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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SORCERESS OF THE NEW PIANO: MARGARET LENG TAN

Sunday, January 29, 7 pm

Presented by the Northwest Asian American Film Festival, Cornish Music Series and Washington Composers Forum

PONCHO Concert Hall, 710 East Roy Street, Seattle

Tickets: \$15 general, \$10 Washington Composers Forum members, \$7.50 students, seniors & Cornish College alumni. Available at <http://www.brownpapertickets.com> or 800.838.3006

For information, please call 206.726.5011 or email events@cornish.edu

SEATTLE, WA – Cornish College of the Arts is pleased to present ***Sorceress of the New Piano: Margaret Leng Tan*** at PONCHO Concert Hall on January 29 at 7 pm. The evening will feature a screening of the documentary *Sorceress of the New Piano* (directed by Evans Chan) with a rare live performance by Margaret Leng Tan, the foremost player of John Cage’s work today. This performance, which kicks-off of this season’s Cornish Music Series, marks the closing of the 2006 Northwest Asian American Film Festival and the premiere of “Transport,” a series of modern music performances presented by the Washington Composers Forum. The screening and performance is followed by a reception with Margaret Leng Tan to celebrate the closing night of the Northwest Asian American Film Festival.

Margaret Leng Tan, who has not performed in Seattle for 30 years, will do so in a presentation of *Sorceress of the New Piano*, director Evans Chan’s film documentary about her singular achievements in modern music. Ms. Tan is an internationally celebrated artist renowned for her performances of American and Asian music that transcend the piano’s conventional boundaries. The leading performer of John Cage’s music, Margaret Leng Tan worked with the composer from 1981 until his death in 1992. In 2002, she celebrated her mentor’s 90th birthday at commemorative festivals worldwide, including a 50th anniversary performance of Cage’s silent piece, *4’33”* (four minutes, thirty-three seconds), at the Maverick Concert Hall

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in Woodstock, NY, where the work was first presented by David Tudor. Ms. Tan participated in Carnegie Hall's 2001-2003 *When Morty Met John...* Cage/Feldman series, making her Carnegie Hall debut performing Cage's Concerto for Prepared Piano and Chamber Orchestra with Dennis Russell Davies and the American Composers Orchestra in 2002. The world's first professional toy pianist, Margaret Leng Tan has transformed a toy into a legitimate instrument inspiring composers to create an adventurous new repertoire for her toy pianos and toy instruments.

Strumming the strings of the piano like a harp and performing Beethoven and the Beatles on toy piano are among the surprising scenes in Evans Chan's documentary, *Sorceress of the New Piano*, which celebrates the trans-cultural career of Singapore-born, New York-based pianist Margaret Leng Tan, praised by *The New Yorker* as "the diva of avant-garde pianism." The film traces Tan's quest for a new pianistic language, as she performs ground-breaking works by American masters Henry Cowell, George Crumb, and her longtime mentor John Cage, as well as by maverick composers of the new generation: Philip Glass, Tan Dun, Somei Satoh, Ge Gan-ru, Toby Twining, Lois V Vierk, Raphael Mostel, and Stephen Montague. In the film, critics Edward Rothstein (*The New York Times*), Mark Swed (*Los Angeles Times*), and Joshua Kosman (*San Francisco Chronicle*) share their thoughts on Tan's artistry and musical lineage.

Incorporating vintage footage of Merce Cunningham's dance, Jasper Johns's art, and a Marcel Duchamp film, *Sorceress* also highlights Tan's latest transformation as the world's first professional toy pianist, turning a humble toy into an instrument worthy of the international concert stage. A decade in the making, Chan's documentary surveys an important chapter of twentieth century avant-garde music through the sonic odyssey of a unique artist who illuminates the confluence of East and West, Asia and America.

The 2006 Northwest Asian American Festival runs from Thursday, January 26-Sunday, January 29, 2006, and is in its third year of presenting independent and local Asian American film in Seattle. More information is available at <http://www.nwaaff.org>.

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ABOUT CORNISH COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

Cornish College of the Arts is the premier, accredited arts college in the Northwest, inspiring the highest standards of artistic and academic excellence. Founded in 1914 by Nellie Cornish, Cornish College is the only private, accredited college in the region offering baccalaureate degrees in visual and performing arts. Cornish College offers a Bachelor of Music and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in art, dance, design, theater and performance production. Cornish College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges and the National Association of Schools of Art and Design.

Over the years, Cornish has hosted a parade of important artists in the roles of students, teachers or as visiting artists-in-residence, including John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Martha Graham, Ping Chong, Kenny Werner, Obo Addy, Mark Morris, Meredith Monk, Rinde Eckert, Bebe Miller, Ruth St. Denis, Ted Shawn, Robin Holcomb, Chet Huntley, Syvilla Fort, Ralph Towner, Thornton Wilder, Lou Harrison, Bill Frisell, Morris Graves, Jane Ira Bloom, Kraig Patterson, Musicians Accord, Bun Ching Lam, Brendan Fraser, Myra Melford, Sharon Isbin, Joanne Brackeen, Oliver Lake, California Ear Unit, Colorado Quartet, and Gary Peacock, among others.

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