

upcoming concerts

december 5 (wednesday)

mozart string quintets:
k. 515 and 516 (c major and g minor)
k. 614 (e-flat major)

january 15 (tuesday)

beethoven: piano trio in e-flat, woo 38
lekeu: piano quartet
mozart: string quintet in d major k. 593

march 4 (monday)

brahms: piano quartet in g minor, opus 25
brahms: piano quartet in a major, opus 26

april 3 (wednesday)

beethoven: variations for piano trio on “*ich bin der schneider kakadu*”
mozart: string quintet k. 406 in c minor
faure: piano quartet in c minor

may 14 (tuesday)

mozart: string quintet in b-flat k. 174
bach: brandenburg concerto no. 5
beethoven: quartet in a minor, opus 132

artistic director - charles curtis

executive coordinator - colin mcallister

program notes - charles cross

recording engineer - tom erbe

production - jessica flores

tonight's concert will be broadcast saturday, november 17th at 9 pm on
kpbs-fm 89.5 or streaming at kpbs.org

for more information:

<http://www.sandiegosymphony.org/concertcalendar/camerLucida.aspx>

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, Éliane Radigue, Alvin Lucier, Alison Knowles and Mieko Shiomi as well as rarely-heard compositions by Terry Jennings, Richard Maxfield, Cornelius Cardew, Christian Wolff, Morton Feldman and John Cage. Curtis is artistic director of San Diego's Camera Lucida chamber music ensemble and concert series.

Anthony Burr is an Associate Professor of Music at the University of California, San Diego. As a clarinetist, composer and producer, he has worked across a broad spectrum of the contemporary musical landscape with groups and artists including: Alvin Lucier, Jim O'Rourke, John Zorn, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Laurie Anderson and many others. Ongoing projects include a duo with Icelandic bassist/composer Skúli Sverrisson, The Clarinets (a trio with Chris Speed and Oscar Noriega), a series of recordings with cellist Charles Curtis and a series of live film/music performances with experimental filmmaker Jennifer Reeves. He has produced and/or engineered records for La Monte Young, Charles Curtis, Skúli Sverrisson, Ted Reichman and many others. Upcoming releases include a new Anthony Burr/Skúli Sverrisson double CD with guest vocalists Yungchen Lamo and Arto Lindsay and a recording of Morton Feldman's Clarinet and String Quartet. His primary clarinet teachers were Chicago Symphony principal Larry Combs and David Shifrin.

Principal Harpist of the San Diego Symphony, **Julie Ann Smith** is one of the most prominent American young harpists today. Silver medalist winner in the 2004 USA International Harp Competition and Bronze medalist in 2001, Ms. Smith made her National Symphony Orchestra debut in 2003 and has been honored in numerous competitions throughout the country. She is a founding member of The Myriad Trio and supplements her chamber performance schedule with solo recitals. She is an Adjunct Harp Professor at the University of San Diego, a certified Suzuki teacher, and maintains a private harp studio, teaching students of all ages. Ms. Smith has a solo album, *The Rhapsodic Harp*, available from her website (www.harpjas.com) as well as a recording with The Myriad Trio entitled *The Eye of Night* (www.themyriadtrio.com). Attending the Cleveland Institute of Music, she received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in harp performance where she studied with Yolanda Kondonassis. A native of Hastings, NE, Ms. Smith began studying the harp at age eleven.

Performing solo and chamber music concerts internationally, **Reiko Uchida** is recognized as one of the finest, most versatile pianists on the music scene. She has appeared as soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Santa Fe Symphony, Greenwich Symphony, and the Princeton Symphony, among many others. As a chamber musician she has performed at the Marlboro, Santa Fe, Tanglewood, and Spoleto Music Festivals; as guest artist with the Borromeo, St. Lawrence and Tokyo Quartets; and in recital with Jennifer Koh, Thomas Meglioranza, Anne Akiko Meyers, Sharon Robinson, and Jaime Laredo. Her recording with Jennifer Koh, “String Poetic” was nominated for a Grammy Award. She is also a past member of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center Two, Lincoln Center's program designed to nurture the careers of outstanding young musicians. A graduate of Curtis Institute of Music, Mannes College of Music and the Juilliard School, Ms. Uchida studied with Claude Frank, Leon Fleisher, Edward Aldwell and Margo Garrett. She currently resides 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

2012-2013 season

sponsored by the sam b. ersan chamber music fund

monday november fifth
two thousand and twelve
7:30pm

Musique de Chambre Nr. 1 [1959]

Bohuslav Martinů
(1890-1959)

Allegro moderato
Andante moderato
Poco allegro

Sonata for Violin and Piano [1942-43]

