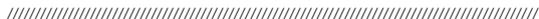




GARY NUÑEZ & PLENA LIBRE

PROGRAM

There will be an intermission.



Saturday, April 25 at 8 PM

Zellerbach Theatre

PROGRAM NOTES

Plena Libre's performance is centered around the influence and development of African rhythms on Puerto Rican music, mostly present through the rhythms called "plena," as well as the 18 different rhythmic patterns contained under the name "bomba."

Using the traditional rhythms as a reference, Plena Libre gives the audience a traditional and modern interpretation, which the group has developed by combining the rhythms with different contemporary and international musical expressions (jazz, cumbia, samba, etc.), all of which define Plena Libre's original style. The performance also includes information about the origins and transformation of these Puerto Rican musical expressions.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Plena Libre

With over 15 albums and a 20-year career, multi Grammy® Award-nominated Puerto Rican ensemble Plena Libre continues to tour the world with no end in sight. Led by founder and bassist Gary Nuñez, Plena Libre is recognized for taking the once dormant Puerto Rican plena style of music and reclaiming it for a new generation of listeners to enjoy. The group became instantly popular in Puerto Rico, with *National Geographic* crediting them among other Puerto Rican acts in "spearheading the Latin invasion of American popular music."

Plena Libre infuses their contemporary Caribbean compositions with a deep sense of unique indigenous musical traditions, known as plena and bomba, which developed on the island over a century ago. Unlike salsa bands, which usually only have two singers, Plena Libre features three vocalists singing in lush three- and four-part harmonies, a musical representation of a traditional community gathering. To further give their live performances a memorable quality, occasionally the entire band will vocalize the percussion parts of the plena, creating an a cappella polyphonic polyrhythm. These artistic choices drive home the core of the tradition with an aesthetic that appeals to broad audiences and aficionados alike. Their aggressive, tight and sensitive style balances the traditional with the contemporary and the global and with the local. Plena Libre creates a brand of music and live performance that is both profoundly Puerto Rican and universally appealing.

Plena Libre has performed in 16 countries around the world, recorded 15 albums and has received four Grammy® and Latin Grammy® nominations.

Gary Nuñez (Founder/Bass Player/Composer/Arranger/Producer/Director)

Although Gary Nuñez graduated from the University of Puerto Rico and then Magna Cum Laude from the Music Conservatory of Puerto Rico, he credits "la calle" (public performance) and his fellow musicians for his true musical knowledge. As a self-taught bass player, Nuñez learned other instruments, such as drums, guitar and vibraphone, before finding his true voice through the cuatro puertorriqueño, a four stringed double bass and the national string instrument of Puerto Rico.

Nuñez has always had his own independent voice and musical vision. Therefore in 1975, while the Latin music world was focused on salsa, he decided to study the history and styles of Puerto Rican music. Nuñez learned to play the cuatro puertorriqueño and developed a group that would become one of the most important strongholds for the development of the "New Song" movement in Puerto Rico, Moliendo Vidrio. With this group, he became involved in the development of two movements that became a part of the music industry in Puerto Rico: the development of musical groups based on Puerto Rico's countryside music, and independent musical recordings outside of the major labels.

In the 1980s, after forming his own salsa orchestra with a typical Puerto Rican flavor, Nuñez developed Caribe Jazz, a jazz project based on the fusion of the musical structure of jazz on top of Afro-Puerto Rican rhythms, a trend that would later be developed by top Puerto Rican jazz performers.

In the 1990s, as a product of plena jam sessions, Nuñez focused on one of the richest, happiest and danceable forms of music in Puerto Rican culture, the plena. Except for extraordinary folklore presentations, the plena had been virtually silent for almost 15 years. In 1994, Nuñez created and designed a new sound, concept and strategy for the plena, and thus Plena Libre was born. Nuñez has been in charge of all the album productions and musical arrangements for Plena Libre, which has led to four Grammy® Award nominations and performances in countries around the world. He has also contributed over 50 original musical compositions performed and recorded by the group, which embody a new lyrical perspective for the plena.

In addition, his work has been included in books that trace the history of Puerto Rico's popular music like *Del Bolero a la Nueva Cancion (From the "Bolero" to the New Song)*, written by Pedro Malavet Vega, and the *Music Encyclopedia of Puerto Rico* by Professor Hector Campos Parsi. Considered to be a musician, an innovator and lover of the Puerto Rican music, Gary Nuñez is always in search of his own voice and identity inside the music world.