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Wilson Center presents *Danzón*
featuring Luna Negra Dance Theater, Turtle Island Quartet, and Paquito D’Rivera

Brookfield, WI (October 15, 2009) The **Wilson Center for the Arts** offers a recipe of pure joy and pulsing energy at **8:00 pm on Saturday, November 14**. Take one sizzling Latin dance company, add a dash of an effusive chamber jazz quartet, and a pinch of a prolific composer and performer, and *sopreiza!* You get ***Danzón!*** Chicago’s **Luna Negra Dance Theater**, the **Turtle Island Quartet**, and **Paquito D’Rivera** perform a new work of an old dance as part of the Wilson Center’s Performing Arts Series. Ticket prices are **\$48–\$25; groups of 10 or more \$35–\$25**. For more information or tickets call **(262) 781-9520** or visit **wilson-center.com**.

The *Danzón* has been called the official dance of Cuba, evolving from Haitian contradance into traditional Cuban dance music. *Danzón* has never ceased to influence Cuban musicians, as it can be heard in virtually all popular Cuban music genres. It is this continuity that defines *Danzón* as a living art form. The genesis of the *Danzón* project began in 2002 when the nine-time GRAMMY® winner D’Rivera approached the Quartet with several compositions and arrangements of traditional *Danzón* music. After some improvisational jam sessions at D’Rivera’s home, David Balakrishnan, Turtle Island founder, violinist, and also a composer and arranger, described the alliance as a “wonderful intersection” of classical and jazz sounds and styles. With help from a Chamber Music America grant, a recording and subsequent tour of *Danzón* ensued for the five musicians. Not too long after the recording and the tour, Luna Negra’s founder Eduardo Vilaro heard the music and was inspired to create a project with his dancers. Commissioned by Chicago’s Harris Theater, the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center at the University of Notre Dame, and the Music Center at Strathmore, *Danzón* premieres at the Harris on October 17.

In just ten years, **Luna Negra Dance Theater** has established itself as a significant and vital component of Chicago’s arts and cultural community. Since Vilaro founded Luna Negra in 1999, the

company has served as a springboard for Latino contemporary choreographers to give expression to their stories and bring new life to the cultures of their communities. Steering away from stereotypes and folkloric representations, Luna Negra offers its audiences energetic, powerful, and passionate contemporary Latino dance, reflecting the immense cultural shift that is shaping America in the 21st century.

Luna Negra's distinctive style blends the discipline of ballet with the dynamic movements of contemporary dance, infused with the explosive energy of Latin and Afro-Caribbean dance forms. The company prides itself in presenting the works of renowned Latino master choreographers such as Vicente Nebrada and José Limón, as well as contemporary Latino choreographers Septime Webre, Alejandro Cervera, Michelle Manzanales, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, and others. The company also collaborates with visual artists, media artists, musicians, and composers, including the world renowned Peruvian singer Susana Baca, Chicago Sinfonietta, Tiempo Libre. These collaborations have fostered innovative cross-disciplinary explorations resulting in richly textured and highly original, contemporary dance theater. Luna Negra makes its home in Chicago at the Harris Theater and performs regularly at Ravinia. The company also tours extensively nationally and internationally.

The two-time GRAMMY® award-winning ensemble **Turtle Island Quartet** is made up of David Balakrishnan (violin), Mads Tolling (violin), Jeremy Kittel (viola), and Mark Summer (cello). Its name derived from creation mythology found in Native American folklore, the Turtle Island Quartet, since its inception in 1985, has been a singular force in the creation of bold, new trends in chamber music for strings. Turtle Island fuses the classical quartet esthetic with contemporary American musical styles, and by devising a performance practice that honors both, the state of the art has inevitably been redefined. The Quartet's birth was the result of Balakrishnan's brainstorming explorations and compositional vision while writing his master's thesis at Antioch University West. The journey has taken Turtle Island through forays into folk, bluegrass, swing, be-bop, funk, R&B, new age, rock, hip-hop, as well as music of Latin America and India. It has included over a dozen recordings on labels such as Windham Hill, Chandos, Koch, and Telarc, soundtracks for major motion pictures, TV, and radio credits such as the *Today Show*, *All Things Considered*, and *Prairie Home Companion*, feature articles in *People* and *Newsweek* magazines, and collaborations with famed artists such as D'Rivera, The Manhattan Transfer, pianists Billy Taylor and Kenny Barron, saxophonist Branford Marsalis, the Ying Quartet, and the Parsons Dance Company.

