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Late Works of Mozart

Trio in E-flat Major for clarinet, viola and piano, K. 498 "*Kegelstatt*"

Andante

Menuetto

Rondeaux

String Quintet No. 4 in G minor, K. 516

Allegro

Menuetto: Allegretto

Adagio ma non troppo

Adagio; Allegro

Divertimento in E-flat Major for String Trio, K. 563

Allegro

Adagio

Menuetto: Allegretto

Andante

Menuetto: Allegretto

Allegro

Jeff Thayer, Alexander Palamidis, violin

Che-Yen Chen, Che-Hung Chen, viola

Charles Curtis, Yao Zhao, cello

Anthony Burr, clarinet; Aleck Karis, piano

MOZART'S LATE STYLE?

by Sheldon Nodelman

Does Mozart have a "Late Style"? Is such a thing even conceivable for a composer who lived no more than thirty-five years? And if so, what might be its defining characteristics? The three works featured in this program may have a bearing on these questions.

The notion of Late Style (or *Spätstil* in its original German coinage, which carries resonances lost in the bare English translation) emerged in the context of Romantic aesthetic criticism, initially in the area of art history, and soon generalized to include music, literature and other creative fields. It is bound up with the conception of *Bildung* or self-formation, the conscious shaping of character according to elevated intellectual and ethical norms, so as to realize the highest possibilities inherent in the individual. It purports to identify in the late-in-life works of certain great artists, despite all differences in media, genres and period-specific modes of construction, some essential shared characteristics which distinguish these productions not only from the works of lesser contemporaries but from the earlier achievements of these masters themselves. The last phases in the careers of such figures as Michelangelo, Titian, Rembrandt, Goya, Beethoven and Shakespeare have been singled out as exemplary cases. The decisive element in this transformation is held to be the attainment or intensification of *Innerlichkeit*, "inwardness," a state of consciousness in which attention is displaced from the sensory and emotional phenomena of the everyday world toward underlying patterns of a more essential and permanent nature. This development is often represented as manifesting in the violent dismemberment of established formulae of expression or in the progressive disinvestment in them, leaving the inherited stylistic apparatus as mere husk. In either case the result is a transfigured image of the world, suffused with a higher degree of meaning. This transformation is assumed to be correlated with the subjective experience of the artist-individual and in particular to the vicissitudes of aging and the proximate thought of death. The association of advanced age with wisdom, corresponding to accumulated experience and the mitigation of the passionate involvements which may impair the clarity of judgment is of course an old one, dating at least to Aristotle in its philosophical formulation, if not to folk tradition of immemorably greater antiquity. What was new in the nineteenth-century Romantic formulation was the radically increased emphasis on

the individual subjectivity of the artist and on the work itself as its immediate, indeed unavoidable, manifestation. This construct, with its bias toward biographically-weighted exegesis, would predictably fare less well in a more recent critical environment, inclined to favor impersonal social, political and ideological factors and the structural dynamics intrinsic to the forms of artistic expression themselves. Nevertheless the idea has continued to intrigue: witness the unfinished last work of the eminent literary and musical critic Edward Said on Late Style.

The most serious attempt at redeeming the notion of *Spätstil* from the vagaries of individual biography and the inchoate variety of the resulting formal expressions in favor of more objectively measurable criteria is perhaps attributable to Hermann Broch, one of the great German men of letters of the twentieth century. For Broch the distinctive characteristic of Late Style is identified as the shift in emphasis from the semantic elements of the work, its “vocabulary,” with its attendant claim of reference to an external “reality” -- a claim Broch regards as necessarily illusory inasmuch as such reference is always grounded in mutable conventions -- to its syntax, the abstractly relational system by which the linguistic order distributes functional significances to its parts. Broch held this preponderance of abstract syntactical values, intrinsic to the artistic language itself, to be the true index (as opposed to any particular code of “physiognomic” expressivity) of Late Style.

