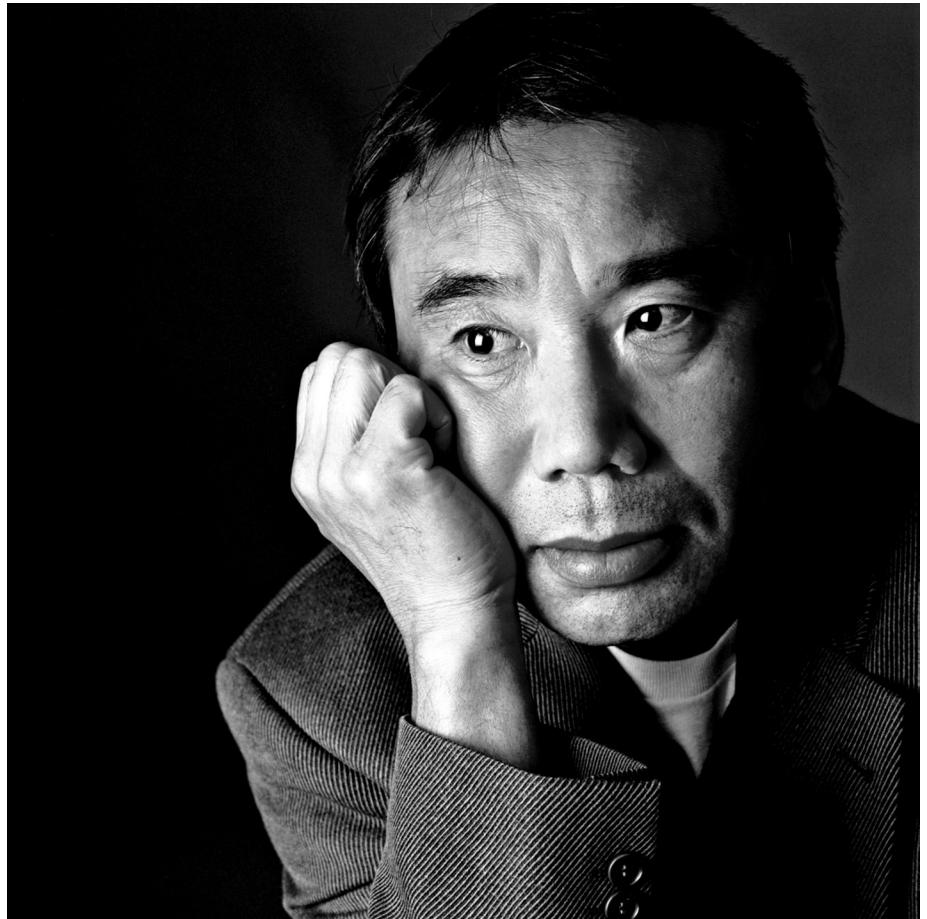


Saturday, October 11, 2008, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

Haruki Murakami



Presented in association with the Center for Japanese Studies as part of its 50th anniversary celebration.

Cal Performances' 2008–2009 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo Bank.

About the Speaker

HARUKI MURAKAMI was born in 1949 in Kyoto, Japan, and raised in Kobe. After studying Greek drama and graduating from Waseda University, he opened the Peter Cat jazz bar in Tokyo, which he operated from 1974 to 1981. It was at a baseball game between the Yakult Swallows and the Hiroshima Carp in Jingu Stadium in 1978, after the American player Dave Hilton hit a double, that Mr. Murakami became inspired and suddenly realized that he could write a novel. That night, he went home and began to write; the epiphany culminated in his first book, *Hear the Wind Sing*, which won for Mr. Murakami the Gunzou Literature Prize for budding writers. *Hear the Wind Sing* was the first in a series of books known as "The Trilogy of the Rat." The other two titles are *Pinball 1973* (1980) and *A Wild Sheep Chase* (1982), for which the author was awarded the Noma Literary Prize for New Writers.

Mr. Murakami continued to write works of fiction in novel and short story form, publishing *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* (1985), *Norwegian Wood* (1987), *Dance Dance Dance* (1988), *South of the Border, West of the Sun* (1992) and *The Elephant Vanishes* (1993). *Norwegian Wood* was an unexpected blockbuster in Japan, selling over two million copies and establishing Mr. Murakami as a literary superstar and a prominent voice of Japan's post-modern generation.

Several of Mr. Murakami's publications were released during times of expatriation. Beginning in 1986, Mr. Murakami traveled through the West, exploring Europe and eventually settling in the United States for four years as a writing fellow at Princeton University and Tufts University, among others. His last book written abroad was *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* (1994–1995), a probing—and often critical—fictional account of modern Japanese culture interwoven with the haunting memories of the nation's past. Often considered to be his finest work, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* was awarded the Yomiuri Prize by one of Mr. Murakami's foremost critics and fellow countryman, the Nobel Prize-winning author Kenzaburō Ōe.

Mr. Murakami returned to Japan in 1995, in the aftermath of two national tragedies. The Kobe earthquake killed more than 4,000 and

left another 300,000 homeless, including Mr. Murakami's parents. He explored the emotional aftershocks of this event in *After the Quake* (2002), a collection of six short stories set in February 1995, a month after the disaster. In March 1995, Japan suffered the most serious attack to occur since the end of World War II when agents of the religious cult Aum Shinrikyo released sarin gas on several lines of the Tokyo Metro, killing a dozen people and injuring at least a thousand others. The attack prompted Mr. Murakami to stray from fiction writing and produce a two-book set that would be published in the United States as one volume entitled *Underground* (2000), compiled from hundreds of interviews that were conducted with the victims, perpetrators and relatives of those who died from the incident.

Following the twin disasters, Mr. Murakami published several novels, including *Sputnik Sweetheart* and *Kafka on the Shore*, and the 24-short story collection, *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman*. His latest work of fiction, *After Dark*, was released in 2007 and was chosen by *The New York Times* as a "Notable Book of the Year." Among Mr. Murakami's other awards include the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award (Ireland, 2006), the Franz Kafka Award (Czech, 2006) and the Asahi Prize (Japan, 2006).

Mr. Murakami has translated a number of English works into Japanese, including fiction by F. Scott Fitzgerald, Raymond Carver, John Irving, Paul Theroux, Raymond Chandler and others. His own works have been translated into more than 40 languages.

Moderating tonight's conversation is **Roland Kelts**, a lecturer at the University of Tokyo and an editor of the New York-based literary journal, *A Public Space*. His articles, short stories and essays have been published in *The Village Voice*, *Newsday*, *Playboy*, *Vogue* and *The Japan Times*, among others. Mr. Kelts is a winner of the Jacob K. Javitz Fellowship in Writing and the *Playboy* Fiction Contest. He is the author of *Japanamerica: How Japanese Pop Culture Has Invaded the U.S.* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).