

FORD FIVE HUNDRED TUSCAN SUN FESTIVAL TOUR
BRINGS THE BEAUTY AND SPIRIT OF TUSCANY
TO ZELLERBACH HALL ON MONDAY, APRIL 25 AT 8:00 P.M.

BERKELEY, March 18, 2005 – Inspired by the books of bestselling author **Frances Mayes** (*Under the Tuscan Sun* and *Bringing Tuscany Home*) and the annual **Tuscan Sun Festival** in Cortona, Italy, the **Ford Five Hundred Tuscan Sun Festival Tour** brings the essence of Italy's wine country to Zellerbach Hall on **Monday, April 25 at 8:00 p.m.** The one night only performance promises to invoke the pleasures of an Italian summer through music, spoken words and photography. The unique program features the U.S. premiere of Russian cellist **Nina Kotova's** concerto for cello and orchestra *The Tuscan* (2005), the writings of Frances Mayes and the projected images of renowned travel photographer **Steven Rothfeld**. Backed by violinist and conductor **Dmitry Sitkovetsky** and his 20 member **New European Strings Chamber Orchestra**, the musical program also features works by Haydn and Tchaikovsky. The Tuscan Sun Festival Tour is presented by Ford Five Hundred in cooperation with Cal Performances.

TUSCAN SUN FESTIVAL

"We are creating a multifaceted, multi-sensory event that unites the world's best classical music with intimate experiences of the pleasures of life in Tuscany," says **Barrett Wissman**, co-founder, along with Ms. Kotova, of the **Ford Five Hundred Tuscan Sun Festival** which has quickly become one of the Europe's most prestigious cultural events. Artistic director Frances Mayes each year assembles an impressive list of musicians, writers, and performers. From art exhibits to culinary delights, literary discussions to classical music, the Tuscan Sun Festival features a full spectrum of artistic treats and Italian delights. The festival also offers highly personal cultural experiences including private receptions with featured artists, art exhibits of Cortona's Etruscan and Renaissance treasures and a day-long wine extravaganza. The performance on April 25 at Cal Performances offers a sampling from the two week event referred to as "a summer festival of good living" by the *International Herald Tribune*.

FRANCES MAYES

Formerly Professor of Creative Writing at San Francisco State University, **Frances Mayes** has been the artistic director of the Tuscan Sun Festival from its beginnings and is the ideal person for the job: she is the author of three best-selling books about Italy. In *Under the Tuscan Sun: At Home in Italy*, she recounts the laborious and rewarding experience of establishing her new home outside of Cortona, Italy. The vivid travel memoir topped *The New York Times'* bestseller list for more than two years, has been translated into 20 languages and was made into a feature film starring Diane Lane. It was followed by the memoir *Bella Tuscany*, also an international best seller. Her forthcoming book of travel essays, *A Year in the World*, will be published in spring 2006. Ms. Mayes, an American, and her husband divide their year between San Francisco and Cortona. For the Tuscan Sun Festival Tour, Ms. Mayes has selected and recorded portions of *Under the Tuscan Sun* to accompany the music and images.

NINA KOTOVA

Born into a family of musicians and scientists, cellist **Nina Kotova** was exposed to the musical world at an early age. At the age of seven, Ms. Kotova was accepted by the cello faculty into an adult class at the Moscow Conservatory, gave her first performance as a soloist with an orchestra at the age of eleven, and at age fifteen, Ms. Kotova won First Prize at the Concertino Prague International Competition.

Ms. Kotova's career has taken her across the globe performing as a soloist, chamber musician and composer. She made her Carnegie Hall debut as a soloist with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra and appeared at the Barbican Centre in London, the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory, the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing, Town Hall in New York, Orchid Hall in Tokyo, and on Ravinia's "Rising Stars" series. When her first cello concerto premiered in 2000, *The San Francisco Chronicle* hailed Ms. Kotova's work as "a complex, gripping affair. [She] is destined for greatness."

DMITRY SITKOVETSKY

As a violinist, **Dmitry Sitkovetsky** has worked with the very best orchestras in the world – the Berlin Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus, London Symphony, Philharmonia, Chicago,

Philadelphia, Los Angeles, New York Philharmonic, and Cleveland Orchestras. Over the past few years, Mr. Sitkovetsky has also built a flourishing conducting career. In 2003, he was the Music Director of the Greensboro Symphony Orchestra and in 2002, he was the Principle Conductor of the Russian State Symphony in Moscow. Between 1996 – 2001, Mr. Sitkovetsky was both the Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor of the Ulster Orchestra.

NEW EUROPEAN STRINGS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

The **New European Strings Chamber Orchestra** was founded by Dmitry Sitkovetsky in May 1990 inspired by his experiences as a musician around the world. He wanted to combine the qualities associated with the Russian String School, such as the uniform mastery of technique and total intensity of playing, with the finest traditions of western music, ensemble playing and a thorough knowledge of various musical styles. The New European Strings Chamber Orchestra has recorded two CDs, both receiving with critical acclaim.

STEVEN ROTHFELD

Steven Rothfeld is a distinguished travel and food photographer and a frequent contributor to *European Travel and Life*, *Bon Appétit*, *Gourmet*, and *Travel and Leisure* magazines. His photographs appear in Frances Mayes' new book *Bringing Tuscany Home*. His work also appears in his own award-winning photography books *French Dreams*, *Italian Dreams*, *Irish Dreams*, and *Entrez*.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for the **Ford Five Hundred Tuscan Sun Festival, April 25 at 8:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$22.00, \$32.00, and \$42.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens and other students receive a \$2 discount, and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$3 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu.

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Cal Performances' 2004/2005 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Monday, April 25 at 8:00 p.m.

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

Chamber Music

Ford Five Hundred Tuscan Sun Festival Tour

Nina Kotova, cellist

Dmitry Sitkovetsky, conductor and violinist

Steven Rothfeld, photographer

The New European Strings Chamber Orchestra

Program:

Shostakovich/Prelude and Scherzo, Op. 11

Kotova/*The Tuscan* (2005)

Haydn/Cello Concerto No. 1 in C major

Tchaikovsky/*Souvenir de Florence* for strings, Op. 70 in D major

Tickets: \$22.00, \$32.00, and \$42.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door.