

Saturday, October 13, 2007, 8pm
Wheeler Auditorium

Taylor Eigsti Quartet



Taylor Eigsti *piano*
Julian Lage *guitar*
Harish Raghavan *bass*
Aaron McLendon *drums*

Cal Performances' 2007–2008 Season is sponsored by Wells Fargo Bank.

About the Artist

Taylor Eigsti

The 23-year-old pianist, composer and bandleader, Taylor Eigsti has been on the jazz scene since he was a pre-teen. With four CDs on micro-indies already to his credit, and an array of live performances on his résumé with such jazz luminaries as Dave Brubeck, James Moody and Ernestine Anderson, Mr. Eigsti is no rookie to the music.

Mr. Eigsti has been afforded the chance to share his music with a very wide audience, having twice been a guest on Marian McPartland's award-winning NPR program *Piano Jazz* and performing on a live recording with her at the 2004 Tanglewood Jazz Festival. He has gained significant exposure for his work on his latest album, *Lucky to Be Me*, since its March 2006 release, including peaking at #7 on the National Jazz Radio Airplay charts after being on the chart for 23 weeks, and ending the year as the 15th most played jazz album on radio.

Mr. Eigsti was the subject of a half-hour feature on the BETJ channel that aired several times this winter, and was also featured in many of the "Top 10 Best CDs of 2006" lists compiled by *JazzWeek*. In November 2006, Mr. Eigsti was featured on the cover of *Jazziz* magazine, one month after he was selected in the 2006 *Down Beat* Critics' Poll in the "Rising Star Piano" category. The following month, Mr. Eigsti was nominated for two Grammy Awards—one for Best Jazz Solo Performance for his improvisation on "Freedom Jazz Dance" and another for Best Instrumental Composition, for his song "Argument."

Acclaimed for his impeccable and adventurous technique, open attitude and mature, intuitive style, Mr. Eigsti started at a very early age, becoming devoted to the piano after the death of his sister, Shannon, a talented pianist who succumbed to cancer when he was just three. He began playing a year later, and at eight, he opened for his friend and mentor, jazz pianist David Benoit. At 12, Mr. Eigsti shared the stage with Diane Schuur and also opened for Diana Krall and Al Jarreau. At 13, he sat in with Dave Brubeck, who commented that "Taylor is the most amazing talent I've come across. Remember him." During his high school years in northern California, Mr. Eigsti worked with such respected jazz artists as Bobby Hutcherson, Red

Holloway and Kevin Mahogany. He also made his mark in the classical field, performing with singers Frederica von Stade and Sylvia McNair, as well as with numerous symphony orchestras. Other artists that Mr. Eigsti has worked with include Patti Austin, Johnny Frigo, Keter Betts, Peter Bernstein, Alan Broadbent, Anton Schwartz, Kitty Margolis and Madeline Eastman.

On *Lucky to Be Me*, his Concord Records debut, Mr. Eigsti features four original compositions alongside brand-new takes on well-known songs, from jazz standards to pop to the Great American Songbook. Alternating between two world-class rhythm teams, Mr. Eigsti is joined by his close friend and collaborator, 17-year-old jazz guitar sensation Julian Lage, on several tracks, including "Woke Up This Morning," the theme song to HBO's *The Sopranos*. Other selections include "Promenade," taken from the first movement of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, and Björk's "I've Seen It All" from the 2000 film *Dancer in the Dark*, in which the innovative singer stars.

"Cross-genre pollination seems to be the norm today, and I enjoy assimilating other genres, using the mechanisms and integrity of jazz," says Mr. Eigsti. "I have listened to all the older sources, like Charlie Parker, Phineas Newborn and Oscar Peterson, and derive many influences from them. But I'm also influenced as much by players from a younger generation, such as Brad Mehldau and Geoff Keezer. I think the younger musicians have a responsibility to move the music forward, and seeing younger people bringing so many new elements into jazz really inspires me."

About *Lucky to Be Me's* title track, written by Leonard Bernstein, Mr. Eigsti says, "I usually end my shows with it as a ballad encore." He pauses and adds, "I've been through a lot of extreme emotions in my life—the highest and the lowest—and *Lucky to Be Me* reminds me that, despite everything else, I have music. And that makes me an incredibly fortunate person."

Mr. Eigsti is managed by acclaimed jazz manager Mary Ann Topper, most notable for making stars of Diana Krall, Jane Monheit and Joshua Redman, among others.