

UPCOMING AT THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Thursday, April 24 – Jazz Ensembles

7:00 pm - Capistrano Concert Hall  
(15 general, \$10 senior, \$5 student)

Friday-Saturday, April 25-26 – Opera Theatre

featuring a staged version of Henry Purcell's  
*Dido and Aeneas* with chamber orchestra

7:00 pm - Capistrano Concert Hall  
(15 general, \$10 senior, \$5 student)

Wednesday, April 30 – Concert Band

*Music by Jack Stamp, Brian Balmages, John Mackey,  
Alfred Reed, Johannes Brahms, Alex Shapiro,  
and Frederick Fennell*

7:00 pm - Capistrano Concert Hall  
(15 general, \$10 senior, \$5 student)

Friday, May 2 – Vocal Jazz Ensembles

7:00 pm - Capistrano Concert Hall  
(15 general, \$10 senior, \$5 student)

[www.csus.edu/music](http://www.csus.edu/music)

*Faculty and Guest Artist Recital*

**Kirsten Smith, piano**  
**Sam Weiser, violin**  
**Jia-mo Chen, cello**

FRIDAY, 7:00 P.M.  
APRIL 18, 2025  
CAPISTRANO HALL 151

Piano Trio in E-flat Major, Op. 70 No. 2      Ludwig van Beethoven  
(1770-1827)

Poco sostenuto - Allegro ma non troppo  
Allegretto  
Allegretto ma non troppo  
Allegro

i don't see stars where i'm from (2022)      Che Buford

Piano Trio in G Major      Claude Debussy  
(1862-1918)

Andantino con moto allegro  
Scherzo intermezzo: Moderato con allegro  
Andante espressivo  
Finale: Appassionato

the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. A winner of many competitions herself, Ms. Smith has been the recipient of awards, scholarships and invitations to music festivals including the Aspen Music Festival, Interlochen Center for the Arts and the Van Cliburn Institute. She has been chosen to premiere numerous new works by contemporary composers and has recorded several times for the Centaur label.

In addition to the solo repertoire, Ms. Smith is devoted to the performance of collaborative works, and is a passionate teacher who believes deeply in the importance of discovering and sharing musical knowledge. Ms. Smith has been on the faculty of Sacramento State University since 1996, where she has taught piano, music theory, aural skills, collaborative piano and piano pedagogy. In demand as a lecturer, adjudicator and columnist, Ms. Smith was awarded a prestigious Pedagogy Enhancement Award at Sacramento State.

Raised in a musical family, she began formal lessons with her mother at age four and began teaching piano and entered college by age thirteen. Ms. Smith resides in Sacramento, where she divides her time between teaching and performing. When she's not at the piano, she enjoys training for dog agility competitions as well as traveling, camping, and exploring nature.

*This music was somewhat new to us and we are new as a group together. We have had great fun getting to know each other and putting this evening's concert together. We hope that you enjoy it as much as we do. We are tremendously grateful for your attendance. A live audience spurs us to dig deeper and become better musicians.*

*With all the problems in the world today, it often feels selfish and indulgent to spend time playing an instrument—or, one could say, struggling against all odds to master an instrument!*

*But with every new work, we come away changed, enlightened, enlivened and optimistic. Musicians are deeply grateful for every moment they get to spend discovering and learning, beholding some of the best art humans have ever created. It is at once a privilege and a daunting challenge to bring the music to life, to try to imbue it, somehow, with our spirit. We hope to share our joy and our awe of this remarkable music with you tonight. Thank you for being here.*

and violinist in sfSound. Formerly, he was a member of the award-winning Del Sol Quartet.

Sam has performed all over the country, from Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center to a raft floating along the Yampa River. He has premiered over 200 new works by composers such as Vijay Iyer, Huang Ruo, and Chen Yi.

He is also a dedicated educator, having taught violin and chamber music at Sacramento State and Chamber Music Conference of the East, in addition to maintaining a private teaching studio. Sam studied with Ian Swensen, Lucy Chapman, James Buswell, and Patinka Kopec. He holds bachelors' degrees from Tufts University in computer science and the New England Conservatory in violin, as well as a master's degree from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music in chamber music. Outside of the violin, Sam loves cooking, a long bike ride, or a game of Dungeons & Dragons.

**Jiamo Chen** is a cellist and dedicated music educator based in Sacramento, California. He holds a Bachelor's degree in cello performance from California State University, Sacramento, and Master of Music degree from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and has an extensive performance background as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral player across North America and Europe.

In addition to his busy performance career, Mr. Chen is committed to nurturing the next generation of musicians. He serves as a cello instructor at the Pacific Institute of Music and manages J's Music Studio.

An avid chamber musician, Jiamo has performed throughout northern California in duo collaborations with Kirsten Smith, as well as trio chamber music with pianist Shinae Kim and violinist Anita Felix. He has also appeared with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, Sacramento Philharmonic Orchestra, North State Symphony, Stockton Symphony, and the Sacramento Choral Society. During his leisure time he enjoys spending time with his family, good food, and playing with his two cats.

American pianist **Kirsten Smith** completed her undergraduate and graduate degrees in piano performance at the Arizona State University School of Music under the tutelage of Steven De Groote, Gold Medalist of

Notwithstanding his homely features and lack of social graces, Beethoven won the friendship and affection of a surprising number of socially prominent young women. One of the liveliest was a Hungarian countess, Anna Marie Niczky, who had married one of Beethoven's earliest patrons, Count Peter Erdödy, when she was only 17 years old, but was now separated from her husband. In 1809, Beethoven published two piano trios dedicated to the countess; we hear the second this evening.

