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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 6, 2006

**CHAMBER ORCHESTRA LES VIOLONS DU ROY IS JOINED BY CZECH
MEZZO-SOPRANO MAGDALENA KOŽENÁ IN CONCERT
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12 AT 7:00 P.M. AT ZELLERBACH HALL**

KEY NOTES: UC Berkeley musicologist Rebekah Ahrendt discusses early music performance practice Thursday, February 9 at 7:00 p.m. at Musical Offering Classical Record Shop and Café.

BERKELEY, January 6, 2006 – Named for the string ensembles that the kings of France kept close at hand, **Les Violons du Roy** combines historical accuracy with passionate musical expression. The 31-member string ensemble of “almost superhuman perfection” (*Opera News*) will be joined by the “impeccable” (*Gramophone*) mezzo-soprano **Magdalena Kožená** on **Sunday, February 12 at 7:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall. Led by founder and conductor **Bernard Labadie** Les Violons du Roy takes an unorthodox approach to performing using modern instruments with baroque period bows. The older, lighter bows of the baroque era allow for a crisper technique and a more authentic sound. The program of early music features arias by **Jean-Philippe Rameau** and **Christoph Willibald Gluck** and *Les Éléments* by the lesser known **Jean-Féry Rebel**.

A *Key Notes* lecture exploring issues around the performance of early music will be given by UC Berkeley musicologist **Rebekah Ahrendt** on **Thursday, February 9 at 7:00 p.m.** at the Musical Offering Classical Record Shop and Café. This event is free to the public.

PROGRAM

Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683–1764), one of the most important composers and theorists in musical history, was France’s leading 18th-century composer. His astonishingly prolific output includes numerous innovative pieces for keyboard, as well as cantatas, motets and dramatic vocal works. Rameau’s operatic catalogue is similarly vast and contains some of the greatest works of pre-Revolutionary French opera. Magdalena Kožená and Les Violons du Roy will perform arias from three of his early operatic *tragédies*, *Hippolyte et Aricie* (1733), *Castor et Pollux* (1737) and *Dardanus* (1739), all celebrated today but which were considered controversial

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when first produced at the Paris Opéra. Composer and instrumentalist **Jean-Féry Rebel** (1666–1747) held many positions at the court of Louis XIV and the orchestra of the Opéra in Paris. At the Opéra he served variously as violinist, harpsichordist, conductor, and music director. He was court composer to Louis XIV and, in 1705, became one of the court's 24 *violons du roi*, eventually becoming the ensemble's leader. Rebel composed several ground-breaking suites and sonatas for violin and pioneered a new instrumental genre, the "choreographic symphony," which contributed to the development of the classical symphony. *Les Éléments* (1737), to be performed at the Berkeley concert, is his ultimate work in this form. **Christoph Willibald Gluck** (1714–1787) was one of the 18th century's leading operatic composers, credited with reforming the genre by up-ending the conventions of the Baroque *opera seria*. He focused his early reforms on Italian opera and the French *opéra comique*. On hearing the works of Rameau, however, Gluck turned his attention to the French *tragédie lyrique* tradition and the Paris Opéra. The five operas he composed for Paris in the mid-1770s are among the most successful of the period. Magdalena Kožená will sing arias from three of them: *Iphigénie en Aulide* (1774), *Alceste* (1776) and *Armide* (1777), accompanied by Les Violons.

LES VIOLONS DU ROY

Les Violons du Roy was founded by artistic director Bernard Labadie in 1984 and specializes in the vast repertoire of music for chamber orchestra, performed in the stylistic manner most appropriate to each era. Although the ensemble plays on modern instruments, its approach to the works of the Baroque and Classical periods has been strongly influenced by current understanding of performance practice in the 17th and early 18th centuries; in this repertoire Les Violons du Roy uses Baroque bows and bowing technique.

A pillar of the musical scene in Québec City, and well known throughout Canada for its concerts and its recordings for the French and English networks of the CBC, Les Violons du Roy has, since 1988, made over a hundred concert appearances in Austria, Belgium, Canada, Ecuador, England, France, Germany, Mexico, Morocco, Norway, Spain and the United States. After a first visit in August 1997, Les Violons du Roy played at Lincoln Center in New York in March 2001. They returned to New York in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks,

offering an emotionally intense version of Mozart's *Requiem* and Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass* that were hailed by *The New York Times* as “soul-healing.”

From 1992 to 2003, Les Violons du Roy made twelve CD recordings with the DORIAN label reaping seven JUNO award nominations (Canada’s Music Awards) and two JUNO awards for Best Classical Album, Choral or Vocal Performance for their recordings of Handel's *Apollo and Dafne* and Mozart's *Requiem*. Their latest CD, of J. S. Bach’s *Psaume 51* and Cantata No. 82, was released in October 2004 on the ATMA label.

