

USCB Festival Series Opens

Written by Lila Meeks

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The USCB Festival Series will open its 35th season on November 3. The Series will include five early Sunday evening concerts from November through April at the USCB Center for the Arts.

Artistic Director and cellist Edward Arron will welcome new and returning talents for musical programs that will ensure the Series' continued reputation as one of the most distinguished classical music offerings in the Savannah—Hilton Head—Beaufort and Charleston area.

The 2013-2014 USCB Festival Series will once again feature some of the most well-known works of the chamber music repertoire by composers such as Brahms, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Schubert, and Schumann. They will be complimented by more recent works of Shostakovich, Pärt, and Americans Bruce, Gershwin, and O'Conner. The musicians, whether young or seasoned, have well-respected international reputations. Those who were in last year's audiences for the exceptional performances of Aaron Boyd playing first violin for Paganini's String Quartet in E Major and Tessa Lark's solo performance of Bach's Chaconne followed up by her lively blue grass encore will, no doubt, be first in line for the upcoming December and March concerts when these two phenomenal talents will return to the Beaufort stage.

The USCB Center for the Arts on Carteret Street is remarkable for its superb acoustics and Steinway concert grand piano. Concert dates are November 3rd, December 15th, February 9th, March 9th

and April 27th. Complete program information is available at

www.uscb.e/festivalseries

. Subscriptions and individual tickets can be ordered through Staci Breton at

843-208-8246/sjbreton@uscb.edu

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Except for the pleasure it gives, the USC Beaufort Chamber Music Series is not a profit-making venture. Ticket-sales cover only part of the expenses. Through the years it has depended upon the kindness and generosity of its friends: the University, local corporate advertisers, and individual donors, who become Friends of the Festival with their donations.

This year the Friends of the Festival will be holding three receptions with the artists for 2013-14 Friends at various levels of giving. On the eve of the March concert, Mr. and Mrs. William Lortz will host a gala at Bray's Island. Guests for this very special evening will include all Friends at the Patron level or higher and the March artists, who will perform chamber music pieces in an intimate setting as they were performed in drawing rooms of earlier centuries. For information about the Friends and receptions, please call Lila Meeks at 843-522-0779.

From its founding in 1979 by USCB Professor Mary Whisonant, the Festival Series has presented internationally renowned artists such as pianists Jean Yves Thibaudet and Richard Goode, violinists Joshua Bell and Robert McDuffie, flautist Paula Robison, cellist Carter Bray and the Emerson, Tokyo and St. Lawrence String Quartets. For several of the early years, performances were held at area banks and churches. In 1983 with the growth of the audience and the opening of the USCB Center for the Arts, the venue was moved to its permanent location. After Professor Whisonant's retirement, Beaufortonian Harriet Keyserling prevailed upon 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. The quality of the music and the talents of the artists surprised and delighted audiences throughout the Whisonant and Wadsworth tenures and have continued to do so under the leadership of Edward Arron.

Cellist Edward Arron spent two years assisting Mr. Wadsworth with the USCB Series, getting to know the Lowcountry audience and allowing the audience to enjoy his artistry and his thoughtful commentary and to appreciate his connectivity to the most significant young artists playing and composing chamber music at this time. As one of those significant young artists himself and as the Artistic Director for the Metropolitan Museum's Artists in Concert Series for the past ten seasons, he is uniquely qualified to ensure the continued high standard of the Festival Series and to attract new talents to the mix as he leads the Series. The upcoming season should prove once again, that living in the Lowcountry of South Carolina is a rich and rewarding experience, especially for those who attend the USCB chamber music concerts.