

CONTACT:
Christina Kellogg 510.643.6714
ckellogg@calperformances.org
Rusty Barnes 510.642.9121
rbarnes@calperformances.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 30, 2014

**PIANIST JONATHAN BISS PLAYS BEETHOVEN SONATAS
AND WORKS BY BRAHMS, KURTÁG, AND CHOPIN
ON FEBRUARY 16 AT 3:00 P.M. IN HERTZ HALL**

BERKELEY, January 30, 2014—Pianist Jonathan Biss returns to Berkeley for a sold-out recital presented by [Cal Performances](#) on Sunday, February 16, at 3:00 p.m. in Hertz Hall. Biss will play works by Brahms, Kurtág, and Chopin, and conclude his recital with two Beethoven sonatas, including the epic *Waldstein*—timely selections, as the pianist is one-third of the way through an epic nine-disc recording project in which he plays all 32 Beethoven sonatas. “Mr. Biss’s style ... bring(s) out the works’ drama and excitement, the sudden harmonic and dynamic contrasts, the pauses and changes of direction that must have jolted listeners in Beethoven’s time” (*The New York Times*). Jonathan Biss made his Cal Performances debut in 2006 and last appeared here in 2012.

Jonathan Biss’s wide-ranging musical interests are on full display in his recital’s diverse program. The program opens with Johannes Brahms’ *Klavierstücke*. These four brief pieces—three intermezzos and a rhapsody—were written late in the composer’s career and display a beguilingly subtle yet masterful simplicity. Selections from *Játékok* by Hungarian composer György Kurtág are next; “játékok” translates as “Games,” and these very short pieces—some as brief as one minute in length—are an ongoing project by Kurtág to create fragmentary, intimate, and often humorous musical elements that can be chosen and combined by the performer. Next on Jonathan Biss’s recital are the last two Nocturnes published by Frédéric Chopin. Delicate and lovely, these pieces are beloved by pianists and listeners alike. Another very late Chopin work, the *Polonaise-Fantaisie*, follows; the work has roots in Polish dances, but is often noted for having more *fantaisie* than *Polonaise*. Two sonatas by Ludwig van Beethoven—No. 27 in E minor, and No. 21 in C major (known as *Waldstein*)—conclude the recital. The first sonata is a gentle, loving work, while the second—composed the same year as Beethoven’s revolutionary

-MORE-

Eroica symphony—is an ambitious piece of music that rode advancements in piano technology in the first years of the 19th century.

[Jonathan Biss](#) made his New York recital debut in 2000 at just 20 years of age, and in the ensuing years this American pianist has been closely watched and widely praised for his performances in orchestral, recital, chamber music, and recording studio settings. His musical repertoire ranges from Mozart and Beethoven to living composers such as Leon Kirchner and Timo Andrews. This season he is performing with orchestras and chamber ensembles throughout the United States and Europe (including a World Premiere of a new piano concerto by Bernard Rands with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Robert Spano in April 2014), in addition to performing a short series of recitals in the US and France. In 2011 Biss began a project to record all 32 Beethoven piano sonatas, an effort that has yielded three albums so far—the most recent released on January 14, 2014—and which should be completed by 2020. In addition to performing, Biss is a faculty member at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for Jonathan Biss, piano on Sunday, February 16, at 3:00 p.m. in Hertz Hall are sold-out. For ticket inquiries, please contact the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988; at <http://www.calperformances.org>; and at the door. For more information about discounts, go to <http://calperformances.org/buy/discounts.php>.

#

Cal Performances thanks Wells Fargo and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for their major support of the 2013—2014 Season.

#

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Sunday, February 16, at 3:00 p.m.

Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at College Ave., Berkeley

-MORE-

Recital

Jonathan Biss, piano

Program:

Brahms/*Klavierstücke*, Op. 119

Kurtág/*Játékok* (selections)

Chopin/*Nocturnes*, Op. 62

Chopin/*Polonaise-Fantaisie*, Op. 61

Beethoven/*Sonata No. 27 in E minor*, Op. 90

Beethoven/*Sonata No. 21 in C major*, Op. 53 (Waldstein)

This performance is sold-out. For ticket inquiries, please contact the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988; at calperformances.org; and at the door.

– Cal Performances –