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**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS THE AMERICAN STRING QUARTET
WITH PIANIST MENAHÉM PRESSLER ON SUNDAY, APRIL 5
AT 3:00 P.M. IN HERTZ HALL**

**A *Sightlines* pre-performance talk will be given by UC Davis Music Professor
Beth Levy at 2:00 p.m.**

BERKELEY, February 26, 2009—The **American String Quartet** comes to Cal Performances' Hertz Hall on **Sunday, April 5 at 3:00 p.m.** Renowned for their innovative approach to concert programming, the ensemble will perform a program of **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's** Quartet in C major, K. 465, nicknamed "Dissonant"; **Alban Berg's** Quartet, Op. 3, composed in the last year of his studies with Arnold Schoenberg; and **Antonín Dvořák's** Quintet in A major, Op. 81, one of the true masterpieces of the piano quintet form. Praised for its "luxurious, beautifully sculpted performances" (*The New York Times*) the Quartet includes **Peter Winograd** (violin), **Laurie Carney** (violin), **Daniel Avshalomov** (viola) and **Wolfram Koessel** (cello). Celebrated 85-year-old pianist **Menahem Pressler**, co-founder of the Beaux Arts Trio and a prominent figure on the global music scene for five decades, will join the American String Quartet on the Berkeley stage for the Dvořák quintet. "The tone [Pressler] summons from the piano is sumptuous, bejeweled, and seemingly effortless" (*The Washington Post*).

AMERICAN STRING QUARTET

The **American String Quartet** was founded in 1974, when its original members were students at The Juilliard School. Its place in the classical music world was cemented when the quartet won both the Coleman Competition and the Naumburg Award in the same year. Today, current members all enjoy multi-dimensional careers: Peter Winograd enjoys an active career as soloist and educator; Laurie Carney, a founding member of the quartet, maintains active performing and teaching careers; Daniel Avshalomov writes essays and criticism for music journals and is a frequent guest artist with ensembles worldwide; and Wolfram Koessel is co-founder of the New York Metamorphoses Orchestra and musical director of the Mark Morris Dance Group. Winograd,

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Carney and Avshalomov are faculty members at the Manhattan School of Music and the Aspen Music School.

The American String Quartet has performed in all 50 states and has appeared in virtually every important concert hall in the world. Its performances—which have included the complete quartets of Beethoven, Schubert, Schoenberg, Bartók, and Mozart—have garnered widespread critical acclaim. “Because of their assured rapport, flawless balance, and unity of style, they play together with a sense of ease that lets each piece of music unfold like a living organism” (*The Plain Dealer*, Cleveland) The quartet’s extensive discography—which includes the 1998 MusicMasters *Complete Mozart String Quartets*, performed on a matched set of Stradivarius instruments—has won equally high praise. “If you are going to call yourself the American String Quartet, you need to be able to live up to your name ... I cannot think of another United States ensemble capable of making recordings as sustainably stylish and beautiful as these” (*The Strad*).

The group has been the resident quartet at the Aspen Music Festival since 1974 and at the Manhattan School of Music since 1984. Other residencies include Taos School of Music (1979–1998), Peabody Conservatory and Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. The foursome has also performed with New York City Ballet, Montreal Symphony and Philadelphia Orchestra. Tours included European, Asian and South American dates.

Longtime champions of new music, the ensemble has been recipient of several commissions and presented numerous premieres, including Richard Danielpour’s Quartet No. 4, Curt Cacioppo’s *a distant voice calling* and, most recently, Tobias Picker’s String Quartet No. 2.

MENAHM PRESSLER

With a career that spans over 50 years, **Menahem Pressler** is one of the world’s most distinguished and honored musicians. He was born in Germany in 1923 and fled the Nazi regime in 1939. He began his musical training in Israel, and in 1946 launched his musical career by winning first prize in the Debussy International Piano Competition in San Francisco. Pressler made his American debut with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy and

subsequently appeared with the New York, Washington, Cleveland, Chicago, Pittsburgh, London and Paris Symphony Orchestras.

In 1955, Pressler co-founded the Beaux Arts Trio with Daniel Guilet and Bernard Greenhouse. The group—"the gold standard of trio playing" (*The New York Times*)—became one of the most widely acclaimed chamber music ensembles in the world and maintained a tireless performing schedule with over 100 concerts per year. The trio made more than 50 recordings, and had its final performance at Tanglewood—the venue where it debuted in 1955—on August 21, 2008. Pressler has also appeared with the Juilliard, Emerson, Guarneri and Cleveland Quartets, as well as the Israel Quartet and the Pasquier String Trio.

Pressler holds honorary doctorates from the University of Nebraska and the North Carolina School of the Arts, has earned five Grammy nominations. Lifetime achievement awards have been given to him from *Gramophone* magazine, Chamber Music America's Distinguished Service Award and the Gold Medal of Merit from the National Society of Arts and Letters. He has also been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 2005, Pressler received France's highest cultural honor, the Commandeur in the Order of Arts and Letters, and Germany's Deutsche Bundesverdienstkreuz (Cross of Merit) First Class.

Pressler's reputation as a performer of solo and chamber works is matched by the esteem he has received as a teacher. He holds the rank of distinguished professor at the University of Indiana, where he has taught for many years. In January 2009 he was the subject of a new book, *Menahem Pressler: Artistry in Piano Teaching* (Indiana Press) written by his student, William Brown. The book includes recollections from more than 100 of Pressler's students and includes the pianist's thoughts on performance and teaching, including technical exercises, principles of relaxation and total body involvement, and images to guide creativity.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **American String Quartet** with **Menahem Pressler**, piano, on **Sunday, April 5, 2009**, at **3:00 p.m.** in **Hertz Hall** are priced at \$52. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at

www.calperformances.org; 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.org.

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 for UCB students; \$15 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 2008/09 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

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CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Sunday, April 5 from 2:00 to 2:30 p.m.

SIGHTLINES

Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley Campus

Bancroft Way at College Ave., Berkeley

Professor Beth Levy of the UC Davis Department of Music will give a pre-performance talk. *Sightlines* is a continuing program of pre- and post-performance discussions with Cal Performances' guest artists and scholars, designed to enrich the audience's experience. This event is free to ticket holders.

Sunday, April 5 at 3:00 p.m.

Chamber Music

American String Quartet

Peter Winograd, violin

Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley Campus

Bancroft Way at College Ave., Berkeley

Laurie Carney, violin
Daniel Avshalomov, viola
Wolfram Koessel, cello
with **Menahem Pressler**, piano

Program:

Mozart/Quartet in C major, K. 465, “Dissonant”

Berg/ Quartet, Op. 3

Dvořák/Quintet in A major, Op. 81

Tickets: \$52.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door.

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