

ABOUT

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WEDNESDAYS@7

Wednesdays@7 continues the mission of experimentation and innovation set forth in 1967 by music department founders Will Ogdon, Robert Erickson and Thomas Nee.

*Through the generosity of Dean Seth Lerer,  
2013-2014 Wednesdays@7 events are free to the UCSD Community.*

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CONTACT US

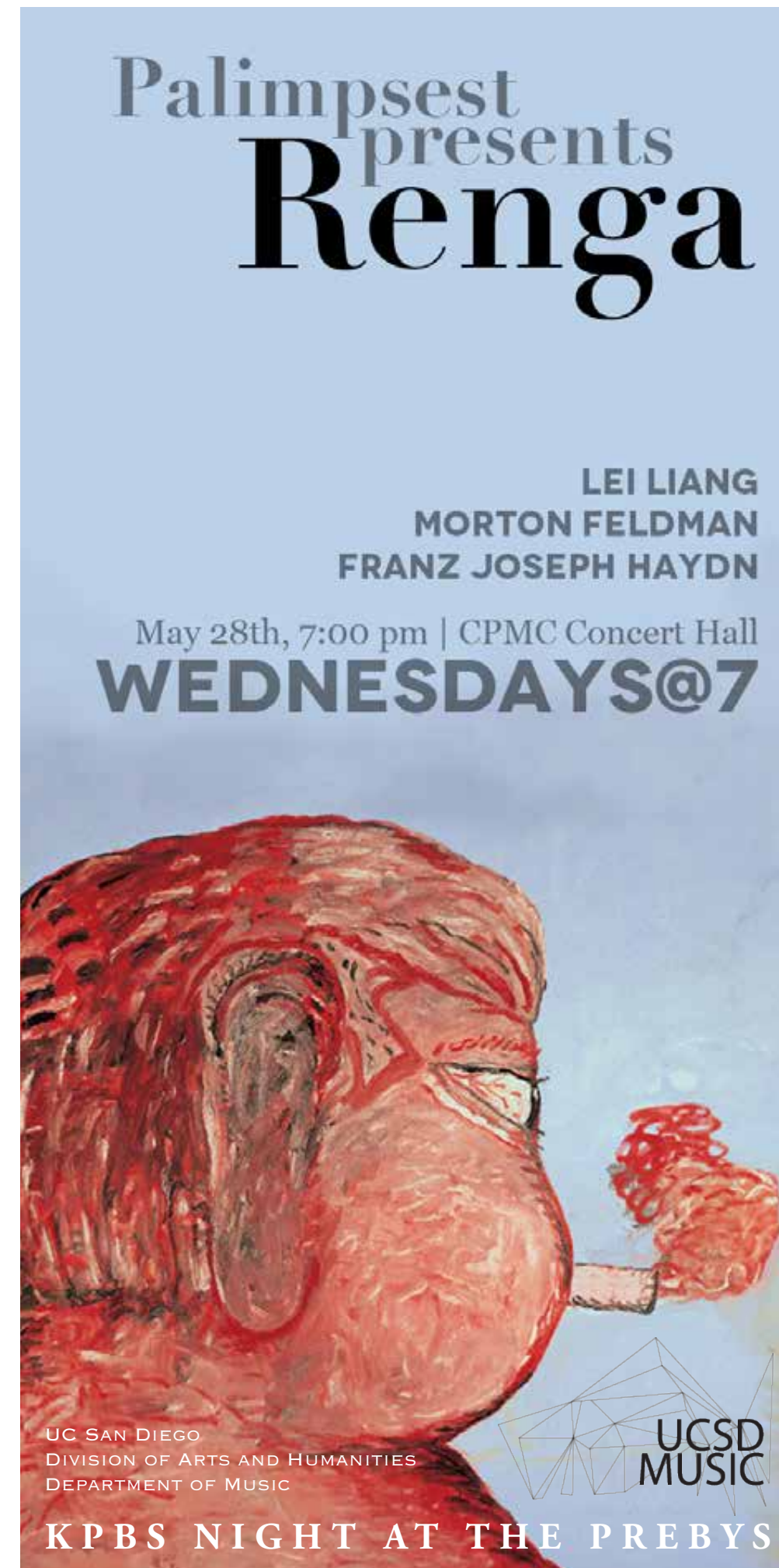
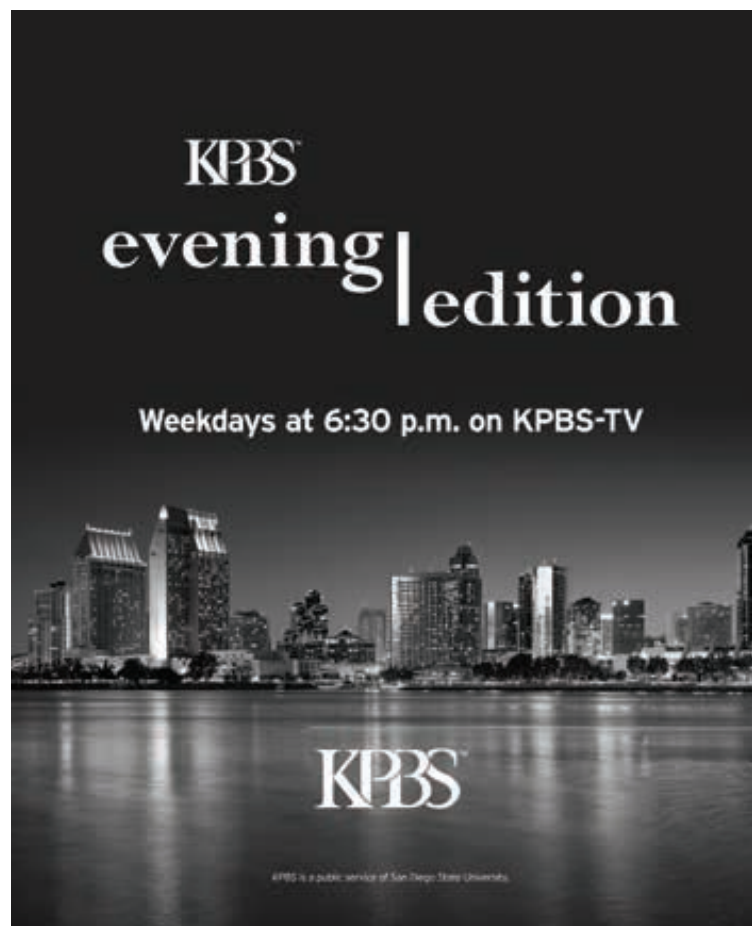
For information on upcoming concerts:

