

upcoming concerts

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, November 23rd 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 Primrose Competition and the "President Prize" in the Tertis 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." Having served as principal violist of the San Diego Symphony for eight seasons, he is principal violist of the Mainly Mozart Festival Orchestra and has appeared as guest principal violist with Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra. A former member of Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society Two and participant of the Marlboro Music Festival, he is a member of Camera Lucida, Concertante Chamber Players and The Myriad Trio. Chen is currently on faculty at USC Thornton School of Music and California State University, Fullerton and has given master-classes in major conservatories and universities across North America and Asia. In August 2013, the Formosa Quartet inaugurated the annual Formosa Chamber Music Festival in Hualien, Taiwan. Modeled after American summer festivals such as Marlboro, Ravinia, the Taos School of Music, and Kneisel Hall, FCMF is the product of long-held aspirations and years of planning, and represents one of the quartet's more important missions: to bring high-level chamber music training to talented young musicians in Taiwan and first-rate music to Taiwanese audiences.

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 unflinchingly 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 Meglitoranza, 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

Thursday, November 14th
Two Thousand and Thirteen
7:30pm

Piano Quartet No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 60

Johannes Brahms (1833-97)

Allegro non troppo
Scherzo: Allegro
Andante
Finale: Allegro comodo

intermission

Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 87

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Allegro con fuoco
Lento
Allegro moderato, grazioso
Finale: Allegro ma non troppo

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

Johannes Brahms - Piano Quartet in C Minor, Op. 60

The genesis of Brahms’ third Piano Quartet is a fraught and complicated one. He started the piece in 1855, twenty years before it was finally finished. Brahms seems to have been pestered for it by his publisher—perhaps on the basis of the success of the earlier two piano quartets--and his dissatisfaction with the C-minor is widely known. In a letter to the publisher regarding the piece, Brahms wrote, “On the cover you must have a picture, a head with a pistol pointed towards it. Now you can form an idea of the music! For this purpose I will send you my photograph! Blue coat, yellow breeches and top-boots would do well.” An educated reader in Brahms’ day would have immediately gotten the reference to Goethe’s famous young protagonist Werther, who commits suicide when his beloved marries someone else; music-lovers will recognize the parallel to Goethe’s tale in Brahms’ own life and his famed love for Clara Schumann, hence his wry suggestion. Thus this work is sometimes referred to as the “Werther Quartet.” But it is also known as the “Clara Quartet,” both because of the foregoing connection and Brahms’ use of a theme whose pitches he borrows—in a convoluted fashion—from works by Schumann himself: In Schumann’s works, the pitches: c-b-a-g#-a spell out CLARA...with the b substituting for L and the g# filling in for R. In Brahms’ work, the theme is transposed into C-minor, and forms the opening theme of the piece.

The piano quartet is a genre that consistently elicited music of the utmost seriousness from Brahms. Despite Brahms’ self-deprecation, the first movement of the C-minor stands as one of the most imposing pieces of instrumental music of the 19th Century. After the piano rings out initial octaves, we hear the “Clara” theme, uttered and developed in successive sighing figures that seem to whisper her name. We move into the *Allegro non troppo* on a driving, pulsating repeated tonic pitch echoed later in the introduction to Brahms’ C-Minor Symphony. The emotional path from one theme to another in this first movement is almost violent: as tragic as the first theme poses itself to be, the astonishing second theme is redemptive—stated first in the piano, then immediately subject to the “developing variation” for which Brahms is known. The exposition closes with a simultaneous statement of both melodies within the affective tone of voice of the second. The development is uncompromising in the intensity with which it rearticulates the first theme while the recapitulation redefines the main and subordinate themes, as if embodied characters are evolving—and growing--throughout the cathartic structure.

The second movement Scherzo, marked *Allegro*, is focused, unyielding and tempestuous, and seems to wrestle with leftover energy from the first movement. This scherzo is unique in the lack of a defined contrasting middle Trio section, offering the listener no real respite, rather driving through to a furious and unsettled finish.

In contrast, the delicate *Andante*—the only movement of the quartet not in C-minor--seems to soothe, mercifully, the rawness of the emotional world of the previous two movements. The key is E Major, which is unusual in a work set in C-Minor, though a similar key scheme exists in the C-Minor Symphony. An extended and lyrical melody for the cello is later joined in counterpoint, first by the violin, and later, the viola. The theme goes through transformations that are astonishingly subtle, motivically and affectively, as this movement marks placid time, importantly—providing an aesthetic island for the listener to rest upon.

