

Saturday, April 1, 2006, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

Eddie Palmieri Septet
featuring
David Sánchez, *tenor saxophone*



with

Brian Lynch *trumpet*
Joe Santiago *bass*
Jose Claussell *timbales*
Donald Harrison *saxophone*
Giovanni Hidalgo *conga*
Conrad Herwig *trombone*

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Eddie Palmieri's musical career spans 50 years as a bandleader of salsa and Latin jazz orchestras. His discography includes more than 32 titles. He has been awarded eight Grammy Awards, including the first presentation in the Best Latin Album category for his 1975 release *The Sun of Latin Music*, and the following year for *Unfinished Masterpiece*. *Palo Pa' Rumba* won in 1984, *Solito* in 1985 and *La Verdad* in 1987. He received two Grammys for his 2000 release with Tito Puente, *Obra Maestral/Masterpiece*—one from the traditional Grammy Awards and one from the Latin Grammys.

He was awarded the Eubie Blake Award by Dr. Billy Taylor in 1991 and he is among the few Latin musicians recognized by the Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico and the New York State Assembly. In 1988, the Smithsonian Institution recorded two of Palmieri's performances for their catalog of the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., a rare public honor.

The 1998 Heineken Jazz Festival in San Juan, Puerto Rico, paid tribute to his contributions as a bandleader, bestowing on him an honorary doctorate degree from the Berklee College of Music. In 2002, Yale University awarded Mr. Palmieri the Chubb Fellowship, an award usually reserved for international heads of state, but given to him in recognition of his work in building communities through music.

As a member of the board of governors of the New York chapter of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, he was instrumental in creating a new category for Latin Jazz in 1995. His 1994 album, *Palmas*, was among the nominees for the first award presented in that category in March 1995. In 1996, he was once again nominated for his album *Arete*. In 2006, the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences awarded Mr. Palmieri's latest release, *Listen Here!*, the Grammy in the Best Latin Jazz Album category. This was Mr. Palmieri's eighth Grammy, awarded on Wednesday, February 8, 2006, at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.

Born in Spanish Harlem in 1936, Mr. Palmieri began piano studies at an early age, as did his celebrated older brother, the late salsa legend and pianist Charlie Palmieri. For Latin New Yorkers of Eddie's generation, music was a vehicle out of the barrio. At age 11, he made his classical debut at Carnegie Hall, a venue as far from the Bronx as he could imagine. Possessed by a desire to play the drums, Mr. Palmieri joined his uncle's orchestra at age 13, where he played the timbales. Says Mr. Palmieri, "By 15, it was good-bye timbales and

back to the piano until this day. I'm a frustrated percussionist, so I take it out on the piano."

He began his professional career as a pianist in the early 1950s with Eddie Forrester's Orchestra. In 1955, he joined Johnny Seguí's band. He spent a year with the Tito Rodríguez Orchestra before forming his own band, the legendary "Conjunto La Perfecta," in 1961. La Perfecta featured a trombone section (led by the late Barry Rogers) in place of trumpets, something that had been rarely done in Latin music, and which demonstrated the early stages of Mr. Palmieri's unconventional means of orchestration. They were known as "the band with the crazy roaring elephants" for the configuration of two trombones, flute, percussion, bass and vocals. With an infectious and soaring sound, Mr. Palmieri's band soon joined the ranks of Machito, Tito Rodríguez and the other major Latin orchestras of the day.

Mr. Palmieri's influences include not only his older brother, Charlie, but Jesus Lopez, Chapotín, Lili Martínez and other Cuban players of the 1940s, as well as jazz luminaries Art Tatum, Bobby Timmons, Bill Evans, Horace Silver, Bud Powell, McCoy Tyner, Herbie Hancock and Miles Davis. Equally important were influences derived from Mr. Palmieri's curiosity and incessant search to unearth his family's roots and seek out the origins of the music that profoundly inspired him. Says Mr. Palmieri, "In Cuba, there was a development and crystallization of rhythmical patterns that have excited people for years. Cuban music provides the fundamental from which I never move. Whatever has to be built must be built from there. It's that cross-cultural effect that makes magnificent music." His solid interpretation of Afro-Caribbean music and its confluence with jazz is evident in Mr. Palmieri's astute arranging skills, which assemble those components in dramatic and compelling compositions.

His accomplishments have taken him through Europe, Japan and Latin America, showcasing his assemblage of seasoned musicians and kaleidoscope of musical styles. He served as a consultant to Paul Simon on his 1990 release *Rhythm of the Saints*, demonstrating his interest in expanding recognition of Latin music in its diverse forms.

Eddie Palmieri remains a powerhouse of brilliance and sound that has stirred audiences for 50 years, continually and successfully seeking to captivate and elevate the senses, and taking them down paths of intensity to a place where there are no musical boundaries.



Latin Grammy Award-winner **David Sánchez** is being hailed as "the most profound young tenor saxophonist working today." In a review, world-renowned jazz critic Howard Reich saluted the young bandleader saying, "Technically, tonally and creatively, he seems to have it all. His sound is never less than plush, his pitch is unerring, his rapid-fire playing is ravishing in its combination of speed, accuracy and utter evenness of tone." Such is the acclaim and respect that Mr. Sánchez has engendered from critics, music lovers and fellow artists throughout the world as he continues to push the frontiers of mainstream jazz to incorporate a compelling and rich array of Latin and Afro-Caribbean influences, while remaining true to the tenets of the jazz genre.