Francis Poulenc
(1899-1963)

Allegro con fuoco
Intermezzo: Très lent et calme
Presto tragico

Intermission

Quintet for Clarinet and Strings [1915]

Max Reger
(1873-1916)

Moderato ed amabile
Scherzo: Vivace
Largo
Poco allegretto

Jeff Thayer, violin
Wayne Lee, violin
Che-Yen Chen, viola
Charles Curtis, cello
Anthony Burr, clarinet
Julie Ann Smith, harp
Reiko Uchida, piano

To Martinů belongs the odd and picturesque distinction of having been born in the bell tower of a village church in Bohemia. His father was the official village bell ringer, as well as a cobbler; and the family lived for the first twelve years of Martinů’s life high up in the tower itself. Here his father could exercise the third of his civic duties, watching for fires. It is said that his father rang the bells right through Martinů’s birth - an auspicious, if clangorous, nativity scene for the future composer.

Late in life, Martinů remarked on the experience of a boyhood in the tower. The sense of looking out at an unimpeded openness, he felt, informed his feeling for musical space. But living apart, in isolation from the village, must also have left its mark on his person. From his biography he emerges elusive, restless, non-committal, plagued by poor health. Moving often, he lived in Prague, Paris, New York and finally Switzerland; the time line is crowded with even more localities than these, as he cast about for a hospitable place of his own. There is a photograph from the late 1940’s in which he and his wife Charlotte look out from the window of their apartment on West 58th Street in New York; dwarfed by the size of the window and the surrounding buildings, he is certainly not seeing open space around him, yet we easily imagine him longing for it.

Musique de Chambre Nr. 1 was evidently meant to carry the title *Fêtes Nocturnes*, and indeed there are hints here and there of a Bartok-like “night music” atmosphere. It is one of Martinů’s last completed works, and there is no Nr. 2. Essentially a kind of Concerto Grosso for a combination of instruments possibly never imagined by another composer, the intertwining of piano and harp provides an intriguing *continuo* texture against which the four sustaining instruments operate. The outer movements revel in rustic sparrings and jousting rhythms; the beginning and ending of the middle *Andante* exemplify a perfect calm as simple white-note clusters lean against each other in gentle syncopations - openness, space, a clear view to the horizon.

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When one surveys the long span of Poulenc’s output, from the raucous burlesques of the ‘20s to the stark sobriety and emotional immediacy of his final work, the Oboe Sonata of 1962, one begins to appreciate the two personalities at work in his creative life. “Part monk - part guttersnipe” is how his friend Claude Rostand described him; a devout Catholic capable of the most august and severe musical expressions, still the type of the urbane Parisian playboy clings to his image.

At the midpoint of his career we find the **Violin Sonata** of 1942-43, dedicated to the memory of the Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca. Considering that it was composed in Nazi-occupied France and performed in Paris during the war, we must consider the Violin Sonata a daring statement of solidarity by the essentially apolitical Poulenc with a fellow artist, Lorca, who had been killed by the fascists at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. The identification with Lorca has many layers. Almost exact contemporaries, Poulenc and Lorca shared numerous friends amongst the writers, artists and composers of the Surrealist years. Lorca had trained as a classical pianist; his poetry is rich with musical references and inspirations. And he was openly gay (this might indeed have contributed to his assassination), an openness which Poulenc surely admired and which he himself struggled to achieve.

The form of the violin sonata was somehow daunting to Poulenc - according to various accounts, he destroyed either three or two prior attempts at composing one. More congenial to his early style were the brusque and acerbic sounds of wind instruments, and the early chamber music is almost entirely for combinations of winds and piano. But the request for a sonata put to him by the brilliant young French violinist Ginette Niveu proved irresistible, and so with the two guardian spirits of Niveu and Lorca encouraging him, he managed the task. As tragedy would have it, Niveu was killed in a plane crash only a few years after she and Poulenc had premiered the sonata and in that same year, Poulenc revised the work definitively.

“The guitar makes dreams weep” is the epigraph to the slow movement, a phrase from Lorca’s poem “The Six Strings.” The next line of the poem, which Poulenc does not quote, is even more unequivocal: “The sobbing of lost souls escapes from its round mouth.”

This movement was evidently composed first, and then the finale, *Presto tragico*, with its bizarre recitativos and jarring ending. The beautiful opening movement, in which Bach-like figuration in the piano gives way to Poulenc’s characteristic melos of Parisian chanson-style melancholy, was composed last, as a prelude to the following two movements.

