in C minor, Opus 15 Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Allegro molto moderato
Scherzo: Allegro vivo
Adagio
Allegro Molto

Jeff Thayer, violin
Meri Englund, violin
Che-Yen Chen, viola
Gareth Zehngut, viola
Charles Curtis, cello
Özgür Aydin, piano

Leave it to Beethoven. Who else would have dreamed up the seriocomic trick of encasing the trifling theme of Wenzel Müller’s absurdly-titled song “I am the Tailor Cockatoo” in the magnificent, vaulted architecture of these G-minor variations? To find parallels one must leap forward to the juxtapositions of affect found in Gustav Mahler - the tragic and the absurd, death and burlesque - or to the realism of Georges Bizet, mixing the quotidian and the crude with elements of genuine pathos. But in these later cases a *Zeitgeist* had emerged through the psychological reverberations of the Romantic era that supported the concept of a fractured or fragmentary reality; and the path forward from Mahler to Expressionism, Surrealism and the dream accounts of Franz Kafka is clear. But in the case of Beethoven we are without precedents or comparisons. We must ascribe Beethoven’s bizarre gesture to personal attributes: insolence, mischievousness, perhaps even a desire to taunt or tease.

Wenzel Müller, 1824

Wenzel Müller’s *Singspiel* “Die Schwestern von Prag” is of course long forgotten, as is the waltz of Diabelli apart from Beethoven’s setting of it in the similarly grandiose surroundings of the Diabelli Variations. A typical Rococo marriage farce replete with scheming servants, cross-dressing and mistaken identities, “Die Schwestern von Prag” might have been, in the 1790s, something like a Broadway musical of middling success. The dating of Beethoven’s variations is uncertain. An original draft seems to reach back to 1798, just a few years after Müller’s musical had run at the *Theater in der Leopoldstadt*. The variations were only published, however, in 1824, receiving the opus number 121a, tucked in between the Diabelli Variations (opus 120) and the Missa Solemnis (opus 123). It is probable that Beethoven thoroughly reworked the piece before publication, as it bears unmistakable traces of late period contrapuntal techniques; and the sheer heft of the work could not possibly have been conceived by Beethoven in 1798. The Adagio introduction takes up a full third of the work’s length; its ponderous, leaden progressions prefigure the rising scale of the song-theme, but in the minor key and hindered by seemingly arbitrary *sforzandi*. The final variation plunges into fugal material and a massive coda that are out of all proportion to the dimensions or expressive weight of the humble theme. New for the genre of piano trio in its historical evolution is the notion of an extended single-movement form; in the “Kakadu” variations, the form is enlarged with a solo variation each for piano, violin and cello, and of course the incommensurately long introduction and coda.

The Tailor Cockatoo, 1824

The little aria itself, as it appears in Müller’s musical play, is sung by Krispin, manservant to one of the suitors of the heroine Wilhelmine. It is a curiosity with odd and eerie historical overtones. The tailor recounts his travels to revolutionary France, where he is asked by a menacing stranger if he is an aristocrat. No, Krispin replies, “nor am I a democrat. / I am a human, who eats and drinks / and calmly wields his needle; / in brief, you old donkey you / I am the tailor Cockatoo!” Whereupon the crowd takes Krispin captive, chains him in a field, and punishes him with fifty lashes daily, until he inexplicably escapes and returns to the German *Vaterland*. Whether we can conceive of Beethoven identifying with the character of this simple man, who eats and drinks and goes about his business without concern for larger ideas, is an open question. This tiny subsidiary narrative of revolutionary Europe buried in the text of a melody that could hardly sound less dramatic is perhaps the kernel of irony which Beethoven explodes in his own setting of exaggerated drama and momentousness.

The Tailor Cockatoo, 1824

Another informal narrative adheres to the story of the tailor. In the conversations which his friend Natalie Bauer-Lechner recorded and later published, Gustav Mahler recounts a childhood habit of making up programmatic descriptions for musical works. The “Schneider Kakadu”, in his childhood fantasy of Beethoven’s variations, endures the travails of a humble working life, and receives at life’s end a parody funeral of unexpected pomp. The lesson, as Bauer-Lechner quotes Mahler as explaining, was: “Now this poor beggar is the same as any king!”

