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**BALLET ARGENTINO, LED BY AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE STAR JULIO BOCCA,  
BRINGS ITS FIERY BLEND OF BALLET AND TANGO TO CAL PERFORMANCES  
MARCH 8 & 9 AT 8:00 P.M.**

**BERKELEY, January 31, 2006** – The boundary between ballet and tango blurs when dance superstar **Julio Bocca** brings *Boccatango*, his sensuous 90-minute melding of classical and Argentine dance, to Zellerbach Hall on **Wednesday & Thursday, March 8 & 9 at 8:00 p.m.** *Boccatango*'s appearance is part of **Celebración de las Culturas de Iberoamérica**, Cal Performances' programming initiative to bring the performing arts of Latin America, Spain and the Caribbean to Bay Area audiences. Featuring Bocca, dancers from his company **Ballet Argentino** and the choreography of **Ana Maria Stekelman**, *Boccatango* offers a red-hot revue-style take on Argentina's beloved tango. The eight-piece orchestra **Octango**, directed by **Julian Vat** along with singers **Guillermo Fernandez** and **Viviana Vigil** help to animate tango classics by Argentinean master composers **Carlos Gardel**, **Astor Piazzolla**, and others.

The emotion of the dances in *Boccatango* ranges from naive and humorous to frankly sexual. With mostly black (and at times minimal) costumes by **Orge Ferrari**, and simple props including chairs, tables, and a three-meter stepladder, *Boccatango* explores tango in its many forms, from solo dances to same-sex pairings to steamy duets. In its New York debut last summer, *Boccatango* was hailed as a "passionate and powerful...original tour de force" (*Back Stage*), "intimate and erotic" (*New York Sun*), "striking," and "innovative" (*New York Times*). Mature audiences are advised.

**JULIO BOCCA**

**Julio Bocca**'s impressive career spans three decades and four continents. He was born in Buenos Aires and began studying ballet at age four with his mother, Nancy Bocca, who ran a backyard dance studio. He studied at the Instituto Superior de Arte del Teatro Colón in Venezuela and danced professionally with the Caracas Ballet Company. In 1983 Bocca joined

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the Ballet del Teatro Municipal de Rio de Janeiro as principal dancer and danced with the International Ballet of Caracas. He toured internationally with the Russian company of Novosibirsk, and in 1986 Mikhail Baryshnikov, then of the American Ballet Theatre, invited Bocca to join ABT as a principal dancer, a post he still holds. In 1990 he became the international representative of Teatro Colón and founded the Ballet Argentino to develop young Argentine dancers.

At home in Argentina, Bocca has furthered his fame with television appearances and stadium performances before crowds of adoring, enthusiastic fans. In recent years he has focused his performing energies on smaller, more intimate venues, staging about 120 performances per year. His performances often benefit his personal foundation, which funds scholarships and AIDS causes. In 2000, Bocca appeared in the title role of the Broadway musical *Fosse* for a brief run and he has also made several motion picture appearances, including Carlos Saura's film *Tango*.

### **BALLET ARGENTINO**

Julio Bocca formed **Ballet Argentino** in 1990 to show Argentina and the world the artistic and technical quality of young Argentine dancers. The company, originally directed by Lidia Segni, gave its first performance in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in the summer of 1990, and now performs regularly in Europe, Asia and the Americas under the artistic direction of Bocca. The company has developed over 100 dancers who have gone on to join other ballet companies.

In 1995, Ballet Argentino presented six highly successful performances at the Luna Park Stadium in Buenos Aires, four performances at City Center in New York and an outdoor performance before 80,000 people in Buenos Aires. The next year, the company visited five continents on a tour that included a performance at the famed Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia. In 1999 the company performed in Bangkok for the celebration of the King of Thailand's sixth anniversary, and in 2000 the company rang in the new millennium dancing before fans in Buenos Aires, and the world, on a live telecast.

Several ballets have been created especially for Julio Bocca and Ballet Argentino, including *Sinfonia Entrelazada* by Mauro Bigonzetti, *Tarde en la Siesta* and *Suite Generis* by Alberto Mendez, and *Blood Grove* by Kevin O'Day. Argentine choreographers Julio Lopez, Rodolfo Lastra, Oscar Araiz, Ricky Pashkus, and Ana Maria Stekelman have created works for the company.

