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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 17, 2009

### The Mondavi Center Presents Pianist Frederic Rzewski in a Concert of His Own Works

**Davis, Calif.**—The Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts, UC Davis, presents pianist **Frederic Rzewski** in a concert of his own compositions in the **Studio Theatre, Saturday, May 16, 8 p.m.**, and again **Sunday, May 17, 2 p.m.** There is a **Post-performance Q&A** on **Saturday with Jeremy Ganter**, Mondavi Center associate executive director, and on **Sunday with Don Roth**, Mondavi Center executive director.

Says **Roth**, “Rzewski is a master composer and a monster pianist. It is fitting that we conclude our **Tour de Force: Piano Series**, which has surveyed works from Bach to Messiaen, with this unique American genius performing his masterpiece, the enormous set of variations on “**The People United Will Never Be Defeated!**”

Also on the evening’s program: the **world premiere** of Rzewski’s “**Nanosonatas**” **Nos. 5 and 6**.

**Pricing** is \$40 for regular tickets and \$20 for students and children. Purchase tickets online at [MondaviArts.org](http://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.

Born in Westfield, Massachusetts in 1938, **Frederic Rzewski** [ZHEV-skee] studied music first with Charles Mackey of Springfield and subsequently with Walter Piston, Roger Sessions and Milton Babbitt at Harvard and Princeton. He went to Italy in 1960, where he studied with Luigi Dallapiccola and met Severino Gazzelloni, with whom he performed in a number of concerts, thus beginning a career as a performer of new piano music. Rzewski's early friendships with Christian Wolff and David Behrman, and (through Wolff) his acquaintance with John Cage and David Tudor, strongly influenced his development in both composition and performance. In Rome in the mid-sixties, together with Alvin Curran and Richard Teitelbaum, he formed the MEV (Musica Elettronica Viva) group, which quickly became known for its pioneering work in live electronics and improvisation. Bringing together both classical and jazz avant-gardists (like Steve Lacy and Anthony Braxton), MEV developed an esthetic of music as a spontaneous collective process, an esthetic which was shared with other experimental groups of the same period (such as the Living Theatre and the Scratch Orchestra).

The experience of MEV can be felt in Rzewski's compositions of the late sixties and early seventies, which combine elements derived equally from the worlds of written and improvised music ("Les Moutons de Panurge," "Coming Together"). During the seventies he experimented further with forms in which style and language are treated as structural elements; the best-known work of this period is "**The People United Will Never Be Defeated!**," a 50-minute set of 36 piano variations based on a song closely associated with the opposition to the rule of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet. Rzewski has recorded "The People United" on hat ART records (CD 6066). The piece has also been recorded by Ursula Oppens (Vanguard), Stephen Drury (New Albion), Marc-André Hamelin (Hyperion) and Yuji Takahashi.

A number of pieces for larger ensembles written between 1979 and 1981 show a return to experimental and graphic notation ("Le Silence des Espaces Infinis," "The Price of Oil"), while much of the work of the eighties explores new ways of using 12-tone technique ("Antigone-Legend," "The Persians"). A freer, more spontaneous approach to writing can be found in more recent work ("Whangdoodles," "Sonata"). Rzewski's largest-scale work to date is "The Road," an eight-hour "novel" for solo piano. "The Triumph of Death" (1987–88) is a two-hour oratorio based on texts adapted from Peter Weiss' 1965 play "Die Ermittlung" ("The Investigation"). "Scratch Symphony" for orchestra was performed at the Donaueschingen festival in October 1997.

From 1983 to 2003, Rzewski was Professor of Composition at the Conservatoire Royal de Musique in Liège, Belgium. He has also taught at the Yale School of Music, the University of Cincinnati, the State University of New York at Buffalo, the California Institute of the Arts, UC San Diego, Mills College, the Royal Conservatory of The Hague, the Hochschule der Künste in Berlin and the Hochschule für Musik in Karlsruhe.

- **Frederic Rzewski**
- **Sat., May 16, 8 p.m.**  
**Sun., May 17, 2 p.m.**
- **Mondavi Center, Studio Theatre**
- **9399 Old Davis Road, Davis, CA 95616 (GPS)**
- **\$40 regular; \$20 students, children**
- **530-754-2787**  
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