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**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS THE BRENTANO STRING QUARTET
WITH PETER SERKIN, PIANO, AND DEAN ELZINGA, BASS-BARITONE,
FRIDAY, MARCH 13 AT 8:00 P.M. AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

Elzinga will substitute for an ailing Richard Lalli

**SIGHTLINES: Pre-concert discussion with Camille Peters will be given Friday, March 13
at 7:00 p.m. at First Congregational Church**

BERKELEY, January 30, 2009—The **Brentano String Quartet**, “one of America’s finest, brainiest young quartets” (*The New Yorker*), comes to Cal Performances **Friday, March 13 at 8:00 p.m.** at **First Congregational Church** in Berkeley. The ensemble will play the eagerly anticipated West Coast premiere of **Charles Wuorinen’s** Piano Quintet No. 2. Also on the program are **Franz Josef Haydn’s** Quartet in D minor (“Quinten”), **Arnold Schoenberg’s** *Ode to Napoleon* and **Ludwig van Beethoven’s** *Grosse Fuge*. Joining the ensemble will be pianist **Peter Serkin**, a player with “surgical precision and infinite subtlety” (*The New York Times*) and bass-baritone **Dean Elzinga**, who will sing in place of the previously announced but currently ill **Richard Lalli**. Writing specifically about Elzinga’s performance of *Ode to Napoleon* in December 2008, *The New York Times* said the singer “brought an imposing ferocity to his vivid, powerfully musical recitation.”

A **Sightlines** pre-concert discussion with Camille Peters from UC Berkeley’s Department of Music will take place on Friday, March 13 at 7:00 p.m. at First Congregational Church, Berkeley. *Sightlines* talks are free to ticketholders.

THE PROGRAM

For its Cal Performances outing, the Brentano String Quartet presents a program suitably complex and varied. It opens with Haydn’s String Quartet in D minor, Op. 76, No. 2, nicknamed “Quinten” due to the fifth intervals that dominate its opening theme. Composed in 1797 as the second in Haydn’s last set of six quartets, the piece shares its key with Mozart’s K421 quartet (which

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was dedicated to Haydn) and Bach's *The Art of Fugue*. The shared key is not coincidental; Haydn's four movements perhaps show the composer conversing with Bach on the techniques of the fugue and paying tribute to Mozart's work, and wrap up with a rollicking Gypsy-inflected finale brimming with infectious energy. For the next piece on the program, Charles Wuorinen's Piano Quintet No. 2, the Brentano Quartet will be joined by American pianist Peter Serkin. Wuorinen's composition, which will have its West Coast premiere, has four movements in a fast-slow-fast-slow pattern—though the third (fast) movement is interrupted midstream by the slow fourth. The third movement eventually reasserts itself and concludes the piece. Wuorinen completed the work in January 2008, writing it for Serkin and the Brentano String Quartet.

The third piece on the program, Schoenberg's *Ode to Napoleon*, Op. 41, was written in 1942 for the League of Composers using a text by Lord Byron. "I had at once the idea that this piece must not ignore the agitation aroused in mankind against the crimes that provoked this war," Schoenberg wrote. "I knew it was the moral duty of the intelligentsia to take a stand against tyranny." Serkin and the Brentano String Quartet will be joined by bass-baritone Dean Elzinga, a singer praised for his dramatic conviction, presence and assured musicianship. The final work on the program, Ludwig van Beethoven's *Grosse Fuge* in B-flat major, Op. 133, was originally conceived as the final movement of the composer's Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 130, but Beethoven inexplicably replaced it with an alternate, less complex finale. (Today, quartets sometimes finish Op. 130 with the *Grosse Fuge*.) The piece is jagged and austere, seeming at times to be on the brink of whirling into chaos.

BRENTANO STRING QUARTET

The **Brentano String Quartet** has garnered a worldwide following and a reputation for thoughtful, learned performance since its founding in 1992. The quartet consists of violinists **Mark Steinberg** and **Serena Canin**, violist **Misha Amory** and cellist **Nina Maria Lee**. It has been widely praised in the press as "surely one of the best" (Cleveland *Plain Dealer*) and "a splendid quartet" (*The Times* of London), and for having a "luxuriously warm sound" (*The New York Times*). In addition to performing the standard quartet repertoire, the ensemble has a strong interest in both very old and very new music. It has performed many works pre-dating the string quartet as a medium, including Gesualdo's madrigals, Purcell's fantasias and Josquin's secular vocal works. The quartet has also championed and commissioned works by important contemporary composers, including

Elliot Carter, Charles Wuorinen, Chou Wen-chung, Steven Mackey, Bruce Adophe, David Horne and Gabriela Frank. The group takes its name from Antonie Brentano, considered by many to be Beethoven's "Immortal Beloved"—the intended recipient of his famous confession of love.

