

# *camera lucida*

chamber music concerts at uc san diego

2012-2013 season

sponsored by the sam b. ersan chamber music fund

tuesday, may fourteenth  
two thousand and thirteen  
7:30pm

String Quintet in B-Flat, KV 174

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-91)

*Allegro moderato*  
*Adagio*  
*Menuetto ma allegretto*  
*Allegro*

Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 in D Major

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

*Allegro*  
*Affetuoso*  
*Allegro*

intermission

String Quartet No. 15 in A minor, Op. 132

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

*Assai sostenuto-Allegro*  
*Allegro ma non tanto*  
*Molto adagio*  
*Alla Marcia, assai vivace*  
*Allegro appassionato*

Jessica Sindell, flute  
Jeff Thayer, violin  
Tereza Stanislav, violin  
Pei-Chun Tsai, violin  
Anna Skálová, violin

Che-Yen Chen, viola  
Chi-Yuan Chen, viola  
Charles Curtis, cello  
Jory Herman, bass  
Takae Ohnishi, harpsichord

## Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart - String Quintet in B-Flat, KV 174

The viola quintet is a genre whose early examples were fairly young when Mozart began his B-flat Quintet in the spring of 1773. These initial explorations--by composers like Sammartini and Johann Christian Bach--were likely known to Mozart; KV 174 seems to have been modeled on a quintet--a *Notturmo* in C--written earlier the same year by Mozart's friend Michael Haydn, whose work he admired. The B-flat Quintet gives no hint of the depth that would characterize his later works in the genre, though there is evidence that Mozart took the piece seriously enough to rework the later movements and to present a copy of the work as a gift to the dramatist Baron Otto von Gemmingen-Homberg in Munich in 1778.

The opening *Allegro Moderato* shows a young Mozart pushing against the genial boundaries of the genre's divertimento roots, exploring a drama inherent in the layout of the players (the first violin's opening melody is echoed by the first viola) and creating a form whose themes seem to grow out of other themes (the second subject, in the cello, seems to be an elaboration of its accompaniment to the movement's principal melody). One can note *empfindsamer Stil* contrasts in mood, as in the surprising caesura and dark chromaticism that introduce the exposition's closing group.

The *Adagio*, introduced by a kind of *Wiegenlied*, features a striking and effective use of mutes, borrowed directly from Haydn. This tender rocking movement shows the sixteen year-old Mozart already adept at crafting mobile and expansive slow movements, with highly expressive solo and duet utterances at phrase endings.

The *divertissement* origins of 18th century chamber music reappear in the *Menuetto*, which features a lighthearted conversation between the first violin and first viola during the first section, later including the respective seconds during a sportive, imitative trio.

The final movement is joyful and exuberant, with another particular nod, in the running sixteenth-notes, to Haydn's own finale. As the movement progresses, Mozart's ability to weave detailed and clear contrapuntal textures seems to grow, as each section is characterized by increasingly effective instrumental writing and a cumulative revisiting of themes.

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## Johann Sebastian Bach - Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 in D Major

There is no better evidence of the power of fashion to dictate musical popularity than the lack of favor met by Bach's music during his life. His mastery of counterpoint and its craft, powerful as it is to us, seemed to arrive on the scene just a generation or two late. Tastes had changed, and, as Glenn Gould has noted, "Fugues were out and minuets were in." Further testimony of this fact, equally incomprehensible through the lens of our perspective, is the tepid reception the Brandenburg Concerti were given by their dedicatee, the Margrave of Brandenburg-Schwedt, in 1721. Despite the centrality of these works in the canon of Baroque instrumental music, there is no indication they were played at the Brandenburg court or ever in Bach's lifetime.

The Fifth Brandenburg Concerto figures in one of the most engaging anecdotes we have relating to Bach's keyboard talents. While as a composer Bach may not have been regarded as much more than a competent craftsman, his keyboard skills were widely known, and he was often in demand to demonstrate them. One such exhibition was to take place at the electoral court of Dresden in 1717, where a large and esteemed audience was gathered to witness an extraordinary spectacle: Bach had agreed to meet for a duel--a "musical contest for superiority" with the famed French keyboard virtuoso, Louis Marchand. This was no simple match between musicians, but a battle between French and German music cultures.

