

Pianist **REIKO UCHIDA** enjoys an active career as a soloist and chamber musician. She performs regularly throughout the United States, Asia, and Europe, in venues including Suntory Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, Alice Tully Hall, the 92nd Street Y, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Kennedy Center, and the White House. First prize winner of the Joanna Hodges Piano Competition and Zinetti International Competition, she has appeared as a soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Santa Fe Symphony, Greenwich Symphony, and the Princeton Symphony, among others. She made her New York solo debut in 2001 at Weill Hall under the auspices of the Abby Whiteside Foundation. As a chamber musician she has performed at the Marlboro, Santa Fe, Tanglewood, and Spoleto Music Festivals; as guest artist with Camera Lucida, American Chamber Players, and the Borromeo, Talich, Daedalus, St. Lawrence, and Tokyo String Quartets; and in recital with Jennifer Koh, Thomas Meglitoranza, Anne Akiko Meyers, Sharon Robinson, and Jaime Laredo. Her recording with Jennifer Koh, “String Poetic” was nominated for a Grammy Award. She is a past member of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center Two. As a youngster, she performed on Johnny Carson’s Tonight Show. Ms. Uchida holds a Bachelor’s degree from the Curtis Institute of Music, a Master’s degree from the Mannes College of Music, and an Artist Diploma from the Juilliard School. She studied with Claude Frank, Leon Fleisher, Edward Aldwell, Margo Garrett, and Sophia Rosoff. She has taught at the Brevard Music Center, and is currently an associate faculty member at Columbia University.

**ANTHONY BURR** has enjoyed a distinguished career as an exponent of contemporary music. He has performed this repertoire with many leading groups, including Elision, Either/Or, Klangforum Wien, Ensemble Sospeso, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. As soloist he has worked with many leading composers in presenting their music including Alvin Lucier, Helmut Lachenmann, Brian Ferneyhough, Chaya Czernowin and Liza Lim. He has worked extensively outside of classical music with Jim O’Rourke, John Zorn, Laurie Anderson and many others. At UCSD, he has taught grad seminars on musical aesthetics, undergraduate classes in music theory and popular music, and regularly performs classical repertoire in the Camera Lucida chamber music series. His primary clarinet teachers were Larry Combs, David Shifrin and Floyd Williams.

Violinist **JEFF THAYER** is currently the concertmaster of the San Diego Symphony. Previous positions include assistant concertmaster of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, associate concertmaster of the North Carolina Symphony, concertmaster and faculty member of the Music Academy of the West (Santa Barbara), 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. He attended Keshet Eilon (Israel), Ernen Musikdorf (Switzerland), Music Academy of the West, Aspen, New York String Orchestra Seminar, the Quartet Program, and as the 1992 Pennsylvania Governor Scholar, Interlochen Arts Camp. Through a generous loan from Irwin and Joan Jacobs and the Jacobs’ Family Trust, Mr. Thayer plays on the 1708 “Sir Bagshawe” Stradivarius.

Taiwanese-American violist **CHE-YEN CHEN** has established himself as an active performer. He is a founding member of the Formosa Quartet, recipient of the First-Prize and Amadeus Prize winner of the 10th London International String Quartet Competition. Since winning First-Prize in the 2003 Primrose Competition and “President Prize” in the Lionel Tertis Competition, Chen has been described 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 the principal violist of the San Diego Symphony for eight seasons, he is the 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 also a member of Camera Lucida, and The Myriad Trio. Chen is currently on faculty at USC Thornton School of Music, and has given master-classes in major conservatories and universities across North America and Asia. In August 2013, the Formosa Quartet inaugurated their annual Formosa Chamber Music Festival in Hualien, Taiwan. Modeled after American summer festivals such as Ravinia, Taos, Marlboro, and Kneisel Hall, FCMF is the product of long-held aspirations and years of planning. It represents one of the quartet’s more important missions: to bring high-level chamber music training to talented young musicians; to champion Taiwanese and Chinese music; and to bring first-rate chamber 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, National and Baltimore Symphonies, the Symphony Orchestra of Berlin, the NDR Symphony, the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, the BBC Scottish Symphony, the Janacek Philharmonic, as well as orchestras in Italy, 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.” Recent seasons have included solo concerts at New York’s Issue Project Room and Roulette, the Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, the Sub Tropics Festival in Miami, the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, the Angelica Festival in Bologna as well as solo performances in Brussels, Metz, Paris, Mexico City, and Athens. Last summer Curtis led four performances of the music of La Monte Young at the Dia Art Foundation’s Dia:Chelsea space in New York.

