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**CYPRESS STRING QUARTET AND HISTORIC MONTALVO ARTS CENTER
COLLABORATE ON TWO CONCERT SERIES FOCUSING ON THE QUARTETS OF
CONTEMPORARY MASTERS AND THE LATE QUARTETS OF BEETHOVEN**

The celebrated Cypress String Quartet and leading Bay Area arts presenter and venue Montalvo Arts Center present two concert series as part of the 2007-2008 series in the warmly intimate acoustics and classic architecture of the main hall in the Historic Villa at Montalvo. The first series of concerts, "From the Artist's Studio," boldly explores some of America's great living composers and other artists that have been commissioned by the Cypress Quartet. Performances (with the composers and other artists present at each concert) are scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on the following dates:

- Oct. 18
- Dec. 5
- Feb. 7, 2008
- April 17, 2008

The second concert series is an intimate discussion in sound and word of the late string quartets of Beethoven with a diversion to Mendelssohn to demonstrate Beethoven's effect on other composers, with concerts scheduled at 3 p.m. on the following dates:

- Nov. 4
- Jan. 13, 2008
- March 16, 2008
- May 4, 2008

"FROM THE ARTIST'S STUDIO" PRESENTS LIVING CREATORS UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

The "From the Artist's Studio" series of four mid-week concerts 7:30 p.m. featuring music by the hottest contemporary American composers and other artists is an opportunity to hear great music in the making in an intimate setting with the composers and quartet on hand to explain it all.

The series begins Thursday, Oct. 18, with Elena Ruehr's stunning *String Quartet No. 4*, a fascinating glimpse into the creative genius of this gifted composer and MIT professor. Commissioned by the Cypress Quartet, her *String Quartet No. 4* premiered in San Francisco in 2005 and has been performed nationally. Ruehr has been acclaimed as a composer of intelligence and heart, whose music is infinitely listenable and inspiring.

On Wednesday, Dec. 5, the Cypress Quartet takes a unique look at the darker side of the holiday season with a Goth-tinged program entitled **Noir Christmas**. Bela Bartok's brooding *String Quartet No. 6* takes center stage, interwoven with spoken word from gritty San Francisco fiction writer Peter Plate. *Quartet No. 6*, Bartok's last, was composed in 1939 and reflects the composer's anguish as he watched the rise of fascism and Nazism in the build-up to World War II. The tone and mood of this meditative work is amplified by Plate, with uncanny recitations from memory of scenes from the noir Christmas tale that unfolds in his troubling urban novel, *Soon the Rest Will Fall*. Noted authors Robert Mailer Anderson, Eddie

Muller, Michele Tea and Ivory Madison will also be in attendance to add their voices to the concert and post-performance reception and discussion.

The work of composer Dan Coleman is featured on Thursday, Feb. 7, 2008 when the Cypress String Quartet continues its exploration into the intricate process of creativity and inspiration with a compelling look at this dynamic young composer's *String Quartet No. 2*. Coleman was commissioned to write this quartet by the Lied Centers of Kansas and Nebraska specifically for the Cypress Quartet, with whom he has had a close association for almost a decade. In addition to his many award-winning concert works, Coleman has contributed to a number of feature films and has composed string arrangements for popular albums on the Geffen, A&M and Atlantic record labels, including projects by Lisa Loeb and Calexico.

The "From the Artist's Studio" series concludes Thursday, April 17, 2008, with a newly commissioned string quartet performance by the Bay Area's own Kurt Rohde. Rohde is a brilliant young composer and recipient of the prestigious 2005 Charles Ives prize whose music been described as eerie and lyrical with a breadth of emotion from dark to lit up and dancing. He is also artistic director of the Bay Area's noted Left Coast Ensemble.

LATE GREAT BEETHOVEN AND HIS FAR-REACHING INFLUENCES

The second series of four concerts, Sundays at 3 p.m., focuses on the late string quartets of Beethoven—historic music in a historic setting, perfect for a Sunday afternoon at Montalvo Arts Center. All four concerts are followed by an informal reception to meet the artists.

The series opens Sunday, Nov. 4, with *Op. 131 in C-sharp minor*. One of the most personal, intriguing and radical of the composer's five late quartets, it was written in seven movements and is played without pause. The genius and profundity of Opus 131 have been described as, "the completely unfaltering rendition into music of what we can only call the mystic vision. It has that serenity which passes beyond beauty. Nowhere else in music are we made so aware, as here, of a state of consciousness surpassing our own." – J.W.N. Sullivan, *Beethoven and Spiritual Development*.

Sunday, Jan. 13, 2008, features Beethoven's *Quartet in A minor, Op. 132*. Completed in July 1825, this transcendent composition embodies the range of turmoil and emotion experienced by an aging composer struggling with ill health, loneliness, financial loss and, most profoundly, deafness. Beethoven's *Op. 132* is an epic masterpiece, 50 minutes in length and made up of five dramatic and emotionally charged movements. From the very eerie opening notes of the first movement through the stormy violin recitative that drives the intense and tumultuous fifth movement finale, the Cypress Quartet weaves their performance panache with enlightened discussion to create a truly memorable concert event.

