



## **MEDIA RELATIONS CONTACTS**

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## **FULL SCHEDULE AND IMAGES**

<http://mondaviarts.org/press>

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Feb. 9, 2009

### **The Mondavi Center Presents “Babar and the Elephants” Family Concert with Lara Downes**

The Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts, UC Davis, presents pianist Lara Downes in “Babar and the Elephants,” a whimsical program featuring Poulenc’s “Story of Babar,” Debussy’s “Children’s Corner,” Saint-Saëns’ “Carnival of the Animals,” Henry Mancini’s “Baby Elephant Walk” and JoAnne Brackeen’s “Pink Elephant.” This Family Concert takes place Sunday, March 8, in the Studio Theatre, with show times at 1 and 3 p.m. Joining Downes in the performance are pianist Avi Downes, narrator Loren Taylor, members of the Davis High School Honors Orchestra and students from Willett Elementary School.

Says Jeremy Ganter, Mondavi Center associate executive director, “We believe that children’s programming, like everything we do, should be of the highest artistic quality and depth. To that end, we are lucky to have a world-class artist-in-residence like Lara Downes, whose commitment to the next generation of artists and arts patrons is matched by her great gifts as a pianist.”

Pricing is \$30 for regular tickets and \$15 for students and children. Purchase tickets for the 1 p.m. performance 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. Call the box office regarding the 3 p.m. show, for which ticket availability is limited.

Acclaimed for her “unique blend of musicianship and showmanship” (NPR) and the “nuance and drama” of her playing (Washington Post), pianist Lara Downes is an exceptionally engaging artist dedicated to creating diverse programs that run the gamut of emotions and musical styles, from Bach to the Beatles. Trained both in her native California and abroad (Paris Conservatoire; Vienna Hochschule), Downes has performed on the world’s most prestigious stages, including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, Queen Elizabeth Hall, the Vienna Konzerthaus and the Salle Gaveau.

A Mondavi Center artist-in-residence since 2004, Downes also serves as director of the UC Davis ArtsBridge program and the Mondavi Center Young Artists Competition. The young mother of two small children, Downes is strongly committed to introducing classical music to students, presenting a full range of outreach activities ranging from advanced master classes to introductory K-12 programs in conjunction with her concert appearances. Downes is the founder and president of the 88 KEYS Foundation, which provides pianos to K-12 public schools.

All of Downes' recordings have met with tremendous critical and popular acclaim. Her debut CD "Invitation to the Dance" (Arkadia/Postcard, 2000) was called "a magical little recording" by NPR. Equally passionate about discovering works by young, emerging composers as well as finding new ways to explore, understand and interpret the best-loved traditional repertoire, Downes presents her audiences with things that are totally new, taking them on thrilling voyages into territory they thought they already knew. Next season, she will tour around the country and abroad with her popular 88 KEYS: Perspectives from the Piano series, in a group of commemorative programs celebrating the centennial of the birth of Samuel Barber. Read more at [laradownes.com](http://laradownes.com).

- - Lara Downes Family Concert
  - Sun., March 8, 1 & 3 p.m.
  - Mondavi Center, Studio Theatre
  - 9399 Old Davis Road, Davis, CA 95616 (GPS)
  - \$30 regular; \$15 students, children
  - 530-754-2787
  - 866-754-2787 (toll-free)
  - 530-754-5402 (TDD)
  - [MondaviArts.org](http://MondaviArts.org)