

CONTACT:
Christina Kellogg 510.643.6714
ckellogg@calperformances.org
Joe Yang 510.642.9121
scyang@calperformances.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 16, 2011

**JUAN DE MARCOS GONZÁLEZ AND HIS AFRO-CUBAN ALL STARS
BRING A WEALTH OF CUBAN SOUNDS TO ZELLERBACH HALL
TUESDAY, APRIL 19 AT 8:00 P.M.**

BERKELEY, March 16, 2011—Bringing Cuba’s electrifying sounds and rhythms to the Bay Area, the **Afro-Cuban All Stars**, led by **Juan de Marcos González**, returns to Cal Performances **Tuesday, April 19 at 8:00 p.m.** in **Zellerbach Hall**. The ensemble was born from González’s goal of keeping the torch of Cuban folk music alive for younger generations and the Afro-Cuban All Stars combine the best of four generations of outstanding Cuban musicians and singers. The 14 member-ensemble will perform a mix of contemporary *timba* (Cuban salsa), swinging big band and Afro-Cuban jazz. “The way the All Stars’ singers toyed with the underlying beat in their phrasing, and the instrumentalists unfurled their forceful and quirky virtuosity, made the music spring to life.” (*The Guardian*, London)

JUAN DE MARCOS GONZÁLEZ

Musical director, guitarist and *tres* (a stringed instrument) player, **Juan de Marcos González** is a central figure in Cuban music today and has made it a personal mission to show the world the wealth, diversity and vitality of Cuban music. His work with the Afro-Cuban All Stars, the Buena Vista Social Club, Ruben Gonzalez, Ibrahim Ferrer, Sierra Maestra and others, has made an extraordinary contribution to raising the profile of Cuban music throughout the world. As the unsung hero of the film *Buena Vista Social Club*, Gonzalez takes center stage with his Afro-Cuban All Stars. His approach has allowed him to expand its creative range by incorporating contemporary styles of Cuban music.

Born in Havana in 1954, González grew up surrounded by music. He studied classical guitar at the Havana Conservatory and took courses in contemporary harmony and orchestral conducting at The Goldsmith College in London. In college he studied hydraulic engineering and Russian before working as a consultant at the Agronomic Science Institute, gaining his doctorate in 1989. While at school, he co-founded the group Sierra Maestra in 1978. Styled as a traditional

-MORE-

Cuban septeto group (tres, trumpet, bass, percussion and vocals), the dynamic young band's aim was to bring about an appreciation of Cuban song by the youth of the island. The band achieved great success, recording fourteen albums in Cuba, touring Africa and Europe and receiving various awards. However, González later left the group to form the Afro-Cuban All Stars.

In 2002, González founded his own independent label, DM Ahora! Records, which released the Afro-Cuban All Stars' albums *Live in Japan* and *Step Forward* (which was Grammy nominated in 2006). He also released *A Diario* (Telmary) and *Goza Pepillo* (Interactivo), projects that represent a new generation of Cuban music, one that fuses hip-hop with contemporary Cuban genres. In 2005, González, along with his wife Glicería Abreu, founded GG and LL, a musical production company based in Mexico City that aims to create a space for new Latin American Music.

AFRO-CUBAN ALL STARS

The Afro-Cuban All Stars were born from González's long harbored dream of forming a band with the old masters and the new generation of Cuban musicians to "mix the generations so there is the experience of the older guys and the energy of the younger players," explained González. He went in search of his old musical heroes and found many of them as forgotten figures who had retired from music. He recruited the singers Manuel Puntillita Licea, Pío Leyva and Raúl Planas, all in their seventies and approached the legendary pianist Rubén González, who no longer even owned a piano. González found him a place to practice and encouraged him to rehearse with his chosen bass player, Orlando Cachaíto López, and continued to assemble his dream band

Although the group was founded in the early 1990s, the magic of the ensemble was first captured on 1997's *A Toda Cuba Le Gusta* (World Circuit/Nonesuch Records), which received a Grammy Award nomination. Their 1999 follow-up recording *Distinto, Diferente* utilizes the group's trademark big-band format, and applies it to a broader scope of both traditional and contemporary Cuban music. Since then, the group has released four additional albums. The group has had several years of tremendous and unexpected success – including four Grammy nominations, being the subject of several documentaries and films, and being recipients of many

other distinctions. The recent plans for the Afro-Cuban All Stars include the recording of the albums *Breaking the Rules* and *Step Backward*, for which González has gathered the most remarkable expatriate Cuban musicians from around the world.

The Afro-Cuban All Stars currently spans four generations of musicians ranging from the age of 13 to 81: **Rubén González, Eliades Ochoa, Ibrahim Ferrer, Manuel “Guajiro” Mirabal Vázquez, Omara Portuondo, Orlando López Vergara aka “Cachaito”, Bárbaro Alberto Torres Delgado aka “Barbarito Torres”, Manuel Licea aka "Puntillita", Raúl Planas, Félix Valoy, Richard Egües, José Antonio “Maceo” Rodríguez, Pio Leyva, and the young Julienne Oviedo Sánchez.**

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Afro-Cuban All Stars** on **Tuesday, April 19 at 8:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$22.00, \$30.00, \$38.00, \$46.00 and \$52.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$5 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988 or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperformances.org.

For select performances, Cal Performances offers UCB student, faculty and staff, senior and community rush tickets. Rush tickets are announced two hours prior to a performance and are available in person only at the Ticket Office beginning one hour before the performance; quantities may be limited. Rush ticket sales are limited to one ticket per person; all sales are cash only. Rush ticket prices are \$10.00 for UCB students; \$15.00 for UCB faculty and staff (UCB ID required) and seniors age 65 or older; and \$20 for all other community members. Information is available at (510) 642-9988, press 2 for the rush hotline, two hours prior to a performance only.

#

Cal Performances 2010/11 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

KDFC is our 2010/11 season media sponsors.

#

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Tuesday, April 19 at 8:00 p.m.

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

World Stage

Afro-Cuban All Stars

Juan de Marcos González, musical director, guitarist and *tres* player

Program: Juan de Marcos González leads the Afro-Cuban All Stars in its mix of contemporary *timba*, swinging big band and Afro-Cuban jazz.

Tickets: \$22.00, \$30.00, \$38.00, \$46.00 and \$52.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door.

-Cal Performances-