

upcoming concerts

march 4 (monday)

brahms: piano quartet in g minor, opus 25
brahms: piano quartet in a major, opus 26

april 3 (wednesday)

beethoven: variations for piano trio on "ich bin der schneider kakadu"
mozart: string quintet k. 406 in c minor
faure: piano quartet in c minor

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, february 2nd at 9 pm on
kpbs-fm 89.5 or streaming at [kpbs.org](http://www.kpbs.org)

for more information:

<http://www.cameralucidachambermusic.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. He is a member of Camera Lucida, Concertante Chamber Players and The Myriad Trio, which just released its debut album "The Eye of Night". Summer of 2013 will commence the inaugural year for the Formosa Quartet's Formosa Chamber Music Festival in Taiwan.

Born in Brussels, Belgian violist **Dimitri Murrath** has made his mark as a viola soloist on the international scene, performing regularly in venues including Jordan Hall, Kennedy Center, Wigmore Hall, Purcell Room and Royal Festival Hall (London), Kioi Hall (Tokyo), the National Auditorium (Madrid), Théâtre de la ville (Paris), and Palais des Beaux Arts (Brussels). Mr. Murrath has won numerous awards, including First Prize at the Primrose Viola Competition and Second Prize at the Tokyo International Viola Competition. Festivals include Ravinia's Steans Institute for Young Artists, Verbier Festival Academy, Caramoor, and Marlboro Music Festival. Mr. Murrath studied with Natalia Boyarsky at the Yehudi Menuhin School, David Takeno in London and with Kim Kashkashian for an Artist Diploma at New England Conservatory. He is now on the viola faculty of NEC and Longy School of Music.

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

Reiko Uchida was born in Torrance, California and is a graduate of the Curtis Institute, Mannes College of Music, and the Juilliard School. Her recording String Poetic with Jennifer Koh, was nominated for a 2008 Grammy Award. She has performed concertos with the LA Philharmonic, and the Santa Fe, Greenwich, and Princeton symphonies. As a chamber musician, she has played at the Marlboro, Santa Fe, Tanglewood and Spoleto music festivals and has collaborated with Anne Akiko Meyers, Thomas Meglioranza, Sharon Robinson, Jaime Laredo, as well as the Borromeo, St. Lawrence and Tokyo string quartets. As a youngster, she performed on The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson. She is a past member of Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center Two and studied with Claude Frank, Leon Fleisher, Edward Aldwell, Sophia Rosoff and Margo Garrett. Ms. Uchida currently lives in New York City where she is an associate faculty member at Columbia University.

camera lucida

chamber music concerts at uc san diego

2012-2013 season

sponsored by the sam b. ersan chamber music fund

tuesday january fifteenth
two thousand and thirteen
7:30pm

Trio in E-flat major, WoO 38 [1790-91]

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Allegro moderato
Scherzo: Allegro ma non troppo
Rondo: Allegretto

Piano Quartet [1892-93]

Guillaume Lekeu (1870-1894)

Dans un emportement douloureux - Très animé
Lent et passioné

intermission

Quintet for Strings in E-flat major, K. 614 [1791]

W. A. Mozart (1756-1791)

Allegro di Molto
Andante
Menuetto: Allegretto - Trio
Finale: Allegro

Jeff Thayer, violin
Yeh Shen, violin
Che-Yen Chen, viola
Dimitri Murrath, viola
Charles Curtis, cello
Reiko Uchida, piano



UC San Diego | Department of Music



Tonight’s program lays out a curious network of correspondences and influences, direct and indirect. The very young Beethoven, before moving to Vienna but after meeting Haydn, composes in 1791 a modest Piano Trio in E-flat major; in the very same year, Mozart completes his last work of chamber music, the sublime Viola Quintet K. 614, likewise in E-flat major. By the time Beethoven arrives in Vienna in 1792, Mozart has died; Beethoven’s sponsor, Count Waldstein, either as prediction or as command, declares that Beethoven will “receive the spirit of Mozart through Haydn’s hands.” Almost exactly one century later, the very young Belgian Guillaume Lekeu is at work on a Piano Quartet that is anything but modest: the music is ambitious beyond the bounds of the achievable. The 24-year-old succumbs to typhus before completing the second movement, and leaves an unfinished masterpiece of stunning maturity and sophistication. It is said that Lekeu always carried the scores to the late Beethoven quartets with him; and it is to Beethoven that we trace the notion of a work of music explicitly seeking to encompass and enunciate the psychic and emotional world of its creator. Thus it is Beethoven’s spirit which Lekeu has received, through the hands of Franck, Chausson and D’Indy, the Franco-Belgian Wagnerians; for let us not forget that Wagner began his formal music lessons in the very year of Beethoven’s death, and considered himself a lifelong disciple of Beethoven.