The identification of a Late Style stage in Mozart’s artistic evolution was proposed by the distinguished music historian H. C. Robbins Landon, who discerned it in a handful of works immediately preceding the composer’s death in 1791. These included sections of the *Magic Flute* and the *Requiem*, the little motet *Ave Verum Corpus*, K. 618, and the Quintet and Adagio for Glass Harmonica, K. 617 and 617a, all displaying “a remote, ethereal passivity and an increasing abstraction of musical thought”. These were held to be indicators of what would have been, had he lived, a new phase of Mozart’s creative activity. The three works presented here, however, all predate -- by five, four, and three years -- this final moment in Mozart’s life and work. If they do evince, in their individual ways, characteristics attributable to a Late Style as previously defined, this would indicate its emergence over a longer period and in a different fashion than Robbins Landon’s proposal implies.

Trio in E-flat Major for clarinet,
viola and piano, K. 498 "*Kegelstatt*"

The earliest of these works, the Trio for clarinet, viola and piano, K. 498, dates to 1786. Since its first publication in 1788 it has labored under a misleading sobriquet as the "*Kegelstatt*" (colloquially translatable as the "Bowling-Alley") Trio, suggesting that its composition was a light-hearted affair thrown off in the intervals of a bowling-match. Such a scenario ill-fits this extraordinarily dense and subtle work, and in Mozart's own thematic catalogue of his works it is entered simply as a Trio with no mention of such a sporting origin. But just a week or so earlier he had finished a set of much slighter, indeed inconsequential wind duets which he annotated as having been composed during a game of bowls. Perhaps the publisher's attachment of this nickname to the Clarinet Trio was the result of a simple confusion. More likely, though, it was a deliberate artifice. Mozart's works were by no means universally favored by the music-consuming public of the time; many found them overly serious, excessively demanding and difficult to listen to or to play -- "too many notes" as the Emperor is made to complain in a famous scene in the film *Amadeus*. About this same time one of his publishers cancelled the remainder of a projected series of piano quartets on just such grounds. The "*Kegelstatt*" appellation may have been transferred to this Trio as a deliberately trivializing sales promotion, implying it was a cheerful and easy-going affair.

The clarinet was Mozart's favorite wind instrument, as the viola was his favorite among the strings. (The two instruments are indeed akin in range and expressive capacities as Brahms' later arrangements for viola of his two Clarinet Sonatas attest.) It was of relatively recent invention and heretofore had found only limited applications, typically in invoking pastoral associations. Mozart would eventually make it an integral part of his orchestra in the symphonies and piano concertos, assigning it prominent soloistic passages, often of great delicacy, and exploiting its unique coloristic resources. His predilection seems to have been grounded in an appreciation of the instrument's limpidity of tone and its particular responsiveness as a carrier of emotional expression. He would make it the protagonist in three outstanding concertante works of his last years, not only the Trio K. 498 but the equally fine Clarinet Quintet K. 581 and the sublime Clarinet Concerto K. 622 -- the last work he was able to complete before his death. Mozart's appreciation of the instrument's special capacity for intimate affective sug-

gestion would find little echo in the years immediately following: Karl Maria von Weber's clarinet quintets, for example, are vehicles of virtuosic display. It would not be for a century, until Brahms' Clarinet Trio op. 114 and Quintet op. 115 of 1891, written in undisguised homage to Mozart, that the instrument would again be the centerpiece of works of comparable depth of feeling.

The K. 498 Trio was written for the Jacquin family, warm personal friends of the composer and an intimate atmosphere pervades the work. Mozart himself played the viola while the clarinet part was confided to Anton Stadler, virtuoso at the Vienna court orchestra, for whom the subsequent Quintet and Concerto would also be destined. It is a composition of extraordinary originality, not least in the scoring for clarinet, viola and piano, with the two tenor instruments contributing to a distinctive mellowness of tone while an exquisite balance is maintained throughout. Its layout is equally idiosyncratic, with a gentle opening Andante rather than the usual more forceful Allegro. It displays an unusual monothematic unity, in which the successive themes, linked seamlessly together, are all variations on the same underlying motif. The Minuet and Trio which follow move on directly to a Coda without the expected Minuet reprise, so as to pitch us forward into a Rondeaux Allegretto in which the hitherto leisurely pace accelerates just enough to propel the work to its conclusion without interrupting the fundamental continuity of the rhythmic pulse. Suffused with a kind of enchanted lyricism, the Trio's diaphanous textures and ravishing sonority induce a dreamlike euphoria shot through with hints of melancholy. Emotionally the work eludes characterization in the standardized categories of affectivity; it invites us into feelings for which we have no name.