A side trip to explore Beethoven's influence on other great composers takes the Cypress Quartet and audience to Felix Mendelssohn's *String Quartet No. 13 in A minor* on Sunday, March 16, 2008. One of the world's most formidable musicians and geniuses, Mendelssohn could not escape the gravity of Beethoven's eminence, and wrote his *String Quartet Op. 13 in A minor* in 1827, the year of Beethoven's death. In this remarkable quartet, Mendelssohn pays homage to some of the great musical ideas his predecessor explored in his incredible and profound *Quartet Op. 132*, also in A minor. Join the discussion as one of America's most compelling young ensembles reveals how Mendelssohn has taken Beethoven's ideas and made them his own.

The Cypress String Quartet's "Late Beethoven" series comes to an exciting conclusion Sunday, May 4, 2008, with the quartet the composer himself called *Liebquartett (Dear Quartet): Op. 130 in B-Flat Major*. Completed in November 1825, only one year after his *Symphony No. 9*, this work is unusual among string quartets in that it is written in six movements, including an extra dance and slow movement. These "extra" two movements have become some of Beethoven's best known and most adored quartet segments: the *Cavatina* and the *Alla danza tedesca*. Join the Cypress Quartet in their rousing season finale as they examine this most exceptional quartet from one of the world's most beloved composers.

Tickets are available exclusively through Montalvo Arts Center Box Office at 408.961.5858 (Mon. – Fri., 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.) or online at www.montalvoarts.org. Create your own salon series for \$100 – select four

or more concerts for savings off single ticket prices; add \$25 for each additional concert added at the time of purchase. Single tickets are \$30.

ABOUT THE CYPRESS STRING QUARTET

The San Francisco-based Cypress String Quartet is one of America's hottest young ensembles and has performed to great acclaim at prominent venues worldwide, including appearances at the Kennedy Center, the Chautauqua Institute, the Ravinia Festival, Stanford Lively Arts and the Mondavi Center for the Arts. The Cypress is reaching out in new ways, with bold programming that ignites interest in chamber music. In the fall of 2006, the Quartet completed an Eastern and Midwestern states tour that featured the critically acclaimed world premiere of its *Inspired by America*, an innovative multi-media performance using live music, film, text, and state-of-the-art stage technology to tell the interwoven story of music and culture in the US. The Cypress has just completed an international tour to Germany, Austria and Mexico. The Cypress String Quartet and the Library of Congress have joined together to celebrate the 200th birthday of composer Felix Mendelssohn in 2009. In honor of the occasion, the Cypress and the Library have co-commissioned a new string quartet from brilliant young American composer, Kevin Puts. The new work will be premiered by the Cypress in Coolidge Auditorium at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. in February 2009 as part of the Mendelssohn on the Mall celebration in conjunction with the National Gallery of Art and the Smithsonian Museum.

Since its inception in 1996, the Cypress String Quartet has commissioned and premiered over 25 works from many of America's leading composers. Two of the last three composers commissioned by the Cypress have been nominated for Grammy Awards for Best Classical Composition and the Quartet makes commissions part of their regular touring repertoire, working closely with each composer, bringing this exciting new music into schools and recording each new composition. In recognition of their work both commissioning and championing contemporary music, the Cypress recently won the Aaron Copland Award. A mainstay of the Quartet's repertoire has been the Call & Response series which annually commissions a new work by a leading composer created in the context of works by history's masters in an ongoing dialogue across the generations that deftly ties the music of the past to the music of the future.

Equally at home on the concert stage and in the classroom, the Cypress String Quartet's deep commitment to education and outreach is clear in its diverse efforts across the nation. As Quartet-in-Residence at San José State University, the Cypress' strengths in performance and education combine to serve the University and the greater Silicon Valley community. Named an "Exemplary Arts Educator" by the California Arts Council, the CSQ has reached an estimated 110,000+ students through educational activities including Native Americans in rural New Mexico and inner-city students in Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Chicago. In September 2004 the CSQ was awarded the "McGraw-Hill Companies' Robert Sherman Award for Music Education and Community Outreach" to honor their commitment to education.

ABOUT MONTALVO ARTS CENTER

Montalvo Arts Center is a nonprofit organization dedicated to forging meaningful connections between art, artists and the communities it serves through creation, presentation and education in extraordinary ways and settings. Located in Silicon Valley's Saratoga hills, Montalvo Arts Center occupies a Mediterranean-style villa on 175 stunning acres, including an international artist residency program. The historic villa and grounds were left to the people of California by Senator James Phelan for the encouragement of art, music, literature and architecture. In January 2005, the organization changed its name from "Montalvo" to "Montalvo Arts Center" to commemorate its 75th year as an arts center and to better communicate its mission to expanding local, national and international audiences. For more information about Montalvo Arts Center, call (408) 961-5800 or visit <http://www.montalvoarts.org/>.

For more information about the Cypress String Quartet's Montalvo Arts Center series, visit www.montalvoarts.org, and for more information about the Quartet, visit its site at www.cypressquartet.com.

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