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**BOUNDARY-BREAKING JAZZ COMES TO CAL PERFORMANCES WHEN THE
BRAD MEHLDAU TRIO & BILL FRISELL QUINTET SHARE A DOUBLE BILL**
SUNDAY, JANUARY 22, 2006 AT 7:00 P.M.

BERKELEY, December 28, 2005 – “Killer pianist” (*Rolling Stone*) **Brad Mehldau** and “guitar genius” (*Spin*) **Bill Frisell**, each known for their cross-pollination of jazz with other musical styles, bring their bands to Cal Performances **Sunday, January 22 at 7:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall. Mehldau and his new trio, featuring **Larry Grenadeir** (bass) and **Jeff Ballard** (drums), push their music toward the edge of rock with sets that include songs by Radiohead, the Beatles and Nick Drake. Mehldau makes unexpected musical choices in order to avoid the pitfalls of using “someone else’s language,” he explains. “It’s a bit easier to bypass that temptation if you’re dealing with material that’s not associated with those great players from the past.” In Mehldau’s hands, any choice is validated by his deep improvisational skills and “gigantic talent” (*Time*).

Not to be outdone, Bill Frisell’s guitar playing can take jazz down twangy, country roads, swing through new songs with abandon, or jam around samples from obscure vintage vinyl recordings as he did on his 2004 Grammy Award-winning album *Unspeakable*. Accompanied in this concert by **Ron Miles** (trumpet), **Tony Scherr** (bass), **Greg Tardy** (tenor saxophone), and **Kenny Wollesen** (drums), Frisell creates music with an instinctual understanding of a song’s structure and a commitment to melody, leading to musicianship of the highest order. “It’s hard to imagine a more fruitful meditation on American music than in the compositions of guitarist Bill Frisell. Mixing rock and country with jazz and blues, he’s found what connects them: improvisation and a sense of play” says *The New York Times*.

BRAD MEHLDAU TRIO

Brad Mehldau began experimenting with the piano at age four and moved to classical training starting at age six. In 1988, Mehldau arrived in New York, where he played and recorded with a variety of musicians over the next several years. During that period, he began to develop his own style, which he attributes to the influence of his musical peers, specifically Peter Bernstein, Jessie Davis and David Sanchez, as well as musicians he regularly worked with, among them Mark Turner, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Perico Sambeat, Leon Parker, Avishai Cohen, and Chris Potter. He

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formed his first trio with Larry Grenadier and Jorge Rossy in 1994 and the following year got his first major international exposure as a member of the Joshua Redman Quartet. Also in 1995, Warner Records released his debut album *Introducing Brad Mehldau*. Mehldau's follow-up album *Art of the Trio, Vol. I*, released in 1997, received great critical acclaim. In the same year he won the *Down Beat* Critics Poll, received a Grammy nomination in the category "Best Jazz Instrumental Solo" and won the category "Best New Artist of 1997" in the *Jazz Times* Readers Poll.

Mehldau's cross pollination of music styles has meant a growing fan base. His trio packed the Village Vanguard in New York this fall with an audience that featured numerous Radiohead fans. Mehldau's latest album *Day is Done*, which explores more new standards but maintains a "timeless jazz feel" (*JazzTimes*) was the second-ranked jazz recording on the college radio charts in November; and he recently performed at Carnegie Hall with soprano Renee Fleming, in a recital of songs based on the poetry of Louise Bogan and Rainer Maria Rilke and composed by Mehldau.

Bassist **Larry Grenadier** received a B.A. in English literature from Stanford University. After relocating to Boston, he toured the United States and Europe as a member of Gary Burton's band. He then moved to New York, where he has performed with Joe Henderson, Betty Carter, Pat Metheny, and John Scofield, among others. When not working with Brad Mehldau, he tours and records with the Pat Metheny Trio.

