

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 20, 2004

CONTACT:
Kimberly Burns/510.643.6714
kburns@calperfs.berkeley.edu
Christina Kellogg/ 510.642.9121
ckellogg@calperfs.berkeley.edu

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS
BELOVED SOUTH AFRICAN SINGERS
LADYSMITH BLACK MAMBAZO & VUSI MAHLASELA
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3 AT 8:00 P.M. IN ZELLERBACH HALL

SCHOOLTIME: SPECIAL 1-HOUR SHOW FOR STUDENTS, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3 AT 11:00 A.M.

BERKELEY, December 20, 2004 — The soul-stirring music of South Africa's **Ladysmith Black Mambazo** comes to Cal Performances on **Thursday, February 3 at 8 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall. For over 30 years Ladysmith's 10-member *a cappella* group, directed by Joseph Shabalala, has been synonymous with African music and rollicking good performances. Long considered their country's cultural emissaries both at home and abroad, the Grammy Award-winning group performed at Nelson Mandela's presidential inauguration and accompanied F.W. de Klerk when he received the Nobel Peace Prize. They will be joined for this performance by **Vusi Mahlasela**, who was recently featured in *Amandala! A Revolution in Four-Part Harmony*, the award-winning Sundance documentary about the importance of music in South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle. The appearance coincides with the release of Ladysmith's new album, *Raise Your Spirit Higher*, which celebrates the tenth anniversary of the end of apartheid and was recently nominated for a 2004 Grammy Award.

Ladysmith Black Mambazo and Vusi Mahlasela will give a *SchoolTime* performance for Bay Area students, **Thursday, February 3 at 11:00 a.m** in Zellerbach Hall.

JOSEPH SHABALALA & LADYSMITH BLACK MAMBAZO

Ladysmith Black Mambazo is known for its mesmerizing, athletic, funny stage performances that delight audience members of all ages. *The Boston Globe* wrote of a recent concert that "the dancing looked anything but casual: intricate steps, stomps, hand flutters, chops, waves, and high kicks, all while singing. Imagine the five-man Temptations, multiply by two, add Zulu lyrics, and you get the idea."

It's been almost 20 years since Paul Simon traveled to South Africa to record with Joseph Shabalala and the other members of Ladysmith Black Mambazo. Captivated by their stirring

-MORE-

bass, alto and tenor harmonies, Simon incorporated their traditional sounds of black South Africa into his *Graceland* album, a project that introduced Ladysmith to the world and ignited the explosive interest in world music. Since then, Ladysmith Black Mambazo has performed throughout the world for presidents, dignitaries, kings, queens and the Pope. They have performed at two Nobel Peace Prize ceremonies, the Olympics, and Queen Elizabeth II's "Party at the Palace" celebration in 2002. The group's founder, Joseph Shabalala, says of the Ladysmith's astounding international appeal, "It is quite a dream for a Zulu South African to dream."

The traditional music sung by Ladysmith Black Mambazo is called Isicathamiya (is-cot-a-me-ya) and was born in the mines of South Africa. The idea for Ladysmith's particular style came to Joseph Shabalala in a dream in 1964. He recruited members of his immediate family and close friends to help him realize the harmony he had dreamed of and, in time, Ladysmith Black Mambazo emerged with its deep, rich, resonant sound.

The name Ladysmith Black Mambazo came as a result of winning every singing competition the group entered. "Ladysmith" is the hometown of the Shabalala family, "Black" makes reference to the black ox, considered to be the strongest on the farm, and "Mambazo" is the Zulu word for ax, symbolic of the group's ability to "chop down" the competition.

They recorded their first album in 1970. Since then the group, which sings in English, French, Zulu and various African dialects, with touches of doo-wop, gospel and reggae, has recorded more than 40 albums, selling over six million records at home and abroad. *Shaka Zulu*, their first album released in the U.S. won a Grammy Award for best Traditional Folk Album in 1987. Ladysmith Black Mambazo has recorded with numerous artists including Yo-Yo Ma, Stevie Wonder, Dolly Parton, George Clinton, and Ben Harper. They provided the soundtracks for Spike Lee's "Do It A Cappella," Disney's "The Lion King Part II," Eddie Murphy's "Coming to America" and others. Their appearance with Paul Simon on Sesame Street is the most requested in the show's history.

Over the years, as members of the group have retired, Joseph Shabalala has enlisted the talents of his four sons, bringing youthful energy to the group and assuring that his teachings of "peace, love and harmony" and the musical traditions of his people will not disappear. *The New York Times* wrote of their message, "the group had more than enough vocal harmonies to back up its messages of universal harmony." Ladysmith Black Mambazo's members are Joseph

Shabalala, Msizi Shabalala, Russel Mthembu, Albert Mazibuko, Jabulani Dubazana, Thulani Shabalala, Thamsanqa Shabalala, Sibongiseni Shabalala, Jockey Shabalala, and Abedengo Mazibuko.