### ANA MARIA STEKELMAN

**Ana Maria Stekelman** studied with Paulina Ossona and Renate Schottelius in Argentina and at the Martha Graham School of Dance in New York. She is a founding member of the Contemporary Ballet at the Teatro San Martin and was the artistic director intermittently from 1977 to 1990. Stekelman created her own dance company, Tangokinesis, in 1992 and began deeper research into tango and modern dance. She has worked with dance companies throughout Europe and South America, and mixed the music of Bach with a popular Argentine tango to create the show *Tango y Fuga* with guest artist Eleonora Cassano. She choreographed three scenes in Carlos Saura's film *Tango*, for which she shared the 1999 American Choreography Award for outstanding achievement in feature film. Stekelman has created several evenings of dance for Julio Bocca and Ballet Argentino including *Piazzolla Tango Vivo*, *Concertango* and *Consagracion del Tango*.

### OCTANGO

The musicians of **Octango** perform with various tango, jazz and contemporary music ensembles. They are members of the Colón Theatre Orchestra and the National Symphony of Argentina, and have worked with the Astor Piazzolla Foundation to perform Piazzolla's tango opera, *Maria de Buenos Aires*. Musicians include **Pablo Mainetti** (*bandoneón*), **Pablo Agri** and **Brigitta Dankol** (violin), **Hernan Possetti** (piano), **Nestor Tedesco** (cello), **German Martinez** (guitar), and **Marisa Hurtado** (double bass).

Octango is led by **Julian Vat**, who plays flute and saxophone in the group. A graduate of the Argentinean National Conservatory (1983), he has been associated with tango music since 1990, appearing in several shows including *Tango X2* and *Tango: Magia y Seducción*, both of

which toured internationally. He also belongs to the duo Vat-Macri and composed scores for the film *Perdido pro Perdido* and the musical comedy *Mi Bello Dragon*.

**Guillermo Fernandez** (vocals) was born in Buenos Aires and began his tango-singing career at age seven. He has appeared in motion pictures, television and musical comedies. Fernandez starred in the musical comedy *The Latin Quarter* in Las Vegas, and won first place on International Star Search. He has two platinum and three gold recordings. **Viviana Vigil** (vocals) was born in the Province of Buenos Aires and has toured Latin America, the United States, Europe, and Japan with the orchestras of Mariano Mores and Orlando Tripodi. She has also been an ensemble member in *Forever Tango*, has twice appeared with the London Symphony Orchestra, and has recorded a CD called *Viviana Vigil, Tango* with Mariano Mores, Antonio Agri, Lito Vitale, Horacio Ferrer, and Walter Rios.

#### **TICKET INFORMATION**

Tickets for Julio Bocca's *Boccatango* on **Wednesday & Thursday, March 8 & 9** at **8:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$24.00, \$36.00 and \$48.00**. 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](http://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](http://www.calperfs.berkeley.edu).

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**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

**Wednesday & Thursday, March 8 & 9 at 8:00 p.m. Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus**  
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

*Dance*

*Boccatango*

**Ballet Argentino**

**Julio Bocca**, dancer and director

**Ana Maria Stekelman**, choreographer

**Octango**

**Julian Vat**, flute and director

**Pablo Mainetti**, *bandoneón*

**Pablo Agri**, violin

**Brigitta Dankol**, violin

**Hernan Possetti**, piano

**Nestor Tedesco**, cello

**German Martinez**, guitar

**Marisa Hurtado**, double bass

**Guillermo Fernandez**, vocals

**Viviana Vigil**, vocals

**Program:** Argentine superstar Julio Bocca and his Ballet Argentino join forces with guest vocalists and the musicians of Octango for a red-hot performance of *Boccatango*, an intense and playful revue-style take on Argentina's pride and joy, the tango.

**Tickets:** \$24.00, \$36.00, \$48.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at [www.calperfs.berkeley.edu](http://www.calperfs.berkeley.edu); and at the door.