

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 Meglitoranza, 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** is the newly appointed Professor of Viola at the University of California, Los Angeles Herb Alpert School of Music. 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 unflinchingly combined lucidity and poise... lyricism and intensity.” Recent seasons have included concerts at documenta 14 in Athens, Greece; the Dia Art Foundation’s Dia:Chelsea space in New York; the Darmstadt Festival in Germany; the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas; the Geometry of Now festival in Moscow; the Serralves Museum in Porto, Portugal; and Walt Disney Hall in Los Angeles, leading a performance of La Monte Young’s *Second Dream*. 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 takes great pleasure in thanking all our supporters for their generous support, in particular Laurette, Janice, Eliza, Marion, Julia, pH Projects, Carol, Lanna, Eloise, Mary and Michael, David, Harry, Irene, Geoff, Stephan and Civia, Bob and Ginny, Caroline, Suzanne, Donald and Evelyn, John and Pauline, Amnon, Nelson, Eric, Barry, Georgiana.

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Chamber Music Concerts at UC San Diego

Monday, December 3, 2018 – 7:30 p.m.

Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

Ludwig van Beethoven:

Twelve Variations in G major on “See, the Conqu’ring Hero Comes!” from Händel’s Oratorio *Judas Maccabaeus* for piano and violoncello, WoO 45 (1797)

Twelve Variations in F major on “Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen” from Mozart’s Opera *Die Zauberflöte* for piano and violoncello, Opus 66 (1798)

Seven Variations in E-flat major on “Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen” from Mozart’s Opera *Die Zauberflöte* for piano and violoncello, WoO 46 (1802)

*intermission*

Sonata for Viola and Piano, Opus 11 Nr. 4 (1919) Paul Hindemith  
 Fantasie  
 Theme with Variations: Quiet and simple, like a folk song  
 Finale (with Variations): Very lively

Sonata for Violin and Piano in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
 E-flat major, K.V. 380 (1781)  
 Allegro  
 Andante con moto  
 Rondeau: Allegro

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

In addition to the five cello sonatas, Beethoven composed three sets of variations for cello and piano, composed over five years from 1796 to 1801, placing them towards the end of his early period. All three feature themes taken from vocal works by other composers: the first from Händel’s oratorio *Judas Maccabaeus*, and the second and third from Mozart’s immensely popular final opera *Die Zauberflöte*. Of these, only the second (the set of 12 variations in F) was published, in this case at the behest of the king of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm II, who was a particular lover of the cello. Beethoven sets the music of his idols with loving reverence, seeking to amplify rather than overshadow their art.

The programming of all three sets of variations offers a unique perspective on a form that was perhaps more close to Beethoven’s identity as a composer than any other. As a young piano virtuoso, Beethoven was renowned for his ability to stun audiences with variations improvised on themes selected at random. The form of a theme and variations accompanied him from the start of his life to the very end, and permeates nearly every genre: the famous finale of the *Eroica* symphony, many string quartets from Op. 18, 59, and 127, the Op. 44 and 121 piano trios, his music for 4-hands piano, the *Diabelli, Eroica, God Save the Queen*, and 32 c-minor variations for solo piano as well as movements from several piano sonatas, including the Arietta of the final Op. 111 sonata in c-minor. The theme and variations form seems to offer the listener a first-person view into the composer’s process, probing, deconstructing, and reassembling the musical material with each iteration so that it incrementally evolves into something completely new and original; in doing so, the composer becomes and joins the audience, and is forced to reveal how he hears the underlying thematic material. Here, Beethoven unfailingly mesmerises with his keen insight.

Beethoven had heard Händel’s *Judas Maccabaeus* performed in Vienna in 1794. The theme in Händel’s setting is sung by a boys choir hidden from view of the audience:

*See, the conqu’ring hero comes!  
Sound the trumpets! Beat the drums!  
Sports prepare! The laurel bring!  
Songs of triumph to him sing!*

Beethoven expertly captures the initially distant quality of the music and Händel’s use of word-painting in referring to specific instruments. He develops the music in a linear trajectory, each successive variation emerging with consummate patience. At the same time, each variation adds incremental complexity and energy to prepare the penultimate slow variation and an epic final variation, with its inspired C-sharp minor coda and its metrical compression of the theme.

