

## upcoming concerts

### Monday, December 7, 2015

Mozart: Piano Quartet in E-flat major, K. 493  
Mozart: Trio for Viola, Clarinet and Piano, K. 498, "Kegelstatt"  
Mozart: Divertimento for String Trio, K. 563

### Monday, March 14, 2016

Beethoven: String Quartet in F major, Opus 95  
Shostakovich (arr. Derevianko): Symphony Nr. 15 for Piano Trio and Percussion, Opus 141a

### Monday, May 9, 2016

Schubert: String Trio in B-flat, D. 581  
Mendelssohn: Piano Trio in d minor, Opus 49  
Schumann: Piano Quartet in E-flat major, Opus 47

Artistic Director – Charles Curtis  
Recording Engineer – Andrew Munsey  
Program Notes – Keir GoGwilt  
Program Associate – Rachel Beetz  
Promotions Design – Jennifer Bewerse  
Production Manager – Jessica Flores

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.

Violinist **ERIK CARLSON** has performed as a soloist and with many chamber and orchestral ensembles throughout Europe and the Americas. He is a highly active performer of contemporary music and has had works written for him by numerous composers, including Christian Wolff, Georges Aperghis, Jürg Frey, Peter Ablinger, Charles Wuorinen, and Tom Johnson. Erik is an enthusiastic proponent of interdisciplinary collaboration, and performs frequently with dancers, poets, and film. This year Erik joined the music faculty at UCSD. His past and present ensemble memberships include the International Contemporary Ensemble, the Talea Ensemble, the Trinity Bach Players, the New York Miniaturist Ensemble (of which he was the founder) and the Theatre of Eternal Music String Ensemble. He has been featured on many recordings, ranging from violin concertos of Antoine Beuger and Aldo Clementi, to chamber music of Milton Babbitt and Iannis Xenakis, to solo works of Johannes Kreidler and Zoltán Jeney. Also a composer, Erik has had his musical compositions performed in a wide variety of venues.

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, Athens and Los Angeles. 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 City.

# camera lucida

chamber music concerts at UC San Diego  
Monday, November 9th, 2015 7:30pm  
Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

Fantasia 1	Henry Purcell	
<i>Satz</i> for String Trio, Opus Posthumous		Anton Webern
Fantasia 4	Henry Purcell	
Fantasia 3	Henry Purcell	
Double Canon	Raoul Dufy In Memoriam	Igor Stravinsky
Fantasia 5	Henry Purcell	
Three Pieces for String Quartet		Igor Stravinsky
Fantasia 2	Henry Purcell	
Fantasia 6	Henry Purcell	
<i>Satz</i> for String Trio, Opus Posthumous		Anton Webern
Fantasia 7	Henry Purcell	

## *intermission*

String Quartet in B-flat major, Opus 67	Johannes Brahms
Vivace	
Andante	
Agitato (Allegretto non troppo)	
Poco Allegretto con Variazioni	

Jeff Thayer, violin  
Erik Carlson, violin  
Che-Yen Chen, viola  
Charles Curtis, violoncello

The first half of tonight’s program weaves together a number of short pieces. Embedded within Henry Purcell’s “Fantasias” (1680) are Stravinsky’s “Three Short Pieces” (1914) and “Double Canon” (1959) for string quartet, as well as Webern’s posthumously published “*Satz*” for string trio (1925). Presenting Purcell’s court music of Restoration era England as the textual web holding together works in the throes of musical modernism (“*Satz*” and “Double Canon”) seems an unlikely move, and yet there is a definite symmetry to the program. Whereas Purcell’s music is part of the 17th century movement toward an expanded awareness of harmony, the pieces by Webern and Stravinsky respond in different ways to the dissolution of traditional harmony. Missing from this first half is a pivotal shift—19th century Romanticism—in which more sophisticated understandings of harmonic principles and the rise of instrumental music (seen, for example, in Purcell’s “Fantasias”) developed into a music-historical and theoretical self-consciousness. This self-consciousness was apparent in a growing awareness of the musical “repertoire” and the driving imperative of musical progress. The reflexivity of theory and practice, history and progress, will be on display in the second half with Johannes Brahms’s String Quartet Opus 67 (1875).

