

CONTACT:  
Christina Kellogg 510.643.6714  
ckellogg@calperfs.berkeley.edu  
Joe Yang 510.642.9121  
scyang@calperfs.berkeley.edu

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**GRAMMY AWARD WINNER JAZZ SINGER KURT ELLING  
COMES TO CAL PERFORMANCES WITH *DEDICATED TO YOU*  
ON SATURDAY, APRIL 23 AT 8:00 P.M. IN ZELLERBACH HALL**

**Ernie Watts, ETHEL and the Laurence Hobgood Trio perform with Elling**

**BERKELEY, March 17, 2011**— Praised as the “standout male vocalist of our time” (*The New York Times*), **Kurt Elling** returns to Berkeley on **Saturday, April 23, at 8:00 p.m.** in **Zellerbach Hall**. He will be singing the music of John Coltrane and Johnny Hartman from his Grammy Award winning album *Dedicated to You*, and will be accompanied by tenor saxophonist **Ernie Watts**, contemporary string quartet **ETHEL** and longtime musical companion **Laurence Hobgood** and his trio. Every one of Elling’s albums has been nominated for a Grammy Award; *Dedicated to You* gave him his first Grammy Award for Best Jazz Vocal Album. In just over a decade, Elling has established himself as a premier jazz artist, composer and lyricist. He has been designated Male Jazz Vocalist of the Year by both *DownBeat* and *Jazz Times* many times over and has won numerous other prestigious awards. “With his soaring vocal flights, his edgy lyrics and sense of being on a musical mission, he has come to embody the creative spirit in jazz” (*The Washington Post*).

**KURT ELLING**

Born in Chicago in 1967, Elling is the son of a church musician and grew up performing sacred and classical music in choir settings. He became interested in jazz while attending college. During his years as a graduate student at the University of Chicago Divinity School, his love for jazz singing became an obsession that led to performances in local clubs. In 1995, Elling submitted a demo tape to Blue Note Records that was accepted almost immediately, and debuted with *Close Your Eyes*. Since then, Elling has recorded or performed with an array of artists, including Terence Blanchard, Dave Brubeck, Jon Hendricks, Charlie Hunter, Al Jarreau, Christian McBride, and Kurt Rosenwinkel. He served as the Artist-in-Residence for the Singapore Music and Monterey Jazz Festivals. He has also written multi-disciplinary works for The Steppenwolf Theatre and the City of Chicago. The Obama Administration’s first state dinner

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featured Elling in a command performance. Elling is also a renowned artist of *vocalese*—the writing and performing of words over recorded improvised jazz solos and in 2007 his lyrics were published in the book Lyrics.

In 2010 Elling completed an extensive tour with the Monterey Jazz Festival All-Stars and staged *Passion World*, a commissioned event for Jazz at Lincoln Center with French accordion virtuoso Richard Galliano, singing songs of love and loss in five languages. Elling's most recent recording *The Gate* was released in February 2011 and was produced by the legendary Don Was. It features inspired interpretations of songs by The Beatles, Herbie Hancock, Miles Davis, and Stevie Wonder.

### THE ARTISTS

Two-time Grammy Award winner **Ernie Watts** is one of the most versatile and prolific saxophone players on the music scene. In a diverse career that has spanned more than 40 years, he has been featured on over 500 recordings by a range of diverse artists. Watts started studying saxophone at age 13 and won a scholarship to the Wilmington Music School in Delaware, where he studied classical music and technique. He briefly enrolled at West Chester University in music education but transferred to Berklee College of Music on a Downbeat Scholarship. Later, Watts left Berklee for a spot in Buddy Rich's Big Band and toured the world with them from 1966-1968. Watts then moved to Los Angeles and began working in the big bands of Gerald Wilson and Oliver Nelson. With Nelson, Watts had the occasion to record with the legendary Thelonious Monk on *Monk's Blues*. After 15 solo records for a variety of labels, large and small, Watts started his own record company Flying Dolphin Records, which he runs with his wife Patricia. He has released five albums on his own label, including his most recent album *FOUR plus FOUR* (2009) which features both his U.S. and European quartets.

Acclaimed as America's premier post-classical string quartet, **ETHEL** was formed in 1998 and is composed of Juilliard-trained performers **Cornelius Dufallo**, violin, **Ralph Farris**, viola, **Dorothy Lawson**, cello, and **Mary Rowell**, violin. The group boldly infuses contemporary concert music with fierce intensity, questioning the boundaries between performer and audience, tradition and technology. Described as a "relentlessly inventive string quartet

setting the standard for new music engagement” (*San Diego Union-Tribune*), ETHEL’s repertoire includes adventurous music of the past four decades with emphasis on works composed since 1995. The group has collaborated with American and international artists such as Kurt Elling, Joe Jackson, Bang on a Can, Todd Rundgren and David Byrne, among many others. The band has appeared as a guest artist on a dozen music labels. ETHEL has also released several of its own albums since its debut, self-titled *ETHEL*, which was named one of Billboard’s Best Albums of 2003.

Members of the **Laurence Hobgood Trio** include **Laurence Hobgood**, piano, **Rob Amster**, bass and **Frank Parker**, drums. The band released an album, *Crazy World*, in 2005 which was a mixture of Hobgood’s original compositions and arrangements, as well as one track by Rob Amster. Hobgood, a pianist, composer, and arranger, began formal piano study at age six; at age 12 he was introduced to blues music through his family’s church. Several years later, after moving to Illinois, he started formal training in jazz. He attended the University of Illinois where he played in the jazz ensemble. In 1993 Hobgood met Elling and began collaborating with him as Elling’s co-producer and musical director. He has had two of his own Grammy Award nominations for his arranging on Elling’s *Flirting with Twilight* and *Dedicated to You*. Rob Amster began playing electric bass in high school and studied at the Berklee College of Music and the University of Miami. Frank Parker attended Western Illinois University and is recognized for his work with drums and percussion. He currently spends much of his time composing, arranging and producing his original music.

### **TICKET INFORMATION**

Tickets for **Kurt Elling**, jazz singer, on **Saturday, April 23**, in Zellerbach Hall at **8:00 p.m.** are priced at **\$24.00, \$32.00, \$38.00, \$46.00, and \$52.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at [www.calperformances.org](http://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](http://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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Cal Performances' 2010/11 Season is sponsored by Wells Fargo

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**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

**Saturday, April 23 at 8:00 p.m.**

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

*Jazz*

*Dedicated to You*

**Kurt Elling**, vocals

**Ernie Watts**, tenor saxophone

**Ethel String Quartet**

**Laurence Hobgood Trio**

**Program:** "The leading male vocalist of our time" (*The New York Times*), jazz singer Kurt Elling returns to Cal Performances singing Coltrane and Hartman.

**Tickets:** \$24.00, \$32.00, \$38.00, \$46.00 and \$52.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at [www.calperformances.org](http://www.calperformances.org); and at the door.

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