

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 11, 2008

**PERÚ NEGRO RETURNS TO CAL PERFORMANCES
WITH ITS EXUBERANT CELEBRATION OF AFRO-PERUVIAN DANCE AND MUSIC
THURSDAY, MARCH 20 AT 8:00 P.M.**

PROGRAM FEATURES MUSIC FROM THE GRAMMY-NOMINATED GROUP'S NEW CD *ZAMBA MALATÓ*

BERKELEY, February 11, 2008 – Perú Negro's "non-stop carnival of rhythm" (*Los Angeles Times*) swings into Zellerbach Hall **Thursday, March 20, at 8:00 p.m.** Perú Negro will perform music from its recently released CD *Zamba Malató* and newly composed works, using folkloric and contemporary instruments. After Spanish colonizers banned drums in the 16th 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 to begin with 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. This unique percussion foundation is what gives Black Peruvian music its distinctive sound. Perú Negro's percussion is complemented by melodic guitars and vocals to form the heart of Afro-Peruvian music. "With artistry as rich and diverse as the history it reflects" (*The Boston Globe*) the ensemble of 20 musicians, singers and dancers has performed all over the world and has been appointed "Cultural Ambassadors of Black Peru" by the Peruvian government.

THE PROGRAM

Perú Negro's program features a cross-section of African-descended styles that had all but disappeared from Peruvian culture by the 1950s. Those dances include the celebratory *festejo*, the sensual *landó*, the slave protest songs called *panalivios* (banned by the Catholic Church in the 18th Century) and the tap-dancing *zapateos*. "Una Negra y un Negro," a *festejo*, relates the story of newlyweds who after a few mishaps finally consummate their love. The title track from the CD, "Zamba Malató," is a *landó*; there is no real translation to this phrase other

-MORE-

than it refers to an old chant sung by black women as they performed their daily chores; the dance evokes the relationships that developed between the women as they do the laundry. “Que Tiene Miguel” is a *zamacueca*, similar to a *landó* but more upbeat. The song narrates the abuses to which slaves were exposed while working in the farms and haciendas of the Peruvian South. The “Toro Mata” is also a *landó* and in its dance form becomes a mockery of the minuet and other stiff European dances observed by the slaves in the homes of their masters. “Festejo de Ritmo” showcases the percussive chops of the group’s rhythm section; additionally, this piece is a ritual dance that is used to energize musicians and dancers. All total, the group will perform 15 songs during their Berkeley performance.

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 was distinctly different than elsewhere in the Americas. 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, remain at the heart of cultural initiatives like Perú Negro. The diverse elements in Perú Negro’s repertoire reflect the complex history of blacks in Peru. Through 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. In 2005, *Jolgorio*, was honored with two Grammy nominations.

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 **Thursday, March 20** at **8:00 p.m.** 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.calperformances.org; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$5 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperformances.org.

For select performances, Cal Performances offers UCB student, faculty and staff, senior and community rush tickets. Rush tickets are announced two hours prior to a performance and are available in person only at the Ticket Office beginning one hour before the performance; quantities may be limited. Rush ticket sales are limited to one ticket per person; all sales are cash only. Rush ticket prices are \$10.00 for UCB students; \$15.00 for UCB faculty and staff (UCB ID required) and seniors age 65 or older; and \$20.00 for all other community members. Information is available at 510-642-9988, press 2 for the rush hotline, two hours prior to a performance only.

#

Cal Performances’ 2007/08 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

Classical 102.1 KDFC is our 2007/08 season media sponsors.

#

-MORE-

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Thursday, March 20 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 \$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.

- Cal Performances -

-MORE-