

FOR IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE

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**PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING AUTHOR OF *THE HOURS*,  
MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM,  
COMES TO *STRICTLY SPEAKING* AT CAL PERFORMANCES  
SATURDAY, APRIL 3 AT 8:00 P.M.**

**BERKELEY, March 2, 2004** – Wrapping up Cal Performances' 2003/04 Strictly Speaking series, author **Michael Cunningham** speaks in Berkeley **Saturday, April 3 at 8:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall, sharing his thoughts on the writing process and the transformation of his 1999 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *The Hours* into an Oscar-winning film. With the film version of his best-selling novel—an inventive re-drawing of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*—surpassing his wildest expectations, Cunningham embraces the page to screen process. “We’re used to thinking of the movies as this great destroyer of literature and anticipate selling our books to Hollywood and seeing them mauled and flattened,” he explains. “But then there are moments of transcendence. I think that’s why we love movies so much...seeing our lives in exalted forms.” In his lecture, Cunningham will also include his recent experiences on the set of the film adaptation of another one of his novels, 1995’s *A Home at the End of the World*, starring Colin Farrell and Cissy Spacek, due to be released later this year.

**MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM**

Raised in Pasadena, California, **Michael Cunningham’s** greatest desire was to be a rock star. It wasn’t until a very beautiful and worldly high school senior suggested that he might consider being “less stupid” if he read a book, Cunningham recalls. “Why don’t you read somebody like T.S. Elliot or Virginia Woolf,” she challenged. As it happened, the school library had nothing by Elliot and only one copy of anything written by Woolf—her 1925 novel *Mrs. Dalloway*. Although Cunningham didn’t understand all that Woolf was trying to express, he knew he’d never seen words used together in quite that way (he equated Woolf’s use of language with Jimmy Hendrix’s use of the guitar). It signified, however, the beginning of Cunningham as a reader and, later, a writer.

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Cunningham received a bachelor's degree in English from Stanford University and his master's degree in fine arts from the University of Iowa. He dabbled briefly in painting, but with his 30th birthday looming, Cunningham decided to get serious about writing and finish his partially completed first novel, *Golden States* (1984). Since then his work has appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The Paris Review*, *The New Yorker*, and *DoubleTake*. In addition to receiving the 1999 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, Cunningham was also given the PEN/Faulkner Award for *The Hours*. He is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, and a Michener Fellowship from the University of Iowa. His short story "White Angel" was chosen for the 1989 edition of *Best American Short Stories*. Cunningham's latest book, *Land's End: A Walk Through Provincetown*, was his response to the daunting question: what does a novelist write after winning the Pulitzer Prize? Cunningham's answer: a non-fiction account of his impressions and memories of time spent on Cape Cod.

Cunningham continues to exist comfortably in the literary world and the cinematic world as his second novel to be turned into a film, *A Home at the End of the World* chronicling a dozen years in the lives of two very different best friends, is being completed. His life as a writer has not drastically changed; Cunningham is busy at work on his next novel and on an original screenplay.

### STRICTLY SPEAKING

With the 2003/04 season Cal Performances introduced **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 have included **Al Franken**, political satirist renowned for his contributions to *Saturday Night Live* and his most recent book, *LIES and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them: A Fair and Balanced Look at the Right*; **Alice Sebold**, author of *The New York Times*' Best Seller *The Lovely Bones*; and cartoonist **Art Spiegelman**, best known for his Pulitzer Prize-winning *MAUS* and *MAUS II* graphic novels and a slew of controversial and visually arresting *New Yorker* covers.

### TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Michael Cunningham** on **Saturday, April 3 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](http://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](http://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.

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**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

**Saturday, April 3 at 8:00 p.m.**

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

*Strictly Speaking*

**Michael Cunningham**

**Program:**

Author Michael Cunningham will speak about the process of writing, as well as the translation of his Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *The Hours* into an Oscar-winning film.

**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](http://www.calperfs.berkeley.edu); and at the door.

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