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The curious acronym “WoO” stands for “*Werke ohne Opuszahl*” or “Works Without Opus”, and designates that part of Beethoven’s output either prior to Opus 1, or to which Beethoven did not attach sufficient importance for an opus number. There are over 200 such works, and while this sounds like an enormous number, many of them are short occasional pieces, marches and dances and the like. The Piano Trio WoO 38 however is a fully elaborated three-movement work perhaps calculated to impress Haydn, his teacher-to-be. The piano has the dominant role; this early approach to the piano trio more resembles a kind of piano concerto in miniature, with violin doubling and echoing the piano, and cello providing rhythmic emphasis and a tonal cushion, not the fully evolved play of equals that we know from the later Beethoven and Schubert. The strings provide a sort of amplification and spatialization of the piano. But there are hints already in this trio of what is to come: the cello is often placed in an uncharacteristically high register, standing out with something like a cantilena role; and the contrapuntal interplay between all instruments, especially in the Finale, seems a demonstration of incipient skills.

The role of the composer in the late eighteenth century was that of a servant and a household craftsman. Haydn was required to wear livery as employee of the Esterhazy family; until 1779, all of Haydn’s compositions were legally the property of his employers. Originality was only valued insofar as it provided surprise and delight; personal expression, the staging of the composer’s own inner feelings in his music, had no specific function in this interaction. It is only very slowly, through the later works of Haydn and Mozart, that the personal began to emerge as an aesthetic value. Against this perspective, it is fascinating to observe a youthful work of Beethoven sitting uncomfortably between *use value*, chamber music as a pleasing product directed at a presumed recipient, and *pure expressive value*, the person of Beethoven as individualistic, creative genius. Naturally the two values are not mutually exclusive, and some part of each resides in all of his music. But a work like WoO 38 may show us, in its modesty and rather awkward striving toward mastery, both the starting point of this remarkable evolution, and the first sproutings of what would blossom into stunningly advanced works in the same genre such as his two Opus 70 trios and the “Archduke” Trio, Opus 97, of only twenty years later.

So we are hearing a minor work of Beethoven; but let us put the emphasis on *Beethoven*, as much as on *minor work*. In a cultural climate overstuffed with superlatives and fetishized masterpieces, let us delight in a work that shows the composer most burdened as the personification of “masterpiece” at an interesting, pre-masterful point in his development. After all, he was a a young man from the German provinces before he was a genius; paradoxically, honoring his youthful strivings may reveal more of the *person* than the exclusive focus on his programmatically *personal* later achievements.

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It could be that illness and pre-knowledge of an early death accelerated Lekeu’s artistic development. Otherwise it is hard to account for the range of expression and profundity of a work like the Piano Quartet. And this quite apart from the highly advanced harmonic style. Or perhaps the two domains are not so separate. Perhaps the existential urgency that drives the overt emotionalism of the music likewise urges on the young composer to seek unheard harmonies, unanticipated modulations, startling dissonances. A reaching beyond his temporal frame, beyond the present-historical context of harmony and form as laid forth by his teacher César Franck, Lekeu’s harmonic language anticipates the subtle shifts and floating perspective of the late Fauré by a good twenty years. The chromaticism is more tangled than *Verklärte Nacht*, or than comparable works of Zemlinsky and Reger. The density of Rachmaninoff is there, not as specifically pianistic but equally ornate. Yet the music remains fully convincing, never complex for the sake of complexity. One thrills to the image of this fraught, sensitive 24-year-old discovering a music utterly his own, moulding and sculpting it, revelling in it, living in it, finally going to his rest in it.

Elements are familiar from the French tradition of organ music, that of Franck or Widor or even jumping forward to Messiaen. A massiveness is there, a sense of sound that is equal to the dimensions of the Romanesque cathedrals, that is designed to expand and fill every last crevice, reverberating from the highest vaultings of arched passageways down to the tiniest flutings of voluted columns. Ostinati lay down a colossal ground work that we must immediately confront; extremely striking unison passages between the strings create timbral densities that stand out against the otherwise florid voice leading.

Ultimately we must hear the first movement as a kind of tone poem in chamber music; and here too, Lekeu is years ahead of Schoenberg. Somewhere in the torrent of sound, sonata form must be lurking, but it has become irrelevant. Where Schumann innovated with the short character piece in chamber music, Lekeu may be the first to make of chamber music the site of an extended single-movement, self-contained dramatic work. In this respect the Piano Quartet does not feel unfinished; still one wonders what its dimensions might have been had the last two movements been completed. But they were not, and like Schubert before him and Bruckner after him, Lekeu’s unfinished work breaks off with a touchingly muted, serene slow movement, hinting at a lullaby, a coming to rest followed by nothing but silence.

