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**CHOREOGRAPHER WILLIAM FORSYTHE BRINGS HIS NEW ENSEMBLE,
THE FORSYTHE COMPANY, TO CAL PERFORMANCES FOR AN EMOTION-CHARGED
WEST COAST PREMIERE THURSDAY AND FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22 AND 23,
AT 8:00 P.M. AT ZELLERBACH HALL**

BERKELEY, January 12, 2007—In a highly anticipated first visit to the Bay Area, **The Forsythe Company**, the new ensemble led by ballet iconoclast **William Forsythe**, brings the West Coast premiere of *Three Atmospheric Studies* to Zellerbach Hall **Thursday and Friday, February 22 and 23 at 8:00 p.m.** Called “dance-theatre at its most mysterious and expansive,” (*The Guardian*, London), the 18-member company showcases Forsythe’s dynamic 21st-century re-imagining of ballet, creating an experience beyond a single discipline. *Three Atmospheric Studies* is an explicit, political three-part commentary on the Iraq war, described by Australia’s *The Age* as “emotive yet intelligent ... accessible and yet high-calibre ... Forsythe at his best.” The production features music by Forsythe’s longtime collaborator **Thom Willems** and **David Morrow**; spoken texts by Forsythe, **Dana Caspersen** and **David Kern**; and design by Forsythe and New York artist **Spencer Finch**.

PROGRAM

The Forsythe Company’s *Three Atmospheric Studies*, said to be a “suitably brutal examination of the physicality of war” (*The Age*), is a triptych of dances showing the full range of Forsythe’s dance and theater lexicon. Part I oscillates between chaos and stillness; the stage background is plain black, the dancers are dressed in casual clothes and the soundtrack is silence, except for the sound of bodies in motion. The action depicts the arrest of a young man.

In Part II, spoken words, recorded sound, multimedia images and the music of David Morrow are matched with minimal action from the dancers, as the mother of the man in Part I relates the story of his arrest and, later, killing. Parts I and II are both subtitled “Clouds after Cranach,” referring to the 16th-century religious painter Lucas Cranach the Elder known for depicting billowing, dark clouds in his artwork.

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Part III, called “Study III,” becomes visually and sonically violent. Dancers carry microphones and create a cacophonous soundtrack, accompanied by explosions, smoke and screams. Music for “Study III” is by Thom Willems; texts are recited by dancers Dana Caspersen and David Kern. The result is an experience that defies the conventional definition of ballet. If there were any concerns about Forsythe losing his edge during the building of his new company, he “is most definitely back in creative action, full of angry energy” (*The New York Times*).

WILLIAM FORSYTHE

William Forsythe is recognized as one of the world’s foremost choreographers, celebrated for reorienting the practice of ballet from its identification with classical repertoire to a dynamic 21st-century art form. Born in New York City in 1949 and principally trained there, he arrived on the European dance scene in his early 20s and rose to be resident choreographer of the Stuttgart Ballet. He also created works for many top ballet companies in Germany, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United States. In 1984, he began a 20-year tenure as director of Ballett Frankfurt in Germany, where he created many celebrated works, including *The Loss of Small Detail* (1991) in collaboration with composer Thom Willems and designer Issey Miyake. It was in Frankfurt that Forsythe developed the cooperative, collaborative approach that has become the hallmark of the Forsythe Company. “We all dance together and we all choreograph together,” Forsythe told *Ballet* magazine in 2003. “Because, if you leave it over to the other person to just do the choreography, then, I believe, a gap forms in your experience. This experiential gap is, I find, dangerous and detrimental to the sort of work that I want to do.”

Forsythe, his choreography, and his companies have won many awards, including the Bessie (1988, 1998, 2004), the Laurence Olivier Award (1992, 1999), the French *Commandeur des Arts et Lettres* (1999), the German Distinguished Service Cross (1997) and the Wexner Prize (2002). In 1994, he revolutionized the teaching of dance with an award-winning computer application, “Improvisation Technologies: A Tool for the Analytical Dance Eye,” which is used by professional dance companies, conservatories and other training institutions worldwide. Forsythe regularly lectures and presents workshops at major universities and cultural institutions. He has also created groundbreaking interactive multimedia performances and

architecture/performance installations with architect Daniel Libeskind, Artangel in London, Creative Time in New York and the City of Paris. Forsythe has also created a short film, called *Solo*, and his performance, film and installation work was celebrated in 2006 with a major exhibition at Munich's Pinakothek der Moderne.

THE FORSYTHE COMPANY

When Ballett Frankfurt closed in 2004, William Forsythe established The Forsythe Company as an independent ensemble. With funding from the German states of Saxony and Hesse, the cities of Dresden and Frankfurt am Main, and private sponsors, the 18-member ensemble is the exclusive performer of new works by Forsythe. (His previous work is prominently featured in the repertoire of virtually every other major ballet company in the world.) In establishing the group, Forsythe built on the intense collaboration developed among dancers in the Frankfurt rehearsal studio over the last 20 years, and is using it to explore a relational and connective mode of thinking that carves out creative autonomy for each individual dancer. Forsythe's newest work explores the contemporary social shift from a politics of individual sovereignty to one of networked multitudes.

The dancers in The Forsythe Company hail from Austria, England, France, Greece, Italy, Japan, Spain, Switzerland and the United States. Based in Dresden and Frankfurt am Main, the company enjoys a yearly residency at the Schiffbauhalle of the Schauspielhaus Zürich in Switzerland as well as an extensive international touring schedule. Forsythe's enduring and evolving interest in alternative encounters with audiences has led to performances and installations in public spaces, museums and cultural centers as well as theaters and performance spaces. This is the company's first visit to the Bay Area.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for The Forsythe Company on **Thursday and Friday, February 22 and 23** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$32.00, \$46.00 and \$58.00**. 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,

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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.calperformances.net.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Thursday & Friday, February 22 & 23 at 8:00 p.m. **Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus**
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

Dance

The Forsythe Company

William Forsythe, choreographer

Program:

Three Atmospheric Studies

Choreographed and directed by William Forsythe in three parts.

Music by David Morrow (Part II) and Thom Willems (Part III).

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