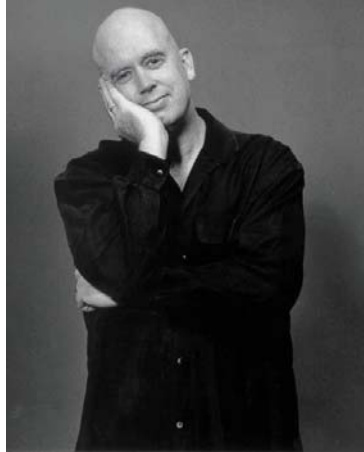


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**RINDE ECKERT TO RECEIVE THE 2009 ALPERT AWARD IN THE ARTS IN THEATRE
TUESDAY, MAY 5**

Eckert's Newest Work, *Slide*, to Premiere at Ojai Music Festival June 12

April 9, 2009...Rinde Eckert, a writer, composer, performer, director, and finalist for the 2007 Pulitzer Prize in Drama, will be presented with the 2009 Alpert Award in the Arts in Theatre on Tuesday, May 5 at a private ceremony at Herb Alpert's Vibrato Jazz & Grill in Bel Air, California. Mr. Eckert receives the award just weeks before the world premiere of *Slide*, his newest concert-length, music/theatre collaboration with composer/guitarist Steven Mackey, at the Ojai Music Festival in Ojai, California on June 12. The Alpert Award, initiated and funded by the Herb Alpert Foundation and administered by California Institute of the Arts, provides unrestricted annual prizes of \$75,000 to each of five independent artists working in the fields of dance, film/video, music, theatre, and the visual arts who are challenging and transforming art, their respective disciplines, and society.

The other 2009 Alpert Award in the Arts recipients are choreographer Reggie Wilson for dance, Paul Chan for film/video, violist John King for music, and Paul Pfeiffer for visual arts.

Rinde Eckert's new music/theatre productions have toured throughout America and to major festivals in Europe and Asia. *Slide*, his newest collaboration with Steven Mackey, was co-commissioned by the Ojai Music Festival and will be performed for the first time at the Festival on June 12. *Slide* is based on an actual psychological experiment about the seduction and manipulation of the psyche, in which Mr. Eckert plays the psychologist Renard and the instrumentalists—the eighth blackbird ensemble and Steven Mackey—double as theatrical role-players.

Mr. Eckert's career began as a writer/performer in the 1980's, writing librettos for Paul Dresher, including *Pioneer*, *Power Failure*, *Slow Fire*, and *Ravenshead*, his first collaboration with composer Steven Mackey, which was hailed by *USA Today* as the "best new opera of 1998." Since then he's composed dance scores, composed and performed his own music/theatre pieces, and directed his own plays and operas and those of others. Among his numerous awards are 2007-08 Drama Desk nominations for *Horizon*; a Pulitzer Prize nomination for *Orpheus X*; and an Obie for *And God Created Great Whales*. As a multi-instrumentalist and classically trained singer known for his flexible and inventive singing voice, Mr. Eckert has performed in multi-media theatre pieces with such companies as the Paul Dresher Ensemble and the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company. But, in recent years, it is his work as a solo artist that has attracted increasing attention. His modern treatment of vernacular and classical music defies stylistic pigeonholes, straddling the boundaries between the traditional and the new and between the mysterious and the familiar. Mr. Eckert recently directed the world premiere of *Schick Machine*, a concert-length music/theatre work featuring percussionist Steven Schick and is currently in partnership with the University of Iowa to create, direct, and perform in *Eye Piece*, a play exploring the loss of vision. Mr. Eckert began a three-year residency at Princeton University last month.

The 63rd annual Ojai Music Festival, under 2009 Music Director eighth blackbird, takes place from June 11 to June 14. The four-day festival, which for six decades has become well known for its fearlessness in championing pioneering musical ideas and personalities, takes place in California's Ojai Valley, and is known worldwide for providing artists with the freedom to present music they are passionate about in a place so idyllic that Frank Capra portrayed the area as Shangri-La in his 1937 film *Lost Horizon*. Previous music directors have ranged from Igor Stravinsky and Aaron Copland to Michael Tilson Thomas and Esa Pekka Salonen. More information is available from 805-646-2094 or www.OjaiFestival.org

The Alpert Award, inaugurated in 1994, is among the largest prizes awarded across genres. It honors and supports artists respected for their creativity, ingenuity and powerful bodies of work at a moment in their lives when they are poised to propel their art in new and unpredictable directions.

The Herb Alpert Foundation, a non-profit, private foundation established in the early 1980s, makes significant annual contributions to a range of programs in the fields of Arts, Arts Education, and Compassion and Well Being. Its funding is directed toward projects in which Herb and Lani Alpert and Foundation President Rona Sebastian play an active role.

The California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) was incorporated in 1961 as the first degree-granting institution of higher learning in the U.S., created specially for students of both the visual and the performing arts. The Institute was established through the merger of two professional schools: the Los Angeles Conservatory of Music and The Chouinard Art Institute. CalArts celebrated its 35th anniversary in 2005.