The structuring principle of counterpoint holds together Purcell, Stravinsky, and Webern in the first half. Counterpoint is a compositional technique in which multiple lines sound together while maintaining melodic and rhythmic independence. The “Fantasias” were originally written for a consort of viols and feature an equality and independence of “voices.” Stravinsky’s “Double Canon” takes a twelve-tone row and performs its multiple inversions and transpositions as a polyphonic texture. In Webern’s short piece, lines are fragmentary to the point of disintegration, but the organizing logic is still one of independent voices playing related musical material. In this contrapuntal logic, any possibility of musical “depth” is given not by the sonorous quality of an individual voice against a subordinate texture, but by an array of equal and independent strands. In this sense, “depth” arises as it does in the visual: through the presence of multiple perspectives (parallax vision) and the displacement of the musical figure (or the object given to sight) in movement.

Stravinsky’s “Three Short Pieces” is the odd piece out in this first half, for it is not contrapuntal. Instead, motivic material is presented in rhythmic unison of voices, or juxtaposed in different groupings of instruments. In the first piece, Stravinsky’s take on a Russian folk song is played by the first violin, over a rhythmic motor given by the second violin and cello, with a *ponticello* pedal tone in the viola completing the strange synthesis of the rustic and machinic. The third piece includes a theme that sounds remarkably similar to the “Dies Irae” plainchant in dynamic and melodic contour. The “Three Short Pieces” thus absorb vocal music—folk songs and the “Dies Irae”—into an instrumental, wordless texture.

In Thomas Mann’s *Doctor Faustus*, the fictional composer Adrian Leverkühn (a character inspired by Arnold Schoenberg) recounts a lesson with his composition teacher:

‘Voice’ is a very good word [to describe notes comprising a singular line], for it reminds us that music was song long before it was anything else—first one voice and then many—and that the chord is the result of polyphonic singing; and that means counterpoint, means an interweaving of independent voices that, to a certain degree and according to changeable laws of tastes, show regard for each other. I think one should never see a chordal combination of notes as anything but the result of voices in motion and should honor the voice that lies within each note of the chord—not honor the chord, however, but despise it as subjectively arbitrary so long as it cannot prove it has arisen as a vocal line, that is, polyphonically. The chord is not a harmonic drug, but is rather polyphony in and of itself, and the notes that make it up are voices.

While the account is fictional, much of the theoretical opining of Leverkühn and Kretzschmar (Leverkühn’s fictional music teacher) Mann adapted from consultations with T.W. Adorno. The “emancipation of dissonance” was largely connected to contrapuntal technique, vertical chords being secondary to the movement of individual

lines. And in Leverkühn’s monologue, he links, historically and metaphorically, the individual line to the singing voice.

Whereas Purcell’s *Fantasias* distinguish themselves in European music of the 17th century for prioritizing the instrumental over the vocal, the return to contrapuntal techniques in musical modernism is premised on a metaphorical engagement with the voice. The “Three Short Pieces” approach the voice via the historical reference to Gregorian chant, and through an ethnographic and nationalistic interest in the folk songs of early 20th century Russia.

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Brahms’s third string quartet was composed in 1875, at the height of self-consciousness in the European tradition of music. In this period, theorists and critics such as Hugo Riemann, Eduard Hanslick, and Franz Brendel, were in the midst of disputes regarding the very identity of the German music tradition, which through historical and theoretical reflection had written its own centrality into the narrative of musical progress. Brahms was brought into these debates as a central figure, presenting compositional innovation within more traditional harmonies and forms (such as the symphony or the string quartet). In this regard, he was seen as a viable alternative to the “New German School,” coined by Franz Brendel, and heralding the works of Berlioz, Liszt, and Wagner. Richard Taruskin, in the *Oxford History of Western Music*, details Brendel’s account of musical progress:

Brendel’s own way of putting it was to say that “the essence of today’s art” can no longer be realized in “the old naturalistic way”—that is, instinctively or intuitively by musicians out to please their patrons or their listeners—but only with “the intervention of theory and criticism,” and by “art’s presupposing theory and criticism within itself.” The age of creative innocence was over; self-conscious theory, based on a high consciousness of purpose and of history, was the only true path to the future.