The mood is strikingly different in the work next in order of composition, the String Quintet in G minor, K. 516, of 1787. Mozart wrote four mature string quintets, commonly regarded as the summit of his achievement in chamber music. Such quintets, in a variety of scorings, were by now not uncommon -- one need only think of the prolific output of Boccherini, whose quality is still perhaps underappreciated. The quintet represented an expansion of the standard string quartet scoring: Boccherini chose to add a second cello, his own preferred instrument, while Mozart, not surprisingly, opted for a second viola, enriching the middle range of the ensemble. He would exploit the

String Quintet No. 4 in G minor,
K. 516

amplified scoring not only for increased sonority but for the more complex articulation facilitated by this augmentation of the interior voices. K. 516 was written concurrently with the Quintet K. 515 in C major, and the two, contrasting in every aspect, were published as a pair. This was surely an intentional demonstration: Mozart was displaying his omnicompetence in the simultaneous production in the same format of works utterly disparate in character and expression, both profoundly achieved. He had produced such demonstrative pairings before and would again the following year with his last two symphonies, K. 550 and K. 551, whose key signatures, in G minor and C major respectively, interestingly and perhaps not accidentally mirror those of the preceding pair of quintets. The frequent association between the G minor Symphony and the Quintet in the same key is indeed irresistible, given their extraordinary resemblances; both are darkly dramatic, even tragic in character, and both stand in similar opposition to their C major siblings. In the words of one critic the Quintet “is as great as the G minor Symphony, whence it is greater; the same wealth of feeling must needs be expressed yet more economically in the chamber work.” K. 515, like the *Jupiter* Symphony, is a grandly conceived, securely grounded tonal structure, Olympian in its breadth and self-assurance. The G minor Quintet, though equally bold in its design, is a work of harrowing doubt and inner tension, poised on the edge of catastrophe.

The Quintet is one of the largest-scale tonal architectures that Mozart ever constructed. It has been suggested that the entire four-movement structure can be understood as a single gigantic sonata movement, with the second-movement Minuet serving as closing theme of the exposition, the slow movement as the development, and the Finale as the recapitulation. The opening is of tormented urgency, motivic fragments tumbling after one another in a dizzying pursuit across a haunted landscape until, just before an abyss of harmonic disintegration, it seems to recover and stabilize – yet haltingly and riven with cracks through which the void can be glimpsed; then the process recommences. The Minuet, shocking in the vehemence of its rhythmic discontinuities, is a macabre parody of the courtly dance whose gestures it echoes. The aching Adagio, as so often with Mozart the emotional center of the entire work, is affectively extended beyond its own limits by its juxtaposition in unheard-of fashion to a second, yet starker Adagio, now

in the tonic -- the slow introduction to the Rondo Finale, The latter, with its seemingly jaunty rhythm and motivic simplicity, has sometimes been complained of as too superficial for the weighty movements which precede it. But this is surely a misjudgment: the very hollowness of this conclusion after what has gone before has its own bitter and surely deliberate irony. Overall, the extreme distentions to which the formal constituents -- motivic, rhythmic, harmonic -- are subjected have the effect of isolating and emphasizing them in their discreteness, so that a kind of skeletal, X-ray vision of the work results.

