

upcoming concerts

Thursday, November 14

Brahms - Piano Quartet in C minor, Opus 60
Dvorak - Piano Quartet in E-flat, Opus 87

Monday, December 2

Bach - Brandenburg Concerto no. 6
Beethoven - Violin Sonata in G Opus 96
Brahms - String Quintet in F major

Monday, January 6

Myriad Trio Concert

Monday, February 3

Mozart - Piano Trio in E major, K. 542
Rebecca Clarke - Viola Sonata
Brahms - Clarinet Trio Opus 114

Monday, March 17

Kodaly - Serenade for two violins and viola
Beethoven - Cello Sonata in D Op. 102 No. 2
Fauré - G minor Piano Quartet

Monday, April 14

Beethoven - Grosse Fuge
Haydn - String Quartet Op. 20 No. 2
Beethoven - String Quartet Op. 130

Monday, June 2

Mendelssohn - Piano Quartet in b minor, Op. 3
Dvorak - F-minor Piano Trio, Opus 65
Sibelius - String Quartet "Voces intimae"

Monday, June 10

Myriad Trio and Camera Lucida

Subscriptions (at a considerable savings from the already-reasonable single-concert price) are a wonderful way to take advantage of the best discounts and seating.

For more information, contact the San Diego Symphony ticket office at 619.235.0804 or via the web at: <http://www.sandiegosymphony.org/concertcalendar/cameralucida.aspx>

Artistic Director - Charles Curtis
Executive Coordinator - Colin McAllister
Program notes - Lukas Schulze
Recording engineer - Tom Erbe
Production manager - Jessica Flores

Tonight's concert will be broadcast Saturday, October 26th at 9 pm on kpbs-fm 89.5 or streaming at 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 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 commenced the inaugural year for the Formosa Quartet's Formosa Chamber Music Festival in Taiwan.

Cellist **Charles Curtis** has been Professor of 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. A student of Harvey Shapiro and Leonard Rose at Juilliard, on graduation Curtis received the Piatigorsky Prize of the New York Cello Society. 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 and Marian Zazeela, Éliane Radigue, Alvin Lucier, Christian Wolff, Alison Knowles and Mieko Shiomi. Of a recent New York recital the New York Times noted that Curtis' "playing unfailingly combined lucidity and poise... lyricism and intensity." The current season includes solo concerts at New York's Issue Project Room, the Auditorium du Louvre in Paris, the Rothko Chapel in Houston and the Kampnagelfabrik in Hamburg. Curtis is artistic director of Camera Lucida.

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.



 UC San Diego | Department of Music



camera lucida

chamber music concerts at uc san diego

2013-2014 season

sponsored by the sam b. ersan chamber music fund

Monday, October 14th
Two thousand and thirteen
7:30pm

Trio in G Major, Op. 9, No.1

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Adagio-Allegro con brio
Adagio ma non tanto e cantabile
Scherzo-Allegro
Presto

Mythes for Violin and Piano, Op. 30

Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937)

La Fontaine d'Arethuse
Narcisse
Dryades et Pan

intermission

Quartet for Piano and Strings in B-flat Major
Op. 41

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

Allegretto
Andante maestoso ma con moto
Poco allegro più tosto moderato
Allegro

Jeff Thayer, violin
Che-Yen Chen, viola
Charles Curtis, cello
Reiko Uchida, piano

Ludwig van Beethoven - Trio in G Major, Op. 9, No. 1

One striking feature of Beethoven’s first period is the wildness and fecundity of the musical imagination, which often appears so boundless that we imagine that the young composer’s ability to control it would have to be wanting, yet that turns out to be just barely not the case. The material doesn’t quite create form organically, as it does in the middle “Heroic” period; rather, one perceives that these broad and volatile brushstrokes of music, poised to run artistically amok, are somehow tenuously reined in by a perplexingly mature capacity for organization. This sense of an incendiary material impulse that threatens to break loose from its formal constraints is one of the defining, and most exciting, characteristics of Beethoven’s early work.