Brahms’s chamber music presented the antithesis to the values of the New German School, cultivated as it was for private performance in the wealthy homes of connoisseurs who considered themselves as possessing some level of musical expertise. Taruskin indicates that such a focus on chamber music was in some way reactionary to the “publicness” of the symphonic genre, and to the increasing urbanization characteristic of industrial Europe. While a certain nostalgia may characterize the genre, the compositional methods employed by Brahms were extraordinarily innovative, to the point that his chamber music was compared to the music of Wagner’s *Ring Cycle*:

One of Dahlhaus’s most fertile insights was the observation that by the late nineteenth century all “serious” composers (as he put it; perhaps we’d better say all German composers) had become “miniaturists.” That is, all did their thematic thinking-in-music in terms of motifs rather than full-blown melodies...To drive the point home, Dahlhaus proclaimed the two seminal practitioners of the new motivic “miniaturism” to have been the Wagner of the Ring and the Brahms of the chamber music.

Dahlhaus thus neatly ties together the two camps—the traditional and the avant-garde—through the similarity of their miniaturism, a technique that is certainly on display in the third string quartet. The opening motif, with its characteristic upward leaps (first a perfect fourth and then a minor sixth) is re-arranged in each following movement, most clearly in the opening of the final movement, which could be read as a simple elaboration of the material. Even in the second movement, which presents the most continuous melody (and thus contradicts Dahlhaus’s characterization of miniaturism), the same gambit of the sequential perfect fourth and minor sixth upward leaps can be heard. The finale, however, confirms Dahlhaus’s description: motivic material from the first and last movements are increasingly fragmented and seamlessly strung together.

Dahlhaus’s comparison again re-introduces the familiar oscillation between the vocal and the instrumental: Brahms’s continuation of instrumental forms, and Wagner’s attempt at a totalizing artistic effect through the operatic. This dialectic of the vocal and instrumental is fraught with a history of abstraction and domination, seen in Immanuel Kant’s assertion in *Critique of Judgment* (1790) that instrumental music was a proponent of the “moral” and “rational” character, of “pure beauty.” The characterization of instrumental music as more beautiful for being abstracted from the human body is a signal moment in the elevation of German culture to the point of a transcendent and universal beauty. Such an apotheosis of the German tradition reached greater heights in the nationalism of the later 19th century, raising the stakes of classical music as a site of political contestation. This conflict between instrumental and vocal forms was representative of the theorized and cultivated abstraction of German music as universal, and yet for that very reason easily employed for nationalistic means.

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Perhaps it is characteristic of our post-modern situation that we can find reason to come together by means of a chamber music concert that weaves together a textual web of musical pieces, thematically linked by fragmentation, counterpoint, and the opposition of the instrumental and the vocal. If Brahms’s era was characterized by a nascent historical and theoretical self-awareness, by a fractious contestation of musical identity characteristic of modernism, today the inundation of musical forms and styles takes on a schizophrenic quality. If Webern’s frightening and fragmentary counterpoint of instrumental “voices” presented the alienation of the modern subject, his “*Satz*” is presently placed as an object of curiosity among others, torn from its historical context and patched back into the post-modern music-cultural fabric. “*Satz*” is prescient in that Webern abandoned it, most likely in order to write his properly dodecaphonic “String Trio” opus 20. Today we rehearse and often celebrate the incomplete, the fragmentary: the very abandonment of the modernist project.

At this point, attention is turned to the figure of the performer. The performer remains as a cultivated vestige of a division of labor between composition, performance, administration, and criticism. It is through this figure that we can revive and juxtapose Purcell, Stravinsky, and Webern on the same quilt, such that one is not cast in relief from the other. The performer is perhaps the figure *par excellence* of post-modernity, removed from historical limitations, able to present his/her art in union with any variety of historical periods or styles. Yet, rather than smoothing over these differences, rather than simply presenting performances as musical contributions adding to the sum total of the production of culture, it would be timely to consider musical works and performances as embedded within another text. This text consists of the discursive modalities that regulate our reception and enjoyment of musical works and performances: for example, a specific and local history of instrumental music and the cultivation of its universal status underlying the smooth surface given to us by a thematically organized concert program. Engagement with this other text underlying the very presentation of musical works and performances is what offers the performer (and by extension, the listener) a respite from the unproblematic celebration of the post-modern. It offers the possibility that one might be both utterly absorbed by the musical work and at the same time stand apart from it. In one of his countless dialectical formulations, Adorno lays out such an imperative: “Nothing less is asked of the thinker today than that he should be at every moment both within things and outside them.”

– Keir GoGwilt

**KEIR GOGWILT** is a first year Master’s student in the Integrative Studies area of the Department of Music. He was born in Edinburgh and grew up in New York City. As a violinist he has performed extensively in North America, Europe, Asia, and South America.