St. Martin Chamber Ensemble Classical Music on a Grand Scale

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIFORNIA – The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields Chamber Ensemble has been called "nothing short of stunning" by Gramophone magazine, with masterful readings of "compelling grandeur" (BBC Music).

In Cleveland, a recent concert of theirs was said to have "splendor in an account full of power and poetic grace" (Plain Dealer).

Cal Poly Arts presents the renowned Chamber Ensemble on Friday, October 20, 2006 at 8 p.m. in the Spanos Theatre.

The artist roster includes Ensemble leader and violinist Kenneth Sillito; violinists Harvey de Souza, Martin Burgess, and Jan Schmolck; Robert Smissen and Duncan Ferguson on viola; and cellists Stephen Orton and John Heley.

The Ensemble will be open their program by playing an unannounced work — entitled “Innocent Ear” — and inviting the audience to guess the composer and the piece, winning an Academy of St. Martin CD for the correct guess.

They will continue with "Verklaerte Nacht ('Transfigured Night') in D minor, Op. 4" composed by Arnold Schoenberg in 1905 and performed in one continuous movement).

The evening will conclude with Felix Mendelssohn’s "Octet for Strings in E-flat major, Op. 20."

The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields was formed in 1959 by a group of eleven enthusiastic musicians with the aim of performing in public without a conductor.

Their first three recordings led to a succession of long-term contracts and the Academy quickly took their place among the most recorded ensembles in history.

As the repertoire expanded from Baroque to Mozart, Bartok, and Beethoven, it became necessary for the principal violin, Neville Marriner, to conduct the larger orchestra.

The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields Chamber Ensemble was created in 1967 to perform the larger chamber works — from quintets to octets —
with players who customarily work together, instead of the usual string quartet with additional guests.

Drawn from the principal players of the orchestra, the Chamber Ensemble tours as a string octet, string sextet, and in other configurations, including winds.

Contracts with labels such as Philips Classics, Hyperion, and Chandos have led to the release of over thirty CDs by the Chamber Ensemble.

The Chamber Ensemble’s touring commitments are extensive, with annual visits to France, Germany, and Spain, and frequent tours to North and South America, Australia, New Zealand, and Taiwan.

A pre-concert lecture will be held by Cal Poly Music professor David Arrivée at 7 p.m. in Philips Recital Hall.

Tickets for the performance are $38 and $44, with student discounts available, and may be purchased at the Performing Arts Ticket Office, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays.

To order by phone, call 805/756-2787; to order by fax: 805/756-6088.

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For audio and video samples of Cal Poly Arts events, visit www.calpolyarts.org.

- 30 -