The String Trio K. 563 of 1788, latest of the works in this program, was by far the most important piece yet to have been composed for such an ensemble, and would have to wait a further century and a half, until Schoenberg's Trio op. 45 of 1946, to find an equal. Mozart himself had previously employed the trio of violin, viola and cello in only one completed work, his arrangements of a set of Bach fugues and the short preludes he composed for them, K. 404a. The work was written as a gift to Johann Puchberg, a Masonic lodge brother who had come to Mozart's assistance during an episode of financial stringency. In his thematic catalogue, Mozart entered the work under the title of Divertimento -- a description which strikes the modern observer as jarringly inconsistent with the seriousness and elevated ambition so evident in it. The piece does in fact display the formal layout characteristic of the Divertimento and the Serenade -- a multi-movement sequence with opening and closing Allegros and within them an Adagio and Andante alternating with a pair of Minuets. This episodic structure, to which movements might be added or subtracted at will, without injury to the essential conception, contrasts notably with the cogent four-movement organization which had become normative for the symphony and for "serious" chamber works such as the string quartet, in which each movement has its structurally necessary place and role. (Cf. the case of Mozart's best-known Serenade, *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, K. 525, which has adventitiously lost one of its two intended minuets without seeming at all impaired.) The *raison d'être* of this additive, open-ended form becomes evident in view of the social function of the divertimento and serenade. This is not concert music envisioned as the principal focus of an audience's attention; it is background music, an element of décor in aristocratic or upper

Divertimento in E-flat Major for String Trio, K. 563

bourgeois entertainment not unlike the interior decoration, furnishings and table service, and intended to fill the time available. Such was the accepted definition of the genre to which the Trio K. 563 would be the last of Mozart's many contributions.

Its anomalous position can be assessed by comparison with an externally similar work of Mozart himself, the above-mentioned *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* K. 525 of the preceding year -- a work which conforms effortlessly to the spirit of the genre to which it purports to belong. K. 525 does indeed stand out among more ordinary examples of its kind by virtue of its impeccable craftsmanship, its studied balance, its inimitable grace and elegance -- in short, as a signature work of Mozart's. But it would in no way have struck a contemporary as peculiar or out of place in its expected role. However much its felicities may repay closer listening, its polite, formalized gestures carefully respect the rules of decorum: they appropriately decorate the occasion for which they are deployed without obtruding or calling undue attention to themselves. K. 563 however is hard to imagine in such a role. Certainly it maintains a surface of polished discretion -- we are far from the violent, preemptory assertiveness of K. 516 for example -- and is sewn through with agreeably melodious moments. But a listener of any sensitivity would find it hard to pay it the degree of inattention which the social occasion would solicit. Its finely spun counterpoint and chastely elusive melodic lines offer relatively little to the casual ear. Conversely, its intricate subtleties are appreciable only to those willing to concentrate at the expense of their full immersion in the social round, and the darker hints scattered through its texture could trouble the good spirits which host and guests alike expect from such situations.

The String Trio, in short, pretends to be a divertimento, or at least the ghost of one, while subtly deflecting its intent. The facade of decorum which it sustains is a necessary one -- it is at the same time the mask of reserve behind which its private interior life sequesters itself. The sparseness of the writing, the extreme economy of means, impart a diagrammatic weightlessness. The formulae of expression corresponding to the established canon are retained but in varying degree leached of their content as, newly inflected, they begin to elicit ideas and feelings as yet unmapped. The dematerialized gestures

and empty intervals embody that turn toward abstraction, that predominance of the semiotic over the semantic dimension, of syntax over vocabulary, which Broch would identify as the hallmark of a Late Style.

In view of the evidence offered by the three works in this program, we might perhaps draw the following inferences: A) Chronological old age, as such, is neither necessary nor sufficient to engender a Late Style; Mozart was dead at thirty-five. Rather it denotes a level of cognitive – or might we say spiritual? – development which may manifest itself at whatever stage of life according to the capacities and circumstances of the individual. B) Independently of chronological age, it need not depend upon the imminence of nor preoccupation with death. The works examined date from five to three years before Mozart's death, well before his eventual illness may have occasioned thoughts of mortality. C) They also precede the handful of very last pieces in which Robbins Landon discerns an incipient Late Style. But all three have highly individual profiles and their distinguishing characteristics are far from uniformly shared among other contemporary works. The wind bloweth where it listeth. *Spiritus flat ubi vult.*

Sheldon Nodelman is an art historian who received his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Yale University. Before joining the Visual Arts Department at UCSD, he taught at Bryn Mawr College, Princeton and Yale Universities. He has been the recipient of Fulbright and Morse fellowships and has been a Getty Scholar. He writes on ancient Classical, especially Roman, art and on twentieth century avant-garde art. He is author of a book on the American painter Mark Rothko and of another forthcoming on Marcel Duchamp.

