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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 16, 2013

**BAREFOOT DIVAS BRING PACIFIC ISLANDER SONG
TO ZELLERBACH HALL ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2 AT 8:00 P.M.**

BERKELEY, January 16, 2013—Opening their first North American tour on [Sunday, February 2 at 8:00 p.m. in Zellerbach Hall](#), Australia’s celebrated female Indigenous singers will join their sisters from New Zealand and Papua New Guinea to share the stories of their lives in an evening of song titled *Walk a Mile in My Shoes*. Backed by a six-piece band playing dozens of traditional and Western instruments, the six artists that make up [Barefoot Divas](#) blend traditional Maori, Aboriginal, Papua New Guinean and Romany music into songs of the joys, struggles, and aspirations of their indigenous cultures. The divas, who perform barefoot, will set the tone for the Cal Performances concert when they open with Grammy-winner Joe South’s *Walk a Mile in My Shoes*. The troupe will then segue into original music with solos, duets, and group works that combine jazz, R&B, and Latin-infused soul with soaring harmonies; lyrics are sung in multiple languages including English. Co-directed by **Vicki Gordon** and **Alana Valentine**, the group includes two Aborigines, **Ursula Yovich** and **Emma Donovan**; two Maori artists, **Whirimako Black** and **Maisey Rika**; one from Papua New Guinea, **Ngaiire**; and one singer of Maori, Romany Gypsy, and Welsh background, **Merenia**. The Barefoot Band is led by music director **Adam Ventoura**.

Each of the artists has a major performing career in her own right, one that combines her Pacific Islander roots with a contemporary sound. Ursula Yovich’s voice reflects the richness and power of her two cultures, Serbia and Australia, while Emma Donovan’s distinctively husky voice is a fusion of roots, reggae, gospel, and soul. Whirimako Black brought her sublime and expressive voice to her debut CD in 2001 which then went on to win a New Zealand Music Award for Best Maori Language Album. Maisey Rika began singing professionally at age 13; her first recordings brought her to national stardom with *E Hine*, a classic collection of Maori traditional songs. Merenia sings her soulful and Latin-infused music in five languages and is considered a powerhouse performer with instinctive vocal talents. Ngaiire, who moved to Australia at age 16 after living in the jungles of Papua New Guinea, credits a diet of “mind-

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bashing, uninspiring top 40 hits” during her youth with her desire to create her own, very different music.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for Barefoot Divas on Sunday, February 2 at 8:00 p.m. in Zellerbach Hall range from \$18.00 to \$48.00 and are subject to change. Half-price tickets are available for UC Berkeley students. Tickets are available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988; at <http://www.calperformances.org>; and at the door. For more information about discounts, go to <http://calperformances.org/buy/discounts.php>.

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Cal Performances thanks Wells Fargo and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for their major support of the 2013—2014 Season.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Sunday, February 2 at 8:00 p.m.

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Dana Street, Berkeley

World Stage

Barefoot Divas

Vicki Gordon, co-director

Alana Valentine, co-director

Adam Ventoura, music director, musician

Ursula Yovich, vocalist

Emma Donovan, vocalist

Whirimako Black, vocalist

Maisey Rika, vocalist

Ngaiire, vocalist

Merenia, vocalist

Program: From six indigenous cultures and backed by a six-piece band, the Barefoot Divas meld traditional Maori, Aboriginal, Papua New Guinean and Romany music into songs of the joys, struggles, and aspirations of their cultures.

Tickets: Prices range from \$18.00 to \$48.00 and are subject to change. They are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988; at calperformances.org; and at the door.

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