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**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS THE THIRD BIENNIAL
BERKELEY EDGE FEST: A FESTIVAL OF CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCE
THURSDAY–SUNDAY, JUNE 7–10 ON THE UC BERKELEY CAMPUS**

**THE FESTIVAL OPENS WITH THE WEST COAST PREMIERE OF
PAUL DRESHER'S *THE TYRANT* WITH TENOR JOHN DUYKERS
JUNE 7 & 9 AT ZELLERBACH PLAYHOUSE**

**TWO CONCERTS FEATURE THE MUSIC OF FREDERIC RZEWSKI,
INCLUDING TWO WORLD PREMIERES AND HIS CLASSIC
36 VARIATIONS ON "THE PEOPLE UNITED WILL NEVER BE DEFEATED!"
WITH PIANIST URSULA OPPENS, JUNE 8 & 10 AT HERTZ HALL**

BERKELEY, March 21, 2007—The third biennial **Berkeley Edge Fest** is presented by Cal Performances on the UC Berkeley campus **June 7–10, 2007**. Designed to provide a showcase for new and contemporary works of performing art, the 2007 Berkeley Edge Fest spotlights the work of two eminent figures on the international new music scene, composers **Paul Dresher** and **Frederick Rzewski**. Dresher's tour-de-force solo chamber opera, *The Tyrant* (2005), was created in collaboration with librettist **Jim Lewis** and tenor **John Duykers**; the West Coast premiere is performed by Duykers and the six-member **Paul Dresher Ensemble** **Thursday and Saturday, June 7 and 9 at 8:00 p.m.** at **Zellerbach Playhouse**. Excerpts of *The Tyrant* were performed last year in San Francisco and "that was enough to leave a listener eager for the rest" (*San Francisco Chronicle*).

On **June 8 at 8:00 p.m.** at **Hertz Hall**, the first of two concerts of the music of Frederic Rzewski includes his magnum opus *36 Variations on "The People Will Never Be Defeated!"* with celebrated pianist **Ursula Oppens**. The composer is at the piano for *Four Pieces*, a rare treat since Rzewski performs infrequently in the United States. "The *Four Pieces* are in part a function of this composer's virtuoso abilities as a player and enormous sound he can make. If the assaults on tradition are eager, traditional harmony is always just under the surface, ready to emerge" (*The New York Times*).

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The second concert, **Sunday, June 10 at 3:00 p.m.** at **Hertz Hall**, includes world premieres—*Nanosonatas, Book 2* (2006), and *The Fall of the Empire, Act 6: Sacrifice* (2007), which reflects his opposition to the Iraq war. In addition, the program includes *To the Earth* (1985); *Bring Them Home!* (2004); **Gao Ping's** *The Mountain* (2004); and **Elliott Carter's** *Intermittences* (2005). Percussionists **William Winant** and **Ben Paysen** join the pianists.

The Berkeley Edge Fest is produced by Cal Performances in association with the Department of Music at UC Berkeley. **Robert Cole**, Director of Cal Performances, is the General Director of the Berkeley Edge Fest.

The Berkeley Edge Fest will include a series of community and education events; they are to be announced.

THE TYRANT

The Berkeley Edge Fest opens **Thursday, June 7 at 8:00 p.m.** with the West Coast premiere of Paul Dresher's *The Tyrant*, "a gripping music-theater piece that is witty, poignant and wonderfully effective. Duykers was absolutely mesmerizing in the role of the king who dares not leave his throne for fear of being overthrown" (*The Seattle Times*). This is only the second presentation of the fully staged, completed work that premiered at the Cleveland Opera in May 2006; earlier, semi-staged versions were performed in Los Angeles and Seattle in 2005 and excerpts were performed in San Francisco in 2006.

The Tyrant is inspired by Italo Calvino's short story *A King Listens*. Dresher and his team do not use the text of the story directly. Rather, they take one of the key elements of the story—a king, unable to physically leave his throne for fear of rebellion, is forced to experience his kingdom entirely through the medium of sound—and build a new text upon this premise. The score is written to set off the full range and depth of Duykers' remarkable voice. The musicians of the Paul Dresher Ensemble, under the direction of Dresher includes **Tod Brody** (flute, piccolo, alto flute), **Joel Davel** (percussion), **Peter Josheff** (clarinet, bass clarinet), **Alex Kelly**

(cello), **Marja Mutru** (piano), and **Karen Bentley Pollick** (violin). Longtime Ensemble associate **Melissa Weaver** directs the work.

The Tyrant is repeated on **Saturday, June 9 at 8:00 p.m.** at Zellerbach Playhouse.

