

Sam Ersan Underwrites Camera Lucida Chamber Music Series at UC San Diego

\$260,000 gift will also support the Department of Music's Myriad Trio concerts and graduate student internship

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Camera Lucida, a one-of-a-kind chamber music series, opens its second season Oct. 5 at 8 p.m. in the Department of Music's new Conrad Prebys Concert Hall, with a program of works by Schubert, Mendelssohn and Brahms. The concert facility is part of the new Conrad Prebys Music Center on the campus of UC San Diego.

The series, which brings together distinguished musicians from UC San Diego's music faculty with principal players from the San Diego Symphony, is made possible by a generous contribution from music patron and UC San Diego supporter Sam Ersan. This year, \$260,000 in current use funds from the Sam B. Ersan Chamber Music Fund will help support Camera Lucida and other programs offered at the Department of Music.

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. 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," says Ersan. "My interest in UC San Diego's chamber music program is to create a musical activity for all of us that I would be proud of, as well as provide additional performance opportunities for San Diego Symphony players. With my gifts, I would like to see Camera Lucida continue to flourish and fill us with beauty and bliss." To date, Ersan has donated \$485,000 to UC San Diego's Department of Music to help fund various programs.

In its new home, Camera Lucida can create the kind of experience originally envisioned by Department of Music cellist Charles Curtis, who chose the name to represent "the radiance that great works of chamber music lend to a space shared by musicians and listeners." He explains that chamber music repertoire is a special body of work, more intimate than opera or symphony. The audience is involved, and invited, into the experience.

Adds Curtis, "The timing of Mr. Ersan's gift could not have been better, coinciding with the opening of the Conrad Prebys Concert Hall. Suddenly, we have a significant chamber music series in one of the world's finest small concert halls, performed by a devoted group of superb musicians who live for this kind of intense musical engagement. His gift has transformed our series from a small, essentially campus-based activity, to what we think is one of the highlights of musical life in San Diego right now."

The world-renowned, San Diego-based musicians of Camera Lucida join forces with outstanding guests from the international chamber music world in performances that blend the cohesion of an established chamber music group with a variety of changing instrumentation and guest performer personalities. Camera Lucida represents a rare opportunity for audiences to experience San Diego's own top-notch musicians inspiring each other with fresh interpretations of classical works.

Performers this season will include San Diego Symphony concertmaster Jeff Thayer, principal violist Che-Yen Chen; UCSD faculty cellist Charles Curtis, pianist Aleck Karis, clarinetist Anthony Burr and soprano Susan Narucki; the superb young New York-based pianist Reiko Uchida; distinguished Austrian pianist Paul Gulda; flutist Demarre McGill; violinist Tien-Hsin Cindy Wu; and harpist Julie Smith, among others.

With Ersan's support, Camera Lucida is able to expand to six concerts this season, all presented in the department's Conrad Prebys Concert Hall, which is already earning critical acclaim for its superior acoustics. Called "breathtaking" and "a gem," the new hall immerses every listener in the midst of the rich experience of live classical music.

Programming for Camera Lucida focuses on masterpieces of the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, often presenting rarely-heard or overlooked music of established masters, and ranging from duos to as many as nine instruments. Concerts are scheduled on Monday nights, and are broadcast as live recordings on KPBS radio on the Saturday following each performance.

For the first time, the Department of Music will offer Camera Lucida series subscription tickets, which provide substantial savings. General admission tickets are \$25 each; a seven-concert subscription (including a special bonus concert) is \$130. Tickets are available through the UCSD Box Office at 858-534-TIXS. For more information on Camera Lucida, visit <http://musicweb.ucsd.edu/cameralucida>.

In addition to underwriting the 2008-09 Camera Lucida season, Ersan's gift supports:

Myriad Trio: a three-concert mini-series featuring an unusual grouping of local flutist Demarre McGill, violist Che-Yen Chen and harpist Julie Smith; all are principal players in the San Diego Symphony; and

Graduate Internship: offering an opportunity for a UC San Diego Department of Music graduate student to assist in the marketing of Camera Lucida and other select programs.

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