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AN EVENING WITH PUZZLE MASTER WILL SHORTZ
NOVEMBER 21 AT 7:00 P.M. AT ZELLERBACH HALL

BERKELEY, OCTOBER 15, 2010—Acclaimed puzzle writer **Will Shortz** returns to Cal Performances' **Zellerbach Hall** on **Sunday, November 21**, as part of the *Strictly Speaking* series to talk about his lifelong passion of enigmatology, the study of crosswords. As the current *New York Times* crossword editor and puzzle editor of *NPR's Weekend Sunday Edition*, the knowledgeable Shortz will discuss his favorite puzzles and puzzle-makers, the curious history of crosswords and his enthusiasm for puzzles in general. The lecture will also include audience-participation word games and a question-and-answer period. He is the only person in the world to hold a college degree in enigmatology, which he earned from Indiana University in 1974. He has been credited with “having taken the puzzle from the stuffy world of prim and proper word usage and the dusty dictionary to the agile world of modern-day word usage, cultural relevance, and playfulness” (*The Rambler*).

Will Shortz has been the crossword puzzle editor for *The New York Times* since 1993 and the puzzle master on *NPR's Weekend Edition Sunday* since the program first aired in 1987. He is the founder of the American Crossword Puzzle Tournament (1978), and has served as its director ever since. He founded the World Puzzle Championship in 1992, and is a director of the United States Puzzle Team. He has continued to foster crossword interest for students by leading a northeast crossword tournament tour to Harvard, Brown and Yale in 2009. Shortz has also expanded the subculture of puzzles in his recent television appearances on *The Simpsons* (2008) and *How I Met Your Mother* (2008). In 2006, he was also the subject of a Sundance Film Festival show titled *Wordplay*, a documentary that focus on Shortz's large puzzle fan-base, which included comedian Jon Stewart and former president Bill Clinton.

Born in 1952 and raised on an Arabian horse farm in Indiana, Shortz sold his first puzzle when he was 14 to *Venture*, a denominational youth magazine. At 16, he became a regular contributor to Dell puzzle publications. Later, after receiving his self-organized degree from

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Indiana University, he completed a law degree from the University of Virginia. Despite initially planning to practice law for ten years to fund his puzzle love, Shortz decided to forgo the wait and leapt straight into a puzzle career. Shortz first worked at the *Penny Press* and then moved to *Games* magazine before his current posts at *The New York Times* and *NPR*.

As editor, Shortz has continually upgraded the crossword section of the *Times*. In 1993, Shortz added a byline for all contributors. He also broadened cultural references in crosswords to add modern subjects while keeping the classic trivia-based puzzle vocabulary. Puzzles also have an increasing slope of difficulty as the week progressed. He ensured that Monday's puzzle was easy; in comparison, those created for Saturday were much more intellectually challenging. Shortz's goal was to offer something to everyone, from beginners to veterans. He has edited or authored hundreds of puzzle books of crossword puzzles, sudoku and kenken, many of which have sold millions of copies. "We're living in a golden age of puzzles," Shortz commented recently.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Will Shortz: *An Evening with the Puzzle Master* on Sunday, November 21** at **7:00 p.m.** in **Zellerbach Hall** are priced at \$20.00, \$24.00, \$28.00, \$32.00, and \$36.00. 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 three 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 \$20.00 for all other community members. Information

is available on Cal Performances' Facebook page and at 510-642-9988, press 2 for the rush hotline, three hours prior to a performance only.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Sunday, November 21 at 7:00PM

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

Strictly Speaking

Will Shortz

An Evening with the Puzzle Master

Program: Will Shortz, crossword editor of *The New York Times*, returns to discuss the curious history of crosswords and his lifelong passion for puzzles.

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