The second set of variations, Op. 66, comes from an aria for solo bass, sung by the character Papageno. Papageno is perhaps the most fascinating character in *Die Zauberflöte*: he is an eccentric (and somewhat pathetic) birdcatcher, who functions both as comic relief (mostly as a proverbial punching bag) and as a counter-protagonist to Tamino. While Tamino is aided in his quest by an enchanted flute, Papageno uses a set of bells, sounded by the glockenspiel in the orchestra. While Tamino embarks on an epic quest to rescue his beloved Pamina, Papageno childishly wallows in self pity at his loneliness:

*A girl or a little wife is what Papageno desires.  
Oh, a sweet little dove like that would be bliss for me!  
Then I should drink and eat with relish, then I could hold my oven with princes,  
enjoy life in my wisdom, and be as if in Elysium.*

*Ah, can’t I find one, then, amongst all the lovely girls, who would like me?  
Let just one help me out of my misery, or I shall truly die of grief.*

*If no one will offer me love, then the fire must consume me,  
but if a woman’s lips kiss me, I shall be well again straightaway!*

Beethoven masterfully captures Papageno’s unique character, pathetic, timid, but also strangely loveable and good-natured. The music seems to reveal different facets of Papageno’s complex character as developed in the libretto.

The final set of variations consists of seven iterations of a theme, also from *Die Zauberflöte*, taken from a duet between Pamina and Papageno. Both characters are pining for their respective missing (or, in Papageno’s case, nonexistent) lovers, and sing an aria in praise of love as the ultimate good. Following the aria, both characters are driven to despair and the brink of suicide before finally being united with their lovers in the final act.

*In men, who feel love / A good heart is not lacking  
To sympathize with the sweet instincts / Is then the wives’ first duty.*

*We want to be happy with love / We live through love alone!  
Love sweetens every torment / Every creature offers itself to her.*

Beethoven sets only the first seven lines (two each by Papageno and Pamina, and three by both). The aria features a call and response pattern, and this is preserved in each of Beethoven’s variations, with the cello and piano taking up the initial roles of Pamina and Papageno, while also trading places after each variation. Beethoven lovingly captures the intensely poignant reiteration of the final phrase: “We live through love alone”, which Mozart sets to different harmonies in each appearance -- initially cadencing tragically in C-minor, before finally ending triumphantly in the initial key of E-flat. Thus, Mozart artfully contemplates love’s dual ability to evoke the most intense joy and intolerable suffering.

As in the other variations, Beethoven treats the music with the utmost respect. The instruments seem to alternate between masculine and feminine characters in a way that mimics Mozart’s duet, aptly capturing the strangely touching, childlike naïveté of Mozart’s music. Beethoven also uses the form to explore the theme, not only musically, but also in terms of its extra-musical content; each variation seems to depict a different stage or dimension of love, ranging from childish infatuation, to playful flirtation, to intoxicating sensuality, bliss, despair, mania, vulnerability, and fulfilment. The fourth variation, the “*minore*” (set in the parallel minor), alters the final pair of phrases to include an agonizing F-flat neapolitan chord. The elaborate penultimate sixth variation, with its shift to a slow, lyrical *Adagio*, and the introduction of improvisatory figuration, seems to make time stand absolutely still in a kind of eternal trance. The enigmatic final variation cuts abruptly to an aggressive, furious C-minor coda (strikingly similar to the B-flat minor second theme of the rondo from Beethoven’s first cello sonata, Op. 5 in F major), before returning stealthily to an altered version of itself. The set finishes off with a poetic restatement of the first two notes of the original melody, a descending minor third, sounded like the call of a hunting horn in the distance.