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To the small list of remarkable clarinet quintets composed at the end of their composers’ lives one must count that of Reger. Why is it that Mozart and Brahms before him, and Morton Feldman after him, all turned to this instrumental form to create testamentary works of profound and elusive beauty, all of them unmistakably valedictory in feeling? Something of the timbral interchange between the frictionless, vowelled sound of the clarinet and the rich brushings of bowed strings may have captured the imagination; or some vestige of pastoral or Elysian iconography associated with the clarinet; or simply its sonic delicacy and shadowy immateriality - who knows. The exceptionally wide range of the clarinet allows it to climb to the highest violin passages and descend nearly to the lowest cello notes, or to rest comfortably in the middle register with the viola, bridging the entire quartet and adding an unusually elastic polyphonic thread.

For many contemporary music lovers, it is a bit of a chore to listen to Reger’s music. This tortured, ambitious figure wrote, we may safely suggest, far too much music for anyone’s good. At the age of barely thirty his d-minor string quartet already bore the opus number 74, and at his death only thirteen years later that number had more than doubled. The individual works are almost uniformly long and dense, the product of extraordinary labor but also of a kind of fixation or addiction to putting notes on paper. His prowess as a contrapuntalist is often at the same time his downfall, as the listening experience devolves into astonishment at what he is doing and how he is doing it, impeding the willing surrender of the listener to a higher state. We find it hard to come over to the side of this obtuse, long-winded, demonstratively talented composer with his orotund and pedantic flights. What we know of his personality and driven life unfortunately corroborates much of what we intuit from the music.

Yet there are musical beauties that are unique to Reger, and the **Clarinet Quintet** is the shining glory of his output, making much of the rest of his work seem like an awkward huffing and puffing on the way to this singular conclusion, his last completed piece. The convolutions of his contrapuntalism appear chastened, or sublimated, in the gentle, non-demonstrative subtlety and plasticity of the Quintet’s pristine voice-leading. The concept of “developing variation” which Schoenberg identified in Brahms finds its own application in Reger, and can be immediately discerned in his refusal to repeat material verbatim; always there is some alteration, however slight, as themes wend their way along the extended journey of German sonata form. Reger’s chromaticism differs from the early Schoenberg in that it plays with the boundaries of tonality without ever losing faith in the premise of tonality: that there is a home, and we will eventually return to it. The return is artfully delayed, and the journey prolonged, by cadential ambiguity or obliqueness, at times a seeming evasiveness or hesitation, which has the overall effect of lengthening and suspending the inevitable. In Reger’s ongoing solo piano collections “Aus meinem Tagebuch”, published in installments from 1904 to 1912, we are in a hovering world not unlike the circular compositions of a Gurdjieff, or the Satie of “Socrate”, or the Janacek of “In the Mists” and “On an Overgrown Path”. This hovering sensation, a symptom of much *fin de siècle* art and literature, is present in the Quintet too; the music beckons us to enter an in-between state, encourages us to relinquish expectations, and simply linger.

Echoes of the Brahms Quintet are un mistakeable, and the wistfulness of motives and lightness of texture suggest Mozart’s as well, though less explicitly. The scherzo might hint at Grieg, somehow more Nordic than bustlingly Mendelssohnian. And as if the elegiac Largo movement, elaborating the poignantly beautiful second subject area of the opening movement, were not enough, the final variation movement adds its own slow movements to once more allow us to pause and think back. It is hard not to feel in these moments of suspended time the tinge of regret.

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.

Wayne Lee, a violinist originally from San Francisco, is a chamber musician equally active with the Manhattan Piano Trio and the Formosa Quartet. A member of the Trio since 2008, he has performed well over a hundred concerts with the group in the United States and Europe; they recently released their third album, a disc of Schumann and Chopin trios, for the Marquis Classics label. In 2012, he became the newest member of the Formosa Quartet, a Taiwanese-American ensemble that has won acclaim worldwide since winning the London International String Quartet Competition. Also active outside of his two groups, Mr. Lee’s recent commitments include appearances at Musique de Chambre à Giverny in France, the Olympic Music Festival near Seattle, concerto performances with the Minnesota Sinfonia, and a duo violin recital at Live from WFMT in Chicago. Mr. Lee holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the Juilliard School; his teachers have included Ronald Copes, Glenn Dieterow, and Laurie Smukler. He lives in Manhattan, where he maintains a large private teaching studio, coaches chamber music for the New York Youth Symphony, and serves as a teaching assistant at Juilliard.

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 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 will commence the inaugural year for the Formosa Quartet’s Formosa Chamber Music Festival in Taiwan.

Cellist **Charles Curtis** has been Professor for 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. He holds the Piatigorsky Prize of the New York Cello Society, and received prizes in the Naumburg, Geneva, Cassado and Viña del Mar (Chile) international competitions.