

upcoming concerts

Monday, December 15, 2014

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

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: Verklärte Nacht
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: *Sonatasatz* 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, November 29th at 7 pm on
kpbs-fm 89.5 or streaming at [kpbs.org](http://www.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>

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.

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 concertos 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 Meglioranza, 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.

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, November Seventeenth
Two Thousand and Fourteen
7:30pm

Serenade No. 2 for Two Violins and Viola, H. 216 Bohuslav Martinů (1890-1959)

Allegro
Poco andante
Allegro con brio

Sonata No. 2 for Piano and Violin in A Major, Op. 100 Johannes Brahms (1833-97)

Allegro amabile
Andante tranquillo – Vivace – Andante – Vivace di più – Andante – Vivace
Allegretto grazioso (quasi andante).

intermission

Quintet for Piano and Strings No. 2, H. 298 Bohuslav Martinů (1890-1959)

Poco allegro
Adagio
Scherzo—Poco allegretto
Largo—Allegro non troppo

Jeff Thayer, violin
Anna Skálová, violin
Che-Yen Chen, viola
Charles Curtis, cello
Reiko Uchida, piano



Bohuslav Martinů—*Serenade No. 2 for Two Violins and Viola, H. 216*

Martinů’s second serenade dates from 1932. Written in Paris, it claims two stylistic ancestors, one more immediate and apparent than the other. The first of these is Stravinsky, who dominated Paris at the time, and whose neoclassicism appealed to Martinů in its clarity, rhythmic vitality, and attention to carefully crafted sonorities. The second, less obvious, is Mendelssohn: his youthful string symphonies and chamber works are remarkably similar to Martinů’s early music in their tireless activity, pattern-work, and drive. The first movement *Allegro* is compact and focused, with repeating gestures made up of *ostinati* and asymmetrical phrases anchored by grounding cadential passages. The facile quality of the materials belies a level of craft than can be heard in the extraordinary amount of ensemble sound that arises from this diminutive collection of players. The beginning of the *Poco andante* is disarming, sounding for a moment like an early 1960’s jukebox ballad, before transforming itself into an earnest melody that soars between moments of lonesome modality and strident expression. The *Allegro con brio* is celebratory and festive, with elements of dance, carefully crafted to bring the most variety out of the group through an attention to dynamics and register.

Johannes Brahms—*Sonata No. 2 for Piano and Violin in A Major, Op. 100*

Brahms wrote his second sonata for violin and piano in 1886, while spending the summer in Thun, Switzerland. The work is known by two different nicknames: the “Thun Sonata,” clearly referring to the city of its composition, and the “Meistersinger Sonata,” a sobriquet that points to the similarity between the opening three notes of the sonata and a motive in “Walther’s Prize Song” (*Morgenlich leuchtend im rosigen Schein*) from Richard Wagner’s opera *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.

This sonata is the product of a moment of perfect union between Brahms’ lyric impulse and his technical mastery. It is an astoundingly cagey work, full of subtle, sensible compositional choices that have been gathered up off the composer’s desk and ground up into the actual melodies, so that the unfolding poetry becomes a series of smart moves designed to maximize all the elements of the piece. The musical content and its shaping influence engage in a thrilling counterpoint: along with the melodies and rhythms there is yet one more contrapuntal line, made up of the thread of one brilliant compositional choice after another.

The *Allegro amabile* shows this immediately: the movement starts weakly, presenting a melody that starts and then starts again—offering several sketched possibilities for a beginning, none especially better than another. This ambivalence undermines the opening motive in a way that turns out to be misleading, for by the time the exposition ends, the theme has not only shown itself to be extraordinarily powerful motivically, with all sorts of episodic salvos based on the motive (even dutiful contrapuntal treatments—imitation, inversion), but within a few short minutes, this opening theme has collected what seems like a lifetime of associations and memories; its later restatement is as bittersweet as a leitmotiv, hung heavy with implications and emotional mileage. Sidestepping the issue of whether Brahms was a classicist or something else, one can never get away from the fact that he was a chief exponent of organicism—a compositional approach wherein themes and sections are girded by interrelationships of keys and long-term harmonic trajectory. And thus it is all the more perplexing that harmony here seems to fade in importance. This first movement is instead about emotional evolution, affect, gesture, topic, voice, even cultural-ethnic stances (with references to Gypsy, or Roma Music), in comparison to which the standard polarity and subsequent synthesis of themes in disparate keys seems trivial. Brahms was a great friend to and influence on Dvořák, and the unique hybrid formal approach taken in the *Andante tranquillo – Vivace* can be found in Dvořák’s later chamber music as well.

