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.

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.

camera lucida

Sam B. Ersan, Founding Sponsor

chamber music concerts at UC San Diego
May 15, 2017 – 7:30 p.m.
Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

Sonata for Piano and Cello in F major, Opus 5 Nr. 1 — Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Adagio sostenuto; Allegro
Rondo: Allegro vivace

String Trio, Opus 45 — Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)

Part One; First Episode
Part Two; Second Episode
Part Three

intermission

Piano Quartet in E-flat, Opus 87 — Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Allegro con fuoco
Lento
Allegro moderato, grazioso
Allegro ma non troppo

Reiko Uchida, piano
Jeff Thayer, violin
Che-Yen Chen, viola
Charles Curtis, violoncello

Ludwig van Beethoven, *Sonata in F major, Opus 5 Nr. 1* (1796)

The title page of the original Artaria edition announces in monumentally incised lettering: "Deux Grandes Sonates pour le Clavecin ou Piano-Forte avec un Violoncelle obligé." And just below, in even larger letters, "A Sa Majesté Frederic Guillaume Roi de Prusse"; then, finally, in smaller and slanted letters, "par Louis van Beethoven." Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia, for all his statesmanlike shortcomings, was known to be a very fine cellist (and a major-league bon vivant), and these sonatas were apparently played at his court by Beethoven and Jean-Louis Duport, Friedrich's most-favored cellist.

The sonata begins with a gentle signal call, as if from a hunting horn in the distance. Even the key, F major, evokes the horn through its native tonality. This Arcadian atmosphere holds through the introductory Adagio: a scene is set, there is no hurry, brief phrases yield to longer ones, goodbyes are said, and the feeling is one of calm anticipation. We might even hear this introduction as the overture to an opera; and indeed, these sonatas verge at times on the scenic, not yet exemplifying the drive for total thematic constructivism that marks the middle period of Beethoven. In Opus 5, themes seem to evoke characters who are immediately recognizable when they return to the "stage," foibles and comedic quirks largely in tact.

An overture in another sense: The two sonatas of Opus 5 mark the historical starting point of the duo-sonata for these two instruments. Neither Mozart nor Haydn apparently found the combination worthy of attention; and earlier works for cello and keyboard belong more to the lineage of the virtuoso string sonata with keyboard accompaniment or the continuo sonata. With Opus 5 Nr. 1, we are squarely in the world of the concertante chamber music work, totally integrated in all parts, expansive and ambitious in scope and in textural density

The Allegro movement emerges out of the introduction without much fanfare, presenting a long, loping, relaxed melody in 4/4 that keeps skirting its conclusion with harmonic evasive maneuvers, extending itself in a charming display of vanity. In fact, the exposition itself goes on and on, featuring no fewer than four distinct themes, the final one of which sits oddly off balance around the strong beats of the bar, confounding any neat metric alignment. And finally, to extend the movement even further, the coda offers yet another brief Adagio, and then a Presto section with gratuitous triplet garlands, scales and grand simultaneous trills, bringing us back to one final sounding of the first theme. The Rondo begins innocuously enough with a jig-like 6/8 dactyllic ditty, set in canon between the instruments. But the impish Beethoven cannot be restrained; repeated loud sixteenth-notes in both instruments bring about a kind of growling, dissonant, noisy clamor, a texture far removed from the courtly sound-worlds of Mozart and Haydn. With these rough and irrational textures Beethoven points far ahead in time to the early 20th-century, and to the embrace of sound, noise and dissonance as a register of expression beyond beauty and order.

Arnold Schönberg, *String Trio, Opus 45* (1946)

H. H. Stuckenschmidt: "The shock effect of the first minutes is inescapable... it earmarks this work as an inspired product of anxiety and anguish; but unexpectedly a realm of unearthly and dream-like truth emerges out of its strange shapes, melodies, sounds and rhythms."

Three years after completing the Trio, Schönberg wrote about the heart illness and medical treatment that accompanied the composing of the Trio. He titled this brief text *"Mein Todesfall"* - "My Death Event," or "My Fatality." Not "near-death," but, "death." The crucial moment in his illness was the administering of an adrenalin injection directly into his heart, in order to revive him from a coma. According to several anecdotal accounts, Schönberg depicted this injection and the resulting jolt to his nervous system in music, presumably with certain high stabbing attacks in the violin part. But the visionary, other-worldly beauty of many sections of the Trio - especially the ending, a passage of transcendent delicacy and tenderness - may reveal his "death experience" more profoundly.

