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**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS MONTY PYTHON ALUMNUS
JOHN CLEESE, FOR AN EVENING OF COMEDY AND COMMENTARY IN HIS NEW
SOLO WORK *SEVEN WAYS TO SKIN AN OCELOT*
FEBRUARY 8 & 9 AT 8:00 P.M. AT ZELLERBACH HALL**

BERKELEY, January 9, 2006 – Funnyman extraordinaire **John Cleese** brings his new solo work *An Evening with John Cleese: Seven Ways to Skin an Ocelot* to Cal Performances for two nights at **8:00 p.m. Wednesday & Thursday, February 8 & 9** at Zellerbach Hall. Cleese is best known for his perpetually off-kilter characters of Monty Python, *Fawlty Towers*, *A Fish Called Wanda*, *Cheers*, *Third Rock from the Sun*, and *Will and Grace*. Less well known is that he is the author of two bestselling books on psychology: *Families and How to Survive Them* and *Life and How to Survive It*. Sure to be an unpredictable evening of hilarity, *Seven Ways to Skin an Ocelot* has been described by Cleese as “a one man show, with several people in it, which pushes the envelope of acceptable behavior in new and disgusting ways.”

From an early age **John Cleese** was a jokester. He was educated at Clifton College in Bristol, from which he was expelled for a humorous defacing of school grounds: he used painted footsteps to suggest that a school statue had got down from its plinth and gone to the toilet. His talent for comedy progressed with his membership in the Cambridge Footlights Revue while he was studying for a law degree at Downing College at the University of Cambridge. There he met his future writing partner Graham Chapman. His comedic reputation flourished and he was offered a job as a writer with BBC Radio. He joined the Cambridge Revue, *Cambridge Circus*, for a tour of New Zealand and Broadway, and decided to stay in America performing on and off-Broadway. It was at this time that he meet another future Monty Python cohort, Terry Gilliam.

On his return to London in 1965, Cleese and Chapman began writing on *The Frost Report*, an important landmark in satire and British comedy in the 1960s. It was during this period that he worked with the remaining Python ensemble members Eric Idle, Terry Jones and Michael Palin and where they developed their unique writing styles that would become so

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significant later. The television program *Monty Python's Flying Circus* ran for four seasons from 1969 to 1974 on BBC. Cleese left the series after the third season.

John Cleese went on to achieve possibly greater success in the United Kingdom as the feckless hotel manager Basil Fawlty in *Fawlty Towers*, which he co-wrote with his wife Connie Booth. Films followed including the most successful British movie ever *A Fish Called Wanda*. In 1999, Cleese appeared in the James Bond movie, *The World Is Not Enough*, followed by *Die Another Day*. Throughout his career there have been numerous guest television appearances and unexpected endeavors such as his Video Arts production company, the largest producer of management and sales training films outside of the United States, and his books on psychology. Additionally, Cleese was rector of Saint Andrews University from 1970 to 1973. He is currently an Andrew D. White Professor-at-Large at Cornell University. He makes his home in Montecito, California.

STRICTLY SPEAKING

Upcoming events in Cal Performances' Stricly Speaking series include *New York Times* associate editor **Frank Rich** (Apr. 10); and **Michael Feldman** and his popular comedy/quiz/interview program on current events titled *Whad'Ya Know?* (Apr. 28).

TICKET INFORMATION

This engagement is sold-out. Tickets for *An Evening with John Cleese: Seven Ways to Skin an Ocelot, Wednesday & Thursday, February 8 & 9 at 8:00 p.m.* in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$32.00**, **\$42.00** and **\$56.00** and may become available due to last minute returns. Call the Cal Performances Ticket Office at (510) 642-9988 for availability.

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Cal Performances' 2005/2006 Centennial Season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

The *Contra Costa Times* and Classical 102.1 KDFC are season media sponsors of the 2005/06 performing arts season.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Wednesday & Thursday, February 8 & 9 at 8:00 p.m. Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

Strictly Speaking

An Evening with John Cleese: Seven Ways to Skin an Ocelot

John Cleese, actor, comedian and writer

Program: Funnyman John Cleese brings his new solo work to Cal Performances.

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