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**PIANIST JEREMY DENK MAKES HIS CAL PERFORMANCES SOLO
DEBUT IN A PROGRAM OF WORKS BY LIGETI AND BACH ON
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 24 IN HERTZ HALL**

**Sightlines: A post-performance conversation with Jeremy Denk and composer
John Adams will take place onstage.**

BERKELEY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2010—Pianist **Jeremy Denk**, whose playing has been described as “bracing, effortlessly virtuosic and utterly joyous” (*The New York Times*), will make his Cal Performances solo recital debut on **Sunday, October 24 at 3:00 p.m.** in Hertz Hall. Denk will play Books 1 and 2 of **György Ligeti’s** *Etudes*, which the pianist described as “some of the most striking, and interesting, and brilliant piano music of recent decades,” and **J. S. Bach’s** *Goldberg Variations*, which Denk has called “my sublime, magnificent, perfect friends.” The contrast between these technically challenging selections—one noted for its modern and angular style, the other revered for its Baroque beauty—demonstrates the stylistic musical range that is one of Denk’s many strengths as a pianist.

A *Sightlines* post-performance talk with Jeremy Denk and Berkeley-based composer John Adams will follow the recital in Hertz Hall. This event is free to ticket holders.

PROGRAM

Jeremy Denk will open his Cal Performances recital with *Etudes* (Books 1 and 2) by the Hungarian composer **György Ligeti** (1923–2006). The 14 etudes—six in the first book, eight in the second—were composed in the 1980s and early 1990s. They are marked by rhythmic experimentation and draw from eclectic influences including polyrhythmic African drumming, player-piano studies of Conlon Nancarrow, jazz piano works by Thelonious Monk and Bill Evans, and even fractal theory. Denk himself wrote, “the *Etudes* shimmer with coolness, both in the sense of restraint and The Hip. And then, they are also outrageous, over the top, demanding of

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the impossible, and engaging of the dance rhythm to the end of the mind's range, an orgy of rhythmic complication.”

J.S. Bach's *Goldberg Variations* comprise the second part of Denk's Berkeley recital. Published in 1741, the variations—named for Johann Gottlieb Goldberg, the German piano and harpsichord virtuoso—consist of an Aria and 30 of its variations. Bach's *Variations* are considered foundational works in piano literature, and are showcases for many compositional techniques, including counterpoint, canon, and fugue, among others. Of the *Variations*, Denk wrote on his blog, “the mishmash of reverence and irreverence is what really gets me off.” When Denk played the Goldberg Variations at New York's Symphony Space in 2009, the *New York Times* raved: “It was indeed a performance to treasure, riveting from the first notes of the gorgeous Aria. Mr. Denk's unmannered, profound playing, enriched by multihued dynamics and vibrantly contrasting moods, earned him universal approval from the rapturous audience.”

JEREMY DENK

Upon his New York recital debut in 1997, given as winner of the Juilliard Piano Debut Award, **Jeremy Denk** was described by the *New York Times* as “a pianist with a searching mind.” That phrase has proved presciently accurate, as Denk has built a reputation for compelling solo performances, chamber music appearances, recordings, teaching, and writing. Denk continued to win accolades in 1997 as the winner of the Young Concert Artists International Auditions and the 1998 Avery Fisher Career Grant.

As a soloist, Denk's repertoire spans from standard 18th- and 19th-century masterworks to pieces by 20th- and 21st-century composers including **Charles Ives**, **Olivier Messiaen**, **Leon Kirchner**, **Jake Heggie**, and **Edgar Meyer**. His premieres include **Ned Rorem's** *The Unquestioned Answer* (2003); **Heggie's** *Cut Time* (2001) with the Eos Orchestra; *Alternating Current*, a work written for Denk by **Kevin Puts** that premiered at the Kennedy Center recital program; and **Mark O'Connor's** *Fiddle Sonata*, performed at the Library of Congress in duet with the composer.

As a chamber musician, Denk has played with the Borromeo, Brentano, Mirò, St. Lawrence, Shanghai, and Vermeer string quartets. He has toured with violinist Joshua Bell and appeared in conjunction with the Seattle and Santa Fe chamber music festivals, the Spoleto Festival, the “Musicians from Marlboro” national tour, and the Ravinia Festival’s Steans Institute. Denk has recorded the works of **Schubert, Bartok, and Strauss** with violinist Soovin Kim, **John Corigliano’s** Violin Sonata with Joshua Bell, **Tobias Picker’s** Piano Concerto No. 2 with the Russian Philharmonic, and many other recordings.

Denk writes “Think Denk,” a popular blog (available at www.jeremydenk.net) in which he talks, with wit and candor, about “the glamorous life and thoughts of a concert pianist.” Topics include practicing, performing, discovering new music, and the rigors and joys of touring, as well as ruminations on non-musical topics. Denk also uses the blog to delve deeply into music theory and analysis, drawing from others and employing his own original, fresh, and knowledgeable voice. Alex Ross of the *New Yorker* said “Denk has established himself as perhaps the leading humorist-intellectual of the classical-music blogosphere, if that is not too esoteric a category.”

Denk is a member of the faculty of Bard College Conservatory of Music. He holds undergraduate degrees in piano and chemistry from Oberlin College and Conservatory, a master’s degree in music from Indiana University where he studied with György Sebök, and a doctorate in piano performance from The Juilliard School where he worked with Herbert Stessin. Denk last appeared at Cal Performances in February 2010, accompanying his friend and frequent collaborator, violinist Joshua Bell.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for pianist **Jeremy Denk** on **Sunday, October 24** in Hertz Hall are priced at **\$42.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$5 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperformances.org.

For select performances, Cal Performances offers UCB student, faculty and staff, senior and community rush tickets. Rush tickets are announced three hours prior to a performance and are available in person only at the Ticket Office beginning one hour before the performance; quantities may be limited. Rush ticket sales are limited to one ticket per person; all sales are cash only. Rush ticket prices are \$10.00 for UCB students; \$15.00 for UCB faculty and staff (UCB ID required) and seniors age 65 or older; and \$20.00 for all other community members. Information is available on Cal Performances' Facebook page and at 510-642-9988, press 2 for the rush hotline, three hours prior to a performance only.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Sunday, October 24 at 3:00 p.m.

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

Recital

Jeremy Denk, piano

Program:

Ligeti/*Etudes*, Books 1 and 2

Bach/*Goldberg Variations*

Tickets: \$42.00 available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door.

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Sunday, October 24

SIGHTLINES

Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley Campus

Bancroft Way at College Ave., Berkeley

Post-performance talk with pianist Jeremy Denk and Berkeley-based composer John Adams will be held on stage. *Sightlines* is a continuing program of pre- and post-performance discussions with Cal Performances' guest artists and scholars, designed to enrich the audience's experience. This event is free to ticket holders.

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