



Press Release

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Celebrating the New and the Old eighth blackbird meets Mary Springfels

FORT SHERIDAN, IL – At **7:30 PM**, on **Sunday, March 25**, 2007, at First United Methodist Church of Evanston, 516 Church St., hear an eclectic concert by New Music Ensemble, eighth blackbird and Mary Springfels, viola da gamba, as they join Midwest Young Artists (MYA) Early and New Music Ensembles. Enjoy an evening of music by Telemann, Nicolai, Tower, Albert, and Kellogg. Tickets are \$12/adults & \$7/students and seniors and are available at www.mya.org, by calling 847.926.9898, or at the door.

Mary Springfels, viola da gamba, has been Musician-in-Residence at the Newberry Library since 1982 and is the founder and Director of the Newberry Consort. A veteran of the early music movement in America, she has performed and recorded extensively with such ensembles as the New York Pro Musica, the Waverly Consort, Concert Royal, Sequentia, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, the Seattle Baroque Orchestra, Music of the Baroque, Musica Sacra, the Marlborough Festival, the New York City Opera, and Chicago Opera Theater, where she also serves as an artistic advisor. In Chicago, Ms. Springfels is a Senior Lecturer at both the University of Chicago and Northwestern University, and is much in demand as a teacher and player in summer festivals throughout the US, among them the San Francisco, Madison, and Amherst Early Music Festivals, and the Conclave of the Viola da Gamba Society of America. In 2004 she delivered the keynote address to the Berkeley Festival and Exhibition for Early Music America. She can be heard on over two dozen recordings, ten of which are critically

acclaimed Newberry Consort projects, including *Puzzles and Perfect Beauty: Italian Music at the End of the Middle Ages*, released this year by Noyse Productions.

Hailed as “Friendly, unpretentious, idealistic and highly skilled” by the *New Yorker*, **eighth blackbird** is widely lauded for its unusual performing style – often playing from memory with virtuosic and theatrical flair – and its efforts to make new music accessible to wide audiences. Highlights of eighth blackbird’s 2006-07 season include a return to the Kimmel Center in Philadelphia, two concerts at The Kitchen in New York City, and tours through New York, California, Colorado, and Texas. During the ensemble’s tenth anniversary in the 2005-2006 season, the group toured Osvaldo Golijov’s song-cycle *Ayre* with soprano Dawn Upshaw and a special collaboration with the Blair Thomas & Co. puppet theater and soprano Lucy Shelton, performing a fully memorized and staged cabaret-opera version of Schoenberg’s *Pierrot Lunaire*. Highlights of past seasons have included performances in South Korea, Mexico, The Netherlands, Poland, and throughout the United States, including performances at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. The group has won numerous competitions, including the Naumburg Chamber Music Award and the Concert Artists Guild Competition, and is currently in residence at the University of Richmond and the University of Chicago. Eighth blackbird has been featured on CBS’s *Sunday Morning* and in the *New York Times*. Its third commercial CD release on the Cedille label, titled *fred*, was released in June 2005. eighth blackbird is represented by ICM Artists, Ltd.

With a vision to create an exceptional environment for young musicians, Dr. Allan Dennis founded **Midwest Young Artists** (878 Lyster Road, Highwood, 847-926-9898) in 1993. Currently reaching over 600 students from 74 cities in the metropolitan Chicago area, with students ranging in age from 2nd through 12th grades, MYA strives to provide the highest quality music experience for young musicians nationwide. MYA expects the best out of its students and provides a supportive and nurturing environment. It is a place where students are able to grow with their peers in a competitive, yet friendly atmosphere. MYA has 5 youth orchestras, more than 60 chamber music ensembles, 3 choral groups, an all-inclusive jazz program, and classes in music theory and history. Students have the opportunity to travel abroad and to perform in major venues throughout Chicago and around the world. Leading the nation in chamber music instruction, MYA

graduates are accepted at the most selective conservatories, universities and colleges in the country.

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