



SPANISH HARLEM ORCHESTRA

Band Leader Oscar Hernández

PROGRAM

There will not be an intermission.

Friday, January 31 @ 8 PM

Zellerbach Theatre

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Spanish Harlem Orchestra

Spanish Harlem Orchestra, the three-time Grammy® winning salsa and Latin jazz band, sets the gold standard for excellence in authentic, New York style, hard-core salsa.

Whether in a concert hall or at an outdoor jazz festival, there is no easing you in; they come at you full force, from start to finish. Their energy on stage, rich sound and musical precision leave audiences mesmerized until the last note is played. With an unwavering respect for the music's storied history, the ensemble's 13 world-class musicians and vocalists come together to create an unparalleled musical experience.

Now celebrating their 15th year, SHO, as they are known to fans, is dedicated to the sounds of the barrio (Spanish Harlem NYC). Their music is characterized by the raw, organic and vintage sounds defined by the genre. They are on a mission to keep the musical legacy of salsa dura (hard salsa) alive and expand its audience to those who love great music, not just Latin music. Grounded in the past, while focused on the future, they strive to keep the music relevant, creating a unique and fresh approach.

With six CD's and multiple Grammy® nominations and wins, this powerhouse orchestra is aware that it is crucial to continually push themselves and raise the bar. Their latest release and sixth album entitled *Anniversary* won the 2019 Grammy® Award for Best Tropical Album.

After two decades of session work, composing, arranging and producing, band leader Oscar Hernández was approached by producer Aaron Levinson in 2000 about the idea of assembling and recording a Latin jazz orchestra. The result was *Un Gran Dia en el Barrio*, the 2002 debut recording from Spanish Harlem Orchestra that scored a Grammy® nomination for Best Salsa Album and a Latin Billboard Award for Salsa Album of the Year. Based on the success of their first CD, Hernández and the SHO began touring and wowing audiences all over the world.

Their first Grammy® win came in 2004 with their follow-up album, *Across 110th Street*, a reference to Harlem's southern boundary. Featuring Rubén Blades as guest artist, the combination has proved to be explosive and featured Blades singing in the style of salsa dura that many of his fans longed to hear.

Released in 2007, *United We Swing* earned yet another Grammy® nomination. The album features Paul Simon as a special guest, singing a burning rendition of his hit *Late in The Evening* SHO style. Their second Grammy® winning album, *Viva La Tradicion*, was released in 2010 on the Concord® Picante imprint. Their 2015 self-titled release *Spanish Harlem Orchestra* on Artistshare® featured jazz legends Chick Corea and Joe Lovano, and their most recent release *Anniversary* (Artistshare®), featuring trumpet great Randy Brecker, was a winner at 2019's 61st Annual Grammy® Awards.

Oscar Hernández (Band Leader)

Oscar Hernández has long been considered one of the most prominent pianists and arrangers in the salsa and Latin jazz scene. He is all about tradition. Born into a large Puerto Rican family living in the Bronx, it was the nearby Spanish Harlem neighborhood that shaped his cultural musical sensibilities. The soundtrack to this bustling enclave in the '60s, emanating from any given window on any given day, was a mix of Latin jazz and American pop radio.

Hernández started playing the trumpet at age twelve; he switched to piano shortly thereafter. By the time he finished his teen years, he was making a living as a professional musician and gigging with some of the most talented Latin jazz artists of the '70's. He spent much of the '80's producing, arranging and playing piano for Panamanian vocalist Rubén Blades while simultaneously leading his own band, Seis del Solar. In the 90's, Hernandez produced a recording titled *Dance Cite*, which received a rare review in *The New York Times* and led Paul Simon to call him as an arranger/producer and musical director for his Broadway show, *The Capeman*.