The Dutch scholar Pieter Dirksen has suggested that Bach wrote this concerto specifically for the contest, designing it to demonstrate his keyboard skills. While there is no conclusive proof this contest ever actually took place, certain aspects of the concerto bear the story out: Bach had two colleagues—a flutist and a violinist, the concerto's other solo instruments--in the Dresden Capelle. Moreover, the second movement is built around a theme written by Marchand. Finally, the scale and difficulty of the keyboard writing are unmatched in any of Bach's other concerti, including those for solo keyboard. While we might relish the idea of Marchand sitting captive, while Bach unsheathed his musical foil from a scabbard made of his own themes and ritornelli, the Frenchman didn't hear the piece. According to the story, when the servants went to fetch Marchand from his room, it was found he had secretly left during the early morning hours!

The *Allegro* first movement begins with a roving, lengthy ritornello made up of pairs of repeated notes, moving quickly into an episode for the *concertino* group that highlights the harpsichordist. As in most of Bach's concerti, the boundaries between *ripieno* group passages and solo episodes are provocatively blurred, maximizing the drama between group and soloist that is the essence of the concerto principle. Particularly remarkable is the extended *cadenza* for the harpsichord—again, presumably written for Bach himself. Many scholars see in the scope and virtuosity of this movement the beginnings of the solo keyboard concerto that would later be so important to Mozart and Beethoven.

The second movement, marked *affetuoso*, or “with great feeling,” features only the solo group, and thus includes in the concerto a tiny piece of chamber music—transverse flute, violin, and keyboard—that could easily pass for a slow movement from one of Bach's sonatas.

The final *Allegro* begins ingeniously--the *concertino* group continuing the same piece of chamber music, with a lively gigue. As the *ripieno* enters, we return to a landscape dominated by the harpsichord. A minor key episode interrupts the dance and introduces a related theme stated and developed by the soloists individually, launching an immense development which features both subjects, interspersed with extended passages for the solo keyboard. This movement is among Bach's freest and most complex stretches of music, piling up masterful displays of motivic development, finely wrought solo/group interaction--even shifts of function *within* the solo group--and brilliant virtuoso instrumental writing, organized via a harmonic structure of utter clarity.

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### Ludwig van Beethoven - String Quartet No. 15 in A minor, Op. 132

Music history students know that Europe's musical timeline changes considerably at the beginning of the 19th Century: Mozart is dead, Haydn soon to be--and everywhere there is evidence of a new Romantic impulse, with images of nature and night, literature, and the solitary, alienated protagonist of Schubert's song-cycles. Another species shouldered its way noisily into the world at this time: music critics, in multitudes, each of them hungry for interesting topics to set them apart from one another. They were given a gift in Beethoven's late work. This was--and remains--bizarre and difficult music, music that seems to beg for an interpretive guide, a polemic, a mythology.

What most writers on Beethoven's late work seem to see is an opposition or conflict—the work moves in different, and contradictory, directions: unity vs. disunity, progress vs. history, integration vs. annihilation. While at one level these works create great architectural frameworks of motivic concision and organic structure (E.T.A. Hoffmann's “from a single bud to a beautiful tree”), they do this beneath a surface that seems to be littered with the historicized detritus of Beethoven's musical memory. In the late music, one encounters all manner of references--*stile antico*, popular and street music, bits of opera, and various genre-specific musical devices--ripped from their original contexts and grafted onto the musical

surface, with no handy guide to their poetic function. The contradiction and confusion that arise from the two opposing trends—the progressive, utopian coherence of underground architecture on the one hand, and a seemingly distracted and artificial surface pastiche of conventions and clichés on the other—confounded the critics of Beethoven's day and continue to incite battles between those listeners and scholars who see in the late style either a *positive*, inclusive, universal view of Beethoven's world, or a *negative*, even apocalyptic view, marked by artifice and estrangement.

The first movement of Op. 132 begins oddly--a strict *ricercare*. The cello introduces a four-note motive of g#-a-f-e that perhaps recalls the B-A-C-H motive which appears in *The Art of Fugue*. The implications of this motive are astonishing—it unifies what seem like wildly scattered ideas throughout the entire quartet, though that fact is easily missed by even the most attentive listener. Immediately we begin to pass through a variety of musical topics and their modular reordering: a cadenza for the first violin, a march, pastoral, fantasy--this movement can easily be heard as a series of moments that allude to various aspects of music history known to Beethoven. This structure appears to have two separate, contrary expositions, or developments, or recapitulations, such are the analyses offered by generations of confused music writers. Certainly there are a sufficient number of confusing references to push us further on into the quartet in search of their explanation.