With their new album, *Raise Your Spirit Higher*, Ladysmith Black Mambazo celebrates the 10th anniversary of the end of apartheid with a politically charged collection of Zulu-Christian gospel. The vocal group goes beyond its usual style to include rap and variations on blues standards. It is the first album since the mysterious murder of Joseph Shabalala's wife in 2002 and includes a tribute to her.

VUSI MAHLASELA

Vusi Sidney Mahlasela Ka Zwane grew up in Mamelodi township, South Africa, a cradle of creativity that has produced a number of noted poets, writers, artists and musicians. When he was very young, Vusi taught himself to play on a homemade guitar made of tin cans and fishing line. By the age of seventeen he was a seasoned musician, singer and performer. He soon discovered that he had a flair for composition and began to write his own music and lyrics.

From the outset, Vusi's songs addressed themes of political and social significance, and he soon found himself in demand at political rallies and cultural events. His message of peace also drew him into close contact with poetry groups. After joining the Congress of South African Writers in 1988, Vusi struck up a creative friendship with South African poet Lesego Rampolokeng. At the same time he was falling under the spell of artists like Miriam Makeba and Phillip Tabane. He was also exposed to the work of Victor Jara, whom Vusi acknowledges as a central influence on his own music and lyrics.

His first record, *When You Come Back* was released by in 1991 and is widely acknowledged as a South African classic. In 1994, Vusi was asked to perform along with artists like Ladysmith Black Mambazo at the inauguration of South Africa's new president, Nelson Mandela. He has since released four successive albums and won many awards in his native country.

He is featured in *Amandla! A Revolution in Four-Part Harmony*, the celebrated film about the importance of music and song in South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle. After garnering two awards at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival, *Amandla!* was released to theaters across North American to much critical acclaim. The *Amandla!* companion album, which spans

forty years of South African music, features four songs by Vusi. In a rave *Los Angeles Times* review of the soundtrack, Robert Hilburn wrote, "Vusi Mahlasela's voice is so pure and commanding...you wonder whether you should have gotten an entire album by him."

An accomplished guitarist, percussionist, composer, arranger, band leader and performer, Vusi now enjoys a growing following worldwide. Among his most ardent supporters is Dave Matthews, a native of South Africa who has long aimed to make Vusi's music known in the U.S. Mr. Matthews says, "[Vusi Mahlasela] was a voice during the revolution, a voice of hope, like a Woody Guthrie or Bob Dylan of South Africa, and he still is." In 2000, Dave Matthews invited Vusi to contribute guest vocals on the title track of his band's multi-platinum album *Everyday*. Vusi Mahlasela's most recent album, *The Voice*, is a definitive collection handpicked by the artist which spans his recordings over the last eleven years.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Ladysmith Black Mambazo & Vusi Mahlasela** on **Thursday, February 3** at **8:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$24.00**, **\$34.00**, and **\$46.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens and other students receive a \$2 discount, and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$3 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu.

#

San Francisco Chronicle, *San Francisco* magazine, and KDFC Classical 102.1 FM are media sponsors of Cal Performances' 2004/05 performing arts season.

Cal Performances' 2004/2005 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo

#

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Thursday, February 3 at 8:00 p.m.

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

World Stage

Ladysmith Black Mambazo and Vusi Mahlasela

Program:

The South African *a cappella* group **Ladysmith Black Mambazo** will perform songs from their new album *Raise Your Spirit Higher* as well as songs from their broad repertoire of original compositions. They will be joined by South African guitarist and vocalist **Vusi Mahlasela**.

Tickets: \$24.00, \$34.00, \$46.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door.

###

Thursday, February 3 at 11:00 a.m.

SCHOOLTIME PERFORMANCE

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

Ladysmith Black Mambazo & Vusi Mahlasela

Program:

The South African *a cappella* group **Ladysmith Black Mambazo** will perform songs from their new album *Raise Your Spirit Higher* as well as songs from their broad repertoire of original compositions. They will be joined by South African guitarist and vocalist **Vusi Mahlasela** in a one-hour performance for Bay Area schoolchildren.

Tickets: \$3.00 per student or adult chaperone, available in advance only through Cal Performances at (510) 642-1082. *SchoolTime* performances are open to students in grades 2 through 12 in Bay Area public and private schools. Supplemental study guides for the classroom are provided. For more information about the *SchoolTime* program, contact the *SchoolTime* coordinator at Cal Performances by email at eduprograms@calperfs.berkeley.edu, or by phone at (510) 642-0212.

-30-