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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 20, 2007

**FEARLESS AND PASSIONATE, SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK RETURNS TO CAL PERFORMANCES SATURDAY, APRIL 28 AT 8:00 P.M. AT ZELLERBACH HALL**

**SCHOOLTIME: A SPECIAL 1-HOUR PERFORMANCE FOR BAY AREA STUDENTS WILL BE GIVEN FRIDAY, APRIL 27 AT 11:00 A.M.**

**A FREE AND OPEN-TO-THE-PUBLIC SYMPOSIUM ILLUSTRATING THE PIVOTAL ROLE OF MUSIC IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT WILL BE HELD FRIDAY, APRIL 27 AT 2:00 P.M. AT HERTZ HALL; SCHOLARS AND SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK ARTISTS WILL PARTICIPATE**

*PLUS*

**THE DOCUMENTARY FILM *SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK: RAISE YOUR VOICE* WILL ALSO BE SCREENED AS PART OF THE HUMANITIES EVENTS SURROUNDING THE CONCERT ON THURSDAY, APRIL 26 AT 7:00 P.M. AT PACIFIC FILM ARCHIVE**

**BERKELEY, March 20, 2007** – “Great Black music is what we sing—a *cappella* style with a political ring” says **Nitanju Bolade Casel** of the world renowned, Grammy-winning female vocal group **Sweet Honey in the Rock**. Returning to Cal Performances **Saturday, April 28 at 8:00 p.m.**, this ensemble of six women, including a sign language interpreter, brings its powerful and indescribable music to inspire and uplift its listeners. With a repertoire that includes work songs, spirituals, gospel, blues, jazz and love songs, Sweet Honey in the Rock references the strength of a rock and the nourishment of honey. Sweet Honey singers include **Ysaye Maria Barnwell, Nitanju Bolade Casel, Aisha Kahlil, Carol Maillard, Louise Robinson**, and sign language interpreter **Shirley Childress Saxton**; they deliver inspiring concerts that “captivate and enthrall” (*Tulsa World*).

Sweet Honey in the Rock will give a *SchoolTime* performance for Bay Area students in Zellerbach Hall on **Friday, April 27 at 11:00 a.m.**; tickets available in advance only.

A symposium titled *Music and Message with Sweet Honey in the Rock* will be held on **Friday, April 27 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.** in Hertz Hall. Members of Sweet Honey in the Rock will illustrate the pivotal role of music in the civil rights movement and social activism

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today. Presentations by UC Berkeley scholars **Waldo Martin** (History), **Ula Yvette Taylor** (African American Studies) and **Leigh Raiford** (African American Studies), will provide a cultural and historical framework for a discussion to follow, moderated by **Margaret Russell**, Santa Clara University School of Law. This event is free and open to the public.

Celebrating Sweet Honey in the Rock's 30th anniversary year (2003), independent filmmaker **Stanley Nelson** created the documentary *Sweet Honey In The Rock: Raise Your Voice*. The film chronicles the history of the group with concert footage, interviews and photographs, offering an acute understanding of the hard work that goes into honing Sweet Honey's distinctive sound. The film will be screened on **Thursday, April 26 at 7:00 p.m.** at the Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley. This event is free and open to the public.

Central to Sweet Honey in the Rock's mission is a deep commitment to make its music accessible to the deaf and hearing impaired community. The group's language interpreter, Shirley Childress Saxton, will be signing at the concert as well as all of the humanities events.

### **SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK**

Founded in 1973 by **Bernice Johnson Reagon** as a supplement to her vocal workshop, **Sweet Honey in the Rock** has weathered the test of time thanks to its unwavering commitment to the struggle for justice, stunning vocal prowess, soulful harmonies and intricate rhythms. Reagon retired in 2004 and the four remaining singers decided to continue performing, adding Arnaé and Louise Robinson. This season, however, company member **Arnaé** is on-leave.

**Ysaye M. Barnwell** is a native New Yorker now living in Washington, D.C., where she has, since 1979, performed with Sweet Honey in the Rock. She appears as a vocalist and/or instrumentalist on more than 30 recordings with Sweet Honey in the Rock, as well as with other artists. In addition to being a singer with a vocal range of over three octaves, Barnwell spends much of her time off-stage working as master teacher and choral clinician in cultural performance theory. In her first year with Sweet Honey, Barnwell provided leadership in developing the group's practice of making concerts accessible to the Deaf through American Sign Language interpretation.

Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, **Carol Maillard** attended college in Washington, D.C. at the Catholic University of America, where she studied violin and majored in drama. While in D.C., she began her professional acting career with the D.C. Black Repertory Company. A founding member of Sweet Honey in the Rock, she rejoined the group full time in 1992. Maillard is also a versatile and talented actress, writer and producer. Her film credits include *Beloved* and *Thirty Years to Life*. A children's book based on her composition, *Still the Same Me*, is scheduled to be published by Simon & Schuster later this year.

**Nitanju Bolade Casel** brought to Sweet Honey her unique performance experience in African vocal styles, jazz, improvisational rhythms and hip hop, after four years of study, performance and cultural organization in Dakar, Senegal. Her extensive training, research and teaching experience in African-derived traditions has its base in those pioneering communities of the late sixties which led the way to redefining and making accessible African expressive culture in the United States.

Joining Sweet Honey in the Rock in 1981, **Aisha Kahlil**, vocalist, composer, dancer/choreographer and teacher, came as an extraordinary vocal innovator with an impressive range to explore jazz, blues, African traditional and contemporary vocal styles and techniques. She received the CASA (Contemporary A Cappella Society Association) Best Soloist award for her performances of "Fulani Chant" and "See See Rider" on the CD *In This Land* (Earthbeat! 1992).

**Louise Robinson** is a native New Yorker who began her relationship with music in the children's choir at church. Robinson has had the good fortune of expressing her creative talents in many arenas, including: studio voice-over work, background vocals and film, direction and production. For the past 16 years, Robinson has been touring and performing with the vocal ensemble Street Sounds, which she founded in 1989. After 26 years, Robinson returns to Sweet Honey. "It is a full circle, and I am excited to rejoin the women who have carried on and kept this vibrant."

**Shirley Childress Saxton** is a veteran professional sign language interpreter, having learned American Sign Language from her deaf parents. In their honor, she founded the Herbert and Thomasina Childress Scholarship Fund to assist other Children of Deaf Adults (C.O.D.A.) to explore sign interpreting as a career option. Saxton began working as sign language interpreter for Sweet Honey in the Rock in 1980.

Over the past 32 years, Sweet Honey in the Rock has recorded 17 albums in addition to various projects, special appearances and collaborations in film, books and music. The group won a Grammy Award in 1989 for work on the Smithsonian Folkways/Columbia recording, *Vision Shared: A Tribute to Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly*.

### **TICKET INFORMATION**

Tickets for **Sweet Honey in the Rock** on **Saturday, April 28 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](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.calperformances.net](http://www.calperformances.net).

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

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**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

**Thursday, April 26 at 7:00 p.m.**

**Film: *Sweet Honey In The Rock: Raise Your Voice***

**Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley**

2575 Bancroft Way

**Program:** Celebrating Sweet Honey in the Rock's 30th anniversary year (2003), independent filmmaker Stanley Nelson created the documentary *Sweet Honey In The Rock: Raise Your Voice*. The film chronicles the history of the group with concert footage, interviews and photographs, offering an acute understanding of the hard work that goes into honing Sweet Honey's distinctive sound.

**Tickets:** Free and open to the public. For more information, contact Cal Performances' Box Office at (510) 642-9988 or visit us online at [www.calperformances.net](http://www.calperformances.net).

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**Friday, April 27 at 11:00 a.m.**

**SCHOOLTIME PERFORMANCE**

**Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus**

Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

**Sweet Honey in the Rock**

**Program:** The Grammy Award-winning African-American female *a cappella* ensemble presents a one-hour program 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](mailto:eduprograms@calperfs.berkeley.edu), or by phone at (510) 642-0212.

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**Friday, April 27 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

**Symposium**

**Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley Campus**

Bancroft Way at College Ave., Berkeley

**Program:** A symposium titled *Music and Message with Sweet Honey in the Rock* with members of Sweet Honey in the Rock illustrates the pivotal role of music in the Civil Rights Movement and social activism today.

**Tickets:** Free and open to the public. For more information, contact Cal Performances' Box Office at (510) 642-9988 or visit us online at [www.calperformances.net](http://www.calperformances.net).

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**Saturday, April 28 at 8:00 p.m.**

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

*World Stage*

**Sweet Honey in the Rock**

**Program:** The six-member a cappella ensemble returns to Cal Performances for a not-to-be-missed performance celebrating African American tradition, culture, and music.

**Tickets:** \$24.00, \$34.00, and \$46.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at [www.calperformances.net](http://www.calperformances.net); and at the door.

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