

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

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THEATER IN SONG: MUSIC BY JAKE HEGGIE AND RICKY IAN GORDON WITH GUEST ARTIST FREDERICA VON STADE INCLUDES THE WEST COAST PREMIERE OF *AT THE STATUE OF VENUS* APRIL 29, AT 3:00 P.M. IN HERTZ HALL

HEGGIE AND GORDON WILL GIVE A *KEY NOTES* LECTURE TITLED *THE COMPOSER'S WAY* THURSDAY, APRIL 26 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE SEABORG ROOM OF THE MEN'S FACULTY CLUB ON THE UC BERKELEY CAMPUS

BERKELEY, March 22, 200—A banquet of contemporary art song—theater songs, poetry set to song, songs from modern opera—will be served **Sunday, April 29, at 3:00 p.m.** in **Hertz Hall** when celebrated composers **Jake Heggie** and **Ricky Ian Gordon** join the incomparable mezzo-soprano **Frederica von Stade** and other guest artists to perform their works. *Theatre in Song: Music by Jake Heggie and Ricky Ian Gordon* opens with the much-anticipated West Coast premiere of *At the Statue of Venus*, a musical scene by Heggie with libretto by playwright **Terrence McNally**. It will be sung by American lyric soprano **Kristin Clayton** who created a sensation when she performed the world premiere for the opening of Denver's Caulkins Opera House in 2005. This is the first collaboration between Heggie and McNally since their distinguished opera *Dead Man Walking* premiered at San Francisco Opera in 2000, going on to conquer opera houses across America. For his part, Gordon is fresh from the triumphant debut of his epic opera, *The Grapes of Wrath*, in Minnesota. "If the music of Ricky Ian Gordon has to be defined by a single quality," wrote *The New York Times*, "it would be the bursting effervescence infusing songs that blithely blur the lines between art song and the high-end Broadway music of Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim."

A *Key Notes* talk titled **The Composer's Way** will be given by Jake Heggie and Ricky Ian Gordon **Thursday, April 26, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.** as a conversational prelude to their concert. They will discuss composing art songs in the 21st century. The lecture, accompanied by light refreshments, is presented by Cal Performances in association with the UC Berkeley Department of Music. All *Key Notes* lectures take place in the Seaborg Room of the Men's Faculty Club on the UC Berkeley campus and are free and open to the public.

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PROGRAM

Heggie's works comprise the first half of the program. *At the Statue of Venus* reveals the fraught interior monologue of an attractive woman waiting nervously in a museum to meet a blind date by the statue of Venus. In a recent conversation at Cal Performances, Heggie described the 22-minute piece as "a dramatic scene and a real workout for a soprano from beginning to end; she's having an internal journey, going from shallow to the things that really matter." Soprano **Kristin Clayton** stepped into the role at the last minute in Denver, receiving accolades of "brilliant, vocally and dramatically" by critic Marc Shulgold in the *Denver Post*. Heggie, who accompanies Clayton on piano, also describes the McNally libretto as brilliant, marveling that he wrote it in just 45 minutes. *Winter Roses* (2004), a 25-minute song cycle written for acclaimed mezzo-soprano **Frederica von Stade** follows; she is accompanied by Heggie. The West Coast premiere of *Here and Gone* (2005) features the writings of A. E. Housman and Vachel Lindsay set to Heggie's music and sung by tenor **Nicholas Phan** and baritone **Kyle Ferrill**, with **Dawn Harms**, violin; **Carla Maria Rodrigues**, viola; **Emil Miland**, cello; and Heggie on piano.

After intermission, it's **Ricky Ian Gordon**'s turn with a mélange of his works set to poems by Emily Dickinson, Dorothy Parker, James Agee, Stanley Kunitz, Edna St. Vincent Millay and others. With Gordon on piano, the program opens with *Ring-a-Ding-Ding* (from *Dream True*, lyrics by Tina Laudau). *New Moon*, based on a Langston Hughes poem, features **Marnie Breckenridge**, soprano; **Zheng Cao**, mezzo-soprano; **Nicholas Phan**, tenor; and **Kyle Ferrill**, baritone. *Sometimes*, from *My Life with Albertine*, was written with Richard Nelson, based on selections from Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*; about Proust's obsession with the unattainable Albertine. The concert's grand finale brings von Stade and all the singers back into the spotlight for *Will There Really Be a Morning?* (Emily Dickinson) with both Gordon and Heggie sharing piano duties.

