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 Meglioranza, 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.

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.

San Diego Symphony Orchestra Associate Concertmaster **WESLEY PRECOURT** has appeared as a soloist with numerous orchestras around North America and is an avid recitalist, recording artist and new music collaborator. He made his solo debut with the San Diego Symphony in February 2016 and has been presented by Art of Elan, the Musical Merit Foundation, First United Methodist Churches of San Diego and Escondido and the La Jolla Athenaeum's concert series. Wesley was featured at the dedication ceremony of the Heifetz Studio at The Colburn Conservatory where he also collaborated with Paul Neubauer, Ida Levin, Ronald Leonard, and Paul Coletti. He has also won awards at international competitions, including the Spotlight Awards of Los Angeles, the NFAA ARTS Awards and the Kingsville International Competitions, among others. Wesley is a graduate of the Thornton School of Music at USC and a recipient of the Artist Diploma at the Colburn Conservatory.

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 UC San Diego 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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Monday, November 7, 2022 - 7:30 p.m.
Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

Piano Trio in E-flat major, Hob XV:30 — Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Allegro moderato
Andante con moto
Presto

String Quartet in F major, Opus 18 No. 1 — Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Allegro con brio
Adagio affettuoso ed appassionato
Scherzo: Allegro molto
Allegro

intermission

Quintet for Piano and Strings in A Major, Op. 81 — Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Allegro, ma non tanto
Dumka: Andante con moto
Scherzo (Furiant): Molto vivace
Finale: Allegro

Reiko Uchida, piano
Jeff Thayer and Wes Precourt, violins
Che-Yen Chen, viola
Charles Curtis, violoncello

UC San Diego
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES
Department of Music

Haydn: Piano Trio in E-flat major, Hob XV:30

Haydn's piano trios offer a unique way of tracking his development as a composer. He composed a total of 45 trios for piano, violin, and cello, an output dwarfing that of Beethoven and Mozart. They were composed in two distinct periods: the early trios (totaling 17) were composed mostly in the late 1760's when the composer was in his 30's; the late trios date from mid-1784 to 1797 and contain more than a few masterpieces. Tonight's is the second in a set of two trios (both in E-flat major) dating to 1797. Like so many of the other late trios, it manages to be both intellectually fascinating and emotionally evocative. Logic and wit both seem to flow from the composer's masterful manipulation of musical structure, always aimed toward expressive ends. By creating and subverting expectations at both small and large time-scales, Haydn immerses the listener in a continuously engaging narrative of ideas. He does all this with an extreme motivic frugality: almost every theme in every movement can be derived from an ascending or descending scale (though often cleverly concealed in elaborate figuration).

Unlike Haydn's quartet writing, the trios rely on a very clear hierarchy of instruments, with the piano occupying the most important role, followed by the violin, and with the cello often either filling out the harmony or doubling the left hand of the pianist. Yet Haydn allows the instruments always to emerge with great sensitivity to their timbral characteristics: when the violin answers the piano, the affect changes, and when the cello enters the high tenor range, a special ardor is felt. The beautiful slow movement, a subtly shifting ceremonial march in triple time, puts these differences on poignant display.

There are moments, particularly toward the ends of the outer movements, when the pianist has extended, cadenza-like solo passages, invoking a kind of concerto-in-miniature. Throughout the three movements the piano seems to consistently take charge by being the first to introduce new ideas and steer the music into new directions. When, in the first episode of the finale, the music shifts suddenly and violently from E-flat major to E-flat minor, it is the piano that emphasizes the unexpected new harmony. However, unlike in concerto writing, or even in the string quartet, one does not have the sense that each instrument is acting as a kind of character in a play. Rather, they each seem to be serving the music itself as parts of a whole according to their own means, and when the character of the music changes, it seems to flow from within the innermost nature of the music, rather than from the willfulness of the performers.

Beethoven: String Quartet in F major, Opus 18 No. 1

The six quartets which make up Beethoven's Opus 18 were composed between 1798 and 1800, and constitute Beethoven's first foray into the genre regarded as the pinnacle of chamber music. The fact that Beethoven waited as long as he did to embark upon the epic saga that would become his sixteen string quartets suggests a certain measure of prudence, as well as a reflection of Beethoven's famous perfectionism. By the time he began work on Opus 18, Beethoven had already demonstrated a command of chamber music with his early string trios and piano trios, which feel like something of a preface or preparation for Opus 18. Thus Opus 18 represents not only Beethoven's embarkation on a transformative journey, but also his self-conscious stepping-forward into the company of the masters.

Opus 18 also encourages us as listeners to take a broader view of the historical evolution of chamber music as a whole, to observe and enjoy its unique qualities as a genre. Chamber music occupies a unique niche whose function is less about profit, prestige, the glorification of God, or social advancement, than it is simply a celebration and exploration of music itself, for music lovers, in an intimate setting. The turn from the 18th to the 19th century saw the rapid evolution of chamber music in the hands of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, but just as much in the hands of the lesser aristocracy and emerging bourgeoisie, who were its intended users, both as practicing musicians and as listeners, and, perhaps most tellingly, as both at the same time. Chamber music must be understood as a social act, as participation; not as spectacle.