Paul Dresher, whose work has been called “startlingly eclectic” (*The New York Times*), is internationally noted for his ability to integrate diverse musical influences into his own coherent and unique personal style. He pursues many forms of musical expression including experimental opera and music theater; chamber and orchestral composition; live instrumental electro-acoustic music performances; musical instrument invention; and scores for theater, dance and film. He has received commissions from the Library of Congress, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Spoleto Festival USA, the Kronos Quartet, the San Francisco Symphony, Meet the Composer and the American Music Theater Festival, among others.

Most recently, Dresher’s score for the Berkeley Repertory Theater’s production of *To the Lighthouse*, for string quartet and voices, premiered February 2007 and was praised as “haunting” and “by turns mournful, anxious and serene, and composed with an elegance that echoes the lapidary beauty of Woolf’s writing” by *The New York Times*. A 20th anniversary production of *Slow Fire*, Dresher’s “intense, tuneful, comic, creepy and electrifyingly performed” opera (*San Francisco Chronicle*) opened March 2007 at Theater Artaud in San Francisco. As part of a Guggenheim Fellowship for 2006–2007, he is creating an evening-length solo music theater work for percussionist Steven Schick using large-scale invented musical instruments. In May 2006, the Dresher Ensemble performed the premiere of his score for *A Slipping Glimpse*, the new evening-length collaboration with the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company.

Dresher is a native Californian, born in Los Angeles. He attended UC Berkeley and received his MA in Composition from UC San Diego, where he studied with Robert Erickson, Roger Reynolds, Pauline Oliveros and Bernard Rands.

Librettist **Jim Lewis** received Tony and Drama Desk nominations for his adaptation of Gabriel Garcia Marquez' *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. With Graciela Daniele, he wrote *Dangerous Games* (Broadway) and the Off-Broadway hit *Tango Apasionado*. His libretto for Ballet Hispanico's dance theater piece *Nightclub* is currently on tour. He has worked with Philip Glass, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Anna Deavere Smith and Bill T. Jones, among others, shaping and creating theater works.

John Duykers made his professional operatic debut with Seattle Opera. Since then, he has appeared with many leading opera companies around the world and is best known for his acclaimed performances of contemporary opera and song, having sung in nearly 90 contemporary operas including 53 world premieres. He created the role of Mao Tse-Tung in John Adams's *Nixon in China*, which he performed throughout the world. Other notable performances include Mime in *Siegfried* with the Opéra de Marseilles and the role of Fatty in *The Rise and Fall of Mahagonny* with the Grand Opera (Genoa, Italy). He has been a frequent performer at Chicago's Lyric Opera and a Bay Area favorite, appearing regularly with San Francisco Opera, in such operas as Thomson's *The Mother of Us All*, Janáček's *Cunning Little Vixen* and Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabre*, and at Los Angeles Opera, where he sang in Strauss's *Die Frau Ohne Schatten*.

THE MUSIC OF FREDERIC RZEWSKI

The Berkeley Edge Fest also features two concerts illuminating the work of **Frederic Rzewski**, recognized as one of the most important and influential living composers. The concert on **Friday, June 8 at 8:00 p.m.** in **Hertz Hall** presents two works with a common denominator of Chilean politics. First up is Rzewski's masterpiece, *36 Variations on "The People United Will Never Be Defeated!"* (1975). The title refers to a protest chant used during Pinochet's takeover in 1973. Sergio Ortega wrote the original song "The People United Will Never Be Defeated!" after hearing the phrase used repeatedly in the streets; Rzewski has composed variations on Ortega's song. Written in six cycles, it is a compilation of keyboard techniques from the baroque to minimalism, acknowledging composers from Bach to Boulez. In the sixth cycle, the pianist is offered the option to improvise—something that Rzewski incorporates into many of his compositions. Ursula Oppens, a longtime collaborator and interpreter of Rzewski's,

will perform the piece. *Four Pieces* concludes the concert. It was written for Oppens in 1977 as a reflection on Pinochet's coup d'état; it is a chillingly evocative work that will be performed by the composer.

The second concert of Rzewski's work is **Sunday, June 10 at 3:00 p.m.** and includes two world premieres: *Nanosonatas, Book 2* (2006) performed by Rzewski and *The Fall of the Empire, Act 6: Sacrifice* (2007) performed by percussionist **Ben Paysen**. *Bring Them Home!* (2004) is written for two pianos and two percussionists and is also composed in protest of the Iraq war; Oppens and Rzewski will be joined by percussionists Paysen and **William Winant**.

To the Earth (1985) for solo percussionist is played on four flower pots by Winant using chop sticks and reciting the text of "To the Earth Mother of All," a poem probably written in the 7th century BCE. "Not only do they have a beautiful sound, but they don't have to be carried around at all: in every place where one plays the piece, they can be bought for a total cost of about one dollar," explains Rzewski. The pots represent the earth in all of its fragility.