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Artistic Director – Charles Curtis  
Recording Engineer – Andrew Munsey  
Program Notes – Charles Cross  
Program Associate – Rachel Beetz  
Promotions Design – Jennifer Bewerse  
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Upcoming Camera Lucida performances:  
February 20, 2017  
April 17, 2017  
May 15, 2017



# camera lucida

Sam B. Ersan, Founding Sponsor

chamber music concerts at UC San Diego  
January 9, 2017 – 7:30 p.m.  
Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

Viola Sonata in B-flat major, Opus 36 (1863)      Henri Vieuxtemps  
Maestoso - Allegro      (1820-1881)  
Barcarolla: Andante con moto  
Finale: Allegretto

Violin Sonata Nr. 1 in d minor, Opus 75 (1885)      Camille Saint-Saëns  
Allegro agitato      (1835-1921)  
Adagio  
Allegretto moderato  
Allegro molto

*intermission*

Trio in d minor for Clarinet, Cello, and Piano, Opus 120 (1922)  
Allegro ma non troppo      Gabriel Fauré  
Andantino      (1845-1924)  
Allegro vivo

Reiko Uchida, piano  
Anthony Burr, clarinet  
Jeff Thayer, violin  
Che-Yen Chen, viola  
Charles Curtis, violoncello

Henri Vieuxtemps undoubtedly considered himself as much a composer as a virtuoso performer on the violin; indeed, when his performing career was cut short due to partial paralysis in the aftermath of a stroke, it was to composing that he turned his entire musical and creative energies. Not that he had scrimped before: his overall creative output numbers more than 100 works. His performing career was neatly enfolded in his composerly production: a performance of Vieuxtemps was, more often than not, also a performance of a work by Vieuxtemps. He was celebrated for his epic violin concerti (five of them) as much as for his dazzling performances of them: the quintessential Romantic performer-composer, much like Liszt, Paganini and Chopin. Regrettably, his music has faded somewhat into the distance, with the exception of the concerti, perennially robust vehicles for each succeeding generation of violin virtuosi.

Vieuxtemps played not only violin, but viola, and loved to take the viola part in chamber music (an affinity he shared with Mozart and Bach). He premiered his Sonata in London in January 1861. *The Musical World* of January 26, 1861 noted first and foremost his superb playing: “The sonata for viola and pianoforte was welcome for more reasons than one [...] M. Vieuxtemp’s mastery of the viola is as complete as his command of the violin, and the sonata possessed a double interest from the fact of its being his own composition ... The mechanical difficulties presented by the whole work are such that none but a performer of the first class should attempt.”

The first published edition of the sonata included a dedication to King George V of Hanover, a cousin of Queen Victoria. George, blind from the age of 14, was a passionate music-lover and a sometime composer. What Vieuxtemps’ relationship to the king might have been, or what significance the viola might have had in the life of this sovereign, who was baptized by the brother of Jane Austen, are questions to which we have no answers. The dedication historicizes the work in a way that seems to put it out of our immediate cognitive reach; and in fact, as music, this seldom-performed sonata asserts its own conditions of being far-off, foreign, and not of our time. In any case, the sonata makes ample use of the dark, lower registers of the viola and the melancholic cast of its timbre, setting these off against the rippling currents of 19th-century pianism. But the sparkling instincts of Vieuxtemps the *violinist* ultimately prevail in viola writing that is indeed exceptionally virtuosic and mercurial, throwing an iridescent haze that sounds and resounds from the distant past to the present moment.

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*The painter had heard, somewhere, that Vinteuil was threatened with the loss of his reason. And he insisted that signs of this could be detected in certain passages in the sonata. This remark did not strike Swann as ridiculous; rather, it puzzled him. For, since a purely musical work contains none of those logical sequences, the interruption or confusion of which, in spoken or written language, is a proof of insanity, so insanity diagnosed in a sonata seemed to him as mysterious a thing as the insanity of a dog or a horse, although instances may be observed of these.*

Marcel Proust writes here in the first volume of *In Search of Lost Time* of a piece of music that captivates his protagonist Charles Swann: a certain phrase from a violin sonata by the fictitious composer Vinteuil.

*The year before, at an evening party, he had heard a piece of music played on the piano and violin. At first he had appreciated only the material quality of the sounds which those instruments secreted. And it had been a source of keen pleasure when, below the narrow ribbon of the violin part, delicate, unyielding, substantial and governing the whole, he had suddenly perceived, where it was trying to surge upwards in a flowing tide of sound, the mass of the piano part, multiform, coherent, level, and breaking everywhere in melody like the deep blue tumult of the sea, silvered and charmed into a minor key by the moonlight.*

In fact, Swann experiences something like an obsession with this musical experience.

