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<http://www.MondaviArts.org/pressroom>

For immediate release:

## Spanish Harlem Orchestra Brings Authentic Salsa to Mondavi Center

*January 10, 2007; Davis, California*—The Grammy Award-winning **Spanish Harlem Orchestra**, one of the world's hottest salsa bands, will play the **Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts at UC Davis**. Formed by musicians who backed up **Tito Puente, Hector Lavoe, Rubén Blades, Celia Cruz, Ray Barretto** and other superstars of salsa music, the New York City-based Spanish Harlem Orchestra is dedicated to playing the authentic sound of salsa, with Afro-Caribbean rhythms, hard-riffing horns, jazz harmonies, and lyrics that sing of the pleasures of the dance floor and the aspirations of the barrio neighborhoods where salsa was born.

The event will begin at 8 pm on February 9 in Mondavi Center's Jackson Hall on the UC Davis campus. Tickets are available from the Mondavi Center Ticket Office at 530.754.ARTS (2787) or online at [MondaviArts.org](http://MondaviArts.org). The event is presented as part of Mondavi Center's **Java City Global Beat** series. There will be a Pre-performance Lecture featuring **Steve Roach**, director of Jazz Studies at **CSU, Sacramento**, beginning at 7 pm on February 9 in the AGR Room of the **Buehler Alumni and Visitors Center**.

Salsa is the dynamic dance music developed primarily by Cuban and Puerto Rican immigrants in New York City during the 1960s and 1970s. Descended from the big band sound of Cuban artists like **Machito, Perez Prado, and Tito Puente**, salsa is characterized by its driving, complex rhythms, often resulting from interlocking patterns played by a brass section and percussionists playing bongos, timbales, and congas. The Spanish Harlem Orchestra was formed at the urging of Latin music producer **Aaron Levinson**, who realized that many of the legends of salsa were passing on and saw the need to establish an orchestra that could uphold their traditions and take the music to a new generation.

Levinson recruited **Oscar Hernández**, perhaps the most seasoned and sought-after pianist, producer, and arranger of his generation in Latin music. In addition to working as pianist, arranger, and musical director for Rubén Blades, Hernández has performed alongside Tito Puente, Celia Cruz, **Julio Iglesias, Juan Luis Guerra, Ray Barretto**, and many others. He is also well-known for his work as musical director for **Paul Simon's** Broadway show *The Capeman*, and produced Simon's *Songs from the Capeman* CD, as well as, the unreleased original cast recording of the play itself.

At Levinson's urging, Hernández formed the Spanish Harlem Orchestra in 2000, and the group quickly established itself as one of the pillars of contemporary Latin music. Using the most accomplished players in the New York Latino community, Hernandez carries on the tradition with outstanding performers like **Ray De La Paz**, **Willie Torres**, and **Marco Bermudez** handling vocals and many of the top musicians on the Latin music scene on the bandstand. The line-up for the Mondavi Center performance will include Hernandez, De La Paz, Bermudez, and Torres, as well as percussionists **George Delgado** and **Jorge Gonzalez**, bassist **Hector "Maximo" Rodriguez**, saxophonist and flutist **Mitch Frohman**, trumpeters **John Walsh** and **Pete Nater**, and trombonists **Jimmy Bosch** and **Dan Reagan**.

The group's first album *Un Gran Dia En El Barrio* ("One Great Day in the Neighborhood") on RopeADope Records was released in 2002, and earned a Grammy nomination for its renderings of songs like **Tito Rodriguez's** "Mama Guela," the **Pedro Flores** bolero "Obsesión," and the **Willie Colón** and **Hector Lavoe** classic "La Llego la Banda." The recording won the 2003 Latin Billboard Award for Salsa Album of the Year and prompted a Best New Group award for the SHO. The group's 2004 CD, *Across 110<sup>th</sup> Street*, which featured Rubén Blades, won a Grammy Award for Best Salsa/Merengue Album.

The Spanish Harlem Orchestra has appeared in Chicago, Connecticut, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Rhode Island, San Francisco, Seattle, Virginia, and toured throughout the United States and in Spain, Belgium, Ireland, Turkey, Holland, France, the United Kingdom, Japan, and China. Appearances in 2003 at the prestigious Montreal Jazz Festival and the legendary Newport Jazz Festival had audiences on their feet and clamoring for more.

"Tito Puente would be proud," wrote the New York Post. "The hard-core sound of '60s and '70s New York salsa — which the king of timbales helped to create — is back with a vengeance. And leading the way is the Grammy-winning Nuyorican band the Spanish Harlem Orchestra."

"Salsa is one of the most dynamic genres in world music today, and the Spanish Harlem Orchestra are among the most exciting and authentic practitioners of the style," said **Don Roth**, the Mondavi Center's executive director. "We look forward to presenting what should be a memorable and exciting performance."

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**What:** Spanish Harlem Orchestra  
**When:** Friday, February 9, 8 pm  
**Where:** Jackson Hall  
Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts  
University of California, Davis  
**Admission:** \$39/\$34/\$29 Adults • \$19.50/\$17/\$14.50 Students, Children  
**Tickets/Info:** 530.754.ARTS (2787)  
866.754.ARTS (toll-free)  
Patrons with disabilities: 530.754.2787  
<http://www.MondaviArts.org>  
530.754.5402 [TDD]

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