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**PERCUSSIVE POWERHOUSE PERÚ NEGRO MAKES ITS CAL PERFORMANCE  
DEBUT FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17 AT 8:00 P.M.**

**BERKELEY, January 23, 2006** – Born out of slavery and the blending of African and Spanish cultures, **Perú Negro** brings its wild and celebratory jam to Cal Performances on **Friday, February 17, at 8:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall. **Perú Negro**'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. The ensemble of 20 musicians, singers and dancers, appointed official Cultural Ambassadors of Black Peru by the Peruvian government, will perform an eclectic program of traditional and newly composed works, using folkloric and contemporary instruments. After Spanish colonizers banned drums in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, slaves turned to everyday objects to provide the rhythm for their music. Perú Negro uses many of these percussion instruments including the *cajón*, a large rectangular drum that is sat upon when played, which was originally a fruit packing crate; the *cajita*, a small trapezoidal drum with a lid that opens and closes, which was in the beginning a wooden collection box used in Catholic churches; and the *quijada*, a dried out donkey jawbone with rattling teeth which was, and still is, just that. These percussive instruments are joined by guitars and vocals to form the heart of Afro-Peruvian music. Combined with intense, vibrant dance and a festival spirit, Perú Negro's performance unleashes "a nonstop carnival of rhythm" (*Los Angeles Times*).

**PERÚ NEGRO**

**Ronaldo Campos de la Colina** founded **Perú Negro** over 30 years ago to preserve Peru's African heritage. The legacy of slavery in Peru differed from elsewhere in the Americas, in that slaves were brought from a wide variety of regions in Africa, making cultural continuity virtually impossible. The issues of identity, as well as the fundamental task of both rescuing and preserving history, however remain at the heart of cultural initiatives like Perú Negro. The diverse elements in Perú Negro's repertoire reflect a complex history of blacks in Peru. Through

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the music, Afro-Peruvians are recreating the lost folkloric history of their ancestors, a history rich in African roots but at the same time full of Spanish culture and influences.

Initially, many members of the Campos family performed with the group. The original group of 12 has now grown to include more than 30 artists, about half of which are members of the original family. The group's popularity exploded after taking first prize in the Hispanoamerican Festival of Song and Dance in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1969. In the 1970s, Perú Negro created the sound that defines Afro-Peruvian music. Dances were reconstructed through research and the collective memory of family members. Nearly all Afro-Peruvian dance companies use choreography created by Perú Negro more than three decades ago.

In 1995, Perú Negro took another step in saving the rhythms and sounds of Peru's African slaves with the release of their first CD *The Soul of Black Peru*. Their first internationally available recording, *Sangre de un Don*, was released in spring 2001. The CD, whose title means "heritage of a gentleman," is dedicated to Ronaldo Campos de la Colina, who died in 2001. The next recording to be produced, *Jolgorio*, was released in 2004. Written primarily by Ronny Campos, son of Ronaldo, its title translates as "a celebratory frenzy," an apt description of the company's performances. The group was honored with two Grammy Award nominations for *Jolgorio* and is working on a new CD.

The company is currently undergoing a renaissance and creating new dances and music. The ensemble now performs recently created works in addition to traditional pieces. Based in Lima, Perú Negro also runs a school and junior troupe, Perú Negrito. Its first company has performed all over the world, with performances hailed as "bursts of energy" (*The New York Times*).

### TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Perú Negro** on **Friday, February 17** at **8:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$22.00, \$30.00** and **\$40.00**. 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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Cal Performances' 2005/06 Centennial Season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

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**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

**Friday, February 17 at 8:00 p.m.**

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

*World Music*

**Perú Negro**

**Program:** Playing on a wide variety of traditional instruments—including church tithing boxes and donkey jaw bones—Perú Negro serves up a feast of Afro-Peruvian music and dance.

**Tickets:** \$22.00, \$30.00 and \$40.00, 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.

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