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One could argue that Mozart received the spirit of Mozart through Haydn’s hands. At any rate the spirit of his chamber music. For it was Haydn who had discovered the dramatic potential of chamber music, who had made the move from a diversionary or background form, one that was meant to take up time and set a mood for conviviality without drawing attention to itself, to a fully engaged and engaging theatre of sounds; not reliant on text, but conveying a kindred spirit of conversation, argument, intrigue, conspiracy, tension and resolution. The starting point for this shift can be clearly dated to Haydn’s so-called “Sun Quartets”, Opus 20, of 1772. It is not coincidental that Mozart’s first attempt at a string quintet follows fairly directly upon his encounter with Haydn’s Opus 20; the 17-year-old Mozart had first worked through a set of six string quartets (K. 168-173) in which he idealistically strove to assimilate the enormous impact Haydn’s Opus 20 had had on him. Immediately following that set, the much more successful String Quintet K. 174 was born, let us say spontaneously, the added middle voice perhaps granting Mozart the dimension needed to liberate him from his model. With this work the cornerstone was laid for the series of extraordinary string quintets which Charles Rosen calls “... by common consent Mozart’s greatest achievement in chamber music...”

But Haydn’s role as godparent of Mozart’s chamber music does not by any means stop there. Time and again Mozart would turn to the string quartet in response to new and energizing work of Haydn’s, sometimes in emulation and sometimes in tribute to the elder composer (as in the six quartets dedicated to Haydn). Often such prolonged engagement with the quartet form would prompt the addition of one more viola, resulting in new quintets. The viola was Mozart’s preferred instrument as a player; and a unique feature of his art is the miraculous embroidery of inner voices that lends his music its integral richness - a splendor of voice leading that had not been present in European music since Bach.

Of all the string quintets, the last of them, K. 614, is most clearly recognizable as a tribute to Haydn. Some of the themes can be derived from themes of his; the compactness of form, so strikingly different from the enormous scale of the previous quintets (especially the C major, K. 515) is Haydn’s. Not only in its longitudinal unfolding but also in its vertical structuring of voices this quintet reveals a perfect balancing of components, interlocking at every instant, fully functioning. There is no padding here. The opening features a kind of hunting horn call from the two violas, the trills evoking tremulous pleasure and anticipation. The second theme, only slightly more languid, lingers imperceptibly over a repeated-note figure with a nervous ornamental turn; this very turn reappears in an eloquent and impassioned exchange at the end of the slow movement as a concluding figure. The slow movement lays out a stately Andante, apparently spare and open at first, filled in little by little with ever-increasing decorative content, always of a directly expressive nature. The Menuetto echoes exactly the entrance of the violins from the first movement - another compactness observable in this work, the cross-referencing of themes from movement to movement. In the Trio section, a rustic bass drone on e-flat supports the wistful, melancholic meanderings of the high instruments, interweaving one another seamlessly. The Finale is very close to an *alla zingarese* gypsy movement, such as the Finale of the famous “Gypsy” Trio of Haydn; garlands of sixteenth notes in a dashing 2/4 meter gallop over a landscape captured in the ultra-sharp focus of contrapuntal detail.

Thus we may even have here the spirit of Haydn through Mozart’s hands; but finally it is the spirit of the dawning of the nineteenth century just before the sun breaks the line of the horizon. As Beethoven did in his final work, the String Quartet Opus 135, Mozart here looks back at Haydn; but he sees him in a panorama of his own devising. It is the perfect gift to the older master - not an imitation, but a dream image that ushers the past into the future.

about the performers

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). 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, Dorothy DeLay, and James Lyon. He has appeared as soloist with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the San Diego Symphony, the Jupiter Symphony, the North Carolina Symphony, the Canton Symphony Orchestra, the Pierre Monteux School Festival Orchestra, the Spartanburg Philharmonic, the Cleveland Institute of Music Symphony Orchestra, The Music Academy of the West Festival Orchestra, the Williamsport Symphony Orchestra, the Nittany Valley Symphony Orchestra, and the Conservatory Orchestra of Cordoba, among others. Through a generous loan from Irwin and Joan Jacobs and the Jacobs’ Family Trust, Mr. Thayer plays on the 1708 “Sir Bagshawe” Stradivarius.

Yeh Shen is the newest member of the violin section of the San Diego Symphony Orchestra after he won a national audition in 2012. Prior to joining SDSO, he was a tenured 1st violinist in the Houston Symphony and a long time extra violinist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Shen studied violin with William De Pasquali at Philadelphia College for Performing Arts and Berl Senofsky at Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore where Shen was also on a full stipend scholarship as a member of the Peabody Honors Quartet, with which he performed frequently with members of the Julliard Quartet and Amadeus Quartet in U.S. and England. Born into a musical family, Shen started studying violin seriously at the age of 9 and was soon accepted to Shanghai Conservatory at the age of 11. At the age of 12, he was selected by the central culture ministry of China to perform publicly for visiting Issac Stern and Yehudi Menuhin and frequently featured on national TV and radio. Shen is a prize winner of China National Violin Competition and Texas International Young Artist Competition and holds degrees from Peabody Conservatory of Music.