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 2003 William Primrose International Viola 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 commemorate the inaugural year for the Formosa Quartet’s Formosa Chamber Music Festival in Taiwan.

Born in Brussels, Belgian violist Dimitri Murrath has made his mark as a viola soloist on the international scene, performing regularly in venues including Jordan Hall, Kennedy Center, Wigmore Hall, Purcell Room and Royal Festival Hall (London), Kurs Hall (Tokyo), the National Auditorium (Madrid), Théâtre de la ville (Paris), and Palais des Beaux Arts (Brussels). Mr. Murrath has won numerous awards, including First Prize at the Primrose Viola Competition and Second Prize at the Tokyo International Viola Competition. Festivals include Ravina’s Steans Institute for Young Artists, Verbier Festival Academy, Caramoor, and Martha Argerich Festival. Mr. Murrath studied with Natalia Boyarsky at the Yehudi Menuhin School, David Takeno in London and with Kim Kashkashian for an Artist Diploma at New England Conservatory. He is now on the viola faculty of NEC and Longy School of Music.

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 Naumberg, Geneva, Cassado and Vila del Mar (Chile) international competitions. 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, Eliane 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.

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 concerts 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 Meifloranau, 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.
It could be that illness and pre- knowledge of an early death accelerated Lekeu’s artistic development. Otherwise it is hard to account for the range of expression and profundity of a work like the Piano Quartet. And this quite apart from the highly advanced harmonic style. Or perhaps the two domains are not so separate. Perhaps the existential urgency that permeated the dimensions of the Romanesque cathedrals, that is designed to expand and fill every last crevice, reverberating from the highest vaultings of arched passages down to the tiniest fringes of daily life. The piano and cello providing harmonic thrust and a tonal cushion, not the fully evolved play of equals that we know from the later Beethoven and Schubert. The strings provide a sort of amplification and sonority that the piano lacks, not the dualistic harmony. The first movement – another compactness observable in this work, the cross-referencing of themes from movement to movement. In the Trio section, a rustic bass drone on e-flat pervades throughout. A touchingly muted, serene slow movement, hinting at a lullaby, a coming to rest followed by nothing but silence.

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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 Cleveland 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 St. Louis Symphony, the North Carolina Symphony, the Berkshire Music Center Orchestra, the Pierre Montez Montez 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 Tynan Valley Symphony Orchestra, and the Conservatory Orchestra of Cleveland, among others. Through a generous loan from Irwin and Joan Jacobs and the Jacob Family Trust, Mr. Thayer plays on the 1708 “St Bagnaghes” Stradivarius.

Yeh Shen is the newest member of the violin section of the San Diego Symphony Orchestra. She made her orchestral debut in 2011 with the San Diego Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Jahja Ling. Yeh Shen is currently the concertmaster of the San Diego Symphony as well as concertmaster of the San Diego Opera Orchestra. She is currently the concertmaster of the San Diego Opera Orchestra. She was also on a full scholarship as a member of the Peabody Honors Quartet, with which she performed frequently with members of the Juilliard Quartet and Amadeus Quartet in U.S. and England. Born into a musical family, Shen started studying violin seriously at the age of 9 and was accepted to Shanghai Conservatory at the age of 11. At the age of 12, she was selected by the Liner School of Music to join the world-renowned violinist and pedagogue Yehudi Menuhin and frequently featured on national television. Shen is a prize winner of China National Violin Competition and Texas International Young Artist Competition and holds degrees from Peabody Conservatory of Music.