

upcoming concerts

Monday, November 17, 2014

Martinů: Serenade No. 2 for Two Violins and Viola, H. 216
Brahms: Sonata for Violin and Piano in A Major
Martinů: Quintet No. 2 for Piano and Strings, H. 298

Monday, December 15, 2014

Schubert: String Trio Fragment in B-flat Major
Mozart: Duo for Violin and Viola in G Major, K. 423
Tchaikovsky: Piano Trio in A minor

Tuesday, February 17, 2015

Mendelssohn: Lied ohne Worte for Cello and Piano in D Major, Op. 109
Brahms: Sonata for Cello and Piano in E minor, Op. 38
Schubert: Quintet for Piano and Strings in A Major, D. 667 "The Trout"

Monday, March 9, 2015

Schoenberg: Transfigured Night
Tchaikovsky: Piano Trio in A minor

Monday, March 16, 2015

Brahms: Sonata for Cello and Piano in F Major, Op. 99
Myriad Trio (Program TBA)

Monday, April 13, 2015

Brahms: Sonata for Viola and Piano in F minor, Op. 120, No. 2
Messiaen: Quartet for the End of Time

Monday, April 27, 2015

Myriad Trio
Program TBA

Monday, May 11, 2015

Brahms: *Sonatensatz* in C minor, WoO 2 for Violin and Piano
Gernsheim: Piano Quintet No. 2 for in B minor, Op. 63
Brahms: Piano Quintet in F minor, Op. 34

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

Tonight's concert will be broadcast Saturday, October 18th at 7 pm on
kpbs-fm 89.5 or streaming at kpbs.org

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

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 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 Music 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 Tashi Wada. *Time Out New York* called his recent New York performances "the stuff of contemporary music legend," and 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 Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, the première of a new cello concerto with the BBC Scottish Symphony in Glasgow, the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, the Klangspuren Festival in Austria, the Sub Tropics Festival in Miami, and solo recitals in Brussels, Metz and Paris. Curtis is artistic director of Camera Lucida.

camera lucida

Chamber music concerts at UC San Diego

2014-2015 season

Sponsored by the Sam B. Ersan Fund at the San Diego Foundation

Monday, October Sixth
Two Thousand and Fourteen
7:30pm

Quartettsatz in C minor, D.703

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Allegro assai

String Trio in D Major, Op. 9, No. 2

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Allegretto

Andante quasi Allegretto

Menuetto-Allegro

Rondo-Allegro

intermission

String Quartet No. 12 in E-flat Major, Op. 127 Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Maestoso – Allegro

Adagio ma non troppo e molto cantabile

Scherzo. Vivace; Presto; Tempo primo

Finale: Allegro

Jeff Thayer, violin
Jisun Yang, violin
Che-Yen Chen, viola
Charles Curtis, cello



UC San Diego | Department of Music



Franz Schubert—String Quartet No. 12 in C Minor, D. 703 (Quartettsatz)

The tragic brevity of Schubert’s life is primarily an issue of aesthetics, rather than one of biology. While he wrote a substantial body of music by the time he died at 31, the artistic trajectory displayed in the late works forces us to imagine the unwritten *next*—the next sonata, the next symphony, the next string quartet—and wonder what might have been. In this sense he is a more poignant figure than Mozart, who had managed to find and explore his maturity fully in all genres. This is especially true of Schubert’s string quartets. Though he wrote 15 quartets, the early efforts are largely good-natured examples of *Hausmusik*, written for amateurs, with little indication of the musical weight his late quartets would reveal.

