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Press Room

**CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS THE
MARIA SCHNEIDER ORCHESTRA
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2017**

Berkeley, January 9, 2017 — Cal Performances at UC Berkeley presents acclaimed bandleader and composer, [Maria Schneider](#), with her award-winning 18-member orchestra, Sunday, February 19, 2017 in Zellerbach Hall.

Schneider has led her accomplished ensemble for more than 20 years, developing a highly distinctive voice in her big band compositions, and earning comparisons to the likes of Duke Ellington and Gil Evans. Schneider last performed at Cal Performances as part of the Ojai at Berkeley Festival in 2011, and returns in 2017 for the first time with her full ensemble of gifted improvisers. The orchestra presents her most recent work, *The Thompson Fields*, which in 2016 won Schneider her fifth Grammy Award, Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album.

Schneider's dense, lushly orchestrated works, which straddle both classical and jazz musical language, have been credited with expanding the range and possibilities of the big band format. *The Thompson Fields* is a suite of compositions inspired by the natural world, notably Schneider's Midwest prairie roots: the work is named after a local Minnesota farm significant to her childhood. A pre-performance talk is planned with Schneider and Alisa Clancy, program director of KCSM 91.1 FM, at 6pm, and is free to concert ticketholders.

About Maria Schneider

Maria Schneider's music has been hailed by critics as "evocative, majestic, magical, heart-stoppingly gorgeous, and beyond categorization." She and her orchestra became widely known starting in 1994 when they released their first recording, *Evanescence*. There, Schneider began to develop her personal way of writing for what would become her 18-member collective, tailoring her compositions to highlight the uniquely creative voices of the group. The Maria Schneider Orchestra has performed at festivals and concert halls worldwide, and Schneider has collaborated with Jazz at Lincoln Center, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and David Bowie, among others. She has been awarded many honors by the Jazz Journalists Association, *Downbeat*, and *Jazztimes*. In 2012, her alma mater, the University of Minnesota, presented Schneider with an honorary doctorate, and in 2014, ASCAP awarded her their Concert Music Award.

About Cal Performances

Cal Performances is the performing arts presenter and producer of the University of California, Berkeley, fulfilling its mission by presenting, producing, and commissioning renowned and emerging artists in music, dance, and theater. Cal Performances reaches more than 150,000 people annually through concerts and campus and community events, including talks, symposia, lecture demonstrations, and academic courses based on Cal Performances' season. Under the leadership of Matías Tarnopolsky, the organization launched Berkeley RADICAL (Research and Development Initiative in Creativity Arts and Learning) to cultivate the artistic literacy of future audiences and connect some of the most innovative artists in the world with the intellectual capital of UC Berkeley. The 2016/17 season is the second season for Berkeley RADICAL, and embraces three strands of artistic exploration: *Inclusion*, *Innovation*, and *Immersion*. More information on Berkeley RADICAL can be found at calperformances.org/berkeley-radical.

Ticket Information

Tickets for the *Maria Schneider Orchestra* on Sunday, February 19 at 7pm in Zellerbach Hall range from \$36–\$86 (prices subject to change). Half-price tickets are available for UC Berkeley students. Tickets are available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, at [\(510\) 642-9988](tel:5106429988), at calperformances.org, and at the door. For more information about discounts, go to calperformances.org/discounts.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Sunday, February 19 at 7pm

Zellerbach Hall

Bancroft Way at Dana Street
UC Berkeley campus

Jazz

The Thompson Fields

Maria Schneider Orchestra

Program: Described as “breathtaking,” “ravishing,” and “sublime,” Maria Schneider’s lush and evocative big band compositions have earned her five Grammy Awards, and invited comparisons to fellow composer/bandleaders and jazz titans Duke Ellington and Gil Evans.

Pre-Performance Talk

Zellerbach Hall

Sunday, February 19, 6pm

Composer and bandleader Maria Schneider and Alisa Clancy, program director of KCSM 91.1 FM, give a pre-performance talk. Free to all ticket holders.

Tickets: Prices range from \$36–\$86 (subject to change).