

FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE

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**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS ALICE SEBOLD, AUTHOR OF *THE NEW YORK TIMES*
BEST-SELLER *THE LOVELY BONES*
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18 AT 8:00 P.M. IN ZELLERBACH HALL**

BERKELEY, October 13, 2003 – Author of the run-away bestseller *The Lovely Bones*, **Alice Sebold** will speak to audiences about the process of writing, the differences between memoir and fiction, and the issues of violence, loss, hope and faith, **Tuesday, November 18 at 8:00 p.m. in Zellerbach Hall**. “Ms. Sebold [has] the ability to capture both the ordinary and the extraordinary, the banal and the horrific, in lyrical, unsentimental prose” hailed *The New York Times* of Sebold’s monumentally successful novel. With over 2 million copies in print, *The Lovely Bones* remains on *The New York Times* Best-Seller list after 66 weeks. The author’s appearance at Cal Performances, part of the newly inaugurated *Strictly Speaking* series, is her only Bay Area lecture engagement since the book was published.

ALICE SEBOLD

Alice Sebold was born in Madison, Wisconsin, but soon moved to the suburbs of Philadelphia where she spent the remainder of her childhood. She attended Syracuse University, the University of Houston, and later returned to school in her 30s and received an MFA from University of California, Irvine. In the years between her one-year stint in Houston as a graduate student in poetry and the publication of her first book when she was 36, she lived and worked in New York City in a variety of part-time jobs. Her favorite was as a teacher of composition at Hunter College. She credits the returning female students there with inspiring her to go back to school herself. Deeply interested in issues of violence and family and how we find hope in the modern world, Sebold is passionate about Henry James and about the idea of working among the arts (i.e. not defining yourself solely by one discipline) in order to make art of any kind.

Sebold’s first book, the best-selling memoir *Lucky*, recounts her rape at the age of 18 on the last night of her freshman year at Syracuse University. In a hap-hazard attempt at

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consolation a policeman informed Sebold she had been “lucky,” at least she hadn’t been murdered and dismembered there like the girl before her. Sebold goes on to tell the details of the aftermath: post-traumatic stress syndrome, heroin addiction, the court trial and, finally, some measure of understanding.

Her first work of fiction, *The Lovely Bones*, now published in 34 languages around the world, is narrated from the omniscient perspective of Susie Salmon, a 14-year-old girl, now in heaven following her own brutal murder. *The Lovely Bones* follows this unbearable tragedy and transforms into a suspenseful, touching, even funny novel about family, memory, love, heaven, and living. “Sebold teaches us much about living and dying, holding on and letting go, as messy and imperfect and beautiful as the processes can be” (*Los Angeles Times*).

Although she began writing *The Lovely Bones* first, Sebold felt almost immediately the need to get her own story out first. “I think that after writing the first chapter of *Lovely Bones*, in which Susie is raped and killed, there was some urging on Susie’s part that I get my own business out of the way before writing further into her story. When I say ‘on Susie’s part’ I mean: the demands of her wanting to tell her story and using me to do so meant that I had to unload *my* story someplace else. It wasn’t going to fit into the book I wanted to write for her. So I went ahead and wrote *Lucky*. But whereas in *Lovely Bones* the rape and murder scene was the first thing I wrote, in *Lucky* it was the last; the first chapter in *Lucky* is the last part I wrote. I definitely feel that *Lucky* was part of the process of writing *Lovely Bones*. I think it exists on its own, but I don’t think I’d have written it if not for the demands of writing the novel.”

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 series began with political satirist and comedian **Al Franken** (Oct. 23), and continues with **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 **Alice Sebold** on **Tuesday, November 18** at **8:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$18.00, \$22.00, and \$28.00.** 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.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Tuesday, November 18 at 8:00 p.m.

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

Strictly Speaking
Alice Sebold

Program:

Author Alice Sebold will speak to audiences about the process of writing, the differences between memoir and fiction, and the issues of violence, loss, hope and faith.

Tickets: \$18.00, \$22.00 and \$28.00, 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.

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