*With a slow and rhythmical movement it led him here, there, everywhere, towards a state of happiness noble, unintelligible, yet clearly indicated. And then, suddenly having reached a certain point from which he was prepared to follow it, after pausing for a moment, abruptly it changed its direction, and in a fresh movement, more rapid, multiform, melancholy, incessant, sweet, it bore him off with it towards a vista of joys unknown. Then it vanished. He hoped, with a passionate longing, that he might find it again, a third time. And reappear it did, though without speaking to him more clearly, bringing him, indeed, a pleasure less profound. But when he was once more at home he needed it, he was like a man into whose life a woman, whom he has seen for a moment passing by, has brought a new form of beauty, which strengthens and enlarges his own power of perception, without his knowing even whether he is ever to see her again whom he loves already, although he knows nothing of her, not even her name.*

Proust describes Swann’s frustration at being unable to learn the source of the phrase, the name of the composer, a copy of the score, the merest hint to help him on his quest of capturing and re-discovering this magical “little phrase.” He reaches the point at which he fancies this one musical fragment to be a sorely needed tonic, a quickening elixir which, if only he could find it again, might cure him of his existential lethargy.

Proust’s close friend, the composer Reynaldo Hahn, wrote, after Proust’s death, of the probable source for this fanciful imagining of a music for violin and piano:

*It happened in this way – and I am now coming to the Vinteuil Sonata – that the Sonata in d minor for piano and violin of Saint-Saëns had pleased him very much, and particularly a singing phrase of the first movement. He asked me hundreds of times: “Play for me that bit I like, you know, that... ‘little phrase’ by Saint-Saëns.”*

While it would be a quixotic undertaking to try to pinpoint the exact musical notes from tonight’s violin sonata which might correspond to Swann’s musical and emotional obsession, we do no disservice to Saint-Saëns’ beautiful composition if we listen to it against the background of Swann’s peculiar infatuation. Who knows what effect it might have on us.

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Oddly, in a hand-written dedication, Proust refers slightly to the Saint-Saëns phrase as “the charming but mediocre phrase of a sonata for piano and violin by Saint-Saëns, a musician of whom I am not fond.” Gabriel Fauré, on the other hand, is described as “often the chief ornament of the parties given by Proust,

at whose request he would frequently seat himself at the piano and play for the assembled guests” (Dorothy Adelson in *Music and Letters*, July 1942). Proust died in 1922, and Fauré’s Trio Opus 120 was completed that very year. Fauré’s most popular works manage to place apparently simple musical materials in astonishingly, transparently sophisticated settings – his voice leading, instrumentation, harmonic transitions, formal balance, all the hidden elements of compositional craft, approach as close to perfection as any music of his time. But none of the early work prepares us for the overt strangeness of his late period. Any stereotypical notions that may cling to Fauré’s music -- Impressionism, sentimentality, sensuousness for its own sake, superficial prettiness – fly out the window in the face of this uncategorizable music.

The first movement features almost constant eighth-notes in the piano, an undulating surface that gathers relentlessly in momentum. The clarinet and cello parts are written in registers that nearly overlap: the cello almost never touches the low C string, hovering in the tenor and counter-tenor range, and the clarinet extends this range upward by only a bit. Thus the two instruments dovetail and caress each other in continuous proximity, much of the time in fact in unison. Overall, the leanness of the texture surprises, and lends, at one and the same time, a specifically modern openness and a sort of archaic austerity to the music. Yet the harmonic language is of the most daring chromaticism, extending even the late Romantic German experiments of Strauss, Reger and early Schoenberg.

The Finale begins with *Dies Irae*-like motto statements in clarinet and cello, stark and foreboding. The piano gradually gathers cascading passages in a manner worthy of a Rachmaninoff. Stentorian, schematic-sounding, almost geometric patterns repeat in unexpected key areas, and certain contrapuntal passages could be mediaeval organum gone psychedelic. This ridiculousness of this description alone demonstrates the futility of any attempt to pin down Fauré’s mysterious craft.

But the true miracle is the slow movement, longest of the three, and clearly the emotional and formal centerpiece of the work. The closest parallel would be the sacred architecture of Bruckner’s symphonic Adagios. Yet Fauré, in his distinctive way, brings qualities of tenderness and vulnerability that eluded the older Austrian. Suspensions are treated as states worthy unto themselves, not in need of resolution. A chord can move in any direction. The stunning freedom of this music leaves one truly baffled; and though the details are so strange that they defy specific remembering, they haunt us with a memory not of sounds, or of melodies, but of the uncanny experience of our listening to them.