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UC San Diego Composer Rand Steiger Named Holder of Conrad Prebys Presidential Chair in Music

\$1 million endowed chair was funded by philanthropist Conrad Prebys through UC's Presidential Match for Endowed Chairs to recruit and retain distinguished faculty

Composer Rand Steiger, currently chair of the [UC San Diego department of music](#), is known for pushing the boundaries and exploring the combination of classical instruments with digital audio processing. Throughout his diverse career he has composed for and conducted critically acclaimed concerts and recordings with distinguished ensembles both here and abroad. In support of his teaching, research and service activities, Steiger has been appointed the inaugural holder of the Conrad Prebys Presidential Chair in Music in the Division of Arts and Humanities.



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The \$1 million endowed faculty chair was recently established by a \$500,000 gift from longtime philanthropist Conrad Prebys, and matched through the University of California's Presidential Match for Endowed Chairs. The endowed chair will provide a dedicated source of funds, in perpetuity, for the chair holder's scholarly activities as well as support for faculty salaries and graduate fellowships.

"We thank Conrad Prebys for establishing a lasting legacy through the Conrad Prebys Presidential Chair in Music," said UC San Diego Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. "His tremendous generosity will enable esteemed music faculty, like Rand Steiger, to break new ground in composition, improvisation and performance."

Throughout his career, Steiger has been involved in computer music research, including collaborations with his music department colleague Miller Puckette. Many of his compositions combine orchestral instruments with real-time digital audio signal processing. A New York Times

review of his recent recording released by New World Records stated, “Few composers blend classical instrumentation and digital technology as organically and eloquently as Rand Steiger.”

His work has been commissioned and performed by numerous ensembles ranging from the American Composer’s Orchestra to the San Diego Symphony, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, where he served as a composer fellow. This year Steiger was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for his “prior achievement and exceptional promise.”

“I am humbled, and extremely proud to be associated with Mr. Prebys, who has been such a generous and visionary leader in our community with his unparalleled philanthropy in support of culture, education and medicine,” said Steiger. “With the Music Center and Concert Hall that he named, he has already given us an extraordinary home that inspires us daily and allows us to share our work with the public in the most ideal of conditions. This chair will similarly inspire me to take my work in new directions, while providing crucial support for our graduate students. For all these reasons I will be forever grateful to him.”

In June, two of Steiger’s pieces will be played at the Ojai Festival—a classical four-day music festival held annually in June showcasing innovative contemporary composers. He will also serve as composer-in-residence at the Summer Institute for Contemporary Performance Practice at the New England Conservatory of Music, where UC San Diego music alumnus Mark Menzies will premiere his new violin concerto.

Steiger joined UC San Diego’s music faculty in 1987 following five years on the faculty at the California Institute of the Arts. He provided crucial leadership for the creation of the Conrad Prebys Music Center, which opened in 2009. In addition to composing, he was active as a conductor specializing in contemporary works until 2010, when he decided to concentrate entirely on composition. He led a series of critically acclaimed concerts, including many premieres, with the Ensemble Sospeso in New York, and with the California EAR Unit at the Los Angeles County Museum, and on tour internationally. Other groups he has conducted include the Aspen Chamber Ensemble, Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group, New York New Music Ensemble and the Nouvel Ensemble Contemporain (Switzerland).

The UC Presidential Match for Endowed Chairs, launched July 2014 by University of California President Janet Napolitano, initially allocates \$4 million per campus to use as an incentive to encourage donors to establish endowed faculty chairs, which are so vital to UC’s efforts to attract and retain top-flight faculty. It is funded through the Presidential Endowment Fund, a source of private donations that the president may use at her discretion to support university activities. Campuses must raise at least \$500,000 per chair to qualify for the match.

With the addition of the music department's Presidential chairs, the Division of Arts and Humanities has a total of 23 endowed faculty chairs that support the division's commitment to teaching and research.

UC San Diego Arts and Humanities Dean Cristina Della Coletta noted, "For more than 500 years, the world's great universities have attracted and supported distinguished educators by endowing academic chairs. What these chairs mean for the department of music is that we can honor outstanding faculty like Rand Steiger for their past and potential contributions to UC San Diego, as well as support their current work. We thank Conrad Prebys for creating a lasting legacy that will benefit our music faculty for years to come."

"The creation of the Conrad Prebys Presidential Chair in Music is a testament to the value that I place on the long-term sustainability of the UC San Diego Division of Arts and Humanities and faculty achievement," added Prebys. "Endowed chairs are critical to attracting and retaining exceptional scholars."

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