

PRESENTS



## **Juan De Marcos Afro-Cuban All Stars**

A World Stage Event

Thursday, February 26, 2009 • 8 pm  
Jackson Hall, Mondavi Center, UC Davis

Support provided by Davis Food Co-op

There will be no intermission.

**Juan de Marcos Gonzalez**, Cardenas Guitar, Tres, Band Leader  
**Miguel Valdes Aballi**, Congas  
**Calixto Oviedo Mulens**, Drums and Timbale  
**Jose Espinosa Martinez**, Bongo  
**Alberto Pantaleon Loran**, Bass  
**Ignacio Herrera Lopez**, Piano and Keyboards  
**Miguel Angel Valdes de la Hoz**, Trumpet  
**Igort Rivas Comas**, Trumpet  
**Alberto Munoz Martinez**, Trombone  
**Jorge Reiner Ardiles Ruiz**, Trombone  
**Emilio Suarez Martinez**, Lead Singer  
**Jose Gil Pinera Leygoniel**, Lead Singer  
**Evelio Galan Castellanos**, Lead Singer  
**Yaure Muniz Rumayor**, Trumpet

*The artists and your fellow audience members appreciate silence during the performance. Please be sure that you have switched off cellular phones, watch alarms, and pager signals. Videotaping, photographing, and audio recording are strictly forbidden. Violators are subject to removal.*

The Afro-Cuban All Stars is a unique orchestra that has always been devoted to promoting the full range of Cuban music, one that embraces several generations and all musical styles. Over the years, many of the band's musicians have become international stars, including brilliant performers such as Rubén González, Ibrahim Ferrer, Guillermo Rubalcava, and Manuel "The Guajiro" Mirabal.

The genesis of the Afro-Cuban All Stars has its roots early in the 1990s. At this time the *son* ensemble Sierra Maestra, headed by Juan de Marcos, received a lot of international exposure. As a consequence, de Marcos was introduced to Nick Gold, president of World Music Records (at that time a small independent world music label). That encounter led to a couple of very successful tours in Europe. Later the group went to London and recorded *Dundumbanza*, considered one of the jewels of the world music scene of the early 1990s. In retrospect, this recording opened the doors to the further incredible boom of the traditional Cuban music of the period. Months later, de Marcos got the go-ahead to do an album celebrating the classic Cuban sound of the 1950s—a recording whose personnel would feature many great musicians that de Marcos knew. An agreement reached, the plan was to prepare two projects: one featuring a Cuban big band, the other favoring a more traditional sound reminiscent of the acoustic style of Nico Saquito or Portabales.

In March 1996, they recorded the album *A toda Cuba le Gusta*, featuring nearly 60 performers. Then, with the addition of celebrated artists such as Compay Segundo, Omara Portuondo, Eliades Ochoa, and legendary American guitarist Ry Cooder, what became the legendary Buena Vista Social Club CD was recorded. Finally, with a small budget, they also recorded the first solo album of Rubén González. This was destined to be one of the most successful of the "Buena Vista" series of recordings.

During the spring of 1997, coinciding with the release in Europe of the three albums, de Marcos and a select group of stellar musicians started touring all over the continent under the banner of a band christened the "Afro-Cuban All Stars." The original line up, familiar from the records, included Ruben González and Guillermo Rubalcava (piano), Orlando López (bass), Amadito Valdés (timbale), Carlos González and Roberto Valdés (bongos), Ángel Terry (congas), Daniel Ramos, Alejandro Pichardo y "Guajiro" Mirabal (trumpets), Alberto "Molote" Martínez and Jesús "Aguaje" Ramos (trombones), and Raúl Planas, Manuel Licea, Pío Leiva, Ibrahim Ferrer, and Félix Baloy (lead singers). After several years of tremendous and unexpected success—including four Grammy nominations, several documentaries and films, and many other distinctions—the All Stars are certainly the best-known and most successful Cuban orchestra in the world.

With the Afro-Cuban All Stars, de Marcos has developed a concept more than simply creating a band. His approach has allowed him to expand his creative range by incorporating contemporary styles of Cuban music, as well as taking a fluid approach to adjusting the orchestra's line-up by changing or adding musicians to best reflect the different styles of music from the various periods the band features. The Afro-Cuban All Stars is the same orchestra that can be seen in those distinct performances captured in the famous Oscar-nominated Buena Vista Social Club documentary by Wim Wenders, the Tony Knox documentary *Salon of Dreams*, or the DVDs *Live in Japan* or *Live in The Hague*.

In 2002, de Marcos founded his own independent label, DM Ahora! Records, through which he has released the Afro-Cuban All Stars' albums *Live in Japan* and *Step Forward* (which was nominated for a Grammy in 2006). He also released *A Diario* and *Goza Pepillo*, projects that represent a new generation of Cuban music, one that fuses hip-hop with contemporary Cuban genres. More recently de Marcos, along with his wife Glicería Abreu, have founded GG and LL, a music production company based in Mexico City that aims to create a space for new Latin American music.

The plans for the Afro-Cuban All Stars include the recording this year of the album *Breaking the Rules*. This documents de Marcos' latest project, in which he has gathered the most remarkable expatriate Cuban musicians from around the world. This new version of the Afro-Cuban All Stars will tour internationally, starting in the United States in February 2009.

#### Juan de Marcos Gonzalez

Juan de Marcos Gonzalez, a central figure in Cuban music for three decades, has set himself a lifetime mission: to show the wealth, diversity, and vitality of Cuban music to the world. His work with super groups and incredible artists such as the Afro-Cuban All Stars, the Buena Vista Social Club, Ruben Gonzalez, Ibrahim Ferrer, Sierra Maestra, and others has had extraordinary success in introducing the whole range of Cuban music around the globe.

Juan de Marcos was born in Havana in 1954 and grew up surrounded by music. In the mid-1970s, he co-founded the group Sierra Maestra. Styled as a traditional Cuban *septeto* group, the band achieved great success, recording 14 albums in Cuba, Africa, and Europe, touring many countries, and receiving various awards. In the 1990s, de Marcos continued to delve into the neglected "golden age" of Cuban music. Things really took off a few years later when de Marco's signature group, the Afro-Cuban All Stars, released *A toda Cuba le gusta* (Grammy-nominated in 1998). This was the first album to be recorded during the now-legendary Buena Vista Social Club sessions, and de Marcos' band proved to be a springboard for the success that followed. Following the album's release, de Marcos led the Afro-Cuban All Stars and the Ruben Gonzalez Ensemble on their debut European and U.S. tours.

Never content to rest, de Marcos continues to develop promising new ideas for Cuban music, which is evolving in exciting ways. In 2005, he inaugurated two innovative new labels: DM Ahora! Records and GG and LL Records. This is typical of de Marcos who, during his career, has arranged, conducted, produced, or co-produced more than 25 albums. His work with the Afro-Cuban All Stars has been nominated for four Grammys, and the band is hailed by jazz bible *DownBeat* magazine for its continued excellence. De Marcos has been responsible for creating and producing some of the most important and seminal recordings of 20th century Cuban music. No one has done more to invigorate the revival and growth of Cuban music than the incomparable Juan de Marcos.