



Juan de Marcos & The Afro-Cuban All Stars

PROGRAM

There will be no intermission.



Saturday, May 7 @ 8 PM

Zellerbach Theatre

AFRICAN ROOTS, AMERICAN VOICES

Part of the African Roots, American Voices series.

PROGRAM NOTES

Wherever they play, from the initial note of their first song to the final huge chord of their encore, Juan de Marcos & the Afro-Cuban All Stars have their audience thoroughly in the Afro-Latin groove. Led by Juan de Marcos González, the visionary behind the Buena Vista Social Club, the group features the best of the next generation of hot Cuban musicians. The Afro-Cuban All Stars capture the quintessence of Cuban popular music with brilliance and power. Their electrifying performance pays tribute to the diversity of Cuban music, marrying the past and the present with the grandeur and grace of the world's greatest orchestras.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The Afro-Cuban All Stars (ACAS) is a unique orchestra devoted to promoting the complete story of Cuban music. With each show, the orchestra exposes Cuba's rich musical history interpreting all of its musical genres. Since their inception, many of the group's musicians have become international super stars, including the brilliant performers Ruben Gonzalez, Guillermo Rubalcava and Manuel "The Guajiro" Mirabal.

The Afro-Cuban All Stars genesis was the early 1990s. Back then, Juan de Marcos González was the band leader of a traditional son band, Sierra Maestra. He had always dreamed of creating an album celebrating the classic Cuban sound of the 1950s. So, González leveraged the success of Sierra Maestra and convinced his record label, World Circuit, to make his dream a reality. He went on to develop the Afro-Cuban All Stars concept. González sought out many great musicians, who are now revered worldwide, including Ibrahim Ferrer, Omara, Portuondo and Ruben Gonzalez.

In March of 1996, González and ACAS recorded *A Toda Cuba Le Gusta*, featuring nearly 60 performers. Then, with celebrated artists Compay Segundo and Eliades Ochoa, and noted American guitarist Ry Cooder, the unforgettable *Buena Vista Social Club* CD was recorded. An added bonus was the solo album *Introducing... Ruben Gonzalez*, recorded on a minuscule budget in merely two live sessions with simple orchestrations, conducted at the studio by González. It was destiny, and *Introducing... Ruben Gonzalez* is still one of the most successful of the Buena Vista series of recordings.

In 1997, González and ACAS toured all over Europe with a multi-generational band, ranging from ages 19 to 90. With nearly two decades of tremendous success – including four Grammy® Award nominations, several award-winning documentary films and receiving many other distinctions – the Afro-Cuban All Stars are the best-known Cuban orchestra after Irakere.

With the Afro-Cuban All Stars, González has developed much more than a musical group, he created an institution. With this formula, he stretches his creative wings, fusing contemporary, traditional and, in essence, the future styles of Cuban music. He fluidly adjusts the orchestra's line-up of musicians to best reflect the various styles from the past eras featured in their performances. The current line-up of ACAS consists of the finest Cuban expatriate musicians, all alumni of Cuba's greatest bands. The Afro-Cuban All Stars tell the story of Cuban music to the rest of the world.

Juan de Marcos González is a Cuban bandleader, the architect of the legendary Afro-Cuban All Stars (the foundation for The Buena Vista Social Club) and the founder of another successful Cuban band, Sierra Maestra. To González, music is religious medicine. Finding spiritual solace playing the sacred rhythms of his ancestors, González' compositions often evoke healing memories in his audiences.

As a child in a musical household, González was trained at the feet of the maestros – his father, Marcos González, a singer for Arsenio Rodríguez' Orchestra and his uncle, famed pianist of the Buena Vista Social Club Ruben González. His mission is the preservation of his rich musical inheritance. He arranged, conducted and produced *the Buena Vista Social Club* recordings to fulfill a dream, creating musical tributes that cured like a fountain of youth for those Cuban musicians whose era was thought long gone. González became a bridge builder, connecting the past and the future, the elders with the youth.

González' melodic story authenticates the blessing of his African ancestors. González has a special formula for each and every performance. There is a tremendous fiesta happening on stage, with an all star cast of Cuba's finest musicians including his daughters and wife, culminating in an unforgettable show reminiscent of a night in Havana.