Bernard Labadie was born in Québec City and completed most of his musical training there. He has become a remarkable ambassador for his native city through the work of two groups he founded: the chamber orchestra Les Violons du Roy and the chamber choir La Chapelle de Québec. He conducts them in regular concert seasons in Québec City and Montréal, and on tour throughout Canada, the United States and Europe. In May 2003, Labadie left L’Opéra de Québec, where he had been Artistic Director since July 1994, to take up a new position at L’Opéra de Montréal. During the 2004–2005 season, he conducted Handel’s *Agrippina* and Bizet’s *Carmen*.

As a guest conductor, Bernard Labadie has directed all the major symphony orchestras in Canada, and the Los Angeles, Detroit, Saint Louis, Seattle, Indianapolis, Utah and Oregon symphony orchestras, the New World Symphony in Miami, the Saint Paul and Los Angeles chamber orchestras, the Oregon Bach Festival orchestra and the orchestra at the Mostly Mozart Festival in New York. In 2005/06, he will conduct the San Francisco, Atlanta, Columbus and New Jersey symphony orchestras for the first time.

Bernard Labadie has also conducted opera productions at the Glimmerglass Opera (Handel’s *Orlando*) and the Mostly Mozart Festival in New York (Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*). In the summer of 2005, he appeared for the first time at the Santa Fe Opera, conducting Susan Graham in Mozart’s *Lucio Silla*. As a recognized specialist in Baroque and Classical music, he has also conducted early music groups such as the Philharmonia Baroque (San Francisco), the Handel and Haydn Society (Boston), the New York Collegium and Chicago Baroque.

MAGDALENA KOŽENÁ

Magdalena Kožená was born in Brno, in what was then Czechoslovakia, now the Czech Republic, and studied at the Brno Conservatoire. She continued her studies with Eva Blahová at the College of Performing Arts of Bratislava, graduating in 1995. In 1996 and 1997, she was a member of the Vienna Volksoper and in 1998 she debuted at the Drottningholm Festival, singing Paride in Gluck's *Paride ed Elena*. Further recitals have taken her to London, the Schubertiade Schwazenberg, Brussels, Paris, Hamburg, Amsterdam, Munich, Prague, Tokyo, Yokahama and Sapporo. Recent operatic engagements include *Idamantes* at the Glyndebourne and Salzburg Festivals and *Dorabella* at the Salzburg Easter Festival and in Berlin, all four engagements were with Simon Rattle. She made her New York Metropolitan Opera debut as Cherubino with James Levine and also performed the role for the Bavarian State Opera.

Kožená records exclusively for Deutsche Grammophon, and her debut album won the Gramophone Solo Vocal Award in 2001. Her most recent CDs are recitals of arias by Mozart, Gluck and Myslivecek, with the Prague Philharmonia and principal guest conductor Michel Swierczewski; French arias with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and conductor Marc Minkowski; and a recital CD with pianist Malcolm Martineau. “Magdalena Kozená’s richly coloured voice combines fullness and warmth with the bloom and freshness of youth,” raved the *BBC Magazine*. “Add to this a perfect technique – seamless legato, dazzling coloratura, smooth negotiation of wide intervals – and a vivid musical imagination and you have a recipe for an exceptional classical recital.”

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Les Violons du Roy** with **Magdalena Kožená**, on **Sunday, February 12** at **7:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$32.00, \$42.00** and **\$56.00**. 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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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Thursday, February 9 at 7:00 p.m.

Musical Offering Café
2430 Bancroft Way, Berkeley

Key Notes Lecture:

UC Berkeley musicologist Rebekah Ahrendt delves into issues in early music performance practice, anticipating the February 12 concert. *Key Notes*, a thematic lecture series presented at the Musical Offering Classical Record Shop and Café by Cal Performances and the UC Berkeley Department of Music. Light refreshments will be served. This event is free to the public.

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Sunday, February 12 at 7:00 p.m.

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

Chamber Music

Les Violons du Roy
with **Magdalena Kožená**, mezzo-soprano
Bernard Labadie, conductor

Program:

Rameau/ Suite from *Dardanus*: Arias from *Dardanus*, *Hippolyte et Aricie*, and
Castor et Pollux
Rebel/*Les Éléments* (sic)
Gluck/Arias from *Alceste*, *Armide* and *Iphigénie en Aulide*

Tickets: \$32.00, \$42.00 and \$56.00 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.