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

For immediate release:

Day of the Dead Fiesta with Mariachi Los Camperos de Nati Cano to Play Mondavi Center

October 5, 2007; Davis, California—Famed mariachi ensemble **Mariachi Los Camperos de Nati Cano** will raise the dead and celebrate life in a special **Day of the Dead Fiesta** at the **Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts** at **UC Davis** on October 31. The Grammy Award-winning group, familiar to local audiences from its Christmas-season performances of *Fiesta Navidad* at the Mondavi Center in 2002 and 2005, will perform their tribute to the colorful *Dia de los Muertos* traditions in a presentation featuring vivid costumes, traditional dancers, and fabulous mariachi music.

The event will begin at 8 pm on October 31 in the 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. The event is presented as a Mondavi Center **Global Beat** event. The event will also feature a display in the Rumsey Rancheria Grand Lobby of Day of the Dead art on loan from **La Raza Galeria de Posada** in Sacramento. Patrons are encouraged to get into the spirit of the event with appropriate costumes.

The Mondavi Center Arts Education Program will also present the Day of the Dead Fiesta as part of the 2007-08 **Wells Fargo School Matinee** Series at the Mondavi Center on October 31 at 11 am. Performances in this series support the **California Department of Education** Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards. Teachers, educators, and others interested in purchasing tickets may contact the Ticket Office at 530.754.4689.

The Mexican celebration known today as *Dia de los Muertos* or Day of the Dead has roots going back to rituals practiced by indigenous people at least 3,000 years ago. For the Aztecs and other Meso-American civilizations, death was not the end of life, but only the end of earthly existence and a kind of rebirth, since individuals went on to another, much longer existence in the afterlife. Skulls were kept to honor the dead, who would return to visit the living during the ritual, which lasted throughout the ninth month of the Aztec solar calendar, coinciding roughly with the month of August.

When the Spanish Conquistadors arrived in what is now Mexico about 500 years ago, they brought with them Roman Catholicism, which held different views of death and the afterlife. At first, the Spaniards attempted to put an end to the ritual, but the old beliefs proved difficult to eradicate, so the missionaries worked to Christianize what they viewed as a pagan rite, merging it with the Catholic holidays of All Saints Day and All

Souls Days, traditionally celebrated November 1 and 2. The result has been the *Día de los Muertos*, which is celebrated primarily in rural Mexico but also in parts of Central America and the United States in a variety of ways.

In most observances, the holiday involves visiting the graves of loved ones with candles and flowers, and often gifts and food for the deceased are placed on the grave. In many locations, there is a candlelight procession from a church or the center of town to the graveyard, and very often participants produce altars—small shrines to the departed that may include pictures, flowers, items the deceased person was fond of, small painted skulls made of sugar, toy skeletons, and other items.

The Day of the Dead Fiesta is a stage representation of several aspects of these traditional festivities, featuring dancers of the folk dance troupe **Danza Teoctl** and the nine musicians of Mariachi Los Camperos de Nati Cano, widely considered the world's preeminent mariachi band. The group has appeared on *The Tonight Show* and Grammy Awards broadcasts, and has performed and recorded with **Linda Ronstadt**, **Aaron Neville**, and many others.

Led since its founding by **Natividad “Nati” Cano**, Mariachi Los Camperos has both mirrored and shaped the history of mariachi music. Cano was born in 1933 into a family of mariachi musicians in Ahuiscolco, Jalisco, a small town in rural Mexico, where the mariachi tradition was born and continues to thrive. After beginning his career in nearby Guadalajara, he moved to Los Angeles, where founded the Mariachi Los Camperos nearly 46 years ago.

Noted for accomplished musical arrangements that highlight the individual skills and voices of the players, the ensemble features musicians from Mexico and the U.S., and was one of four mariachi groups that collaborated on Ronstadt's acclaimed recordings *Canciones de Mi Padre* and *Mas Canciones*. Mariachi Los Camperos has recorded 10 albums including *Puro Mariachi* (Indigo Records, 1961); *North of the Border* (RCA/Carino Records, 1965); *El Super Mariachi, Los Camperos* (Latin International, 1968); *Valses de Amor* (La Fonda Records, 1973); *Canciones de Siempre* (PolyGram Latino, 1993); *Sounds of Mariachi* (Delfin Records, 1996); *Fiesta Navidad* (Delfin Records, 1997); *Viva el Mariachi* (Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 2003); and *Llegaron Los Camperos* (Delfin Records, 2004), which was nominated for a Grammy Award. The group was featured on the Grammy Award-winning *cELLABration*, a tribute to **Ella Jenkins**, in 2004.

Performing at the Mondavi Center event will be violinists **Jesus Guzman**, **Jimmy Kyle Cuellar**, **Raul Cuellar**, and **Ismael Hernandez**, **Juan Jimenez** on *guitarron*, harpist **Sergio Alonso**, trumpeters **Javier Rodriguez** and **David Gomez**, and Nati Cano on *vihuela*.

“Los Mariachis Camperos de Nati Cano's performances of Fiesta Navidad have long been audience favorites at the Mondavi Center, and we expect the Day of the Dead festival to be equally moving, festive, and exciting,” said **Don Roth**, the Mondavi Center's executive director.

What: **Day of the Dead Fiesta**
Featuring Mariachi Los Camperos de Nati Cano

When: Wednesday, October 31 • 8 pm

Where: Jackson Hall
Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts
University of California, Davis

Admission: \$44/\$39/\$34 Adults • \$22/19.50/\$17 Students & Children

Tickets/Info: 530.754.ARTS (2787)
866.754.ARTS (toll-free)
<http://www.MondaviArts.org>
530.754.5402 [TDD]

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