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There is no irony whatsoever in the tragic cast of Mozart’s C-minor Wind Serenade, which we behold tonight in Mozart’s own arrangement for viola quintet. The original serenade is listed as Köchel-Verzeichnis 388, and is presumed to have been composed in 1782, the year in which Emperor Joseph appointed a full wind octet - a so-called *kaiserliche Harmonie* - to his court in Vienna. In its reincarnation as viola quintet, the Serenade takes

the Köchel-Verzeichnis 406, and is no longer called a serenade. There is little to justify its denomination as serenade even in the wind octet version; it is lacking a second menuet, a second slow movement and a march, all typical earmarks of the classical serenade; and the music is very far from the spirit of amiable outdoor entertainment and endearment which is the serenade’s usual métier. It is more a small symphony for wind instruments. All the same, one thrills to the imagined sound of this music in the outdoors, the gruff and steely attacks and arching phrases of sustaining winds, the bagpipe-like plaints and martial *staccati*. This outdoor setting seems the only link to the tradition of the serenade. Translated to the sweeter and more yielding sounds of the string quintet the music turns less austere; the attendant effects of vibrato and the audible brushings of the bows, the gentle swelling and releasing of sound that is the natural pulsation of up-bow and down-bow, gives this explosive work a quality of yearning and even consolation that the eight wind instruments utterly rebuff.

Mozart, 1782

We are in the presence of an august funeral music, the subject unknown. Where the G-minor Quintet, K. 516, enters a private world of internalized despair, Mozart’s works in C-minor seem to frame a more public observation of grief, inspiring awe. The blockiness of the writing is its appropriate hardness of outline: the marble walls of a sepulchre. A short and relentlessly repeated jabbing figure - three short notes, one long - in the development of the first movement in fact points the way to the Fifth Symphony of Beethoven, also in C minor. The comparatively brief Andante is set in E-flat major; it is a poignant devotion, warming to an extraordinary statement of the theme in the low strings at the midpoint in A-flat major, lightening again as the tonic key returns. The unusual *Menuetto in canone* hovers between a stately dance movement and an exercise in very sophisticated Bachian polyphony, an unexpected combination. The charged theme is an upward-surging semitone, making it easy to follow the sequence of *dux* and *comes* as the canon advances. Even more striking is the *Trio in canone al roverscio*, in this case meaning that the rising fourth of the canonic figure is answered by a falling fifth: each successive interval of the subject is “reversed” when repeated by inverting the direction of the melody from up to down and from down to up. Such display pieces of contrapuntal mastery are not meant to dazzle or draw attention to the cleverness of their fashioner; rather they underpin the almost cult-like seriousness of whatever occasion this music was meant to memorialize, and the ritualized and arcane formality of its expression.

Mozart, 1782

The Finale again points forward to Beethoven, in particular to the Finale of the C-minor String Quartet, Opus 18 No. 4. In a quick double meter, this powerful theme with eight variations races forward with a vehemence that even the young Beethoven could not equal. A masterful interlude has the theme suspended over the bar lines in a chain of syncopations, like the Fourth Species of Renaissance counterpoint, as the accompanying instruments perforate the suspended fabric of tied-over notes with soft strong-beat stabs. The final variation emerges into a glorious frenzy of C-major, the conventions of classical form being such that a work of tragic drama was not considered truly completed until the minor key had been “resolved” in its parallel major. But in the original Wind Serenade, Mozart clings to the austerity of the setting by leaving the third out of the final chord - it is a hollow piling up of eight C’s in unisons and octaves.

