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For immediate release:

## **Mala Punica Brings Musical *Italian Journey* to the Mondavi Center**

*February 4, 2008; Davis, California*—The acclaimed early music ensemble **Mala Punica** will take listeners on a journey through the Italy of **Dante** and **Petrarch** in a special concert of early music at the **Robert and Margit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts** at **UC Davis**. The event, a joint presentation of the Mondavi Center and the **UC Davis Department of Music**, will feature historically informed performances of compositions by **Johannes Ciconia**, **Matteo de Perugia**, **Antonello da Caserta**, **Francesco Landini**, **Paolo da Firenze**, and others in a program entitled *Iter Ytalycum—Italian Journey*.

There will be two performances, at 2 pm and 7 pm, on March 2 in the Mondavi Center's Studio Theatre on the UC Davis campus. Tickets are available from the Mondavi Center Ticket Office at 530.754.ARTS (2787) or online at [MondaviArts.org](http://MondaviArts.org). The event is presented as part of the Mondavi Center's **Creativity Project**, a season-long exploration of the creative process. For more information on the Creativity Project, visit [www.MondaviArts.org/aboutus/creativityproject](http://www.MondaviArts.org/aboutus/creativityproject).

There will also be a symposium entitled *Compositional Processes*, with Mala Punica director **Pedro Memelsdorff**; **Anna Maria Busse Berger**, chair of the UC Davis Department of Music; UC Davis faculty members **Jessie Ann Owens** and **Chris Reynolds**; **Stanford University** faculty member **Karol Berger**; and **UC Berkeley** faculty member **Richard Taruskin**. The discussion will begin at 10:30 am on March 3 in the Mondavi Center's Studio Theatre. Admission is free and open to the public.

Founded in 1987, Mala Punica is a Bologna-based vocal and instrumental ensemble dedicated to the performance of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century musical traditions known as *Trecento* and *Ars Subtilior*. Named for the Latin words for "pomegranate"—a fruit associated in medieval times with sensuality and fertility but also with discord, Mala Punica specializes in performing the secular and sacred polyphony of Italian composers such as de Perugia, da Caserta, Ciconia, da Firenze, **Bartolomeo da Bologna**, **Antonio Zacara da Teramo**, **Corrado da Pistoia**, **Filippotto da Caserta**, and others with virtuoso playing and singing, improvisation, poetry, and theatricality.

Mala Punica regularly participates in some of the most important festivals in Europe and North and South America. Its discography includes three volumes released on Arcana (*Ars subtilis Ytalica*, *D'amor ragionando*, and *En attendant*), and three on Erato (*Missa Cantilena*, *Sidus preclarum*, and *Hélas Avril*). The

group has won more than 30 international awards and enjoys a reputation among critics as one of the supreme interpreters of its chosen repertoire.

Mala Punica “has revolutionized the *ars subtilior* with its polemical interpretations and dazzling performances,” wrote *Goldberg Magazine*. Writing of *Narcisso Speculando*, Mala Punica’s recording of madrigals by Don Paolo da Firenze, *Classics Today* noted that, “As elegant as these madrigals are, the performances are equally graceful...clarion-clear voices blend magnificently with the accompanying winds and brass. There are a few moments on the recording when the two sides mix so seamlessly that at first hearing it’s surprisingly hard to distinguish instrument-produced sound versus that of the human voices.”

*Trecento* means “300” in Italian, but the term is often used in reference to the 1300s and particularly the later part of that century, which produced a flowering of musical culture in Italy that coincided with the ending of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Renaissance. The music of the period builds upon *conductus*, a sacred polyphonic music that had originated in France in the twelfth century, to achieve a greater independence of voices and a richer harmonic vocabulary than anything that had come before. *Ars subtilior* refers to the increasingly complex musical style that developed in southern France during the late fourteenth century, a music that is sometimes compared to the avant-garde music of the twentieth century in its emphasis on technical experimentation and the determined expansion of rhythmic and tonal possibilities.

Mala Punica director Pedro Memelsdorf was born in Buenos Aires in 1959 and immigrated to Europe in 1977. He studied at the **Schola Cantorum** in Basel and the **Sweelinck Conservatory** in Amsterdam, and worked with famed *viol de gamba* player **Jordi Savall**’s ensemble **Hesperion XX** in 1980. He founded Mala Punica in 1987 and worked to develop a performance style incorporating microtonal singing, improvisational techniques, and other historically informed performance practices. He is also a dedicated scholar and teacher, publishing regularly in the journal *Recercare* and teaching at the **Civica Scuola** in Milan.

Slated to perform at the Mondavi Center on March 2 are Memelsdorf, flute; **Barbara Zanichelli**, soprano; **Markéta Cukrová**, mezzo-soprano; **Gianluca Ferrarini**, tenor; **José Manuel Navarro** and **Thomas Baeté**, *vielle*; and **Pablo Kornfeld**, *eschaquier* and organ.

“We are very proud to be hosting the performances by Mala Punica and the accompanying symposium,” said **Don Roth**, the Mondavi Center’s executive director. “We feel that these events offer not only a rare opportunity to experience early music performed at the highest level, but also a chance to achieve a richer understanding and appreciation of this important repertoire.”

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**What:** **Mala Punica**  
*Iter Ytalicum—Italian Journey*

**When:** Sunday, March 2, 2008 • 2 & 7 pm

**Where:** Studio Theatre  
Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts  
University of California, Davis

**Admission:** \$29 Adults • \$14.50 Students & Children

**Tickets/Info:** 530.754.ARTS (2787)  
866.754.ARTS (toll-free)  
<http://www.MondaviArts.org>  
530.754.5402 [TDD]

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