Leonard Stein, Schönberg's assistant and close associate, pointed to a cognitive state of something like half-consciousness as the source of the Trio's uncanny logic: "... Schönberg explained the many juxtapositions of unlike material within the Trio as reflections of the delirium which the composer suffered during parts of his illness. Thus, the seemingly fragmentary nature of the Trio's materials represents the experience of time and events as perceived from a semiconscious or highly sedated state. These unusual juxtapositions also represent ... the alternate phases of 'pain and suffering' and 'peace and repose' that Schönberg experienced."

Charles Rosen imagined the Trio as more than a musical account of illness and suffering; he calls it "a memorial to [Schönberg's] own momentary death." The composer memorializes himself, thus reviewing and invoking his own past. And indeed, gentle *Ländler* and waltz rhythms pay unmistakable homage to the Viennese past; brief, furtive phrases of abrupt lyricism suggest the aphoristic style of Schönberg's Opus 19 piano pieces; the hallucinatory groping and searching for musical paths suggests the early Schönberg of *Erwartung*; moments of inspired counterpoint - including lengthy canons - hint at Renaissance music; at one point an exact quotation from *Verklärte Nacht* stands out; the Barcarolle finale to *Pierrot Lunaire* seems to peek through near the end; and a moment of seductive beauty seems to recall the cabaret atmosphere of the years around the First World War. But all of these intricate layers and markers of memory lie revealed beneath a shattered structure of sonic violence and destruction. Michael Cherlin, in connection with the Trio, notes: "...retrospection at the time of death is a powerful and virtually universal trope."

The instrumental setting of all these imaginary treasures is radical. Schönberg deploys an astonishing array of timbres and sound-production techniques - *col legno*, extreme *ponticello*, unusual harmonics and combinations of harmonics with stopped notes, registral extremes, choked sounds, mumbling, high notes on low strings. Tempo and meter changes resemble jump cuts in film. Amidst the relentlessly dense and variegated texture, one totally unexpected moment suprises us, when all three instruments play a frantic passage in unison. The *col legno tratto* passages - drawing the bow with the wood rather than the hairs - seem to express muteness, the inability to make a sound despite great effort, the nightmare moment of wanting to scream but finding oneself unable to make any sound at all.

Antonín Dvořák, *Piano Quartet in E-flat, Opus 87* (1889)

Chamber music, by the mid-19th century, had departed its setting in the palaces, castles and chapels of 18th-century sovereigns. It had moved into the living rooms of upper-middle-class commoners, those newly-rich who were striving for elevation in every part of their lives. The music had changed accordingly. No longer ingratiating and entertaining according to the servile strictures of aristocratic patronage, chamber music needed now to reveal subjective emotional states, longing, sentiment, the complex aspirations of its upper-class users. Patronage was replaced by the market. Schumann, Brahms and Dvořák best encapsulate this situation. Hailing from modest origins, they positioned themselves through music in the upwardly-mobile and ultimately utopian process of *Bildung*, self-formation, and advancement through individual genius. Their music reflects this process while at the same time it is, for them, its medium.

Chamber music is capable of much greater sonic detail than orchestral or operatic music; instruments speak for themselves, not for a collective, and highly intricate rhythmic relationships can be made perfectly audible. The music requires virtuosity from all participants, but does not exalt virtuosity as an end in itself. Soulfulness *is* exalted, on the other hand, and a striving for ecstatic states and extremes of enthusiasm. All of these characteristics describe the dimensions and content of Dvořák's Piano Quartet.

Certain gestures anticipate Mahler (a Czech compatriot of Dvořák's, in a sense); the third movement has affinities with Schubertian *Ländler*; and Brahms and Schumann are clear orientation points. Interestingly, there are very few traces of Beethoven. The piano here and there imitates the cimbalon, a kind of eastern European hammered dulcimer. By turns gruff and achingly melodic, Opus 87 frames an inner world of incredible intensity within a musical setting that is modest, domestic, *heimisch*. One can barely imagine the experience of those playing, reading and hearing together, for the first time, in an intimate and everyday setting, music of such delirious fervor. If only we could.

Camera Lucida takes great pleasure in thanking all our supporters for their generous support, in particular pH Projects, Dan, Caroline, Stephen and Civia, Bob and Ginny, Geoff, Carol, Lanna, Eloise, Mary and Michael, Julia, Evelyn, Marion, Pauline, Harry, Georgiana, Irene, David and Suzanne.

Artistic Director – Charles Curtis
Recording Engineer – Andrew Munsey
Program Notes – Charles Cross
Program Associate – Jordan Morton
Promotions Design – Jennifer Bewerse
Production Manager – Jessica C. Flores

Special thanks to the Del Mar Inn Hotel