This changed with his 12th quartet, in C minor. Written in 1820, this quartet movement (*Quartettsatz* in German) seems to be the beginning of an imagined larger piece (41 measures of a second movement exist), though this single finished movement has come to stand alone as an autonomous work, one that represents the first mature statement by Schubert in the string quartet genre. Immediately, the music strikes the listener with its initial gravity and focus, and quickly one is struck by a similarity with another truncated masterpiece, the Symphony No. 8 in B minor--the “*Unfinished*.” Not only do both works state a tense principal theme in the minor, that uses tremolo repeated sixteenth notes, but both invert the importance of first and second themes found in Beethoven and virtually every other composer before him. Often in Schubert’s later music—and this can be heard here—the principal theme is quickly dispensed with in favor of an expansive and lyrical melody that so takes over the discourse that the lasting memory after hearing the piece (especially in the Unfinished Symphony) is this secondary idea. Thus in content, this quartet is a contest—a battle between these melodies and the musical pacing of their respective expressive states: on the one hand, a severe, goal-directed first theme, one which rushes through musical time, and on the other, a jaunty, roaming second theme, in no hurry to arrive at any particular place, utterly untroubled by the darkness of the opening. This emotional (and temporal) contrast could not be more stark, and while the sonata form itself dictates that the principal idea, and its mood, be the finishing stamp put on the music, the ending is a fairly clear indication of Schubert’s real impulse, as it is only in a brief codetta that the sobriety of the music’s beginning returns to close out the structure.

Ludwig van Beethoven—String Trio in D Major, Op. 9, No. 2

When the young Beethoven managed to gain an audience with Mozart, as the story goes, the encounter ended with Mozart’s proclamation that the younger composer would “make a noise in the world one day.” Few composers after Beethoven’s time were shielded from this noise, and in the case of Beethoven’s Op. 9 string trios, he seems to have drowned out even himself. That is: the aura and impact generated by his string quartets has overshadowed his trios to the extent that only a few devotees interact with these pieces at all. Written in 1797-98, they were quickly shouldered aside by the Op. 18 quartets, following a year later. The tendency to view them as a sketchbook for the quartets is a pity, since they are astonishing examples of compositional resource and musical argument that show a complete understanding of the masterworks that came before them, especially the trio chamber works of Mozart. The textural and harmonic richness shown in these pieces is extraordinary, resulting from a careful handling of register, counterpoint, and an inventive swapping of the traditional roles of each instrument.

The second trio, in D Major, is an example of the classical style at perhaps its most ideal: in the succession of themes, their proportion, the division of the instrumental parts, the discourse is clear and comprehensible even to the musical laity, while allowing for (and truly, depending on) those structural quirks and harmonic forays that show the style to be

truly alive, without the slightest hint of mannerism. The first movement *Allegretto* varies the texture in each different theme, maximizing the limited ensemble resources. Excursions in secondary tonalities intimate the minor in the exposition and development; this was to be a favorite device of Beethoven’s throughout his middle period as well: clouding the music with minor tonal areas in order to make the most out of later major resolutions. The arresting second movement, *Andante quasi allegretto* is ingenious: contrast is made between the opening figure, a ritualized, hesitant dance-rhythm, with the flavor of a recitative, and the second idea, which supplies the opposite: an arioso melody, propelled along by accompanimental patterns in the viola. The *Menuetto* is warm and graceful, with a wonderful balance between homophonic textures featuring the violin and contrapuntal group interweaving, the texture and instrumental weights changing as the music moves toward cadences. The *Trio* is initially probing, questioning, and as in the second movement, this affect is set against its counter-image: a rustic and self-assured country dance. The *Rondo—Allegro* is thoroughly optimistic—with a theme stated first in the cello before being passed to the violin. Episodes in this movement pour out in such an abundance of texture types—fugato, chordal, solo flourishes—that the movement rushes by with no sense of the instrumental limitation one might expect from a trio, enveloping the listener instead in an opulence of sound, energy, and idea.

Ludwig van Beethoven—String Quartet No. 12 in E-flat Major, Op. 127

Beethoven’s late string quartet music is made up of a group of five full-length quartets and the *Große Fuge* (a movement originally planned as the finale of one of the quartets, though it proved so impenetrable that, on the publisher’s suggestion, Beethoven replaced it with another movement and issued it as a separate work). The string quartet offers a more complete representation of Beethoven’s late period style than any genre, as neither the symphony nor the piano sonata go as late into his life as the quartet. This is the *latest* of the late music in more ways than one. The elements and tendencies that typify his last period are found in these works in the most extreme, and often challenging, manifestations.