In 1808, the countess invited Beethoven to move into her spacious apartment. There is no evidence that any sexual relationship existed. Beethoven had been an itinerant lodger, changing quarters frequently because of minor discomforts or disagreements with landlords, and she hoped to help him settle down. Unfortunately, the irritable and inflexible composer made a poor houseguest, and after six months of petty squabbling he moved out.

However, during his stay in the countess's home, Beethoven wrote the two trios as a gesture of appreciation for her hospitality. In this music, one can hear his genial and affectionate mood. Ultimately, the Countess Erdödy was one of Beethoven's longest-lasting friends and a faithful promoter of his music. Her numerous exchanges of letters with Beethoven shared deep philosophical ponderings along with mutual grumblings about their respective ill health.

The trio opens with a melancholy line in the solo cello, immediately imitated and overlapped by the violin, then piano, as if each instrument is searching for the right key. A short piano cadenza leads us into the main *Allegro*, where shift from 4/4 into 6/8 and the material from the melancholy opening is masterfully woven into the new jaunty character. The slow introduction returns to launch the coda.

The second movement is a set of variations built on two contrasting dance themes, stated consecutively, both with Hungarian flavor. The first is poised and in major, the second coarser and in minor. The variations alternate, following the major-minor pattern. Beethoven used this "double variation" structure in the slow movement of his Fifth Symphony, composed the same year.

In the third movement Beethoven provides an allegretto with such affectionate lyricism that the long melodic line and harmonic movement

could easily be mistaken for a Schubert song. In the contrasting middle section, the strings and piano alternate in a question-and-answer pattern.

All three players get a chance to show off in the tirelessly exuberant last movement, which was inspired, according to Carl Czerny, by a galloping horse. Beethoven undertakes a full-scale journey from theme to fragment, with escalating reiterations that ultimately resolve in the heroic triumph that Beethoven associates with the key of E-flat major.

Che Buford (he, they) is an NYC-based artist whose work explores creating new narratives within the world of music while engaging in themes of memory and place. Che performs as a violinist in various musical settings, specializing in improvisational performance, contemporary compositions, electroacoustic work, and interdisciplinary collaborations. Che describes this composition as follows:

*I don't see stars where I'm from* reflects on moments during the summer of 2022 when I was in numerous places where stars could be seen. The specific memory that sparked the inspiration for this piece was during an outdoor get-together in Western Massachusetts, where we stargazed and admired the intricate nature of the sky. At that moment, I recalled my memories of stargazing as a child in Brooklyn, when the stars were actually visible. This made me look at how light pollution gradually obscures our ability to see stars as humans.

The work begins by depicting a still, peaceful scene at night with twinkling stars. The music then shifts to something shimmering with expectancy. Rhythmic, effervescent, vibrant music takes over leading to something elated, highly energetic, and vast. After this, a bittersweet, reflective, melancholic narrative takes over. Fragments of music from the beginning repeat while fading out. The work ends on a dark and pessimistic note with a sudden change in tonality and gradual movement to the piano's low register.

When writing this piece, I thought about how artificial advances we make as humans may have a temporary advantage but long-lasting damage. Light pollution negatively affects wildlife, wastes energy, and diminishes our sense of the universe. As we listen, I hope we can think deeply about how we relate to and care for our earth.

"The primary aim of French music," Claude Debussy wrote in 1904, "is to give pleasure." He was a passionate champion of a purely French style, and he proudly referred to himself as "Claude Debussy, *musicien français*." His music became the very opposite of formal, dramatic, and primarily Germanic musical rhetoric of the 19th century. Much to the consternation of his teachers, Debussy allowed his concept of sound to override many of the traditional rules of composition and conjured his colorful, sensuous musical atmospheres from new harmonies, exotic rhythms and influences from Spain, Asia and the new world.

In 1879, Tchaikovsky's Russian patroness Nadezhda von Meck invited the eighteen-year-old Debussy to teach her children piano as well as provide accompaniment and chamber music. Debussy traveled with the family through Interlaken, Paris, Nice, Genoa, Naples, and Florence. While in Florence, von Meck's entourage was joined by a violinist and cellist, recent graduates of the Moscow Conservatory, who were asked to perform piano trios with Debussy every evening. It was during this time that he found inspiration to compose his only piano trio.

The manuscript was presumed lost for a century until it surfaced at auction around 1979. Nearly complete, it was reconstructed by an American musicologist who eventually published the work in 1986. This early work provides a glimpse into the evolution of a musical giant long before his signature style matured.

In this lyrical and charming piece, we hear the young Debussy already experimenting with new harmonies and rhythm. The first movement, instead of the usual sonata form, is episodic and free-flowing. The Scherzo-Intermezzo which follows is playful, with all three players tossing the sparkling melodic lines back and forth. The Andante espressivo third movement is constructed of long lyrical melodies in a simple romantic style. The finale, marked Appassionato, has a fervent intensity throughout.

**Sam Weiser**, currently the first violinist of the Carpe Diem String Quartet, is a lifelong chamber musician and advocate of contemporary music. He holds a number of positions around the Bay Area, including assistant concertmaster of the California Symphony, member of One Found Sound,