Beethoven was 28 when he completed the three string trios of Op. 9. Ten years earlier, Mozart had written his immense and marvelous E-flat *Divertimento*, KV 563, a work Beethoven must have known and could not but have admired. While Mozart’s influence can be heard in the G Major Trio, as can Haydn’s, this is anything but an inchoate student effort. To begin with, this is a not-particularly-early work by a not-particularly-young composer. By Op. 9, Beethoven had an impressive portfolio of content-rich music to claim; but it is likely the string quartets that were at this time unwritten that invite us, foolishly, to underestimate a work like Op. 9, No. 1.

The first movement’s *adagio* introduction, which foreshadows the introduction of the 7th Symphony with a grand declamation followed by ritualized scalar passages, eases almost imperceptibly into the *allegro con brio*. Any sense that a trio is less capable than a quartet is immediately erased, replaced by a natural balance between players, their roles, and their respective registers. Haydn’s influence is here, in a number of interesting anomalies, such as the initially perplexing minor theme that appears, hushed and intense, before it cedes into the expected major key we expect from a second theme group. This early cloud of minor tonality pulls the music toward the darker, flat keys in the contrapuntal, probing development. The move into the recapitulation is surprising and slippery, and the earlier curious minor second theme now reveals itself to be canny and forward-thinking—set now in tonic minor, then ebbing satisfyingly into major. The coda shows what was to become a favorite device of Beethoven, as a succession of ominous minor keys is followed by a vigorous, sunny diatonic progression.

If Haydn is present in the first movement, then Mozart’s impact--via KV 563 specifically--is audible in the *adagio*, in the use of these three instruments to their fullest sonic and harmonic effect. The string writing in this gentle and rueful movement is lush but utterly lucid, and the sections are expansive in both their dimension and emotional scope.

Beethoven didn’t invent the *Scherzo*. The word means “joke” in Italian, and while earlier examples of movements bearing the title *scherzo* can be found in Baroque music, it was Beethoven who replaced the ubiquitous and often galant *Minuet* (or *Menuet*, or *Menuetto*) usually found in the inner movements of instrumental music by Haydn and Mozart with this new form, one more suited to Beethoven’s rhythmically muscular language. This early scherzo is much like earlier minuet movements: busy and compartmentalized, with a contrasting *trio* section. Yet care has been taken to imbue each momentary passage with its own mood and tone—one *pesante*, one introspective—as the movement grows in size and weight beyond the implications of its opening gambit.

The rondo finale, marked *presto*, is exuberant, fast, and difficult, varying both topic and harmony wildly in its episodes. The detours are circuitous enough to create a dizzying emotional effect, while the alternation between clearly delineated themes that move between unison passagework and counterpoint helps to create formal order as the musical tension grows to a final climax.

Karol Szymanowski - Mythes for Violin and Piano, Op. 30

The lack of familiarity with Karol Szymanowski’s chamber music on the part of the concert-going public is unfortunate. It is surprising as well, given the quality of his instrumental writing and his aesthetic pedigree in terms of important 20th Century contexts and resources with which he had contact. His music and writings combine erudition with ecstasy; Szymanowski’s works find spiritual cognates in other art media—painting, poetry, and architecture—and his path through his life and work reads as a *who’s who* of art movements and cultural personnel of the early modern age.

His three *Mythes*, Op. 30, for violin and piano, were written in 1915. These are programmatic, incandescent settings of classical myths. *La Fontaine d’Arethuse* tells the story of the nymph Arethusa, who, escaping the amorous advances of the river god Alpheus, was transformed into a spring by Artemis, whose retinue she occupied. The dazzling and evocative piano writing, representing water, immediately brings to mind Ravel’s *Ondine*. There is a clear kinship with the impressionist composers in the use of extended tonal materials as blocks of color, without the functional key relationships and processes of traditional tonal music.

There are different versions of the myth of *Narcissus*, though all of them tell of a supernaturally handsome young man whose pride in his appearance so offended Nemesis—the spirit of divine retribution—that she attracted him to a pool, in which he saw his own reflection. Unable to pull himself away from the bewitching image, he met his end at the water’s edge. Szymanowski’s setting evokes the world, and the young hunter Narcissus moving through it, with a kind of promenade made up of a lilting dotted figure. The violin writing is opulent and effective; the skillful use of double-stops and mute highlight various phases of the protagonist’s self-intoxication.

