



ROBERT AND MARGRIT
MONDAVI CENTER
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
UCDAVIS



MEDIA CONTACT

Jessica Kelly, jjkelly@mc.ucdavis.edu, 530-754-5428

FULL SCHEDULE AND IMAGES

<http://mondaviarts.org/press>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Nov. 7, 2008

Pianist Christopher Taylor Performs Messiaen Masterwork at the Mondavi Center

Davis, Calif.—Performing **Messiaen’s** masterpiece “**Vingt Regards sur L’Enfant-Jésus,**” one of the great Herculean challenges of the piano repertory, **Christopher Taylor** appears **Saturday, Dec. 6, at 8 p.m.** and **Sunday, Dec. 7, at 2 p.m.** in the **Studio Theatre** of the **Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts**, UC Davis. There will be **Post-performance Q&A** sessions after each concert: on Saturday, Dec. 6, moderated by Jeremy Ganter, Mondavi Center associate director, and on Sunday, Dec. 7, moderated by Don Roth, Mondavi Center executive director.

Pricing is \$40 for regular tickets and \$20 for students and children. Purchase tickets online at MondaviArts.org, through the Mondavi Center box office at 530-754-2787 or 866-754-2787 (toll-free), or at the door. Accommodations for persons with disabilities are available upon request. This event is presented as part of the Mondavi Center’s **Tour de Force Series**.

In a related event, **Christopher Taylor** joins **Laurie San Martin**, UC Davis associate professor of music, in “**Mastering Messiaen,**” a **Forum@MC** panel discussion of the composer’s music, on **Monday, Dec. 8, at 5 p.m.** in the **Studio Theatre**. As with all **Forum@MC** events, admission is free.

Among his generation of pianists, **Christopher Taylor** stands out as an innovative musician with a diverse array of talents and interests. During the past few years, he has appeared regularly in many important concert halls and developed a loyal following throughout the United States and abroad; critics hail him as “one of the most impressive young pianists on the horizon today” (“The Washington Post”) and “frighteningly talented” (“The New York Times”). He is known for a passionate advocacy of music written in the past 100 years—Messiaen, Ligeti and Bolcom figure prominently in his performances—but his repertoire spans four centuries and includes the complete Beethoven sonatas, the Liszt Transcendental Etudes, Bach’s Goldberg Variations and a multitude of other familiar masterworks. Whatever the genre or era of the composition, Taylor brings to it an active imagination and intellect coupled with heartfelt intensity and grace.

In recent seasons, Taylor has concertized around the globe, performing throughout Europe, Asia and the Caribbean. At home in the U.S., he has appeared with such orchestras as the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Detroit Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, Houston Symphony and Boston Pops, and he has toured with the Polish Chamber Philharmonic. As a soloist, he has performed in New York’s Carnegie and Alice Tully halls, Washington’s Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the

Ravinia and Aspen festivals and dozens of other venues. In chamber settings, he has collaborated with many eminent musicians, including Robert McDuffie, Robert Mann, and the Borromeo, Shanghai, Pro Arte and Ying Quartets. His recordings have featured works by Liszt, Messiaen, and present-day Americans William Bolcom and Derek Bermel.

Apart from concertizing and recording, he has undertaken various unusual projects, including the commission and premiere of a piano concerto by Derek Bermel with the Indianapolis Symphony, made possible by a Christel Award from the American Pianists' Association; investigations into the compositions of the legendary pianist Gunnar Johansen; performances and lectures on the complete etudes of György Ligeti; and a series of performances of the Goldberg Variations on the unique double-manual Steinway piano in the collection of the University of Wisconsin, an instrument whose rediscovery and refurbishment he has actively promoted.

Numerous awards have confirmed Taylor's high standing in the musical world. He was named an American Pianists' Association Fellow for 2000, before which he received an Avery Fisher Career Grant in 1996 and the Bronze Medal in the 1993 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, where he was the first American to receive such high recognition in 12 years. In 1990, he took first prize in the William Kapell International Piano Competition, and he also became one of the first recipients of the Irving Gilmore Young Artists' Award.

In addition to his busy concert schedule, he currently serves as Paul Collins Associate Professor of Piano Performance at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. He pursues a variety of other interests, including mathematics (he received a summa cum laude degree from Harvard University in this field in 1992), philosophy (an article he coauthored with the leading scholar Daniel Dennett appears in the Oxford Free Will Handbook), computing (one project being to create a compiler for a new programming language), linguistics and biking, which is his primary means of commuting.

Says **Don Roth**, Mondavi Center executive director, "Christopher Taylor is a remarkable young pianist, and he has made a specialty of performing the incredibly difficult and interesting 'Vingt Regards sur L'Enfant-Jésus,' one of the most complex pieces ever written for the piano. Messiaen's music is not comfort food—it is dense, difficult, and deep, but I don't think you can come away from Taylor's performance of 'Vingt Regards' unmoved."

- **Christopher Taylor, piano**
- **Sat., Dec. 6, 8 p.m.**
Sun., Dec 7, 2 p.m.
- **Mondavi Center, Studio Theatre**
- **9399 Old Davis Road, Davis, CA 95616 (GPS)**
- **\$40 regular; \$20 students, children**
- **530-754-2787**
866-754-2787 (toll-free)
530-754-5402 (TDD)
MondaviArts.org