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[Press Room](#)

**CAL PERFORMANCES AND THE UC BERKELEY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM PRESENT**

MY OLD HOME, A NOVEL OF EXILE
ORVILLE SCHELL AND PETER SELLARS IN CONVERSATION,
WITH MUSICAL INTERLUDES
TUESDAY, MARCH 30 AT 6PM (PDT)

Writer and cultural critic Zha Jianying will introduce the talk and moderate a Q&A session

**This free, livestreamed event is presented as part Cal Performances’
Illuminations: Fact or Fiction series**

**A recording of this event will be available on demand
for three months following the livestream**

Berkeley, March 22, 2021 — Cal Performances, in partnership with UC Berkeley’s Graduate School of Journalism, presents *My Old Home, A Novel of Exile: Orville Schell and Peter Sellars in Conversation, with Musical Interludes*, a free, livestreamed discussion featuring **Orville Schell**, Director of the Center on US–China Relations at the Asia Society in New York and former Dean of the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism, and renowned theater director **Peter Sellars**, on Tuesday, March 30 at 6pm (PDT). The conversation will center on Schell’s just-published book *My Old Home, A Novel of Exile*, and will explore Schell’s particular interest in the divide that arose under the Chinese Communist Party between the imperatives of the individual and the state, especially as experienced by artists and musicians. Schell and Sellars will be welcomed by *New Yorker* contributing journalist, writer, and cultural critic **Zha Jianying**, who will introduce the conversation and moderate the Q&A session. The discussion will also showcase recordings of some of the music that is featured in Schell’s novel.

Schell is respected for his many nonfiction books, articles, and videos covering decades of life and travels in China since 1974, and *My Old Home*—his first work of fiction—is a distillation of this extensive fact-based reporting, expressed through the experiences and inner lives of its characters. Schell’s book takes readers on a vast journey from the rise of Mao Zedong in 1949 to the Tiananmen Square uprising in 1989, a story of a son and his classical-pianist father swept away by

the relentless series of devastating events that have marked modern Chinese history. Peter Sellars, a major figure in staging classical and contemporary world theater and opera—including landmark productions of the masterpiece of traditional Chinese Kunqu opera, *Peony Pavilion*, as well as the original production of John Adams’ 1987 opera *Nixon in China*—observes that Schell’s book is “epic [in] scope and pinpoint detail... illuminated from within and sustained by music.”

This talk is free and open to the public and will feature a Q&A session moderated by Zha Jianying following the discussion. Questions for the participants can be submitted at calperformances.org/my-old-home. Following the livestream, this event will be available to view on demand for three months, through June 30, 2021, at calperformances.org/beyond-the-stage.

Produced in partnership with the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism, this event is presented as part of Cal Performances’ [Illuminations: Fact or Fiction](#) programming, which examines the balance artists and authors strike between historical accuracy and poetic license while creating work that resonates with meaningful impact without completely obscuring the truth.

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

LIVESTREAMED EVENT

Tuesday, March 30, 6pm (PDT)

Following the livestream, this event will be available to view on demand for three months, through June 30, 2021, at calperformances.org/beyond-the-stage

My Old Home, A Novel of Exile

Orville Schell and Peter Sellars in Conversation, with Musical Interludes

Program: Orville Schell—Director of the Center on US–China Relations at the Asia Society in New York, former Dean of the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism, and a uniquely experienced observer of contemporary China—joins renowned theater director Peter Sellars for a free, livestreamed conversation centered on Schell’s just-published book *My Old Home, A Novel of Exile*, on Tuesday, March 30 at 6pm (PDT). The conversation will explore Schell’s particular interest in the divide that arose under the Chinese Communist Party between the imperatives of the individual and the state, especially as experienced by artists and musicians. The discussion will showcase recordings of some of the music that is featured in Schell’s novel, and will also feature a Q&A session moderated by *New Yorker* contributing journalist, writer, and cultural critic Zha Jianying.

This event is part of Cal Performances’ [Illuminations: Fact or Fiction](#) programming.

Tickets: *This online conversation is free and open to the public. Advance registration is recommended at calperformances.org/my-old-home.*