

FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE

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**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING AUTHOR AND EMMY
AWARD-WINNING TELEVISION WRITER AND PRODUCER**

AL FRANKEN

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23 AT 8:00 P.M. IN ZELLERBACH HALL

BERKELEY, September 23, 2003 – Renowned for his writing and comedic contributions to *Saturday Night Live* and books like his most recent, *LIES and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them: A Fair and Balanced Look at the Right*, political satirist **Al Franken** will speak at UC Berkeley for one night only, **Thursday, October 23 at 8:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall. The inaugural event of Cal Performances' new **Strictly Speaking** series, the evening will provide a platform for the liberal humorist and author to share his striking and often hilarious observations of current events, politics, and the media.

Franken has been widely visible in the press recently due to a lawsuit filed by Fox News over the title of his most recent book, *LIES and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them: A Fair and Balanced Look at the Right*, an uproarious and excoriating exposé of the rhetoric used in the media and by conservatives. When the suit was dropped, just three days after a federal judge refused to block the use of the Fox slogan "Fair and Balanced" on the cover of his book, Franken responded to the *Associated Press* by saying: "In addition to thanking my own lawyers, I'd like to thank Fox's lawyers for filing one of the stupidest briefs I've ever seen in my life." Franken also thanked Fox "for all the publicity", which no doubt helped debut the book at number one on *The New York Times* best-seller list. Following his talk on October 23, Franken will be signing copies of his book in the lobby.

AL FRANKEN

Actor, Emmy Award-winning writer and producer, political satirist, *New York Times* #1 bestselling author, successful screenwriter, and the alter ego of self-appointed, self-help guru Stuart Smalley – Al Franken has done it all. Perhaps best known for his work on *Saturday Night Live*, Franken was part of the original writing team that created the groundbreaking show, where

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he spent 15 seasons, first from 1975-1980 and then from 1985-1995. His behind-the-scenes talents led him to win four Emmys for writing and a fifth for producing *SNL*, beyond the scores of Emmy nominations, including one for last season's episode hosted by Al Gore, for which Franken returned to *SNL* for the first time since 1995.

Franken is also known for his on-camera work, first as half of the comedy team of "Franken and Davis", then for his "Al Franken Decade" persona, and such unique characterizations as the one-man mobile uplink unit and, of course, Stuart Smalley, the nurturing and somewhat nutty cable TV host, forever on the "Road to Recovery". Franken's television sitcom, *Lateline*, which he created with John Markus, ran on NBC in 1998 and 1999. Hailed by *People* magazine as "the best sitcom of the year", *Lateline* was given a "Perfect 10" by *TV Guide*.

On the large screen, Franken was co-writer, with Oscar-winner (*Rainman*) Ron Bass, of the critically acclaimed Touchstone Pictures release, *When a Man Loves a Woman*, starring Andy Garcia and Meg Ryan. His first book, *I'm Good Enough, I'm Smart Enough and Doggone It, People Like Me* provided the basis for the 1995 Paramount movie *Stuart Saves His Family*, which Franken both wrote and starred in. The movie, which was directed by Harold Ramis, received "two thumbs up" from Siskel & Ebert.

Al Franken is known for his great gift for political satire, and in 1988 he provided commentary for CNN at the Democratic National Convention in Atlanta. Four years later, he anchored Comedy Central's *Indecision '92*, winning wide critical acclaim for his coverage of both the Democratic and Republican national conventions and of Presidential election night. In 1996, he teamed with Arianna Huffington, again covering the party co *More...* on night for *Politically Incorrect*. At the 1994 and 1996 White House Correspondents Dinners, Franken demonstrated his skill as one of the nation's top after-dinner speakers.

Franken's second book, *Rush Limbaugh is a Big Fat Idiot and Other Observations*, hit the *New York Times* bestseller list the first week it was published in 1996; it remained number one for five weeks and spent over eight months on the list. Even the ultra conservative

Washington Times called Franken “a master of political humor.” His subsequent recording of the book on tape won the 1997 Grammy for Best Comedy Album. *Why Not Me: The Making and Unmaking of the Franken Presidency*, which chronicled the rise and fall of Al Franken, 43rd President, and *Oh, The Things I Know*, which Franken wrote as an easy-to-follow roadmap for human existence, were both *New York Times* bestsellers.

In 2003, Franken served as a fellow with Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government at the Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, where he researched and wrote his newest book. *LIES And the Lying Liars Who Tell Them: A Fair and Balanced Look at the Right* achieved the number one ranking on Amazon.com even before it was published, and has become one of the most talked about books of 2003.

STRICTLY SPEAKING

With the 2003/04 Season Cal Performances inaugurates **Strictly Speaking**, a series of events designed to bring the most intriguing literary, cultural, scientific and political voices of the day to Bay Area audiences. This season’s Strictly Speaking guests include: **Alice Sebold** (Nov. 18), author of *The New York Times*’ Best Seller *The Lovely Bones*; **Art Spiegelman** (Feb. 24), the creator of countless *New Yorker* magazine covers and the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Maus: A Survivor’s Tale* graphic novels; and novelist **Michael Cunningham**, whose rich, triple-layered narrative *The Hours* earned a 1999 Pulitzer Prize and inspired the screenplay for the Oscar-winning film of the same name (April 3).

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Al Franken** on **Thursday, October 23** at **8:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$20.00, \$28.00, 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.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens and other students receive a \$2 discount, and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$3 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu.

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San Francisco Chronicle, *San Francisco* magazine, and KDFC Classical 102.1 FM are media sponsors of Cal Performances' 2003/04 performing arts season.

All Cal Performances programs are supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

Wells Fargo is the corporate sponsor of Cal Performances' presentation of Al Franken.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Thursday, October 23 at 8:00 p.m.

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

Strictly Speaking

Al Franken

Author, comedian, political satirist

Program:

Author of *New York Times*' best-seller *LIES and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them*, the Emmy Award-winning writer, actor and political humorist inaugurates Cal Performances' Strictly Speaking lecture series.

Tickets: \$20.00, \$28.00 and \$36.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door.