The quartet designated Opus 18 Nr. 1 is apparently the second of the six quartets to have been composed, but may have in fact been the last to be completed, given that the piece was completely worked over and revised in minute detail prior to publication. The earlier version is the one sent in friendship to Karl Amenda, violinist associated with the court of Count von Lobkowitz, the dedicatee of the set. Why Beethoven elected to place this quartet at the head of the suite of Opus 18 quartets is a matter of speculation. Perhaps it is due to the rather sensational second movement, which according to Beethoven's communication with Amenda evokes the burial-vault scene from Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. In this d-minor fantasy of death and lost love, an expanse of bleakness gives way to outpourings of despair and rage, fashioned in musical forms that were utterly unprecedented for the time. Here the 18th century truly gives way to the 19th, and Beethoven advances what will be one of his most memorable characteristics: the expression of extremes of subjective emotion, tearing at the very limits of music to make place for his uncontrollable need to externalize his own inner psychic states. In the remaining quick movements, classical grace and Haydnesque wit vie with Beethoven's proprietary unruliness. The music is oriented around shocks and surprises, pushing and pulling this way and that, so that one is constantly being tripped up, by a new key, a sudden sforzando, a sudden piano subito, some further and unanticipated elaboration of the theme. A kind of one-upmanship performed against himself, outdoing his own incessant newness with ever more genial interventions.

Dvořák: Quintet for Piano and Strings in A major, Opus 81

Although the crafted instants of Dvořák's opus 81 piano quintet countenance an assured, middle-aged hand, the piece grows from calculated doubt and attempted revision: Dvořák began the work as a reconsideration of an early work, his opus 5 quintet. Despite accruing middle-aged reservation, the composer's initial reaction to the earlier work's premiere was not especially ambivalent – he destroyed the manuscript immediately, which left him in the awkward position of retrieving it from a friend fifteen years later when he decided to revise. But ambivalence breeds, and the composer soon found himself doubting his doubts enough to begin composing a new piano quintet altogether.

The quintet is a return. Because of success in England, Dvořák stopped composing chamber music and spent most of 1882-6 completing several professional, meticulous commissions; then, with the proceeds, he bought a vacation home in the Czech countryside and sank back into the private world of chamber music. He resumed where he left off, with a folk- infused style from the late 1870s that smells more like the sun than the lamp. It expresses its release from contract through a systole-diastole of frenetic development and lyrical pause.

Although tactless continental circles did without Dvořák on political grounds – there is a reason why his success was a British success – his stylistic allegiances and compositional tendencies betray a great debt to the German tradition: As a teacher, he recommended his students learn from the works of Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, and Wagner, and he echoed Schumann's interpretation of Beethoven and Jean Paul when he declared composition "[the ability] to make a great deal – a very great deal – out of nothing much." This debt came, predictably, with politically motivated cognitive dissonance, and, in an 1894 magazine article, he described his favorite Schubertisms as "Slavic" habits. Nationalisms aside, Schubert's style is an especially apt comparison for the quintet, as both composers have a penchant for the casually discursive variation of lyrical melodies that need only occasional attention; also as in Schubert, this compositional mode balances a disruptive Beethovenian temper that mulches tunes into hallways through a form.

The second movement, though, is Czech through and through. It is a dumka, a pan-slavic ballad of thoughtful and melancholic affect first popularized through the 1873 lecture collaboration of Ukrainian composer-musicologist Mykola Lysenko and blind troubador (kobzar) Ostap Veresai. The most palpable impacts of this genre are harmonic – the collections of pitches are clearly modal, rather than tonal – and orchestrational – several textures employ extended use of bandura-like plucking. It is also here that this casually discursive, melodic style, by becoming even more casual still, becomes something all together different, that the entire equation between music and language, as in Beethoven's tiny abyss, fails. As Vladimir Jankélévitch writes in Music and the Ineffable: We have refused music the power of discursive development: but we have not refused the experience of subjective time.... And yet this wandering is always something a bit dream-like and nocturnal... It's called becoming! Fluent, but not itinerant: such is music.

The third-movement scherzo bears striking resemblance to the second part of Schubert's f minor piano fantasy, with a theme that alternates between swift, upward spins and downward turns in strict time. But Dvořák trades Schubert's melancholy for carefree whirling, and the molto vivace tempo needs to collapse into reverie for a center section that remembers the second movement's plucked and burbled textures. The playful finale owes its meter and rhythm to another composer often regarded as Dvořák's progenitor, Smetana. In the middle of a lovingly choreographed dance, a sudden pocket of reverie emerges, remembering the second movement and its modes, as if discovering something there all along – an aside: it is rare that revisited layers are present enough to make the lineage meaningful, but it makes sense in this context to point out that Harry Rowe Shelley, a student of Dvořák, taught American composer Charles Ives. At last, the music reacts to this discovery by erupting into song.