Violinist **Jeff Thayer** is Concertmaster of the San Diego Symphony as well as Concertmaster and guest artist of the Music Academy of the West (Santa Barbara). Previous positions include Assistant Concertmaster of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Associate Concertmaster of the North Carolina Symphony, 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, and Dorothy DeLay. A native of Williamsport, Pennsylvania, Mr. Thayer began violin lessons with his mother at the age of three. At fourteen, he went to study with Jose Antonio Campos at the Conservatorio Superior in Cordoba, Spain. 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. Other festivals include La Jolla Summerfest, the Mainly Mozart Festival (San Diego), Festival der Zukunft, and the Tibor Varga Festival (Switzerland). Through a generous loan from Irwin and Joan Jacobs, Mr. Thayer plays on the 1708 "Sir Bagshawe" Stradivarius.

Violinist **Alexander Palamidis** earned a Master of Music in Violin Performance from the University of Southern California where he was a member of the USC String Quartet. He attended classes with emphasis on Chamber Music and Violin Performance at The Mozarteum Academy of Music in Salzburg, Austria. A graduate of Istanbul Conservatory of Music, he also holds a degree in Mechanical Engineering. He has been a member and soloist with many orchestras including Istanbul State Symphony, Denver Symphony, Austin Symphony, Austin Lyric Opera, Denver Chamber Orchestra, leader and conductor of the Istanbul Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra, Concertmaster with the Istanbul Radio String Orchestra, Glendale Cham-

ber Orchestra, and Acting Concertmaster with the San Diego Symphony Orchestra and the San Diego Opera. He performed and toured with the L'Amoroso String Quartet. Prior to his appointment as Principal Second Violinist with the San Diego Symphony he was offered the position of Principal First Violin with the Melbourne Symphony in Australia. He has taught violin at the Istanbul Conservatory of Music, La Sierra University and has given master classes with emphasis on Orchestral Excerpts. He is currently Principal Second Violinist with the San Diego Symphony Orchestra and Concertmaster of the San Diego Chamber Orchestra. Special interests include the study of ancient Indian scriptures and philosophy, old violins, movies, and travel.

Described by *The Strad Magazine* as a musician whose “tonal distinction and essential musicality produces an auspicious impression,” Taiwanese violist **Che-Yen Chen** (also known as “Brian Chen”) has established himself as a prominent recitalist, chamber, and orchestral musician. He is the first-prize winner of the 2003 William Primrose Viola Competition, the President Prize of the 2003 Lionel Tertis Viola Competition, and he recently distinguished himself by qualifying for the Principal Viola positions of both the Los Angeles Philharmonic and San Francisco Symphony. He has performed throughout the U.S. and abroad in venues such as Alice Tully Hall, Merkin Hall, Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Jordon Hall, Library of Congress in D.C., Kimmel Center, Taiwan National Concert Hall, Wigmore Hall, and Snape Malting Concert Hall, among numerous others. A founding member of the Formosa Quartet, the Amadeus prize winner of the 10th London International String Quartet Competition, Mr. Chen is an advocate of chamber music. He has been a member of the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society Two, the Jupiter Chamber Players, ADCA, and has toured with Musicians from Marlboro after three consecutive summers at the Marlboro Music Festival. A participant at the Ravinia Festival, Mr. Chen was featured in the festival's Rising Star series and the inaugural Musicians from Ravinia tour. Other festival appearances include the Kingston Chamber Music Festival, International Viola Congress, Mainly Mozart, Chamber Music International, La Jolla Summerfest, Primrose Festival, Bath International Music Festival, Aldeburgh Festival, Seattle Chamber Music Society Summer Festival, Taiwan Connection, Incontri in Terra di