The concert also includes two non-Rzewski selections. About the composer of *The Mountain* (2004) Rzewski says, "Gao Ping is one of a new generation that is breathing new life into the classical tradition...a true adventure!" The title of **Elliott Carter's** *Intermittences* (2005) is suggested by a well known passage of Marcel Proust, where the narrator is overwhelmed by an intense memory of his grandmother's death. "This taut, brittle nine-minute piece certainly captures the intensity of Proustian recollection. Hazy, dissonant chords are punctured by fierce squalls of scattered notes; the pedals help produce haunting billows of resonance" (*The New York Times*).

Frederic Rzewski comes from a long line of pianists/composers that includes Chopin, Liszt and Beethoven. He studied music at Harvard and Princeton. His early friendship with Christian Wolff and David Behrman, and (through Wolff) his acquaintance with John Cage and David Tudor strongly influenced his development in both composition and performance. In the mid-1960s in Rome, together with Alvin Curran and Richard Teitelbaum, he formed the MEV (Musica Elettronica Viva) group, which quickly became known for its pioneering work in live

electronics and improvisation. Bringing together both classical and jazz avant-gardists (like Steve Lacy and Anthony Braxton), MEV developed an esthetic of music as a spontaneous collective process.

In the 1970s, however, his populist political beliefs began to drive his music in a different direction, and he began to compose in a more approachable language. His new works were tonal and incorporated quotations from popular music. His compositions frequently include improvisation, whistling, shouting, tapping and knocking on the piano, hitting his own body and other techniques which reinforce the musical texture.

Rzewski has taught at the Conservatoire Royal de Musique in Liège in addition to Yale University, the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, the State University of New York at Buffalo, the California Institute of the Arts, UC San Diego, Mills College, the Royal Conservatory in Den Haag, the Hochschule der Künste in Berlin and the Hochschule für Musik in Karlsruhe.

Ursula Oppens is one of the few pianists performing today who is celebrated as an interpreter of classic repertoire and a champion of contemporary music. Her performances of music old and new are marked by a powerful grasp of the composer's musical intentions and an equally sure command of the keyboard. Oppens has performed with the world's major orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, the American Composers Orchestra, the Berlin Symphony, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande and the Deutsche Symphonie, among others. An enduring commitment to integrating new music into regular concert life has led Oppens to commission and premiere many compositions by Anthony Braxton, Elliott Carter, György Ligeti, Witold Lutoslawski, Conlon Nancarrow, Joan Tower, Christian Wolff, Amnon Wolman and Frederic Rzewski. She has played at many of the world's major festivals, including those in Aspen, Tanglewood, Santa Fe, Ojai, Music Academy of the West, Edinburgh, Bonn, Cabrillo, Stresa, Bath, Bergamo, Brescia, Japan and the Holland Festival.

TICKET INFORMATION

Single tickets for the **Berkeley Edge Fest** are on sale now at the Cal Performances Ticket Office. Individual tickets for **Paul Drescher's *The Tyrant* Thursday and Saturday, June 7 and 9** are **\$36.00**; individual tickets for the concerts of **Frederic Rzewski's music Friday and Sunday, June 8 and 10** are **\$32.00**. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students; UC Berkeley Alumni Association members receive a \$3 discount; UC faculty and staff, senior citizens, and other students receive a \$2 discount. For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988 or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperformances.net.

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CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Thursday & Saturday, June 7 & 9 at 8:00 p.m.

Zellerbach Playhouse, UC Berkeley
Bancroft at Dana Court, Berkeley

Berkeley Edge Fest 2007

The Tyrant

The Paul Drescher Ensemble

Paul Drescher, conductor

John Duyker, tenor

Program:

Drescher/*The Tyrant* (2006, West Coast premiere)

Tickets: \$36.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.net; and at the door.

Friday, June 8 at 8:00 p.m.

Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at College, Berkeley

Berkeley Edge Fest 2007

THE MUSIC OF FREDERIC RZEWSKI

Frederic Rzewski, piano

Ursula Oppens, piano

Program:

Rzewski/*36 Variations on "The People United Will Never Be Defeated!"* (1975); *Four Pieces* (1977)

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

Sunday, June 10 at 3:00 p.m.

Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at College, Berkeley

Berkeley Edge Fest 2007

THE MUSIC OF FREDERIC RZEWSKI

Frederic Rzewski, piano

Ursula Oppens, piano

William Winant, percussion

Ben Paysen, percussion

Program:

Rzewski/*Nanosonatas, Book 2* (2006, world premiere); *To the Earth* (1985); *Bring Them Home!* (2004); *The Fall of the Empire, Act 6: Sacrifice* (2007, world premiere)

Ping/*The Mountain* (2004)

Carter/*Intermittences* (2005)

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