The second movement seems odd in a different way: rather than the series of individual modules we encountered in the first movement, we now have an entire movement that seems to be a critique of the minuets one encountered in the quartets of Haydn and Mozart. The first section--disturbingly genteel in the light of the content of the first movement—is an otherworldly dance, whose first and second endings suspend an otherwise omnipresent downbeat. One of the starkest (and unexplained) references in the late work is heard here in the trio: a hurdy-gurdy, the sort one might encounter on a European street corner, complete with drones that wheeze to life. This is followed immediately by an even more garish take on triple-time dance, whose inescapable downbeat is actually written on beat three in a massive and almost unnoticeable syncopation, after which we encounter an ominous unison declamation that sounds lifted from the scene of an unheard opera.

The third movement is the spiritual and affective center of the work—*Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit, in der Lydischen Tonart*—"Hymn of Thanksgiving to the Deity from a Convalescent, in the Lydian Mode." Written after recovering from a long illness in 1824-25, Beethoven resurrects an antique pitch-world, the Lydian mode on F, long since associated with either church music or counterpoint exercises. The composer sets his own hymn in the form of a 17th century *fantasia* or *capriccio*, older genres in which voices enter one by one, in strict imitation, building up to a large cadence, and repeating the process again and again. Interspersed with these textures, which become gradually more florid, until the harmony is almost non-functional, are sudden exaltations in D major, heard as the joyous return to life of the rescued—the physical world welcoming the convalescent back from the realm of near-death.

The *Alla Marcia* seems to wrestle with vestiges from the first two movements--a metrically dysfunctional march combined with a directionless, imitative minuet. This gives way to more opera—a recitative for the first violin. One can perceive here Beethoven's later compositional method of composing using large brushstrokes of topic—opera, dance, counterpoint, finally here *cadenza*—as a way of pasting surface materials onto structural areas.

The last movement seems to be something of a return to normalcy: a coherent and expository rondo in A minor. Again, however, there are episodic forays into otherworldly dance. The second of these becomes more aggressive and disturbing, and the returns to the main theme become less convincing, even hysterical. It seems that the only way to finish this massive structure is, in a sense, from without--to whip the music into an *accelerando* and to return to the tonic major with an extended rocking coda.

## about the performers (continued)

**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 Shipps. 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 in 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 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. Summer of 2013 will commence the inaugural year for the Formosa Quartet's Formosa Chamber Music Festival in Taiwan.

**Chi-Yuan Chen** joined the viola section of the San Diego Symphony in 2006. A top-prize winner of both the 2000 Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition and the 2004 International Paris Viola Competition Ville d'Avray, Mr. Chen is recognized as one of the leading violists from Taiwan and in 1999, made his American concerto debut in Boston performing Walton's Viola Concerto. Mr. Chen is also an active chamber music performer. A graduate of New England Conservatory he received both Bachelor and Master degrees there and also holds a Doctoral of Musical Arts degree from Stony Brook University in New York. His principal teachers are Ben Lin, James Dunham, Martha Katz, Katherine Murdock and Nobuko Imai. A violist of the Great Wall String Quartet which resides in Beijing's Great Wall International Summer Music Academy, Mr. Chen gives master-classes frequently throughout Asia and is on the faculty of the San Diego State University.

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. 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. Curtis is artistic director of San Diego's Camera Lucida chamber music ensemble and concert series.

**Jory Herman** is the newest member of the San Diego Symphony Double Bass Section. He recently finished performing a season with the National Symphony in Washington D.C. A native of Houston, he received both a Bachelors and Masters of Music Performance in an Honors 5-year degree program at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. After this, he spent three seasons with the New World Symphony in Miami Beach under the direction of Michael Tilson Thomas. The awards he has received for solo competitions include second place in the 2007 ISB Competition and finalist with the Corpus Christi Young Artists Competition. His primary teachers have been Paul Ellison, Dennis Whittaker, and Andrew Moritz. He has participated in numerous orchestra festivals including Tanglewood Music Festival, Colorado Music Festival, Spoleto USA Music Festival, Pacific Music Festival, and the Youth Orchestra of the Americas. In the summer of 2010, Mr. Herman was selected for the Recollets International Artist Residency in Paris to study video and experiment with works for Double Bass and Multimedia.

