

CONTACT:
Christina Kellogg 510.643.6714
ckellogg@calperfs.berkeley.edu
Joe Yang 510.642.9121
scyang@calperfs.berkeley.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 22, 2006

**SPANISH HARLEM ORCHESTRA, CLASSIC SALSA BAND SUPREME, SWINGS INTO
ZELLERBACH HALL ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10 AT 8:00 P.M.**

BERKELEY, December 22, 2006 — Audiences who hear the **Spanish Harlem Orchestra** on **Saturday, February 10 at 8:00 p.m.** at **Zellerbach Hall** will get two concerts in one. Formed by New York's top Latin musicians in 2000, the band's members are both curators of New York's Latin music tradition and pillars of contemporary Latin music. "For the Spanish Harlem Orchestra, classic salsa is still here and now" (*The New York Times*). Dubbed the "dazzling 13-piece supergroup" (*This Is London*), the orchestra is led by famed Latin pianist and arranger **Oscar Hernández**, who rose to fame in the 1970s while producing the sound of salsa legend Rubén Blades. Other members of the orchestra are vocalists **Ray De La Paz, Marco Bermúdez** and **Willie Torres**; bassist **Maximo Rodriguez**; percussionists **Luisito Quintero, George Delgado** and **Jorge Gonzalez**; trombonists **Jimmy Bosch** and **Dan Reagan**; trumpeters **Pete Nater** and **John Walsh**; and sax and flute player **Mitch Frohman**. The program will be announced from the stage.

Making classic salsa music sound fresh and vibrant is the hallmark of the Spanish Harlem Orchestra. "One of the most compelling aspects of the orchestra is how it revitalizes the arrangements that must have thrilled salsa's earliest audiences" (*Chicago Tribune*). The Orchestra is dedicated to preserving the vital history of classic Latin dance orchestras while writing and arranging new music for today's audiences. One way it makes the classic songs sound new—and new numbers sound like classics—is by engaging some of the greatest arrangers in Latin music, including Marty Sheller (arranger for Mongo Santamaria) and Gil Lopez (arranger for Tito Puente).

SPANISH HARLEM ORCHESTRA

El Barrio—the vibrant neighborhood of Spanish Harlem, on New York's East Side, south of 125th Street—was the birthplace of salsa, Latin soul, boogaloo and countless other variants of

-MORE-

the tropical Latin sound in the last half of the 20th century. As the greats of that era—Machito, Tito Puente, Celia Cruz, and others—passed away, Latin music producer Aaron Luis Levinson recognized that the musical traditions of El Barrio would be lost without a new generation of practitioners. Levinson approached Oscar Hernandez, the renowned pianist, arranger, and music director for Latin American music legend Rubén Blades, and proposed creation of the Spanish Harlem Orchestra.

The band recorded its first album, *Un Gran Dia En El Barrio (One Great Day in the Neighborhood)* before it played a single gig. The recording, made over two days for John Medeski's Ropeadope label, was a huge hit—especially for a yet-unknown band—reaching No. 9 on the Billboard Tropical/Salsa chart. *Time Out New York* called the record “relentless” and “a lot of fun,” and raved that “The salsa is as high-energy as you would expect, appropriately spiced with blaring horns, peppy percussion, and exuberant vocals.” To celebrate the release of the album, the band played its first gig at New York's swank Joe's Pub in 2002. The record earned a Grammy nomination for Best Salsa Album in 2003 and the Latin Billboard Award for Salsa Album of the Year - Best New Group.

The Orchestra's next release, 2004's *Across 110th Street*, features four performances by Rubén Blades and renditions of classic salsa songs such as “Bailadores” and “Como Lo Canto Yo.” The record won a 2005 Grammy Award for Best Salsa/Merengue Album of the Year. The group is currently in the studio working on a new album.

The Spanish Harlem Orchestra's tours have taken the musicians to Hong Kong, Tokyo, Istanbul, Glasgow, Barcelona, London, Paris, Oslo, Zurich, Montreal, and other cultural capitals, and its appearances at the prestigious Montreal Jazz Festival and the legendary Newport Jazz Festival have left audiences on their feet and clamoring for more.

MUSICIANS OF THE SPANISH HARLEM ORCHESTRA

Pianist, producer, arranger, and Bronx native **Oscar Hernández** has led the Spanish Harlem Orchestra since its founding. Long a towering fixture in the New York Latin music scene, Hernandez charted the musical course of the Rubén Blades band in the 1980s and

performed or recorded with Latin greats including Tito Puente, Celia Cruz, Julio Iglesias, Willie Colón, and Pete “Conde” Rodriguez. He also was musical director, conductor, and arranger of Paul Simon’s Broadway musical *The Capeman* and music director of the hit shows *Quien Mato A Hector Lavoe* and *La Lupe* at the 47th Street Theatre, and is a sought-after studio musician and composer for advertising.

The 13 members of the Spanish Harlem Orchestra represent an all-star team of Latin musicians. Vocalists are **Ray De La Paz**, whose 30-year career has taken him around the world with musicians such as Ray Barreto and Louie Ramirez; **Marco Bermúdez**, an Ecuadorian singer-composer who has toured with top Latin acts including Tito Puente and Celia Cruz; and Puerto Rican singer **Willie Torres**, who has performed with many Latin greats including Johnny Rivera, Gilberto Santa Rosa and Rubén Blades. The percussion section consists of **Luisito Quintero** of Venezuela, who has played with *Orquesta Simfonica de Venezuela* (The Symphonic Orchestra of Venezuela) and has been an influential part of Louie Vega’s Element of Life projects; New York–born timbale player **George Delgado**, who began playing professionally at age 14 with Tito Rojas’ *El Conjunto Borincano*; and **Jorge Gonzalez**, a Latin music veteran who has appeared on 80 albums in 25 years, seven of which received Grammy nominations.

Brass players in the Spanish Harlem Orchestra are trombonist **Jimmy Bosch**, whose trademark sound is featured on Latin albums by Willie Colón, Rubén Blades, Victor Manuelle, and others; California-born trombonist **Dan Reagan**, a 25-year veteran whose career spans disco, R&B, Latin music and his own original compositions; New York–born trumpeter **Pete Nater**, who began his musical career in 1972 with Latin Soul, Inc. and who also appears with Richie Viruet’s Clave Azul and The Giants of Latin Jazz; trumpeter **John Walsh** of Michigan, who has performed and/or recorded with artists as diverse as Tito Puente, Mel Torme, Lionel Hampton, Wyckleff Jean, Max Roach, Justin Timberlake and Ricky Martin; and playing saxophones and flute is **Mitch Frohman**, who has appeared with Machito, Willie Colón, Charlie Palmieri, Blood Sweat & Tears, David Byrne and myriad other acts. Rounding out the orchestra is bassist **Hector “Maximo” Rodriguez**.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Spanish Harlem Orchestra** on **Saturday, February 10** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$22.00, \$30.00** and **\$42.00**. 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.

#

Cal Performances' 2006/07 Season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

Classical 102.1 KDFC and SFStation.com are 2006/07 season media sponsors.

#

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Saturday, February 10 at 8:00 p.m.

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

World Stage

Spanish Harlem Orchestra

Oscar Hernández, leader and piano

Program: The 13 members of New York's Spanish Harlem Orchestra will present an exciting evening of classic Latin dance music and new compositions. Selections will be announced from the stage.

Tickets: **\$22.00, \$30.00** and **\$42.00**, 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.
