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**THE QUEEN OF *MORNA*, CESARIA EVORA RETURNS
TO CAL PERFORMANCES FOR TWO NIGHTS
FRIDAY & SATURDAY, MARCH 24 & 25 AT 8:00 P.M. IN ZELLERBACH HALL**

BERKELEY, February 10, 2006 – Celebrating the release of her long-awaited tenth album *Rogamar*, chanteuse **Cesaria Evora** brings the nostalgic and rhythmic Cape Verdean *morna*, cousin to American blues, to Cal Performances **Friday & Saturday, March 24 & 25 at 8:00 p.m.** at Zellerbach Hall. **Cesaria Evora**'s appearance is part of **Celebración de las Culturas de Iberoamérica**, Cal Performances' programming initiative to bring the performing arts of Latin America, Spain, Portugal, and the Caribbean to Bay Area audiences. Hailing from Cape Verde, Evora has long been a master of *morna*, music steeped in the rhythms of the Portuguese *fado*, the Brazilian samba and the swaying of West African percussion. Her songs are rooted in the struggles of everyday people and the natural wonders of her birthplace. "Like other members of the tiny vocal elite to which she ascended," says *Rolling Stone*, "Cesaria Evora really only sings two ways: well or magnificently." Evora returns following her remarkable Cal Performances appearances in 2001 and 2003.

Three years in the making, *Rogamar* was recorded in Mindelo, her hometown, Paris and Rio de Janeiro and produced by pianist Fernando Andrade, who has been accompanying Evora on stage since 1999. *Rogamar*, translates as "praise the sea, pray to the sea", celebrates the ocean as well as incorporating typical Cape Verdean themes. The tracks include "Vaga Lenta" (Slow Wave) and "Sombras di Distino" (Shadows of Destiny). With ear-catching melodies that sound familiar right away, each track is elegantly arranged to showcase Evora's honey-toned and soft-burred voice. The Berkeley program will include pieces from her upcoming CD and some of her all-time favorites.

Evora's distinctive style of music is drawn directly from hometown life in Mindelo, an impoverished island off the coast of Senegal and a former Portuguese colony. After her father died, most of her siblings eventually emigrated, but Evora remained firmly rooted in the culture

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and nightlife of her birthplace. By 16, Evora had found a spot for herself in Mindelo's musical life: with her voice that conveyed power and vulnerability, she was perfect for the style of music called *morna*.

Evora sang regularly up until she started to raise a family. She took a decade off at that point before finally getting her musical break in the 1980s. She was plucked from obscurity out of a small club in Lisbon, when her voice captivated José Da Silva, a young Frenchman of Cape Verdean origin. He convinced her to travel with him to Paris to record, and a musical relationship between the two was born.

In 1988, Evora and Da Silva made *La Diva aux Pieds Nus*, and in the ensuing years, *Distino di Belita* (1990) and *Mar Azul* (1991). But it was the 1992 *Miss Perfumado* that made Evora a star at age 52. In 1995, Evora's self title album, *Cesaria Evora* was nominated for a Grammy and her New York City date at The Bottom Line attracted such curious note-worthies as Madonna, David Byrne and Branford Marsalis. Evora won a Grammy Award in 2003 for her album, *Voz D' Amor*. Garnering several gold records and a total of six Grammy nominations, *The New York Times* has characterized her voice as having "melodies as graceful and knowing as the Mona Lisa's smile." She became widely embraced as the "Barefoot Diva," in literal reference to her style on stage.

Although the *morna's* beginnings are not completely clear, early 19th century Africans may have crafted Cape Verde's version of the blues. Evora's husky vocals inform these bittersweet, melancholy ballads with the weight of personal and social tragedy. In her music, listeners hear strains of Portuguese *fado*, French *chanson* and Cuban *habanera*. Given Mindelo's place on the international sea-lanes, it is understandable that its music is also influenced by the Latin American sounds of the Brazilian samba and the Argentine tango. Most *mornas* are written and sung in Kriolu, a blend of Portuguese and West African language spoken in Cape Verde; a defining instrument in *morna* is the distinctive *cavaquinho*, a ukulele-like four-stringed instrument. Contemporary *mornas* also may use trumpet, saxophone, clarinet, electric guitar, and keyboards.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Cesaria Evora** on **Friday & Saturday, March 24 & 25** at 8:00 p.m. in Zellerbach Hall are priced at \$26.00, \$38.00 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; 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.

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Cal Performances' 2005/2006 Centennial Season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Friday & Saturday, March 24 & 25 at 8:00 p.m. **Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus**
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

World Stage

Cesaria Evora

Program: Multiple Grammy nominee Cesaria Evora brings her hauntingly beautiful musical style to Cal Performances for two nights, March 24 & 25, 2006.

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