

CONTACT:
Christina Kellogg 510.643.6714
ckellogg@calperfs.berkeley.edu
Joe Yang 510.642.9121
scyang@calperfs.berkeley.edu

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**CAL PERFORMANCES COMPOSER PORTRAITS SERIES OPENS WITH GYÖRGY
LIGETI'S COMPLETE PIANO ETUDES PERFORMED BY CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR AT
HERTZ HALL, NOVEMBER 6**

BERKELEY, September 28, 2005 – Cal Performances, in collaboration with the Miller Theatre at Columbia University, presents a new series titled Composer Portraits, in-depth examinations of the works of the great composers of the 20th Century. The series opens with Hungarian-born composer **György Ligeti's** masterful **Complete Piano Etudes** Sunday, **November 6 at 3:00 p.m.** in Hertz Hall. The 82-year-old composer recently won the Frankfurt Music Prize, which honored him as “one of the most eminent composers of our time who had a major formative influence on contemporary music for more than four decades.” Ligeti's Complete Piano Etudes, a series in progress considered to be one of the most important additions to the piano repertoire in the last half century, is performed by **Christopher Taylor**, “one of the most impressive young pianists on the horizon today” (*The Washington Post*).

Ligeti's etudes, considered preternaturally difficult to perform, combine influences of Debussy and Chopin along with contemporary references to Conlon Nancarrow's studies for player piano, polyphonic ensemble playing and rhythms found in sub-Saharan African cultures, Balinese gamelan, American minimalism, and jazz. So far Ligeti has completed eighteen etudes: six works in Book One (1985); eight studies in Book Two (1988 -1993); and four works in Book Three (1995 – 2001).

GYÖRGY LIGETI

One of the world's best known living composers, musical pioneer **György Ligeti** forged his own musical mode, based on texture and sound density, which has become a major influence on contemporary music. His varied works, which he began in pre-communist Hungary and continued in western Europe after the Hungarian communist revolution, can be searingly intense or full of vivacity and humor. Ligeti was born in Dicsőszentmárton (today Tîrnăveni) in 1923 as

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the son of Hungarian-Jewish parents. He studied at the Klausenburg conservatory with Ferenc Farkas from 1941 to 1943. His studies were interrupted when he was sent into forced labor as a Jew for the remainder of World War II. Although his family was destroyed, he survived. In 1945, he resumed his studies at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest with Ferenc Farkas, Sándor Veress, Pál Járdányi, and Lajos Bárdos, which he soon developed "micropolyphony" - his own term - which later was to become one of the most significant features of his music.

Ligeti stayed in Hungary until after the revolution in 1956 when he fled to Vienna. Because of political repression and censorship, his work in Hungary was limited to folk music. Once he arrived in the West, he was introduced to important figures in avant-garde and experimental music. He was invited to join the Electronic Music Studio of Westdeutscher Rundfunk (West German Radio) in Cologne in 1957. Once there, he began to develop his own style. His electronic composition *Artikulation* (1958) and the orchestral *Apparitions* (1958-59), the first pieces to reflect his new approach, attracted critical attention and launched his international career.

Numerous prizes, awards and distinctions are proof of the high esteem accorded to Ligeti's work and to him as a teacher and mentor of a whole generation of composers. Apart from his membership in the Hamburg Free Academy of Arts and the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts in Munich, other prizes and distinctions include appointment as '*Commandeur dans l'Ordre National des Arts et Lettres*' in 1988, the Kyoto-Prize for Arts and Science for the body of his work in 2001, the Echo Klassik 2004 for his lifework, in addition to the Frankfurt Music Prize 2005. He became an Austrian citizen in 1967 and continues to live and teach in Vienna.

CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR

In recent years, **Christopher Taylor** has emerged as one of the nation's foremost young musicians. Numerous awards have confirmed Taylor's standing in the musical world including American Pianists' Association Fellow for 2000, an Avery Fisher Career Grant in 1996 and the Bronze Medal in the 1993 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, where he was the first American in twelve years to receive such high recognition. In recent seasons, Taylor has performed around the globe, including France, Korea, Spain, the Philippines, and the Caribbean.

In the U.S., he has appeared with such orchestras as the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Detroit Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, Houston Symphony, and Boston Pops, and has recently toured with the Polish Chamber Philharmonic. As a soloist he has performed in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, The Kennedy Center, Ravinia Festival, Aspen Festival, and dozens of others.

Taylor began his piano studies in his native Boulder, Colorado, under Julie Bees, and has since studied with Francisco Aybar, Russell Sherman and Maria Curcio Diamand. While pursuing his musical career, he also attended Harvard University and graduated summa cum laude with a degree in mathematics in 1992. He maintains many other active interests, including composition (a field in which he has won several awards), music theory, linguistics, bicycling, and hiking, and is on the faculty at the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Christopher Taylor** performing **György Ligeti's** Complete Piano Etudes on **Sunday, November 6 at 3:00 p.m.** in Hertz Hall are priced at **\$32.00**. 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' 2005/2006 Centennial Season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday, November 6 at 3:00 p.m

Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
College Ave. at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

20th Century Music & Beyond

Composer Portrait: György Ligeti

Christopher Taylor, piano

Program:

Ligeti/The Complete Piano Etudes, Books 1, 2 and 3

Tickets: \$32.00, 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.
