March 23, 2004

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

eighth blackbird Brings New Music to Cal Poly April 21

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Hailed by the New York Times as "a superb contemporary sextet" and ambassadors of new music, eighth blackbird (all lower case) brings their virtuoso sound to the Cal Poly Theatre on Wednesday, April 21, 2004 for an 8 p.m. concert.

"Not, perhaps, since the Kronos Quartet first reared its collective head has contemporary music had advocates like these." (The Boston Globe)

Cal Poly Arts presents the fun, unconventional ensemble as part of the Cal Poly Arts innovative "Director's Choice" series, which showcases emerging artists who show great promise in their fields.

The group has a growing reputation for its vitality, astounding musical versatility, and its dedication to the works of today's composers. eighth blackbird features Molly Alicia Barth (flutes), Michael J. Maccaferri, (clarinets), Matt Albert (violin and viola), Nicholas Photinos (cello), Matthew Duvall (percussion), and Lisa Kaplan (piano).

Formed in 1996 at the Oberlin Conservatory, eighth blackbird was awarded first prize at the Fischoff National Chamber Music Competition and soon received top honors at the Coleman Chamber Music Competition.

The sextet was honored in 2000 with the prestigious Naumburg Chamber Music Award and the first BMI/Boudleaux-Bryant Fund Commission. They also received commissioning grants from CMA, Meet the Composer, and the Greenwall Foundation, adding works by Randolph Coleman, Daniel Kellogg, Jennifer Higdon and Derek Bermel to its repertoire.

The ensemble claimed the 1998, 2000, and 2002 CMA/ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming and was the first contemporary ensemble to win
First Prize at the Concert Artists Guild International Competition (1998).

Several eminent composers, most notably Frederic Rzewski and George Perle, have dedicated works to eighth blackbird. The ensemble’s extensive repertoire includes works by Michael Torke, George Crumb, Aaron Jay Kernis, Paul Moravec, John Harbison, Joan Tower and Bang on a Can’s David Lang, as well as ground-breaking works by new composers David Schober, Daniel Kellogg, Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez and the Minimum Security Composers’ Collective.

"Round Nut Tool," eighth blackbird’s debut CD, was self-released in 1999. The ensemble recently signed a three-record deal with Cedille Records Repertoire. Their April, 2004 release, "Thirteen Ways," includes works by Joan Tower, George Perle, David Schober and Thomas Albert.

eighth blackbird recently performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, in Salt Lake City, and at UCLA, the University of Texas at Austin and the Eastman School of Music.

Past seasons have included performances at Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall, Carnegie’s Weill Recital Hall, the 92nd Street Y, Columbia’s Miller Theater, the Metropolitan Museum, the Library of Congress, and the La Jolla Chamber Music Society.

The ensemble has also performed in San Francisco, Philadelphia and Mexico City, among many other cities, and has toured South Korea.

The sextet appears at numerous festivals, was featured on "CBS Sunday Morning," and they were the focus of a symposium on new music at the American Symphony Orchestra League’s annual conference, where they also performed.

eighth blackbird is active in teaching young artists about contemporary music and teaches master classes and conducts outreach activities in the art of contemporary performance and interpretation.

eighth blackbird currently is in-residence at Northwestern University and the University of Chicago. Each member holds a Bachelor’s degree in performance from the Oberlin Conservatory, an Artist Diploma in chamber music from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and a Master's degree from the Northwestern University School of Music.

Tickets for the performance are $28 and $34, 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

Sponsored by Gerry and Peggy Peterson and by KCBX 90.1 FM. The concert is also supported in part by a grant from the Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF).

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

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