THE COMPOSERS

In addition to his acclaimed *Dead Man Walking* and *At the Statue of Venus*, **Jake Heggie** has composed music for *The End of the Affair*, based on the Graham Greene novel (libretto by

Heather McDonald, Leonard Foglia and Jake Heggie), the lyric drama *To Hell and Back* (libretto by Gene Scheer) and more than 200 art songs set to poems. The recipient of a 2005/06 Guggenheim Fellowship, he also has composed concerti, orchestral works and chamber music. His songs, song cycles and operas are championed internationally by singers, including von Stade and Clayton, Susan Graham, Audra McDonald and Patti LuPone. Upcoming commissions include a music theater work for the Metropolitan Opera in association with Lincoln Center Theater; a three-person music theater work featuring von Stade for Houston Grand Opera and San Francisco Opera (libretto by Gene Scheer); a major new opera for Dallas Opera and San Francisco Opera (libretto by Terrence McNally); a new song to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Merola Opera Program; duets for women for the Steans Institute at the Ravinia Festival; and *For a Look or a Touch*, a song cycle about the persecution of homosexuals during the Holocaust, commissioned by Seattle's Music of Remembrance (texts by Gene Scheer).

Heggie's operas have been performed at San Francisco Opera, where he was a resident composer, and at opera houses across the country and abroad. *Dead Man Walking* this year alone will receive 50 productions in the United States and around the globe. Recordings of his work include *The Deepest Desire* (Eloquientia), *Dead Man Walking* (Erato), *The Faces of Love* (RCA), *My Native Land* (Teldec) and *Holy the Firm: Essay for Cello and Orchestra* (Oakland East Bay Symphony with cellist Emil Miland). His numerous commissions include works for San Francisco Opera, Houston Grand Opera, the Metropolitan Opera with Lincoln Center Theater, Ravinia Festival and Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra. Heggie's first composition teacher was the late Ernst Bacon, with whom he studied in Orinda from 1977 to 1979. After two years of study in Paris, he went to UCLA where he studied piano with the late Johana Harris and composition with Roger Bourland, Paul DesMarais and the late David Raksin. He has made his home in San Francisco since 1993.

The versatile **Ricky Ian Gordon** is equally at home writing for the concert hall, opera, dance, theater and film, and his songs and song cycles have been performed and recorded by internationally acclaimed singers. His new opera, *The Grapes of Wrath*, based on the Steinbeck novel, premiered recently to great praise at the Minnesota Opera. Writing in *The New Yorker*, Alex Ross observed, "With a slyness worthy of Weill, Gordon wields his hummable tunes to

critical effect, ... (making) clear his growing ambitions as a theatre composer, a seriousness of purpose that had already surfaced in his haunting 2005 theatre piece *Orpheus and Eurydice* (staged at Lincoln Center last season),” which went on to win an Obie.

His musical, *My Life with Albertine*, debuted at Playwrights Horizons in March 2003, received an AT&T Award and was recorded on PS Classics. Sean Curran choreographed Gordon’s *Art Song Dance*, first heard and seen at Jacob’s Pillow in August 2004. As part of the American Songbook Series, the composer’s *Bright Eyed Joy: The Music of Ricky Ian Gordon* was presented at Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall in March 2001. As Composer in Residence at Lyric Opera of Chicago between 2000 and 2002, Gordon wrote the opera *Morning Star* with librettist William M. Hoffman. *Dream True*, recorded on PS Classics, opened at the Vineyard Theatre in the spring of 1999, and won a Richard Rodgers Award presented by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. It is one of several musical collaborations with Tina Landau. Gordon’s first opera, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, with a libretto by Jean-Claude van Itallie, premiered at Houston Grand Opera in 1996.

Following its Minnesota premiere, Gordon and librettist Michael Korie’s *The Grapes of Wrath*, will be presented at the Utah (May 2007), Pittsburgh (November 2008) and Houston grand operas (March 2009). In conjunction with the world premiere of this epic opera, *Musical America* wrote: “At the most *The Grapes of Wrath* might be the great American opera. At the least it is a decided triumph for Gordon, heretofore viewed widely as the heir to Stephen Sondheim.”

THE ARTISTS

Frederica von Stade’s career began with a contract from Sir Rudolf Bing at her audition for the Metropolitan Opera, and continued to the stages of the world’s great opera houses and concert halls. Since her debut in 1970, she has sung nearly all of the great opera roles with the Met, culminating in new productions of *Pelléas et Mélisande* in 1995 and *The Merry Widow* in 2000 to mark the 25th and 30th anniversaries of her debut, respectively. Her global performing résumé is equally grand, with new productions mounted for her at Teatro alla Scala; the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; the Vienna State Opera; and the Paris Opera. She is invited regularly by

the world's finest conductors, including Claudio Abbado, Charles Dutoit, James Levine, Kurt Masur, Riccardo Muti, Seiji Ozawa, André Previn, Leonard Slatkin and Michael Tilson Thomas, to appear in concert with leading orchestras.