Siena, Emilia Romagna Festival, and numerous others. Mr. Chen has also taught and performed at summer programs such as Hotchkiss Summer Portal, Blue Mountain Festival, Academy of Taiwan Strings, Interlochen, Mimir Festival, and has given master-classes at the Taiwan National Arts University, University of Southern California, University of California, Santa Barbara, and McGill University. Mr. Chen began studying viola at the age of six with Ben Lin. A four-time winner of the National Viola Competition in Taiwan, Mr. Chen came to the U.S. and studied at The Curtis Institute of Music and The Juilliard School under the guidance of Michael Tree, Joseph de Pasquale, and Paul Neubauer. Mr. Chen had served on the faculty at Indiana University-South Bend, where he taught viola and chamber music. Mr. Chen is currently teaching at San Diego State University, UC San Diego, McGill University in Montreal, and holds the Principal Viola position of the San Diego Symphony.

Che-Hung Chen began his studies at the age of six with Ben Lin in Taipei and became a two-time top prize-winner at the Taiwan National Instrumental Competition. He later entered the Curtis Institute of Music at age 14, where he studied with retired Philadelphia Orchestra principal violist Joseph de Pasquale, and served as Principal Violist with the Curtis Symphony Orchestra. Chen joined the Philadelphia Orchestra in the spring of 2001 at the age of twenty. He was the youngest and first-ever Taiwanese member of the orchestra. He has served as Acting Associate Principal Violist with the Orchestra under Maestro Christoph Eschenbach's directorship. Chen was the first-prize winner at the seventh Banff International String Quartet Competition, playing as a member of the Daedalus Quartet. He was also awarded the Piece de Concert prize for the best performance of a commissioned work and the Szekely Prize for the best performance of a Beethoven quartet. As a participant in the Marlboro Festival, Chen has toured with "Musicians from Marlboro," and performed in their 50th anniversary concerts in Boston and New York's Carnegie Hall. He has collaborated with members of the Guarneri, Orion, Mendelssohn, and Tokyo quartets, and with artists such as Martha Argerich, Yefim Bronfman, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Lang Lang, and Hilary Hahn. Chen has also participated in festivals such as Ravinia, Caramoor, Kingston, Bridgehampton chamber music festivals, and Music from Angel Fire. He also performed with the Brandenburg Ensemble

and Metamorphosen Chamber Orchestra. He currently serves on the faculty of Temple University's Esther Boyer College of Music and its Preparatory Division.

Charles Curtis has been a professor in the Music Department of the University of California, 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. He holds the Piatigorsky Prize of the New York Cello Society, and received prizes in the Naumburg, Geneva and Cassado international competitions. He has appeared as soloist with the San Francisco Symphony, the National Symphony, the Baltimore Symphony, the Symphony Orchestra of Berlin, the NDR Symphony, the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, the Orquestra de la Maggio Musicale in Florence, the Janacek Philharmonic, as well as orchestras in Brazil and Chile; under the baton of distinguished conductors such as André Previn, Herbert Blomstedt, Max Rudolf, John Eliot Gardiner, and Christof Eschenbach. His chamber music associations have taken him to the Marlboro, Ravinia, Wolf Trap, La Jolla Summerfest, and Victoria Festivals, among many others. He has recorded and performed widely with soprano Kathleen Battle and harpsichordist Anthony Newman, as well as with jazz legends such as Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, and Brad Mehldau.

Hailed in the *New York Concert Review* as "a superb cellist with intense and sensuous sound," and described by the *Los Angeles Times* as "being able to handle the most intricate musical works with unblinking ease and expressive zeal," Mr. **Yao Zhao** performs with a rare and captivating dynamism that has already secured him a successful career as an artist. The Cello Principal of the San Diego Symphony Orchestra, Mr. Zhao has held the Associate Cello Principal position from 2005 to 2007, and prior to that, he was a member of the Pacific Symphony Orchestra. Born in Beijing in 1976, Mr. Zhao began his studies on the cello and piano at the age of four under the instruction of his father, a distinguished cellist. He made his first appearance in concert at the age of five, and solo debut in the Beijing Concert Hall at age nine. That same year, he was also accepted to the China

