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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESENTS
2003-2004 SEASON OPENS WITH
EMERSON AND PACIFICA QUARTETS'
"HAPPY BIRTHDAY" TO MANDEL HALL**

On Opening Night, Friday, October 10, 2003, at 7:30 p.m. the University of Chicago Presents will celebrate 100 years of music-making in **Mandel Hall**. The centennial concert will feature the **Emerson String Quartet** performing **Beethoven's Quartet in A Minor, Op. 132**, with its fitting "Song of Thanksgiving." In the second half of the program, the Emerson will be joined by the University's Artists-in-Residence, the **Pacifica Quartet**, to play the **Mendelssohn Octet**, itself a birthday gift of the 16-year-old composer to his friend, violinist Eduard Rietz.

ABOUT MANDEL: HALL WITH A HISTORY

Mandel Hall was a gift to the young University of Chicago by department store tycoon Leon Mandel. It is modeled after the great hall of Crosby House, built in 1472 by Sir John Crosby, Sheriff of London. Its interior, capable of seating almost 1000, is decidedly Victorian, however, boasting an ornate balcony, detailed oak woodwork, ornamental painting, and majestic windows, including one by Tiffany and Co., a gift of the class of 1902. The graceful size of the hall and its fine acoustics have long made it a favorite of area music-lovers.

The first concert in Mandel Hall, on December 21, 1903, featured works by Mozart and Wagner, Beethoven's *Leonore Overture, No.3* and Strauss's *Death and Transfiguration* performed by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, then known as the Theodore Thomas Orchestra. The Chicago Symphony continued to use Mandel for both symphonic and smaller ensemble concerts until the mid-1970's when rising costs made South Side productions prohibitive.

In the mid-1940's, classical music in Mandel Hall became organized as the *University Concerts* series. It was this organization that first presented 24-year-old violinist Isaac Stern, introduced guitarist Andre Segovia to local audiences and welcomed the newly formed Juilliard String Quartet to Chicago. These early years boasted a "dean's list" of legendary performers: organist Marcel Dupre, the Budapest String Quartet, violinist Alexander Schneider, harpsichordist Ralph Kirkpatrick, cellist Gregor Piatigorsky and keyboard greats Grant Johannesen, Eugene Istomin and Artur Schnabel. The practice of hosting stellar debuts continues to this day with violinist Hilary Hahn, soprano Cecilia Bartoli, tenor Ian Bostridge, flutist Emmanuel Pahud and cellist Pieter Wispelwey among many taking their first Chicago bows at Mandel Hall.

Along with its dedication to the classics, Mandel Hall has also consistently showcased the music of ascending composers. It was within Mandel's ivied walls that Samuel Barber conducted the first performance of his *Capricorn Concerto*, Aaron Copland first played his Piano Sonata for the public, Isaac Stern premiered Hindemith's violin sonata and Gregor Piatigorsky introduced Martinu's *Variations on a Russian Theme*. In 1964, Professor Ralph Shapey founded the *Contemporary Chamber Players (CCP)*, making the University's dedication to new music and new composers official. Almost 40 years later, the *CCP* continues to keep Mandel Hall a centenarian on the cutting edge of new music performance.

Now organized as the *University of Chicago Presents* and including four concert series and a number of related events, professional concerts continue to animate Mandel Hall. The venerable venue has undergone only one major renovation since its opening: in 1980-1981, a \$2 million dollar project improved acoustics and stage lighting, as well as expanding stage, dressing room and backstage space.

The Opening Night celebration marks a milestone in the life of Mandel Hall, a special place of delight, discovery and transformation for local music lovers for 100 years.

THE EMERSON QUARTET

In its 27th year, the Emerson String Quartet is considered one of the best chamber ensembles in the world. But with Eugene Drucker and Philip Setzer trading first and second violin, Lawrence Dutton on

viola and David Finckel on cello, the group refuses to rest on its laurels. In fact, the quartet (which frequently plays on its feet) is known for its musical and artistic experimentation – like its 25th anniversary project, “The Noise of Time” a performance of Shostakovich’s 15th Quartet in which the musicians were joined by a troupe of actors. In the 2003–2004 season, the Emerson will explore the boundaries of spirituality in music with a three-concert series at Lincoln Center featuring Haydn’s *Seven Last Words of Christ*, Bach’s *Art of the Fugue* and the late Beethoven string quartets. The group also participated in the opening festivities of Carnegie Hall’s new Zankel Hall with works by Haydn, Rorem and Dvorak. In winter, the Emerson will perform in Europe, followed by an Asian tour in spring.

The Emerson has won an unprecedented six *Grammy* Awards (twice for *Best Classical Album*), including: two for the Shostakovich cycle, two for the Bartok cycle, one for the complete quartets of Beethoven and one for its *American Originals* (Ives and Barber). The ensemble records exclusively for Universal Classics/Deutsche Grammophon. Its most recent release is Bach’s *Art of the Fugue*, soon to be followed by Haydn’s *Seven Last Words*.

As dedicated to education as performance, in 2002 the Emerson joined the State University of New York at Stony Brook as Quartet-in-Residence where the musicians coach chamber music, teach master classes and provide instrumental instruction. More information about the quartet can be found at www.emersonquartet.com.

THE PACIFICA QUARTET

Now nine years old, the Pacifica Quartet continues to cause the world to take notice of its adventurous and impassioned music-making. The group, composed of Simin Ganatra and Sibbi Bernhardsson on violin, Masumi Per Rostad on viola and Brandon Vamos on cello, has an almost uninterrupted history of prize-winning. In 1996, just two years after four friends first raised their bows together on the West Coast, the ensemble took Grand Prize at the Coleman Chamber Music Competition, to be followed by a steady stream of awards. Most recently, the group was honored with Chamber Music America’s prestigious Cleveland Quartet Award for 2002 and appointed Resident Quartet of Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society Two. This August, the Pacifica made its debut at the Edinburgh International Festival, where it performed the five quartets of Elliott Carter, a feat that had already inspired the admiration of audiences in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago’s own Mandel Hall last season.

The Pacifica records for Cedille Records. Its recordings of Dvorak (including the quintet with violist Michael Tree) and the complete quartets of Easley Blackwood have been enthusiastically received. The group’s next release will be the complete string quartets of Felix Mendelssohn.

The award-winning performers are also innovative educators, instrumental in creating and implementing the Music Integration Project, which brings performance and teacher training to inner-city schools. The Pacifica is the first ever Quartet-in-Residence at the University of Chicago and for the University's *Contemporary Chamber Players*, for which it presents a series of new music concerts each year. As of fall, 2003, the Pacifica is also Faculty Quartet in Residence at the University of Illinois, Champaign/Urbana. More information about the quartet can be found at www.pacificaquartet.com.

FACTS AND FIGURES

- TICKETS:** By phone with credit card at (773) 702-8068 or in person with cash, check or credit card at Concert Office, 5720 S. Woodlawn, or at Box Office after 6:00 p.m. on concert night, or by email at concert-office@uchicago.edu
- PRICE:** \$35 general public
\$11 students with valid ID
- DATE/TIME:** Friday, October 10, 7:30 p.m.
- PLACE:** Mandel Hall, 1131 East 57th Street, University of Chicago campus
- PARKING:** On the street or free after 5 p.m. in the lot at 55th and Ellis
- SPECIAL HELP:** Persons with disabilities or who are otherwise in need of assistance may call the concert office at (773) 702-8068 prior to the concert, but no later than 4 p.m. on concert day.
- MORE INFO:** At <http://chicagopresents.uchicago.edu> or by sending an email to the concert-office@uchicago.edu.

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