As a specialist in the *bel canto* style, von Stade—widely known by her nickname, Flicka—has presented heroines in Rossini's *La cenerentola* and *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and Bellini's *La sonnambula*. In the French repertoire, her characterizations of Marguerite, Mélisande, Périhole and Mignon have won high praise, and her performances in trouser roles, such as Strauss's Octavian and Mozart's Cherubino, are a testament to her imagination and dramatic gifts.

Von Stade has made over 70 recordings with every major label. Her recordings have received six Grammy nominations and numerous other awards, including two French *Grand Prix du Disque* awards, the *Deutsche Schallplattenpreis* in Germany, and Italy's *Premio della Critica Discografica*. Honorary degrees from Yale University, Boston University, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the Georgetown University School of Medicine and her *alma mater*, the Mannes School of Music, are among her accolades, as well as France's highest honor in the arts, *L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*.

Kristin Clayton made her 1994 San Francisco Opera debut singing in the world premiere of Susa's *The Dangerous Liaisons* (telecast nationally on *Great Performances* on PBS), was featured as Wellgunde in the opening night production of *Das Rheingold* during the company's 1999 *Ring* Festival and in Massenet's *Herodiade* with Plácido Domingo and Renée Fleming, (recorded and released by Sony Classical). Recent roles include Echo in a critically acclaimed production of *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Mimi in *La Bohème* for Chautauqua Opera, Violetta in *La Traviata*, and Micaela in the adaptation of Bizet's *Carmen: La tragédie de Carmen* by Peter Brook with Festival Opera in Walnut Creek. While a member of the San Francisco Opera Center and an Adler Fellow, she performed in Showcase productions of Tippett's *King Priam* (Andromache) and Handel's *Ezio* (Onoria). She recently performed the Verdi *Requiem* with Modesto Symphony, and Poulenc's *Gloria* and Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the San Mateo Masterworks Chorale. Clayton is featured on a recording of songs by Jake Heggie titled *The*

Faces of Love (RCA Red Seal), and she sang the role of Sister Helen Prejean in the workshop of *Dead Man Walking*. She sang a solo recital on the acclaimed Schwabacher Debut Recital series, performing the world premiere of Heggie's *Eve Song*, commissioned for her.

American soprano **Marnie Breckenridge**'s musicianship and dramatic intensity have established her as a rising young artist. She started off the 2007 season singing solos with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra and debuting with the Berkeley Symphony in Unsuk Chin's *Cantantrix Sopranica* under the baton of Kent Nagano. Last year, she premiered a new opera written for her, *Chrysalis*, by Clark Supryniewicz (John O'Keefe libretto), with Berkeley Opera. Mezzo-soprano **Zheng Cao** began her professional career with San Francisco Opera as an Adler Fellow and is a regular guest of leading companies here and abroad. Tenor **Nicholas Phan**, a recent graduate of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, has appeared with Houston Grand Opera, Arizona Opera and Wolf Trap, and made his European debut with Frankfurt Opera. **Kyle Ferrill** has sung the baritone solos in works such as Ligeti's *Le Grande Macabre*, Berio's *Sinfonia*, Britten's *Cantata Misericordium* and Faure's *Requiem*. He will spend August 2007 at the Steans Institute at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago studying art song.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for *Theater in Song: Music by Jake Heggie and Ricky Ian Gordon* Sunday, April 29 in Hertz Hall at 3 p.m. are priced at **\$62.00**. Tickets are 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. 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 \$3.00 discount (Special Events excluded). 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, April 26 at 7:00 p.m.

Key Notes Lecture:

The Composer's Way

Seaborg Room, Men's Faculty Club

UC Berkeley Campus

Bancroft Way at College, Berkeley

Program: Jake Heggie and Ricky Ian Gordon discuss composing art songs in the 21st century. Light refreshments will be served. This lecture is free and open to the public.

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Sunday, April 29 at 3:00 p.m.

Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley Campus

Bancroft Way at College, Berkeley

Special Events

Theater in Song:

Music by Jake Heggie & Ricky Ian Gordon

with **Frederica von Stade**, soprano

Kristin Clayton, soprano

Marnie Breckenridge, soprano

Zheng Cao, mezzo-soprano

Nicholas Phan, tenor

Kyle Ferrill, baritone

Dawn Harms, violin

Carla Maria Rodrigues, viola

Emil Miland, cello

Program: *Theater in Song: Music by Jake Heggie and Ricky Ian Gordon* with special guest performance by mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade; also, soprano Kristin Clayton sings the West Coast premiere of the musical scene *At the Statue of Venus* by Heggie and playwright Terrence McNally.

Tickets: \$62, 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.