Central Conservatory of Music. For his talent and exceptional performance in a master class held by Professor Eleonore Schoenfeld, Mr. Zhao was personally chosen by the renowned pedagogue to venture to the United States and continue his education on full scholarships at the Idyllwild Arts Academy and the Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California in 1991. Since winning a top prize at the First Chinese National Cello Competition in 1987, Mr. Zhao has kept a winning streak of thirteen competitions, awards and honors. The successful solo debut at Weil Recital Hall of Carnegie Hall in New York has been marked as one of his career highlights. Mr. Zhao has performed at renowned concert halls in more than forty cities around the world. Some of his festival appearances have included the Grand Teton Festival, the Ojai Music Festival, and the Asia Philharmonic Orchestra in Korea and Japan which gathers top Asian artists worldwide. Mr. Zhao has been interviewed by CNN, CBS, KTLA, GreekTV, and CCTV. As both a solo and ensemble artist on multiple recordings, his performances can often be heard on radio stations KPBS and KUSC. Beyond a busy performance schedule, Mr. Zhao continues to dedicate himself to the education of youth in the arts. This year marks his 9th season teaching at the Idyllwild Arts Academy and the Idyllwild Arts Summer Festival. His achievements and generous contributions to music performance and education have been recognized and highly commended by the City of Los Angeles. Mr. Zhao is an artist of the Asia Pacific Arts Management Ltd.

Anthony Burr received his D.M.A. in Contemporary Music Performance from UCSD in 2004. He is known internationally as one of the leading interpreters of contemporary music for clarinet, having performed as soloist for many leading institutions including the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, The Ensemble Sospeso (New York), The Munich Biennale, and Elision (Australia). He has collaborated with many leading artists including Laurie Anderson, Alvin Lucier, and MacArthur Fellow John Zorn, and has created a series of live film/music performances with experimental filmmaker Jennifer Reeves. As a composer, he has specialized in the creation of epic scale mixed media pieces, most notably *Biospheria: An Environmental Opera*.

For over twenty years **Aleck Karis** has been one of the leading pianists in the New York contemporary music scene. Particularly associated with the music of Elliott Carter, Mario Davidovsky, and John Cage, he has championed their works all over the world. Among his numerous solo piano discs on Bridge Records are acclaimed recordings of Stravinsky, Schumann, Carter, and John Cage. Recently, Karis performed Birtwistle's marathon solo work *Harrison's Clocks* in London and New York, Feldman's *Patterns in a Chromatic Field* in New York, and appeared at the Venice Biennale. At home with both contemporary and classical works, Karis has performed concertos from Mozart to Birtwistle with New York's Y Chamber Symphony, St. Luke's Chamber Orchestra, the Richmond Symphony, and the Erie Symphony. He has been featured at leading international festivals including Bath, Geneva, Sao Paulo, Los Angeles, Miami, New York Philharmonic's Horizons Festival, Caramoor, and the Warsaw Autumn Festival. He is the pianist with Speculum Musicae. Awarded a solo recitalists' fellowship by the NEA, Karis has been honored with two Fromm Foundation grants "in recognition of his commitment to the music of our time." Karis has recorded for Nonesuch, New World, Neuma, Centaur, Roméo, and CRI Records. His solo debut album for Bridge Records of music by Chopin, Carter, and Schumann was nominated as "Best Recording of the Year" by *OPUS Magazine* (1987) and his Sonatas and Interludes for prepared piano by John Cage received a "Critic's Choice" from Gramophone in 1999. His most recent CD, on the Tzadik label, is an acclaimed recording of *Patterns in a Chromatic Field* for cello and piano, by Morton Feldman. He has also recorded solo music by Davidovsky, Babbitt, Glass, Primosch, Anderson, and Yuasa. Chamber music recordings include works by Carter, Wolpe, Feldman, Crumb, Babbitt, Martino, Lieberson, Steiger, and Shifrin. Karis has studied with William Daghlian, Artur Balsam, and Beveridge Webster and holds degrees from the Manhattan School of Music and The Juilliard School. Currently, he is a Professor of Music at the University of California, San Diego.

A black and white photograph of Chris Botti, a trumpeter, performing on stage. He is wearing a dark suit and is captured in the middle of playing his trumpet. The background is dark and out of focus, showing other musicians and the stage environment.

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