In *Dryades et Pan*, Pan’s musings and pursuit of the wood nymphs are conveyed by a catalog of extended violin techniques, including an early use of quarter-tones, glissandi, and muting. This last portion of the triptych is the most varied in texture, and features a luminous cadenza for the violin, consisting entirely of violin harmonics that represent Pan’s flute.

Camille Saint-Saëns—Quartet for Piano and Strings in B-Flat Major, Op. 41

As the 19th Century progressed, one of the subtlest shifts in European musical style took place in the realm of form. Specifically, sonata-allegro form—THE dramatic, first-movement formal model of choice for Classical Era composers, the form that most authentically articulated their artistic worldview—began to lose its power to speak. This was not true for all composers, of course: Brahms is an example that helps prove the rule. For many other composers, the use of sonata-allegro form produced such mannerist results that two new compositional approaches appear in the musical landscape. The first replaced those genres that relied heavily on sonata-allegro form—the string quartet, the symphony, the piano sonata—with new genres that relied less on sonata form, and thus we see the rise, in the Romantic Period, of the character piece for piano and of the *Lied*, or art-song. The second approach was to use the now problematic nature of these older genres as a new narrative, involving irony, historical reference, and experimental ways of organizing large-scale musical form across an entire work. Saint- Saëns’ 1875 *Piano Quartet in B-flat, Op. 41*, is just such a piece. Three ideas are quickly made clear to the listener: first, the piece reverses the traditional plan of placing the weightiest content at the front of a piece—this work gathers in weight and intensity as it progresses. Second, the movements have a story quality; rather than being organic musical structures in themselves, they are imagined as a series of engaging tales told through instrumental behaviors. Third, omnipresent in all of this is Saint-Saëns’ unfailing ability to weave fetching and infectious melodies and textures such as we associate with his more famous works.

The opening *allegretto* recalls Brahms’ Op. 26 Piano Quartet, both in the opening placid B-flat chordal piano gesture in particular, and the stressed and surging lyricism in general. This first movement form is conspicuously clear and sectional, with an emerging sense of a antiphonal, if cooperative, relationship between the piano on the one hand, and the strings on the other. Several factors seem designed to deliberately undercut the weight this first movement might normally bear: the diatonic harmonic language, a restrained string *tessitura*, and an innocuous development section—all these combine to give this movement a disarming sense of pastoral innocence.

The G minor *andante maestoso*, by contrast, chooses a different tack. Saint-Saëns was an accomplished organist and organ composer, and would certainly have been familiar with Baroque chorale preludes and fantasies. This movement sets forth the elements of a church chorale, complete with discrete phrases, and virtuosic accompaniment. As the movement progresses, the roles of hymn tune (which hints at the famous melody of Saint-Saëns’ 3rd Symphony) and accompaniment are freely distributed between piano and strings, with brilliant and episodic fugal piano textures and string flourishes.

The third movement scherzo, in D minor and marked *poco allegro*, has a kinship with the Saint-Saëns’ own *Danse Macabre*. The music is scurrying and mischievous, and shows the composer’s talent for creating convincing character settings for which he was so lauded during his lifetime. The driving compound meter breaks only momentarily, for cadenzas for both the violin and the piano; throughout there is an ominous aura of the nocturnal, a favored affective type of the 19th Century composers.

The final movement, which begins, oddly, in D minor, is big from the start, and aggressive, rhetorically and gesturally. This movement uses a cyclic form, a favorite structural device of the Romantics, one that shows, again, the new strategies that were mobilized to animate long-term design. The phrases of the opening section are suddenly longer, textures vary more in their dynamics and register—everything about this movement is aimed toward its climactic function. The earlier melodies from previous movements—the hymn from the second, the dotted figure from the scherzo--are treated as episodes in a giant rondo, with the refrain being the last movement material itself. This ingenious plan ends with a return of the incipit from the first movement, which boils into a stirring fugato fantasy.

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.