The Quartet in E-flat, Op. 127 is the first of these late quartets. Finished in 1825, it is part of a group of three commissioned by Russian Prince Nikolay Galitzin, an admirer of Beethoven and amateur cellist. Galitzin had written to Beethoven in 1822, requesting quartets, offering to pay Beethoven “whatever amount you would deem adequate.” Beethoven began the work in 1824, and Op. 127 was premiered by the Schuppanzigh Quartet in March of 1825. The E-flat quartet is unique among these last quartets not only in the fact that it launches the set, but further, in that its mysteries seem to lack the identity that the other quartets possess. All of the other late quartets have, each of them, some astounding, tragic, named anomaly: Op. 130 had, in its original form, the *Große Fuge*; Op. 132 has the *Heiliger Dankgesang*; Op. 131, the famous opening rercare; Op.135, the final movement that asks: “*muss es sein?*” What is this quartet’s great, storied riddle? It doesn’t seem to have one, and so it lags behind in the critical race toward superlative apocalypse. And yet this music is heavily laden with the same symptoms that push us toward mythology in our efforts to interpret it, and for some, Op. 127 is at the top of the late works—Joseph Kerman referred to it as “of all Beethoven’s works his crowning monument to lyricism.”

The *Maestoso—Allegro* is a massive sonata form featuring several ideas that return in such a way that their structural function is obscured. This begins with the opening gesture, a declamatory introduction that, by its third repetition, is shown not to be an introduction at all. Traditional distinctions between types of material—expository vs. developmental, for example—are muddled, as the movement seems to begin again and again in different keys, sounding each time more removed from a collectively understood standard of musical coherence. This is one of the aspects of Beethoven’s late style that for many critics, both during Beethoven’s life and since, has represented an abandonment of earthly reality, and a turn toward some other realm, one of alienation and keenly-felt mortality.

The *Adagio ma non troppo e molto cantabile* is a theme and variations, whose theme literally only becomes apparent as we hear the variations themselves. These variations show the love affair Beethoven seemed to have, late in life, with *the page*, with the writing itself, as they expand beyond any boundaries the listener might expect from hearing the theme and its implications. Pushing further and further, the music seems to have been taken over by Kerman’s lyricism, and as in the symphonies of Mahler, the idea that we are in the second movement of a projected four provides no restraining impulse. The *Scherzando vivace* is agitated, with digressions so differing and earnest that they threaten to derail any narrative thread, forcing us to wonder who, or what, is the guiding impulse here—how do these ideas come together to form a coherent whole? The main idea of the *Finale*, mercifully, offers a tone of assurance. The quality some have seen, in Beethoven’s last music, of *universality*, or inclusiveness, can be heard here, as an array of musical dialects ranging from the hurdy-gurdy to the peasant celebration come together here, unified by the buoyant refrain.

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.

Jisun Yang has been the Assistant Concertmaster of the San Diego Symphony since 2005. Before coming to San Diego she was a violinist in the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra. She also held the position of Concertmaster of the Spoleto Festival and Opera Orchestra in 2003. Jisun is a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music and the Oberlin College Conservatory where she studied with David Cerone, David Updegraff, William Preucil, and Almita and Roland Vamos. In 1999 she was a recipient of a Nicolò Gagliano violin from the Stradivari Society which enabled her to appear as a soloist and chamber musician all over the United States and Europe. She has been a finalist in many competitions including the Carl Nielsen International Violin competition held in New York City. The performance, held at Merkin Hall, was broadcast live on National Public Radio. She has also won numerous competitions including the Cleveland Institute of Music Concerto Competition (2002), The American Opera Society (1997), American String Teacher’s Association Competition (1996), G.D. Searle National String Competition (1996), and the Chicago Institute of Music Concerto Competition (1995). Recent chamber music collaborations include Ivan Chan, Steve Copes and Anne-Marie McDermott. Festival appearances include La Jolla Music Festival, Music Academy of the West, Festival Mozaic, Encore School of Music, Spoleto Music Festival, Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival and Bowdoin Music Festival.