

FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE

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**UNITED COMMERCIAL BANK AWARDS CAL PERFORMANCES SPONSORSHIP
FOR THE WEST COAST PREMIERE OF U THEATRE**

BERKELEY, August 22, 2003 – Cal Performances is pleased to announce sponsorship from **United Commercial Bank** for the 2003 presentation of **U Theatre's** *The Sound of Ocean*. Making their West Coast debut, this 14-member company comes to Cal Performances Friday, September 26 at 8:00 p.m. and Saturday, September 27 at 2:00 p.m. in Zellerbach Hall. Founded in 1988 by artistic director **Liu Ching-Ming**, U Theatre actors are trained in popular Taiwanese art forms, traditions and rituals, in addition to intense physical training based on Western and Far Eastern techniques.

“In April 2002, Cal Performances hosted Yo-Yo Ma’s remarkable *Silk Road Project* under the generous corporate sponsorship of United Commercial Bank,” comments director of Cal Performances **Robert Cole**. “Without their support, the three weeks of educational and community activities and two weeks of *Silk Road* music and dance performances would not have been possible here. Following that success, we are extremely pleased that United Commercial Bank has chosen to join Cal Performances again this season in sponsorship of Taiwan’s U Theatre, presenting *The Sound of Ocean*. Thanks to United Commercial Bank, we are able to share this dynamic company with Bay Area audiences in its West Coast debut this September. We look forward to our continued partnership with United Commercial Bank.”

Thomas S. Wu, President, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of United Commercial Bank, adds: “As a bank with many customers who have close ties to Asia, we are pleased to have this opportunity to sponsor this wonderful program from Taiwan. We see similarities between the art of U Theatre and the work that our bank does, which is extracting the best from traditional values and placing them in a modern context.”

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U THEATRE

Founded in 1988 by current artistic director **Liu Ching-Ming**, the early focus of U Theatre centered on learning the skills of traditional Taiwanese theatrical performance from local folk artists, while concurrently studying the various forms of Western modern theatre. The early works of U Theatre were adaptations of classic Chinese tales told from a Taiwanese viewpoint, in the form of song and dance and in a religious atmosphere. In 1993, Liu invited **Wong Chee-Mon**, a master drummer with nearly 20 years of drumming experience, to instruct the members of U Theatre in his craft. Under Wong's guidance, meditation (and later, Chinese martial arts) became an integral part of the training of U Theatre actors. Liu and Wong worked to combine this specialized training with drum beating, and U Theatre as it is known today was fully realized. Aesthetically, U Theatre's work is rooted in an ongoing exploration of indigenous Taiwanese and Chinese performance history and practice.

CAL PERFORMANCES

Cal Performances presents over 100 performances annually, bringing the work of traditional and non-traditional artists to Bay Area audiences, including artists such as **Mikhail Baryshnikov, Cecilia Bartoli, Mark Morris, Yo-Yo Ma, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, American Ballet Theatre, Merce Cunningham, Pina Bausch, Bill T. Jones, Peter Sellars, John Adams, and Lou Harrison**; and, such Bay Area artists as **Margaret Jenkins, Kronos Quartet, Joe Goode, Jon Jang, and Gamelan Sekar Jaya**, which has aided and encouraged their national touring. Cal Performances has been instrumental in facilitating the touring of large ensembles from abroad, and has hosted such esteemed companies as the **Grand Kabuki Theater of Japan, the Lyon Opera Ballet and Orchestra, the Berliner Ensemble, the Gate Theatre of Dublin, Les Arts Florissants, Ballet Nacional de Cuba, and Nederlands Dans Theater**, among others.

Cal Performances annually programs as many free education and humanities programs as there are performances on stage in a calendar year. Based on the UC Berkeley campus, the institution is a conduit for artist-community interaction, where over 30,000 Bay Area residents participate in dynamic activities designed to foster meaningful relationships between the artist's work and the diverse communities served. These include: *SchoolTime*, which serves a vital part

of public and private school education with specially scheduled, one-hour daytime performances by world-class performing artists on the Zellerbach Hall stage; “**Cal Performances in the Classroom**,” professional development workshops for teachers; **community programs**, such as free classes, lectures and symposia offered throughout the year in schools, senior centers, to cultural organizations and on the campus; and **AileyCamp**, a six-week camp combining dance instruction with personal development and creative communication classes, designed to develop self-esteem, self-discipline, and critical thinking skills in youths ages 11 – 14.

UNITED COMMERCIAL BANK

United Commercial Bank, a subsidiary of UCBH Holdings, Inc., is the leading California bank specializing in serving the Chinese community. The bank has 46 offices located in the San Francisco Bay Area, Sacramento, Stockton, and the Greater Los Angeles area, as well as an office in Brooklyn, New York and an office in Hong Kong. United Commercial Bank is a full-service bank offering a wide range of consumer banking services to individuals and commercial banking services, to small- and medium-sized businesses, and professionals in a variety of industries. The company’s common stock is traded on the NASDAQ under the symbol “UCBH.” The website address is www.ibankunited.com.

United Commercial Bank is pleased to be a sponsor of Cal Performances presentation of U Theatre. Headquartered in San Francisco, United Commercial Bank understands the importance of contributing to the arts and cultural activities which make the Bay Area a vibrant and culturally diverse place. United Commercial Bank will also sponsor the performances of Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan October 31 and November 1 at Cal Performances.

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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.

Performances of U Theatre are sponsored by United Commercial Bank.

This program is co-sponsored with the San Francisco Art Institute. Both SHC and SFAI are participants in *Awake: Art, Buddhism, and the Dimensions of Consciousness*, a consortium of artists and arts organizations. During 2002-2004, thanks to generous funding from the Nathan Cummings Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and others, a number of organizations are sponsoring programs, exhibitions, performances, and artist residencies to reveal the threads of Buddhist intellectual, psychological, and aesthetic influence that run through the fabric of American culture.

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CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Friday, September 26 at 8:00 p.m. **Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus**
Saturday, September 27 at 2:00 p.m. [Family Fare] Bancroft Way at Telegraph, Berkeley

World Stage

U Theatre

The Sound of Ocean

Liu Ching-Ming, Founder and Artistic Director

Program:

The exquisite collective of U Theatre performers bring *The Sound of Ocean*, a rhythmically-based theatrical exploration of water, the natural environment and sound through dynamically complex drumming, meditation and martial art techniques.

Tickets: \$22.00, \$30.00 and \$42.00, 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.