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December 15, 2011

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Original Chamber Music by Cal Poly Professor Craig Russell to be Performed Jan. 7

SAN LUIS OBISPO – In a tribute to Cal Poly Music Professor and composer Craig Russell, some of the Central Coast's most acclaimed artists will perform his original chamber music at 8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 7, in the Spanos Theatre at Cal Poly.

Titled "Transatlantic Landscapes," the program will include world premieres of works Russell composed while living on the Central Coast and in Madrid, Spain.
Local performer and Cal Poly alumna Inga Swearingen will be featured in a series of songs titled "Car Songs," including the premiere of "Please Stop the Car." The first half of the show will feature the world premiere of "Twisted River," an ambitious piano suite based on eight characters in John Irving's novel "Last Night in Twisted River" and played by pianist Barbara Hoff, to whom the suite is dedicated.

The second half includes a string quartet that Russell composed in 1980 in Spain. The program concludes with Russell's sextet "Four American Scenes" for piano and strings that he re-crafted, drawing on an earlier version from 1994.

Performers include Paul Severtson and Randy Garacci on violin; David Hennessee, viola; Jeanne Shumway, cello; and Cal Poly Music Professor Emeritus Clifton Swanson, bass.

After completing his doctorate in historical musicology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1982, Russell began teaching at Cal Poly. He has published more than 100 articles on 18 century Hispanic studies, Mexican cathedral music, the California missions, baroque guitar music, and American pop culture. His latest book, "From Serra to Sancho: Music and Pageantry in the California Missions," was released in summer 2009 by Oxford University Press.
Russell has earned numerous awards and received major grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Fulbright Commission, Spain's Ministry of Culture, the Program for Cultural Cooperation, the California Council for the Humanities, and the Edmund Cabot Memorial Fund.

Tickets for the concert are $10 for the public and $6 for senior citizens and students. Tickets are on sale at the Performing Arts Ticket Office from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays. To order by phone, call SLO-ARTS (805-756-2787). Patrons who buy season tickets to four Music Department events through the Performing Arts Ticket office will receive a 10 percent discount; a 15 percent discount is given to those who buy tickets to five or more events.

The concert is sponsored by Cal Poly's Music Department, College of Liberal Arts, and Instructionally Related Activities program. For more information, call the Music Department at 805-756-2406.

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