

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

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**ENGLAND'S MASTERS OF RENAISSANCE POLYPHONY,
THE TALLIS SCHOLARS, SING SEASONAL CHORAL WORKS ON
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30 IN BERKELEY AND
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1 IN SAN FRANCISCO'S GRACE CATHEDRAL**

BERKELEY, October 31, 2007—The ten crystalline voices of **The Tallis Scholars**, led by founding director **Peter Phillips**, bring glorious Renaissance polyphony to the San Francisco Bay Area for two concerts presented by Cal Performances. On **Friday, November 30 at 8:00 p.m.** the group will sing in Berkeley's First Congregational Church, and on **Saturday, December 1 at 8:00 p.m.** they will be heard in the Gothic splendor of San Francisco's Grace Cathedral. Called "rock stars of Renaissance vocal music" (*The New York Times*), The Tallis Scholars will present a seasonal program of works by well-known Renaissance composers **Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina** and **Josquin des Prez**, and motets by lesser-known but highly regarded composers **Jean Lhéritier**, **Jean Mouton**, **Thomas Crecquillon** and **Jacobus Gallus**.

PROGRAM

The Tallis Scholars' concert will open with *Nigra sum*, a setting of an erotic love poem from the Song of Songs by the French composer Jean Lhéritier. This will be followed by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina's *Missa Nigra sum*, a Mass based on the same text. Both Lhéritier and Palestrina wrote mystically contemplative music on the text, which begins with "I am black but comely"; though the words appear in the Hebrew Bible, they have long been adopted by the Christian church to praise the Virgin Mary.

Two settings of *Quaeramus cum pastoribus* ("Let us seek with the shepherds") follow, written by the French composer Jean Mouton and Franco-Flemish composer Thomas Crecquillon. The pieces are related: the Crecquillon composition is considered a fantasy motet on Mouton's themes. Both pieces end with the traditional "Noel, Noel."

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Two very different settings of *Pater noster* (the Lord's Prayer) are next on the concert, by the Franco-Flemish musician Josquin des Prez and the Slovenian composer Jacobus Gallus. Gallus worked at the court of Rudolph II in Prague in the late 16th century. The concert closes with two other Gallus works, *Mirabile mysterium* ("A wondrous mystery"), an experimental five-voice work built on chromatic harmony, and *Omnes de Saba* ("All from Sheba [shall come]"), an energetic work on a standard text.

THE TALLIS SCHOLARS

Since its founding in 1973, **The Tallis Scholars** have been a leading exponent of Renaissance sacred music through both recordings and concert performances. The ensemble's renowned pure, clear sound—the results of meticulous work on tuning and blend—is ideal for presentation of Renaissance polyphonic repertoire because it permits every detail of each individual vocal part to be heard.

Now performing approximately 70 concerts per year, The Tallis Scholars have given in total over 1,500 concerts, with performances worldwide. They have performed to sold-out houses several times at Cal Performances. Recent festival appearances have included the Salzburg Festival, the Milan Cathedral Festival, the BBC Proms in London, and the Mostly Mozart, Ravinia, and Tanglewood festivals in the U.S. In 1994, they sang in the Sistine Chapel to mark completion of the restoration of Michelangelo's frescoes, an event that was televised around the globe. In addition to presenting Renaissance music, The Tallis Scholars have premiered and commissioned works by contemporary composers, including John Tavener, Robin Walker and Errollyn Wallen, and have appeared with pop musicians including Sting and Paul McCartney.

The group has released more than 50 recordings on its own label Gimell Records, including a 1987 recording of Josquin's *Missa La sol fa re mi* and *Missa Pange lingua* which is the only recording of early music to receive the *Gramophone* Record of the Year award. Other

prizes for the Tallis Scholars' recordings include two *Diapason d'Or de l'Année* awards from the French magazine *Diapason*, two *Gramophone* Early Music Awards and a People's Choice award presented jointly by Classic FM and *Gramophone*. The Tallis Scholars have also produced several DVDs, including *Playing Elizabeth's Tune*, released in 2003 in collaboration with the BBC, focusing on the life and works of Elizabeth I's favorite composer, William Byrd.

In addition to its demanding performance and recording schedule, The Tallis Scholars and director Peter Phillips annually present three weeklong summer schools—one each in the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia—at which talented amateur musicians can learn from and sing with members of the group.

PETER PHILLIPS

Peter Phillips has dedicated his life's work to the research and performance of Renaissance polyphony. He won a scholarship to Oxford in 1972 and promptly began experimenting with small groups and performing rare works of the Renaissance repertoire. In addition to founding The Tallis Scholars in 1973 and leading them ever since, Phillips has worked with the Collegium Vocale of Ghent; the Vox Vocal Ensemble of New York; Musix of Budapest; the BBC Singers, with whom he has broadcast live on BBC Radio Three, among other groups.

Phillips is also a highly regarded writer and academic, having authored two books: *English Sacred Music 1549–1649*, a scholarly work; and *What We Really Do*, an account of touring with the Tallis Scholars. He also writes a regular music column in *The Spectator*, a weekly newsmagazine in the UK, and is owner and publisher of *The Musical Times*, the oldest continuously published music journal in the world.

Phillips was made a *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* by the Minister of Culture of France in 2005. Through Phillips's work, Renaissance music has come to be accepted

as part of the mainstream classical repertoire.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **The Tallis Scholars** on **Friday, November 30** at **8:00 p.m.** at **First Congregational Church** and **Saturday, December 1** at **8:00 p.m.** at **Grace Cathedral** are priced at \$48. 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, other students and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$5 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.

For select performances, Cal Performances offers UCB student, faculty and staff, senior and community rush tickets. Rush tickets are announced two hours prior to a performance and are available in person only at the Ticket Office beginning one hour before the performance; quantities may be limited. Rush ticket sales are limited to one ticket per person; all sales are cash only. Rush ticket prices are \$10.00 for UCB students; \$15.00 for UCB faculty and staff (UCB ID required) and seniors age 65 or older; and \$20 for all other community members. Information is available at (510) 642-9988, press 2 for the rush hotline, two hours prior to a performance only.

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Cal Performances 2007/08 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

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CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Friday, November 30 at 8:00 p.m.

First Congregational Church
2345 Channing Way, Berkeley

Saturday, December 1 at 8:00 p.m.

Grace Cathedral
1100 California Street, San Francisco

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The Tallis Scholars

Peter Phillips, director

Program:

Lheritier/Nigra sum

Palestrina/Missa Nigra sum

Mouton/Quaeramus cum pastoribus

Crecquillon/Quaeramus cum pastoribus

Josquin/Pater noster

Gallus/Pater noster; Mirabile mysterium; Omnes de Saba

Tickets: \$48.00, 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.

- Cal Performances -