Beethoven’s choice of this aria becomes even more meaningful when taking stock of his own failed romances. He first met Josephine von Brunswick in 1799 as her piano teacher. Their mutual attraction became obvious to her family, who, motivated by precarious finances, married her off to a wealthy and much older count the following year. The marriage lasted until his death in 1804, and many of Beethoven’s love letters to her date from this period. Josephine’s family eventually persuaded her to terminate their relationship, on account of his being a commoner. She is now regarded as the strongest candidate for the “Immortal Beloved” Beethoven referred to in his famous, anonymous letter.

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Mozart dedicated the Sonata K. 380 (and several other violin sonatas) to the accomplished pianist and composer Josepha Barbara Auernhammer. Auernhammer and Mozart were romantically involved in their youth, and even performed together on several occasions.

Their friendship seems to have persisted later in life despite their respective marriages to other people. Auernhammer and Mozart seem to have had a strange relationship: Mozart in particular apparently tried to placate his disapproving father by privately making disparaging remarks about Auernhammer, even as the two remained in constant contact.

This strange and confusingly multifaceted ambiguity seems to have found its way into Mozart’s E-flat major violin sonata. The work features unusual key relationships, sudden changes in character, and an overwhelming variety of musical ideas, juxtaposing extremes of virtuosity and simplicity, all with godlike effortlessness. The first movement features a repeated three-note motif that permeates all three movements, whose character is manipulated with stunning variety, even moving for fleeting moments into the remote keys of B-flat minor and E-flat minor in the respective outer sections of the first movement. The Rondo finale contains extended minor-key sections, and strikingly conserves thematic material from the first movement, while marrying a tremendous, insistent energy and raw musical power with Mozart’s trademark effortless elegance.

The second movement features a morosely obsessive, shockingly dark main theme in g-minor which seems to move from darkness to light and back in alternation. The clash of extremes -- of elegance, simplicity, grace and detachment with darkness, tragedy, and hidden pathos -- recall Mozart as described by Charles Rosen in *The Classical Style: It is only through recognizing the violence and sensuality at the center of Mozart’s work that we can make a start towards a comprehension of his structures and an insight into his magnificence... In all of Mozart’s supreme expressions of suffering and terror, there is something shockingly voluptuous... In his corruption of sentimental values, Mozart is a subversive artist.*

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Hindemith was as much a theorist and musicologist as a composer. He harnessed an obsessive interest in the theoretical basis of counterpoint and harmony to develop a novel, exotic and idiosyncratic, yet also strangely accessible, musical language that is entirely his own. Hindemith’s tonal system retains the traditional concept of a tonal center, as well the treatment of consonance and dissonance in relation to rhythm and the independent movement of layered melodic lines, while discarding the idea of traditional keys and scales. Using this method he is able to synthesize subtle harmonic shades and colors that combine with a gift for melody to create moments of incredible poignancy.

The Op. 11 No. 4 viola sonata is one of Hindemith’s best known works of chamber music. It features traditional triadic harmony to a much greater extent than much of his later music, and is often unabashedly romantic. The sweeping melody of the opening bars is a case in point, almost recalling Fauré or Rachmaninov. The harmonization and texture become increasingly elaborate, and the piano accompaniment in particular takes on an impressionistic quality evocative of the music of Debussy. Whole-tone scales and wildly shifting harmonies abound, particularly in the second movement, which alternates between rustic, charming folk-music and passages of extreme density and expressivity. Hindemith expertly takes advantage of the viola’s unique range and timbre to achieve a singing quality that manages to penetrate the piano’s many varied textures without piercing them.

This sonata is also interesting for the fact that both the second and third movement consist of a theme and variations. While the second movement spins out variations on a theme in the traditional way, the third movement is a kind of synthesis of traditional sonata-allegro form with a theme and variations superimposed over it. This has the effect of heightening the dramatic tension of the movement’s narrative arc, as increasing energy and complexity seem to strain toward an epic climax, with the final cadence of the last bar on a bare octave.

—Amir Moheimani

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