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For immediate release:

Perú Negro Brings Exciting Afro-Peruvian Revue to the Mondavi Center

February 20, 2008; Davis, California—The Afro-Peruvian music and dance company **Perú Negro** will bring its colorful celebration of the Peru's African heritage to the **Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts at UC Davis**. Featuring 10 dancers, two singers, and an eight-piece band, Perú Negro offers a high-energy experience of Peru's folkloric history with festive, celebratory dances and exotic, percussion-driven live music.

The concert will begin at 8 pm on March 19 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 part of the Mondavi Center's **Global Beat Series**.

The Mondavi Center Arts Education Program will also present Perú Negro as part of the 2007-08 **Wells Fargo School Matinee Series** at the Mondavi Center on March 19 at 11 am in Jackson Hall. The School Matinee Series is made available for teachers and students, including homeschooled students. 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.

For more than 30 years, Perú Negro has set the standard in Afro-Peruvian music and dance. Founded by **Ronaldo Campos de la Colina** in 1969, the ensemble has been appointed official Cultural Ambassadors of Black Peru by the Peruvian government, and its 2004 CD *Joglorio* was nominated for both a Grammy Award in the World Music category and a Latin Grammy. With a presentation that alternates between seductive, percussion-driven musical performances and high-spirited, brightly costumed dance sequences, Perú Negro brings a world of African-inspired culture to the stage.

"The world feels a little smaller when you watch Perú Negro," wrote the *Washington Post* of one recent performance. "The group hails from Lima, but there's something Cuban in their drumbeats, something African in the way they whip the air with their hips and shoulders, even a bit of the American South in a body-slapping musical routine as near to the hambone as you'll see north of the Carolinas."

Peru's African heritage stretches back to the country's colonial period, which begins with the Spanish conquest during the 16th century. Until slavery was abolished there in 1854, captive Africans were brought

into the country, primarily to work in the country's silver mines, and much like the African slaves brought to the United States, they established distinctive traditions of music and dance that reflected the various cultures of their origins as well as influences from Europeans and local indigenous cultures.

By the 1950s, most African-descended musical traditions in Peru were fading and were practiced by only a few older blacks in private gatherings. But over the course of the next two decades, scholars and musicians began to realize the need to preserve these traditions and the rich potential for artistic expression within them. Inspired in part by the Civil Rights movement in the United States, Ronaldo Campos de la Colina founded Perú Negro with a group of family members to recreate the folkloric history of their ancestors as part of a conscious effort to reclaim and reshape the country's cultural history. Campos de la Colina directed the group until his death in 2001, when his son Rony took over.

The company's repertoire includes both traditional music and new compositions, and features instruments such as the *cajon*, a wooden box drum similar to the fruit crates used by slaves who had been forbidden access to traditional instruments, as well as the African *djembe*, and the *batajón*, a cross between the double-headed Afro-Cuban drum known as the *batá* and the *cajon*. In addition to the intricate, driving percussion, the company's music also features guitars—a staple of both Spanish and Andean traditions—as well as vocals by **Mónica Dueñas** and **Sandra Minaya**.

Also performing at the March 19 Mondavi Center event will be female dancers **Fiorella Ayala**, **Graciela Bramón**, **Milagro Elguera**, **Vanesa Rivadeneyra**, and **Milagros Valdivia**; male dancers **Eder Campos**, **José Durand**, **José Saldamando**, **Luis Urquiaga**, and **Renato Valdivia**; and musicians **Edu Campos** (percussion), **Marco Campos** (percussion and vocals), **Mariano Liy** (bass), **Williams Nicasio** (percussion), **Frank Perez** (guitar), **Edy Sanchez** (guitar), **Edson Saravia** (percussion), and **Lucho Solar** (percussion).

“Perú Negro offers an opportunity to experience the rich music and dance created by the melding of African and Peruvian traditions, and we look forward to a vibrant and exciting performance,” said **Don Roth**, the Mondavi Center's executive director.

What: Perú Negro
When: Wednesday, March 19 • 8 pm
Where: Jackson Hall
Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts
University of California, Davis
Admission: \$39/\$34/\$24 Adults • \$19.50/\$17/\$12 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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