This second movement fills the function of both a slow movement and a faster middle movement by splicing the materials from each. Even that process is dimensionalized, as the faster material alternates between *scherzo* and dance. Again here, the simplest choices by Brahms make all the difference. The violin theme, if taken alone, sounds as if it begins with an *anacrusis*, or upbeat. By setting it differently each time the section appears, with a varied piano beginning, the melody takes on an entirely different meaning and effect. The faster sections are altered each time they return as well, creating the impression that these plots are developing on their own, away from our ears, as separate and autonomous *intermezzi*. In the *Allegretto grazioso (quasi andante)*, there is a moving contrast between a subtle ambiguity of meter (the piano chords are NOT on the strong beats as it sounds) on the one hand, and the affective strength of the melody’s fraternal benediction on the other. The attention paid to these two levels of musical craft, one that faces in (toward itself) and one that faces out (toward us) speaks further to the composer’s genius and depth. The movement’s structure appears (again, with stunning canniness) to pun on two models, *rondo* and theme and variations, both of which depend on our recognition of the returning materials; and in the final return, the main theme is set squarely into the meter we expected at the beginning. Finally, and not surprisingly, culmination is achieved through the most efficient means, as the violin features lush and rising double-stops as the movement draws to its end.

Bohuslav Martinů—*Quintet No. 2 for Piano and Strings H. 298*

“I caution against communication because once language exists only to convey information, it is dying.”—Richard Hugo.

There is an ongoing narrative in the development of modernism that is felt in nearly all of the arts, in which the *surface* of the mode of information delivery becomes increasingly part of the artwork’s content. That is, works of art convey information to us. The various art media have their own systems of communicating that information, and one subplot of modern art is the gradual illumination of these systems, proceeding from the point at which they are barely visible, to an extreme wherein the system itself takes on the lion’s share of the artistic content. In a painting by an 18th-Century artist, the color blue might have been used simply because the sky, or the ocean, is blue. Moving ahead to early Picasso, an entire painting, or indeed a series of paintings, might have been dominated by bluish hues. Finally, Mondrian, in the full-throes of *De Stijl*, used blue as a primary color, and was uninterested in recruiting blue in service of the lie of representationalism. In the language arts, we move from prose (with the actual sound of the word being irrelevant to the idea referred to) to onomatopoeia (with the sound of the word representing some aspect of the thing being described), and into sound-poetry (like that of early 20th-Century artists Hugo Ball and Tristan Tzara), where semantic meaning virtually slips away, leaving behind pure rhythm, sonority, and gesture. Finally, music shows this continuum, as well: much “traditional” music conveys the bulk of its content through a discourse of harmony and harmonic processes, note patterns, scales, and, importantly, cultural topics and clichés (like march, fugue, and dance). While timbre and sonic details were always important in music—and, it has to be mentioned, the other arts were always animated by the sensual power of their surfaces, too—the modern age saw sound come into its own as a central, rather than incidental, part of the musical statement, culminating in any number of musical moments, from French *Musique concrète* to the work of John Cage.

Martinů’s later work shows this tension between a traditional world of discursive content and the modern sensibility of sound-centered surface, and the 2nd Piano Quintet (1944) is a perfect example. The opening of the first movement *Poco allegro* bathes a powerful harmonic flowering in a lugubrious wash of sonority before rising easily into sunnier materials that recall both Martinů’s earlier music and his Eastern European musical origins. The contrast between these two worlds makes up the specific plot of this movement, while the music is propelled by the unabated motion and asymmetry of phrase and meter for which

the composer had a lifelong penchant. The second movement *Adagio* is slow in the way a Mozart adagio is slow—with a constant mobility and drive; and as in the first movement, the conversation (as much disputation as consensus) between Martinů’s traditional origins and newer, evocative harmonies and gesture, reveals the personal negotiation that lay beneath his musical growth. This Janusian tone is maintained in the *Scherzo—Poco Allegretto*, as a triple-time, highly syncopated and often piano-centered first section is characterized by a familiar chiaroscuro of harmonies and gestures before digressing into a darkly lyrical trio section made up of chordal melody and Nachtmusik perturbations. The final movement, *Largo—Allegro ma non troppo*, is made up of a set of two repeating moments: singing, autumnal spans that sustain dissonance for a surprising period before erupting into, in the first case, an optimistic busy-ness, and in the second, a piano cadenza joined in its final passages by the strings for a dark *scherzando* coda.

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.

Anna Skálová graduated with a Performer Diploma from Indiana University in 2012 under the tutelage of Jaime Laredo and with a Bachelor’s degree from the University of Michigan in 2011 where she studied with Stephen Shipp. Upon graduation from the U of M, she was awarded the prestigious Augustus Stanley Award for distinguished work in music. Anna had served as concertmaster of the University of Michigan Symphony Orchestra, Indiana University Orchestra, New York String Orchestra and Michigan Philharmonic, with which she also appeared as a soloist. In 2008 Anna obtained the Grand Prize in the Michigan American String Teachers Association Competition and First Prize at the ASTA Competition in Atlanta. She has won the concerto competitions of the Marquette Symphony Orchestra (Michigan) and the University of Michigan. Skálová appeared as a soloist in the 8th Emirates International Peace Music Festival in Dubai. Anna is a native of the Czech Republic and joined the San Diego Symphony in 2012.

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