Music Box Office: (858) 534-3448

<http://music.ucsd.edu/concerts>

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Audience members are reminded to please silence all phones and noise generating devices before the performance. As a matter of courtesy and copyright law, no unauthorized recording or photographing is allowed in the hall. The Conrad Prebys Music Center is a non-smoking facility.



## Palimpsest Presents

*Renga**Trans* (2014)

Steven Schick, percussion

Lei Liang

Symphony #80 (1784)

Franz Josef Haydn

Allegro Spiritoso  
Adagio  
Menuetto  
Finale: Presto*intermission**For Samuel Beckett* (1987)

Morton Feldman

Violin 1	Kate Hatmaker, Wes Precourt, Alicia Engley, Bridget Dolkas
Violin 2	Pei-Chun Tsai, Igor Pandurski, Tricia Lee, Isaac Allen
Viola	AJ Nilles, Michael Molnau, Angela Choong
Cello	Abe Liebhaber, Judith Hammon, Jennifer Bewerse
Bass	Mathew Kline
Flute	Rachel Beetz, Alice Teyssier
Oboe	Sarah Skuster, Andrea Overturf
Clarinet	Sam Dunscomb, Curt Miller
Bassoon	David Savage, Bill Propp
Horn	Nicolee, Kuester, Darby Hinshaw
Trumpet	Jonah Levy, Rachel Allen
Trombone	Eric Starr, Devin Burnworth
Tuba	Bryan Smith
Harp	Tasha Smith Godinez
Piano	Kyle Baldwin
Percussion	Dustin Donahue, Steven Schick
Conductor	Steven Schick
Artistic Direction	Kate Hatmaker and Steven Schick

Introducing *Renga!*

We take the name from the centuries-old Japanese practice of collective poetry writing. One person writes a line then passes it to another, who contributes the next line, and then to another for yet another line, and so on. With *Renga* as both a name and an inspiration, we hope to harness the growing musical energy of San Diego into a collective of likeminded performers committed to collaborative programming and music-making.