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Fauré’s first Piano Quartet is one of a handful of early works - the others being the *Ballade* for solo piano and the famous A-major Violin Sonata - which must be considered his first masterpieces. Fauré was in his mid-thirties, laboriously carving out for himself a career as composer of “pure” instrumental music, achieving some success in the Parisian salons of the 1870s, earning his keep as organist and choir master at churches such as Saint-Sulpice and L’église de la Madeleine. His former teacher, Saint-Saëns, maintained his own popular salon to which Fauré was a regular visitor; and Saint-Saëns introduced Fauré into the highly desirable salon of the singer Pauline Viardot in 1872. Many of Fauré’s early works were premiered in the Viardot home; the Violin Sonata, for example, is dedicated to Paul Viardot, Pauline’s son, who gave the first performance together with Fauré. In 1877, Fauré became engaged to Marianne Viardot, the singer’s daughter, after having been in love with her for five years; but the engagement was broken off by the young lady after only a few months. Perhaps partly to distract himself from this disappointment, Fauré embarked on a series of musical travels, visiting Liszt in Weimar in December of 1877, and traveling to various cities

to hear the operas of Wagner.

Fauré, 1877

Almost all of the French composers of Fauré’s generation were trained in the traditions of Roman Catholic church music; most were accomplished organists. Thus it is not surprising to hear some of the acoustical voluminousness and massiveness of the sacred spaces mimicked in chamber music. The lightness and transparency that we associate with the French chanson, or with much of the music of Satie and Debussy, is only one aspect of the tradition. Let us not forget the sonic extravagances of Berlioz; and while Fauré is justifiably celebrated for his exquisitely delicate Requiem, he is also the composer of *Prométhée*, a lyric drama for three wind bands, 100 strings, 12 harps, chorus and soloists, intended to be performed in an amphitheater. He could go either way; and the Piano Quartet in C-minor puts both sides on ample display.

Fauré, 1877

The opening movement seems to evoke Brahms in its roiling pentatonic disquiet; in fact, it is striking that Brahms and Fauré were at work on C-minor piano quartets at nearly the same time. But the comparison quickly breaks down, as a distinctly Fauréan piquancy of harmony and voicing emerges already at the end of the first long phrase: hints of modality mixed with an ambiguous chromaticism, a qualitative “in-betweenness” which will become the prized feature of progressive French music by the end of the century. A meandering character marks the second theme, a filigree of descending scales passed between instruments; in German music, such a passage would hardly have been granted the status of a theme. Fauré alternates between music that departs noticeably from the Germanic models, and moments in which he returns to the fold. Certain of his departures are highly original, and others in this early work suggest Slavic influences, calling to mind his exact contemporaries Dvorak and Tchaikovsky. The Scherzo movement, for instance, might pass for a ballet number in *Swan Lake*, composed only very shortly before our Piano Quartet. The Trio section, however, might allude to the opera *Carmen*, premiered in 1875: the piano strums atmospheric guitar-like arpeggios as the strings hum a languid and sensuous melody, *con sordino*. The slow movement might be the most vivid harbinger of Fauré’s mature style. Hushed yet impassioned, we have here that inimitable joining of emotional restraint and deep *Empfindung* which, while the techniques are uniquely Fauré’s, might take its temperamental cues from early Romantics like Schumann and Chopin. The Finale is a dance and a *moto perpetuo*, taking turns at fast triplet figures and propulsive dotted rhythms. Almost all of the motifs rise in pitch, ascending again and again, until the closing unison scales bring us back downward to earth, elated and exhausted.

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Violinist **Jeff Thayer** is currently the concertmaster of the San Diego Symphony as well as concertmaster and faculty member of the Music Academy of the West (Santa Barbara). He is a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music, the Eastman School of Music, and the Juilliard School’s Pre-College Division. 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. Through a generous loan from Irwin and Joan Jacobs and the Jacobs’ Family Trust, Mr. Thayer plays on the 1708 “Sir Bagshawe” Stradivarius.

Meri Englund, 2003

Meri Englund has served as concertmaster of Tapiola Sinfonietta since 2003. She has also worked as concertmaster for the Finnish Radio Orchestra and is a member of the Finnish Chamber Orchestra. Throughout her successful career as chamber musician, soloist and concertmaster she has established herself as a respected and versatile musician in Finland and worldwide. In a career spanning over a decade, she’s had the privilege to perform with some world-renowned musicians including Ana Chumachenko, Tabea Zimmermann, Ralf Gothóni, Olli Mustonen and Pekka Kuusisto. Future engagements for the coming year include chamber music concerts and solo performances in the United States, China, Hong Kong and Finland.