The Finale, *Allegro comodo*, which appears to set out a clear and concise agenda in the *moto perpetuo* nature of the piano accompaniment, actually owes its nature to a curious assemblage of various competing sources. The piano material itself

begins with the opening to Mendelssohn’s *Piano Trio No. 2*, also in C-Minor. There are overtones, too, of Beethoven’s 5th Symphony, in the three repeated Gs that open the movement in the piano almost unnoticed. A brief chorale episode (Mendelssohn’s Trio also features a chorale) seems further to refer to sources beyond the piece. The *sonata-allegro* form develops the multiple themes in various keys before returning to C. The return to the tonic, now unconvincingly in the major, only barely dispels the darkness that hangs over the music.

Antonin Dvořák—Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 87

The *Piano Quartet in E-flat Major*, Op. 87 dates from 1889, in a period marked by intense artistic creativity in Dvořák life. This piece followed quickly on the heels of several celebrated works--the famous *Piano Quintet* Op. 81, and his opera *The Jacobin*—and immediately preceded several more. Composing with enthusiasm and apparent ease, Dvořák wrote to his publisher: “I’ve now already finished three movements of a new piano quartet and the finale will be ready in a few days. As I expected it came easily and the melodies just surged upon me. Thank God!” As is typical of this period of Dvořák’s output, the musical discourse is made of little else besides winning melodies, and the structures of the music are constructed largely as trellises for the composer’s characteristic melodic invention.

The first movement *Allegro con fuoco*—begins with a first theme so simple and powerfully iconic that it almost resists integration into Dvořák’s landscape, returning like a bullying thesis from which, almost gratefully, we digress into more elegant secondary and tertiary themes that lend themselves more seamlessly to development. The topic of this first movement—a taut and clearly organized *sonata-allegro* form--becomes an ongoing narrative of this first theme and its affective place in the musical landscape. There is a connection with mature Schubert here: remote and unusual keys are visited almost surreptitiously, unified and connected by a convincing and unabated melodic effluence. The development highlights the difference in the themes, as the head motive governs moments of ominous fantasy, whose tension the secondary melodies inevitably relieve. The recapitulation sets the principal motive in multiple guises, from a hushed *poco sostenuto e tranquillo* rising to a celebratory and opulent close.

The second movement *Lento*—is a serene, elegiac song, offered by the cello and tinged with smoky touches of the minor, that breaks into crystalline chordal interruptions by the piano before the other strings enter, bathing the melody in counterpoint. This first section is ruptured first by a dark and turbulent episode--again evoking late Schubert--and then by a gently rocking passage whose place in the form seems almost out of place—as further testimony of the abundance of Dvořák’s ceaseless melodic inspiration.

The third movement, which begins *Allegro moderato, grazioso*, with a waltz, introduces the idea of national voice so often associated with Dvořák, that with the possible exception of the first movement’s main idea, has been relatively absent from this work. The use of the harmonic minor scale gives the music a non-western air, and some have suggested that the upper-register writing for the piano is evocative of the cimbalom—the hammered dulcimer of Central and Eastern Europe. The outer section of this movement is surprising in the variety of moods and metrical colorings that belie its formal simplicity. The *Trio* section is galloping and urgent, and counterposes with the main melody as if comparing the bluster of the hurried, outside world with a soothing and intimate parlor.

The finale, marked *Allegro ma non troppo*, has been criticized by some writers as being overly “symphonic.” The logic of this indictment is difficult to follow; certainly Dvořák’s skill at wringing sumptuous textures from four players is nothing other than thrilling. What is daunting, however—the factor to which the critics may have been referring--is navigating the emotional terrain of this movement, made up as it is by themes so individually compelling in their moods and references. We move between a rousing (and serious) country-dance on the one hand, and a sentimental, even melancholy, theme on the other, and the positioning of these ideas in this sort of roaming and expansive form may have been beyond the abilities of some of Dvořák’s contemporary listeners. These themes are developed at length and in numerous keys before the music rushes to an exciting, dramatic conclusion.

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.