Born 36 years ago in Puerto Rico, Mr. Sánchez began playing percussion and drums at age 8 before migrating to tenor saxophone four years later. While a student at the prestigious La Escuela Libre de Música in San Juan, he also took up soprano and alto saxophones, as well as flute and clarinet. The *bomba* and *plena* rhythms of Puerto Rico, along with Cuban and Brazilian traditions, were among the biggest influences on Mr. Sánchez's early taste in music. Sonny Rollins, Dexter Gordon and John Coltrane had the greatest impact on his saxophone playing. "I'm just talking about tenor, now. Charlie Parker is a major influence, of course, and many, many others."

In 1986, Mr. Sánchez enrolled at the Universidad de Puerto Rico in Río Piedras, but the pull of New York was irresistible. By 1988, he had auditioned for and won a music scholarship at Rutgers University in New Jersey. With such close proximity to New

York City, Mr. Sánchez quickly became a member of its swirling jazz scene. He gigged with pianist Eddie Palmieri, sometimes sharing the stage with saxophonist Paquito D'Rivera. At the recommendation of D'Rivera and trumpeter Claudio Roditi, who had admired Mr. Sánchez's performance, Dizzy Gillespie invited the young saxophonist to join his United Nations Orchestra in 1991.

The Departure, his 1995 debut recording for Columbia, gained critical kudos as did the disc's successors, *Sketches of Dreams* and *Street Scenes*. Meanwhile, Mr. Sánchez had begun touring with various jazz greats such as Kenny Barron, Roy Haynes and Elvin Jones and recording with Barron and Haynes, respectively. When he returned to the studio for his next project, the results were notable. Produced by Branford Marsalis, *Obsesión* garnered the saxophonist his first Grammy Award nomination. He followed that album with the Grammy- and Latin Grammy-nominated *Melaza*. In 2001, Mr. Sánchez appeared on high-profile recordings with bassist Charlie Haden (*Nocturne*) and trombonist Steve Turre (*TNT*) before issuing another release on Columbia, *Travesía*, also garnering rave reviews from jazz cognoscenti.

Mr. Sánchez's most recent recording for Columbia, *Conal*, released in August 2004, is the most ambitious manifestation to date of his continuing expansion of the frontiers of mainstream jazz to incorporate Afro-Latin influences. In the project, recorded in Prague and placing his jazz sextet against the backdrop of the City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra, he explores obscure works composed by giants of the Latin American classical genre: Antonio Carlos Jobim, Alberto Ginastera and Heitor Villa-Lobos. In addition, he juxtaposes classical structure with jazz improvisation in three of his original tunes as well as in a composition by Carlos Franzetti, the arranger and conductor for all tracks on the album.

The expression of the jazz sensibility against the backdrop of a classical structure, the hallmark of the *Conal* project, has recently led David to explore other pairings of the jazz and classical traditions. Most recently, David has collaborated with the Alexander String Quartet in performances of the *Focus Suite*, composed by Eddie Sauter and recorded by Stan Getz over 40 years ago, and considered by some to be Getz's finest recording. In the two ensembles' 2004 debut performance of the work in San Francisco, the wildly enthusiastic audience response spawned a performance collaboration between the two groups which continues to thrill concertgoers whenever it is experienced.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Whether with Gillespie, Palmieri, Haden and his other jazz mentors, or under his own name, Mr. Sánchez has continued to tour extensively, bringing his mix of mainstream jazz with Afro-Latin influences to delighted audiences throughout the globe. In summer 2003, he partnered with pianist Gonzalo Rubalcaba for a world tour, which took the two artists to France, Spain, Italy, Slovenia, Russia, Germany, Portugal, Holland, Denmark, South Korea, Hong Kong and Australia before Mr. Sánchez took his own band to perform at the Newport Festival at Madarao, Japan. Later that year, he led his sextet in a triumphal tour of Spain, followed by a week of performances by his quartet in Athens, Greece, and Fort-de-France, Martinique. Performance highlights in 2004 included a European tour, *Latin Landscapes*, with Dee Dee Bridgewater, as well as extensive touring with his own jazz quartet and trio throughout the United States, Brazil, Canada and Europe, extending up to the present.

A prolific composer, Mr. Sánchez composes and arranges for a number of ensemble configurations—instrumental and with vocals—including sextet, quartet, trio and saxophone and piano duo. In rec-

ognition of his prodigious talents, in 2005 he was awarded a grant from Chamber Music America's New Works: Creation and Presentation Program, in which he has been commissioned to compose and present a multi-movement work for jazz sextet. The highly selective and prestigious program is made possible through the generosity of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

Mr. Sánchez has also proven to be a compelling presence with student musicians and continues to be in demand for workshops and master classes throughout the world. In recent years, his academic pursuits have included visiting professorships at the Peabody Conservatory, the Conservatory of Puerto Rico and at Indiana University's School of Music. He has also been a featured artist for Marsalis Jams, a program of the non-profit Music Education Initiative, which takes working jazz ensembles to colleges and universities in the United States for mini-residencies to enhance capability and lend insights to student musicians and to build jazz audiences in general. During the 2005–2006 academic year, Mr. Sánchez will be an Artist-in-Residence at the School of Music at Georgia State University.