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<http://www.MondaviArts.org/press>

For immediate release:

Acclaimed Baritone Thomas Hampson to Open Mondavi Center Season

September 4, 2008; Davis, California—**Thomas Hampson**, “the leading American baritone” (*Gramophone*), will perform a program of American songs by composers including **Stephen Foster**, **Charles Ives**, and **Aaron Copland** as well as lieder by **Franz Schubert** and **Franz Liszt** in the opening event of the 2008-09 season at the **Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts, UC Davis**. Hampson will sing accompanied by pianist **Craig Rutenberg** in a performance dedicated to Mondavi Center supporter and patron of the arts **Barbara K. Jackson** on the occasion of her birthday, October 4.

The event will begin at 8 pm on October 4 in the Mondavi Center’s Jackson Hall on the UC Davis campus. Tickets are available from the Mondavi Center Ticket Office at 530.754.ARTS (2787) or online at MondaviArts.org. The event is presented as part of the Mondavi Center’s **Raley’s and Bel Air Concert** series with support from Barbara K. Jackson.

One of the most popular and gifted singers of our time, Thomas Hampson has been praised by *Time* for his “beautiful, lyric baritone voice, smooth and supple.” Well-known for both the rich tone of his voice and the intelligence of his interpretations, Hampson is equally at home on the opera stage or in the recital hall. “What makes him so rewarding in opera is the same artistry he brings to lieder—the command of music as a language, the sense of line and color, the range of effects,” *Opera News* has written. A leading advocate of the study of American song, Hampson collaborates on projects with academic and cultural partners through the **Hampson Foundation**, which he founded to promote the art of song in intercultural understanding. He was recently named Special Advisor to the Library of Congress for Education and the Legacy of the Performing Arts.

Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts, UC Davis

“To me, the most interesting thing in learning about American song is to realize what our poets and composers have in common—it’s a driving need tell a story about ourselves and about our becoming this American society,” Hampson has said. “The great American song or poem is directly connected to expression and expressiveness.”

Born in Indiana in 1955 and raised in Spokane, Washington, Hampson studied with **Marietta Coyle**, **Elisabeth Schwarzkopf**, **Martial Singher**, and **Horst Gunther**, and began to garner acclaim in various competitions, including the Metropolitan Opera Auditions, in which he won first prize in 1981. International fame came with a series of recordings of the songs of **Gustav Mahler** made in the late ‘80s and early ‘90s with famed conductor and composer **Leonard Bernstein**. Mahler has been an abiding interest, with Hampson’s latest recording of the composer’s *Das Lied von der Erde*—a “live” performance with **Michael Tilson Thomas** and the **San Francisco Symphony**—is due soon on the orchestra’s label. Yet Hampson has also been an adept and prolific performer of works ranging from lieder by Schubert and Liszt to songs **Ned Rorem** and **Irving Berlin** and operas by **Mozart** and **Puccini**.

His operatic repertoire includes more than 60 roles and more than 120 recorded performances. He has sung the title roles in **Rossini**’s *Guillaume Tell*, **Tchaikovsky**’s *Eugene Onegin*, **Massenet**’s *Werther*, **Busoni**’s *Doktor Faustus*, **Verdi**’s *Macbeth* and *Simon Boccanegra*, **Mozart**’s *Don Giovanni*, as well as supporting roles in operas by **Wagner**, **Gluck**, **Strauss**, and many others.

Hampson has received numerous honors, including a Grammy Award for his role in a 2002 recording of Wagner’s *Tannhäuser*, *Gramophone* awards, the Grand Prix du Disque, the Edison Prize, and the Echo Klassik. Hampson’s operatic performances on DVD include *Macbeth*, *Don Giovanni*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Werther*, and others. He is a regular performer on PBS’s *Live from Lincoln Center*, and his program *I Hear America Singing* has been featured on the station’s *Great Performers* series.

The success of *I Hear America Singing*, first broadcast in 1996, prompted Hampson to launch of the first interdisciplinary Web site for American song (www.pbs.org/wnet/ihas/). Subsequently, he has presented *I Hear America Singing* concerts, symposia, and radio programs throughout the world, offering various perspectives to the fascinating history of poetry, thought, and music in America.

Through cooperation between the Hampsong Foundation and the Library of Congress, Hampson has helped to further the understanding and performance of American song.

Hampson’s Mondavi Center performance will be an apt demonstration of his range and abilities, including lieder by Schubert and Liszt and works by American composers Stephen Foster, **Henry T. Burleigh**, Charles Ives, **Elinor Remick Warren**, **Virgil Thomson**, **Paul Bowles**, **William Grant Still**, **Arthur Farwell**, **Sidney Homer**, **Stephen White**, and Aaron Copland.

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Accompanying Hampson will be pianist Craig Rutenberg, whose playing has been described as ranging from “sterling directness to expansive beauty” (*San Francisco Chronicle*). Rutenberg is head of Music Administration at the **Metropolitan Opera** and regularly coaches and gives master classes at the **Pittsburgh Opera Center**, the **Chicago Opera Theatre**, and the **Vancouver Opera**. He is recognized as one of the most distinguished accompanists working today, and has appeared in recital with acclaimed singers including **Frederica von Stade**, **Angelika Kirchshlager**, **Dawn Upshaw**, and **Ben Heppner**.

Barbara K. Jackson, to whom the October 4 performance is dedicated, is an opera lover, award-winning costume designer, patron of the arts, and longtime supporter of UC Davis, the **UC Davis Department of Music**, the Mondavi Center, and other local arts organizations. She was a founding member of the Friends of UC Davis Presents, a volunteer organization that became Friends of Mondavi Center when the center opened in 2002, and which supports the university’s arts presenting program. She also serves as a trustee of the UC Davis Foundation. Jackson was a leader in the effort to raise funds for the Mondavi Center’s construction and in honor of the \$5 million contributed by Jackson on behalf of herself and her late husband, the center’s 1,800-seat main performance space is named the Barbara K. and W. Turrentine Jackson Hall.

“It is a distinct pleasure to be able to open our 2008-09 season with Thomas Hampson, one of America’s leading singers, on the occasion of the birthday of our dear friend and supporter Barbara K. Jackson,” said **Don Roth**, the Mondavi Center’s executive director. “We look forward to a great opening performance and another outstanding season.”

What: **Thomas Hampson, baritone**
Craig Rutenberg, piano

When: Saturday, October 4 • 8 pm

Where: Jackson Hall
Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts
University of California, Davis

Admission: \$65/\$55/\$35 Adults • \$37.50/\$27.50/\$17.50 Students, Children

Tickets/Info: 530.754.2787
866.754.2787 (toll-free)
<http://www.MondaviArts.org>
530.754.5402 [TDD]

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