Hailed as "an expressive champion" by the Cleveland Plain Dealer and "superb" by the Oregonian, **Jessica Sindell** was recently appointed principal flute of the Oregon Symphony at the age of 22. A graduate of the Eastman School of Music as a student of Bonita Boyd, Ms. Sindell has performed with the Eastman Philharmonic, the Eastman Wind Ensemble, Musica Nova, the Buffalo Symphony Orchestra and the Ohio Light Opera. At Eastman, she was a concerto competition winner and performed as soloist with the Eastman Wind Orchestra. She is a first place winner of the Alexander and Buono International Flute Competition where she was invited to perform at Carnegie Hall. She later attended the San Francisco Conservatory of Music as a graduate student of Timothy Day. Ms. Sindell was the recipient of consecutive fellowships to participate in the Aspen Music Festival & School during the summers of 2011 through 2013. In 2012, she also performed at the Lake Tahoe Music Festival and as principal flute at the Mainly Mozart Festival in San Diego. She's been invited to perform chamber music in the Camera Lucida series in San Diego, in Portland's Chamber Music Northwest Festival and the Lake Tahoe Music Festival during the summer of 2013.

Harpichordist **Takae Ohnishi** has performed extensively as a soloist, chamber musician and continuo player. The Gramophone remarks that "Ohnishi's brilliant artistry immerses the listener in the creative and emotional narratives Bach unfolds with incomparable mastery." Classics Today described her performance as "masterful," and praises its "vitality and impressively differentiated articulation." Ms. Ohnishi has been the principal harpichordist at Atlantic Symphony Orchestra, as well as a soloist with the Berlin Philharmonic Scharoun Ensemble, Gardner Chamber Orchestra, and continuo player with Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra, and Bach Collegium San Diego. She has performed at the Boston Early Music Festival, the American Academy in Rome, and took part in the complete Brandenburg Concertos at the Gardner Museum directed by Paula Robison. As a performer of contemporary music, Ms. Ohnishi appeared as a guest artist at the Summer Institute for Contemporary Piano Performance held at the New England Conservatory of Music. She also performed with the Harvard Group for New Music and the Callithumpian Consort. Since 2007, Ms. Ohnishi has been Lecturer of Harpichord and Baroque Chamber Music at the University of California, San Diego, and she also taught at the University of San Diego. In 2011-12, Ms. Ohnishi served as Visiting Artist at the American Academy in Rome.

## 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). He is a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music, the Eastman School of Music, and the Juilliard School's Pre-College Division. 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.

Violinist **Tereza Stanislav** was appointed Assistant Concertmaster of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra in 2003 by music director Jeffrey Kahane. Dividing her time among orchestral, solo, chamber and recording projects, Tereza has been hailed for her "expressive beauty and wonderful intensity" (Robert Mann) and her "sure technique and musical intelligence" (Calgary Herald). An active performer, Tereza has appeared in venues including Alice Tully Hall, the Library of Congress, the Kennedy Center, Wigmore Hall, the Ravinia Music Festival, Bravo! Vail, the Chautauqua Festival, Merkin Concert Hall, La Jolla Summerfest, Charlottesville Chamber Music Festival, the Banff Center in Canada, St. Barth's Music Festival and at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall. She has performed in concert with artists including Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Gilbert Kalish, Jon Kimura Parker, Colin Currie, and Monica Huggett. In 2004, Tereza released a CD in collaboration with pianist Hung-Kuan Chen. This season, Tereza served as Concertmaster of the Los Angeles' Opera production of *The Marriage of Figaro*, conducted by Plácido Domingo. In 2009, Tereza was invited to be the Chamber Music Collaborator for Sonata Programs and a member of the jury for the Sixth Esther Honens International Piano Competition, as well as the soloist on a Central European tour performing Mozart's Fifth Violin Concerto.

**Pei-Chun Tsai** has been a member of the San Diego Symphony since 2006 and is a native of Tainan, Taiwan. At 4 she began her musical studies and in 1997 made her solo debut in Carnegie Weill Recital Hall. She was awarded first prize in the Taiwan National Violin Competition and was also a three time first-prize winner of the Tainan Violin Competition. She has performed as a soloist and a chamber musician in Paul Recital Hall, Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center and the National Concert Hall in Taiwan. She has also toured with The Muse Piano Quartet in Taiwan. Ms. Tsai is also an experienced teacher and holds a Suzuki Teaching Certificate from the School for Strings. As a scholarship recipient of the Juilliard School, she was on the faculty of the Juilliard pre-college division. She received her Bachelors and Masters degrees at the Juilliard School where she studied violin with Joseph Fuchs. She has also studied with Earl Carlyss, Daniel Phillips, Harvey Shapiro, and Sally Thomas and received her DMA in violin performance from the City University of New York.



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