



The USCB Festival Series brings world class chamber music to Beaufort.

From its founding in 1979 by USCB Art History Professor Mary Whisonant, the USCB Festival Series has presented internationally renowned artists such as pianists Jean Yves Thibaudet and Jeremy Denk, violinists Joshua Bell and Bobby McDuffie, flautist Paula Robison, cellist Carter Brey and the Emerson, Brooklyn Rider and St. Lawrence String Quartets.

The upcoming season, the Festival's 35th, will continue the tradition of great talents bringing the music of the masters to the Lowcountry of South Carolina.

Soon after Professor Whisonant's retirement in 1989, Harriet Keyserling prevailed upon the legendary Charles Wadsworth to assume directorship and bring to Beaufort the chamber music riches he had unearthed for New York's Lincoln Center and Charleston's Spoleto. At that time Mr. Wadsworth had been entertaining audiences by providing informative and lively introductions of artists and compositions and his own inimitable style at the piano for over thirty years. A world-class raconteur as well as musician, he was a favorite with audiences across the US and in Europe. In fact, he has been credited by some with saving the art form of chamber music from extinction. He certainly had an impact in the Lowcountry of South Carolina.

His Beaufort reign lasted twenty years, during which Wadsworth drew many new fans to the USCB Festival, and when he announced his retirement just as he was turning eighty in 2008, the Art Center was standing room only. It was a memorable and bittersweet evening with a very large cake, many candles, enthusiastic audience participation, the presentation of a personalized parking meter with lifetime free parking from Mayor Keyserling, Wadsworth's usual wit and most importantly wonderful music played by exceptional artists. At the end, the Master expressed his great appreciation to artists and fans and his feelings of regret on closing the curtain on fifty years of grand music, "It's very tough to say good-bye. I plan to cry a lot."

For the Whisonant-Wadsworth tenures, the quality of the music and the talents of the artists surprised and delighted audiences, who had been drawn here by the beauty of the creeks and marshes, little expecting to discover Bach, Beethoven and Handel hiding in the bull rushes. Under the leadership of Edward Arron, the Festival Artistic Director, host and resident cellist for the past five years, the delightful discovery continues. As a significant young artist himself and as the Artistic Director for the Metropolitan Museum's Artists in Concert Series for the past eleven seasons, he is uniquely qualified to ensure that exceptional musicians keep coming and playing the exquisite music that make us the cultural envy of much larger, much wealthier, and much less fortunate towns and cities.

The new season will kick-off on Sunday November 2 with two of Beaufort's favorite

