

August 23, 2007
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**Humanities West Announces its
2007-2008 Season of Three Programs
at Herbst Theatre, San Francisco**

VOLTAIRE AND THE FRENCH ENLIGHTENMENT October 5 - 6, 2007

THE ENDURING LEGACY OF GENGHIS KHAN February 22 - 23, 2008

ATHENS IN THE TIME OF PERICLES May 2 - 3, 2008

Humanities West, now in its twenty-fourth season, will present three unique lecture/performance two-day programs during its 2007 - 2008 season: *VOLTAIRE AND THE FRENCH ENLIGHTENMENT* (October 5 - 6, 2007); *THE ENDURING LEGACY OF GENGHIS KHAN* (February 22 - 23, 2008) and *ATHENS IN THE TIME OF PERICLES* (May 2 - 3, 2008), at Herbst Theatre, 401 Van Ness Avenue near McAllister in San Francisco. For more information, call Humanities West at 415/391-9700 or check the website at www.humanitieswest.org.

Designed to entertain and educate diverse audiences, Humanities West programs offer a lively combination of wide-ranging lectures and performances that encompass the fine and performing arts, social history, music, politics and philosophy of the arts. Through lectures, slides, music, readings and panel discussions, Humanities West's 2007-2008 Season provides a form of "armchair travel" for audiences, offering a departure through time to explore the challenges of Voltaire's France during the Age of Enlightenment, the dynamic Mongol Empire of Genghis Kahn, and the excitement of the Golden Age of Athens - all without leaving the comfort of Herbst Theatre.

All Seating is Reserved. Season subscription tickets for all three two-day programs are \$200 orchestra/grand tier and \$125 balcony. A Fridays-only subscription series is \$100, and a Saturdays-only series is \$160. Series subscriptions offer significant savings over single-ticket prices. Single tickets for individual Friday programs are \$40 orchestra/grand tier and \$25 balcony and individual Saturday programs are \$60 orchestra/grand tier and \$35 balcony, single tickets for both days of each program are \$90 orchestra/grand tier and \$50 balcony. Order direct from City Box Office at 415/392-4400 or www.cityboxoffice.com. For more information call Humanities West at 415/391-9700 or check the website at: www.humanitieswest.org.

BRIEF PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS AND SCHEDULE

VOLTAIRE AND THE FRENCH ENLIGHTENMENT October 5 - 6, 2007

Prolific author, philosopher, social reformer, and successful businessman, Voltaire was a leading figure of the French Enlightenment as well as a friend and advisor to some of the most important monarchs of Europe, including Frederick the Great of Prussia and Catherine the Great of Russia. A fierce critic of the Church, religion, and aristocratic privilege, he offended many powerful interests, but also helped lay the foundations of a modern society based on the rule of law and reason.

Friday, October 5, 8:00 pm - 10:15 pm

Keith Baker, the J.E. Wallace Sterling Professor in Humanities and the Jean-Paul Gimon Director of the France-Stanford Center of Stanford University, will discuss how Voltaire—poet, playwright, philosopher, and pamphleteer—defined and epitomized the new spirit of secular engagement with the world we know as the Enlightenment.

Maria Cheremeteff, Head of the Art History Department at City College of San Francisco and Lecturer at both the De Young and Legion of Honor Museums in San Francisco, will follow with an illustrated lecture on the art of the Enlightenment, featuring the art of Jacques-Louis David.

Saturday, October 6, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

David Bodanis, award-winning author and lecturer at Oxford University, will discuss his book *Passionate Minds*. This is the fascinating account of Voltaire, his mistress Émilie du Châtelet, who was a brilliant scientist in her own right, and their joint intellectual projects.

Robert Hahn, Professor Emeritus of History at UC Berkeley, will follow with a talk about Voltaire's views on religion, his taunts against Judaism, and his campaign for tolerance.

David Morris, cellist and violist, will perform the works of Rameau on viola de gamba, accompanied by **Katherine Heater** (harpsichord) and **David Wilson** (violin).

Clifford 'Kip' Cranna, Musical Administrator of the San Francisco Opera, will give a presentation on Voltaire's influence on the composers of the Enlightenment.

THE ENDURING LEGACY OF GENGHIS KHAN February 22-23, 2008

In the thirteenth century, Genghis Khan (Universal Ruler) led a nomadic East Asiatic people in the creation of the largest contiguous empire in the history of the world. In the wake of his military victories, the essence of Asian culture spread throughout the conquered lands, the Silk Road that linked China via Central Asia to Europe was reopened, papermaking and printing technologies were introduced to the West, and a comprehensive communications network was established. Although his reputation as a brutal warrior is infamous, in recent years the contributions of Genghis Khan's Empire in art, science, religious tolerance, commerce and politics, as well as military strategy, have gained more recognition.

Friday, February 22, 8:00 pm - 10:15 pm

Daniel Waugh, Emeritus Professor at the University of Washington, will discuss Genghis Khan and the Mongol Empire.

Peter Marsh, Professor of Music at CSU East Bay, will describe and demonstrate authentic Mongolian music.

Saturday, February 23, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Morris Rossabi, Professor of History at Columbia University, will speak about Culture and Commerce.

James Ryan, Emeritus Professor at CCNY, will discuss The Women in Genghis's Life.

Stephano Carboni, Curator of Islamic Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, will follow with an illustrated lecture about the Art of the Mongol Period.

The afternoon will include a live performance of traditional Mongolian music.

ATHENS IN THE TIME OF PERICLES May 2 – 3, 2008

During the Fifth Century BCE, citizens of the tiny city-state of Athens, despite political turmoil at home and constant threats from abroad, achieved levels of accomplishment in art, architecture, philosophy and theatre not previously recorded. They also established a working democracy. The influence of their achievements on the development of human civilization continues to this day.

Friday, May 2, 8:00 pm - 10:15 pm

Josiah Ober, holder of the Tsakopoulos-Kounalakis Professorship in honor of Constantine Mitsotakis at Stanford University, will speak on Democracy and Knowledge in Classical Athens.

Mark Griffith, Professor of Classics and of Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies at UC Berkeley, will follow with a talk about, and performances of, Greek Drama of the Fifth Century.

Saturday, May 3, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Kurt Raaflaub, David Herlihy University Professor, and Professor of Classics & History and Chair of the Program in Ancient Studies at Brown University, will speak on the Athenians' thinking about war, imperialism and freedom.

Eric Gruen, Emeritus Professor of the Graduate School - Wood Professor at UC Berkeley, will follow with a discussion of the relationship of Athens and Persia.

George Hammond, a San Francisco attorney and author, will perform as Pythagoras in Pythagoras Discovers Philosophy, describing the intellectual enthusiasm for new ideas which led to Athens's cultural success.

Margaret Miles, Professor of Art History, Classics, and Visual Studies at UC Irvine, will discuss the Art and Architecture of Periclean Athens.

ABOUT HUMANITIES WEST:

A non-profit serving the Bay Area since 1983, Humanities West is devoted to exploring history to celebrate the mind and the arts. The only independent non-profit offering humanities and arts programs of this scale, Humanities West presents a diverse series of lectures and performances encompassing fine arts, social history, music, politics, and philosophy of the arts. These interdisciplinary programs are designed to entertain and educate audiences and to illuminate and elevate the human spirit through exploration of the many sources of modern culture.