

Sam B. Ersan Gift to Support Chamber Music at UC San Diego

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Kristin Luciani

The innovative chamber music series, Camera Lucida, returns this fall to the University of California, San Diego, for its third season of collaborative, one-of-a-kind performances. Bringing together talented musicians from the university's faculty and distinguished performers from the San Diego Symphony, this season promises to take the chamber music experience to the next level. On October 11, the series will kick off with a performance by the celebrated Myriad Trio.

The renowned Camera Lucida series is made possible by the generosity of UC San Diego supporter and classical music enthusiast Sam Ersan, who established the Sam B. Ersan Chamber Music Fund in 2008 to support the series, as well as chamber music classes and graduate student fellowships. Now, with an additional gift of \$300,000 to the department of music, Ersan is ensuring that UC San Diego continues to be a premier site for music performance and education.

Born in 1950 to diplomat parents, Ersan's first music experience was at age six through the vinyl recordings of Wilhelm Backhaus and Nathan Milstein. He attended his first concert at age 10 in Geneva (David Oistrakh). Today, the founder and CEO of Spectrum Detention Services is a passionate patron of classical music in San Diego.

"With its rich and complex qualities, classical music has been a favorite friend throughout my life. My interest is to create a musical activity for all of us that we would be proud of. By supporting Camera Lucida, I hope to share the joy with UC San Diego and the local community."

In addition to bringing together exceptional San Diego musicians, Camera Lucida unites music performance with the university's mission of education by offering a behind-the-scenes internship for graduate music students. This unique position provides the opportunity for a select graduate student to get hands-on experience marketing and producing the concert series, learning everything it takes to make a production like this possible.

Aaron Helgeson, a current Ph.D. candidate in music composition, was the inaugural intern in this position. Helgeson has been composing music for more than twelve years now, exploring the poetic boundaries of musical perception and instrumental technique. Today, he is a visiting professor of composition at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

"The internship gave me a lot more insight into the way that you put a concert series together," he said. "It's a great experience that can be applied to different fields, and that has expanded my career options."

Giving to UC San Diego Fifty years ago, the founders of the University of California, San Diego had one criterion for the campus: It must be distinctive. Since then, UC San Diego-recognized as one of the top ten public universities by *U.S. News & World Report* and named by the *Washington Monthly* as number one in the nation in rankings measuring "what colleges are doing for the country"-has achieved the extraordinary in education, research and innovation. But with higher education's share of state revenue declining each year, we must increasingly rely on financial support from private sources to continue to provide the local impact, national influence and global reach as one of the world's leading research universities. As we celebrate our milestone

anniversary, we also look forward to a long future of UC San Diego visionaries, innovators and overachievers, thanks to our generous donors. Visit www.giving.ucsd.edu or www.50th.ucsd.edu for more information.

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