The Brentano String Quartet is well traveled, having performed all over the United States and Canada, throughout Europe, and in Japan and Australia. It has graced stages in Carnegie Hall, the Library of Congress, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Suntory Hall in Tokyo, the Sydney Opera House and many other famed venues. Brentano was the quartet-in-residence at London's Wigmore Hall for the 2000–2001 season, and has served as resident string quartet at Princeton University since 1999. For its tenth anniversary in 2002, it commissioned ten composers to write companion pieces for selections from Bach's *The Art of Fugue*. The group has also collaborated with soprano Jessye Norman and pianists Richard Goode and Mitsuko Uchida. The Brentano String Quartet records for AEON and its recordings are distributed by Harmonia Mundi USA.

PETER SERKIN

Peter Serkin's piano artistry conveys the essence of five centuries of piano repertoire and spans recital appearances, chamber music collaborations, symphony orchestra performances, and recordings. The son and grandson of musicians, Serkin entered the Curtis Institute of Music at age 11 (his father, Rudolf Serkin, was one of his teachers there) and made his Marlboro Music Festival and New York City debuts a year later in 1959. In succeeding decades, he has performed with all major United States orchestras and has worked with conductors including George Szell, Eugene Ormandy, Seiji Ozawa, Pierre Boulez, Daniel Barenboim, Simon Rattle, James Levine and Herbert Blomstedt. His expressive style and range only deepen with each passing year.

Like the Brentano String Quartet, Serkin is an avid proponent of important contemporary composers. He has brought the music of Schoenberg, Berg, Stravinsky, Messiaen, Wuorinen, Takemitsu, Knussen, Goehr and many others to wider audiences worldwide, and several noteworthy composers have written pieces for him. His recordings also demonstrate the breadth of his skill and artistic curiosity, ranging from a Grammy-nominated recording of Mozart concerti to his most recent disc showcasing Schoenberg's complete works for solo piano. Serkin

received an honorary doctoral degree from the New England Conservatory of Music in 2001 and was the first pianist to receive the *Premio Internazionale Musicale Chigiana*. He resides in Massachusetts.

DEAN ELZINGA

Bass-baritone **Dean Elzinga**, a highly regarded singer and actor, is active on concert and opera stages worldwide. Praised as “physically commanding, with a powerful, attractive voice,” (*Calgary Herald*), he has appeared with many opera companies including the Metropolitan, Los Angeles, San Diego, Seattle, Arizona Glimmerglass and New York City. In the Bay Area, he has been heard in productions at Opera San Jose and the Sacramento Opera, and in concert with the Santa Rosa Symphony singing Verdi’s *Messa da Requiem*.

Elzinga recently earned wide acclaim singing Maxwell Davies’ fiendishly difficult *Eight Songs for a Mad King* in New York, Cleveland and Santa Monica. Other concert events include appearances with Vancouver Symphony, National Philharmonic, Rochester Philharmonic and Baltimore Choral Arts Society. He is a frequent soloist with Leon Botstein and the American Symphony Orchestra, and is one of the country’s most sought-after basses for the Beethoven Ninth Symphony, having performed the work with the Reading, Vancouver, Long Beach, New West, Phoenix, Pasadena and San Diego symphonies, the Minnesota Orchestra and the Rochester and Naples philharmonics. Elzinga’s repertoire includes Handel’s *Messiah*, Haydn’s *Creation*, Britten’s *War Requiem*, Brahms’s *Requiem*, and Berlioz’s *Roméo et Juliette*.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Brentano String Quartet** with **Peter Serkin**, piano, and **Dean Elzinga**, bass-baritone, on **Friday, March 13, 2009** at **8:00 p.m.** in **First Congregational Church** 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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CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Friday, March 13 from 7:00–7:30 p.m.

Sightlines

First Congregational Church

2345 Channing Way, Berkeley

Brentano String Quartet pre-concert talk will be given by Camille Peters from UC Berkeley's Department of Music. *Sightlines* is a continuing program of pre- and post-performance discussions with artists and scholars, designed to enrich the concertgoer's experience. These events are free to ticketholders.

Friday, March 13 at 8:00 p.m.

First Congregational Church

2345 Channing Way, Berkeley

Chamber Music

Brentano String Quartet

Mark Steinberg, violin

Serena Canin, violin

Misha Amory, viola

Nina Maria Lee, cello

with

Peter Serkin, piano

Dean Elzinga, bass-baritone

Program:

Haydn/String Quartet in D minor, Op. 76, No. 2 ("Quinten")

Wuorinen/Piano Quintet No. 2

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Schoenberg/Ode to Napoleon, Op. 41
Beethoven/*Grosse Fuge* in B-flat major, Op. 133

Tickets: \$52, 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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