And tonight's concert is the unveiling!

We'll combine the vast, ethereal canvas of Morton Feldman's final composition, *For Samuel Beckett*, with a provocative new percussion piece by Lei Liang, receiving its local premiere tonight, with one of Haydn's freshest and most progressive symphonies. Aesthetic contrast is clearly in abundance! The dates of composition are scattered across the centuries: 1784 for Haydn, 1987 for Feldman, and 2014 for Liang. There are radical dissimilarities in compositional and orchestrational strategy. And the cultural ecology from which each piece emerged – that vital combination of practice and place – spans a gamut from the Esterházy court to the percussion studios at UC San Diego.

Perhaps the simple premise of tonight's concert is that boundaries are made for crossing.

But in spite of all their contrasts, these works have important aspects in common. Each composer exhibits a bracing, progressive musical spirit. Each is an experimentalist in the language of his time.

For most of his life Haydn was the court composer for Prince Nikolaus Esterházy, an enviable position that brought with it great notoriety, prosperity, and not least, a “house orchestra” to be used at his artistic discretion. An inveterate experimentalist, Haydn took full advantage of his position, creating, in one of his first efforts for the prince, the small gems of early symphonic writing that we know as *Le Matin*, *Le Midi*, and *Le Soir*. Later, in a less than subtle hint that summer vacation was over and the musicians were eager to leave the prince's summer retreat and return to their families in Eisenstadt, he created an extraordinary mixture of music, theatricality and politics in his “Farewell Symphony.” Among the most experimental of all is the wild romp in texture and tonality of Number 80. This symphony was written just before the death of Esterházy, an event that eventually led to Haydn's expulsion from the protective confines of the prince's estate and paved the way for his huge commercial successes in Paris and London. But at the end of his time with Esterházy Haydn shows us what you can accomplish when you have tenure. And he sets a high bar with music that is questioning and fearless; principled and irreverent.

Haydn's Eisenstadt is a long way from the back entrance of the Conrad Prebys Music Centre where Lei Liang collected the sixty pairs of small stones he requires for his work *Trans*, a percussion solo with significant audience involvement. The work is scored for a small installation of metal, skin and wooden percussion instruments. But where most composers carefully determine and notate sounds, rhythms and harmonies, Liang turns his compositional focus to the state of mind of the performer. The work stipulates four expressive spaces:

An *outward space*, designed to be conventionally expressive – full of dramatic shifts in gesture and nuance.

An *immovable space*, which the composer describes as simultaneously engaged and detached. Potentially this refers to the psychic environment of the concert experience itself as multi-personal medium for the transmission and reception of musical impulses.

An *internal space*, the ineffable, thoughtless domain within the spirit of the performer, and

A *public space*, which alludes to the clouds of stone sounds generated by the audience.

The challenge for the percussionist is to play the material of the score while simultaneously navigating among these four states of mind. This performer quickly became aware that such a project was technically – and perhaps spiritually – impossible. But good faith attempts to satisfy the requirements of the score are repaid with surprising confluences of sounds and electrifying aggregates of musical energy.

The luminous canvas of Morton Feldman's *For Samuel Beckett* stretches for more than fifty minutes with barely a silence. Yet for all of the sounds it produces there is the telling absence of a concrete musical statement in this work. Instead our minds are filled with the conundrums of late Feldman: a space is saturated with sound, yet the music is not heavy. The surface seems glassy, yet the weave of its texture breathes easily thanks to small enharmonic perturbations in intonation and variations of chord voicing. Feldman's late works range in duration between one and six hours and, like *For Samuel Beckett*, they seem to this listener to end abruptly and too soon, stopping nearly in mid-sentence. One is left with the question, why should this music end now? Does it die of old age –its weight (as sonic experience) gradually overburdening its skeleton (as musical architecture)?!

It seems that there is rightness to this music but not necessarily logic. As John Cage exclaimed when he first heard Feldman's music: “Isn't it marvelous!”

Finally it is Samuel Beckett himself who, though not writing about Feldman here, comes very close to the heart of this music.

“only dust and not a sound only what was it it said come and gone was that it something like that come and gone come and gone no one come and gone in no time gone in no time.”

Steven Schick