New to the trio, drummer **Jeff Ballard** grew up in Santa Cruz, California. He toured with Ray Charles from 1988 until 1990, when he settled in New York. Since then, Ballard has played and recorded with Lou Donaldson, Danilo Perez, Chick Corea, and Joshua Redman, among others. In addition to his work with Brad Mehldau, Ballard co-leads Fly, a collectively led trio with Larry Grenadier and saxophonist Mark Turner, and performs with Joshua Redman's Elastic Band.

BILL FRISELL QUINTET

Inspired by Jimmy Dodd, the Mouseketeers leader on the *Mickey Mouse Club*, **Bill Frisell** built his first guitar out of cardboard, using rubber bands for strings. He began clarinet lessons at nine, got his first real guitar at eleven, and by 14 had started his first band covering pop and soul classics. In addition to his own band, Frisell plays with Paul Motian's Trio with Joe Lovano and has also performed with Jim Hall, Don Byron, Ginger Baker, Charlie Haden, David Sanborn, Marianne Faithful, Elvis Costello, and Ron Carter. He performed Steve Mackey's composition *Deal* at

Carnegie Hall with the American Composers Orchestra conducted by Dennis Russell Davies and in Los Angeles with members of the L.A. Philharmonic conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen. Constantly stretching himself, Frisell's music can be heard in a variety of films including Gary Larson's *Tales from the Farside*, Gus van Sant's *Psycho* and *Finding Forrester*, and Wim Wenders's *Million Dollar Hotel*. He has also written music for the Frankfurt Ballett and has been featured on television on "Night Music," "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno" and "Sessions at West 54th Street."

A Denver, Colorado, native, trumpeter **Ron Miles** has played with Bill Frisell in a number of recording and live situations including in Frisell's collaborative multi-media piece, *Mysterio Sympatico*. Miles has also appeared on Frisell CDs *Blues Dream*, *Quartet* and *The Sweetest Punch*. His most recent recording is *Laughing Barrel* recorded with his Ron Miles Quartet and follows his duo recording *Heaven* with Frisell. When not on the road, he serves as Assistant Professor of trumpet at Metropolitan State College in Denver.

Bassist **Tony Scherr** was born in New Haven, Connecticut, and is self taught. He is best known as a bass player, but also plays slide and electric guitar. Scherr is in great demand recording and touring for several bands, including Sex Mob, Jesse Harris and the Ferdinandos, Joey Baron's Killer Joey and The Maria Schneider Orchestra. His original material can be heard on his self-produced CD entitled, *Come Around*. Scherr has contributed to film scores by John Lurie, Evan Lurie, Howard Shore and members of Sonic Youth.

Born in New Orleans, **Gregory Tardy** began studying classical clarinet, subsequently turning to the tenor saxophone on which he explored many musical styles, with a special love for jazz. Tardy has played with Elvin Jones, the Neville Brothers, Nicholas Payton, Ellis Marsalis, Tom Harrell, Andrew Hill, Dave Douglas, John Patitucci, and Wynton Marsalis, among others. His recordings as a leader include *Serendipity*, *Hidden Light* and *Abundance*.

Kenny Wollesen grew up in Santa Cruz, California, and now lives and works in New York City. He performs regularly with Frisell and has played with John Zorn, Tom Waits, John Scofield, among many others. In addition to his live performances with Frisell, he currently tours with trumpeter Steven Bernstein's group Sex Mob, and occasionally with Zorn's Electric Masada. He also leads his own band, The Wollesens.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Brad Mehldau Trio & Bill Frisell Quintet** on Sunday, January 22 at 7:00 p.m. in Zellerbach Hall are priced at \$20.00, \$30.00 and \$40.00. 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. 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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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Sunday, January 22 at 7:00 p.m.

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

Jazz

Brad Mehldau Trio

Brad Mehldau, piano
Larry Grenadeir, bass
Jeff Ballard, drums

Bill Frisell Quintet

Bill Frisell, guitar
Ron Miles, trumpet
Tony Scherr, bass
Greg Tardy, tenor saxophone
Kenny Wollesen, drums

Program: The Brad Mehldau Trio and the Bill Frisell Quintet are part of a double-bill evening of category-defying jazz.

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