An extraordinarily versatile musician, composer, former child prodigy, and GRAMMY® Award winner, **Paquito D'Rivera's** 50-year musical career has crossed the boundaries of diverse styles of jazz, classical, and Latin music. Born in Havana, Cuba, he performed at age 10 with the National Theater Orchestra, studied at the Havana Conservatory of Music and, at 17, became a featured soloist with the Cuban National Symphony. A founding member of the Orquesta Cubana de Música Moderna, D'Rivera directed that group for two years while also playing both clarinet and saxophone with the Cuban National Symphony Orchestra. D'Rivera was also a founding member and co-director of the innovative musical

ensemble Irakere, which received several GRAMMY® Award nominations in 1979 and 1980, and won a GRAMMY® Award in 1979. In 2007, D’Rivera won his ninth GRAMMY® Award for "Best Latin Jazz Album" with *Funk Tango*, and in 2008, for the third year in a row, he was voted “Clarinetist of the Year” in *DownBeat Magazine* reader’s poll. D’Rivera has been a featured soloist with the London Philharmonic, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra, the Baltimore Symphony, the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Brooklyn Philharmonic. He has also performed with the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra, the Costa Rica National Symphony, the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra, the Bronx Arts Ensemble, and the St. Luke’s Chamber Orchestra, among others. Published by Boosey & Hawkes, D’Rivera has received widespread recognition as a composer, receiving a Guggenheim Fellowship in Music Composition in 2007 as well as an appointment as composer-in-residence at the Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts in 2007-08. He is the author of two books, *My Sax Life* and *Oh, La Habana*. He is the recipient of prestigious awards, including the National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Masters Award and the National Medal of the Arts in 2005; the Jazz Journalist Association’s Clarinetist of the Year in 2004 and 2006; and the Frankfurt Music Prize, the International Association for Jazz Education President’s Award, and the Kennedy Center Living Jazz Legend Gold Medal in 2008. D’Rivera is currently the Artistic Director of the Festival Internacional de Jazz de Punta Del Este in Uruguay and of the Duke Ellington Jazz Festival in Washington, D.C.

Danzón, sponsored by Haack Ventures, Investors Bank, and the Performing Arts Fund, is in the Kuttemperoor Auditorium and is part of the Wilson Center Performing Arts Series. **Tickets are \$48–\$25; group rates start at \$25.**

Photographs of Luna Negra, Turtle Island Quartet, and Paquito D’Rivera are available for print and web.

Attention Calendar Editors

Luna Negra Dance Theater featuring Turtle Island Quartet and Paquito D’Rivera

Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts, Brookfield

Saturday, November 14, 2009 at 8:00 pm

Join the Chicago-based Luna Negra Dance Theater in a new collaboration with the bold and ingenious Turtle Island Quartet, and legendary composer and musician Paquito D’Rivera, to bring a fabulous evening of new music and dance crafted from an old dance form. Tickets are \$48–\$25; groups of 10 or more \$35–\$25. Call (262) 781-9520 or visit wilson-center.com

Other Luna Negra Dance Theater and Turtle Island Quartet events:

Luna Negra school group performances Thursday, November 12, 10:30 am and 12:30 pm

This special performance is designed to engage young audiences in the creative and playful development of several dance pieces, introduced and narrated by the company’s artistic staff. For group or single tickets, contact the box office at (262) 781-9520.

Workshop for Educators Thursday, November 12

Teachers of all disciplines will explore creative ways to use dance throughout the curriculum, engaging students in new and dynamic learning. For information, contact Laura Aaron Sear, Education Director, at (262) 781-9470, x5037.

Turtle Island Quartet Friday, November 13, 8:00 pm

A Love Supreme: The Music of John Coltrane

Part of the Wilson Center Jazz Club; tickets \$25. For tickets, contact the box office at (262) 781-9520, or purchase online at wilson-center.com.

The Danzón performance is supported by the Performing Arts Fund, a program of Arts Midwest funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional contributions from Wisconsin Arts Board, General Mills Foundation, and Land O'Lakes Foundation.



The Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts is a non-profit, multi-disciplinary cultural arts center that offers performances by regional and touring groups, arts education, and an art gallery with changing exhibits. The Center nurtures lifelong learning through innovative programs and classes for all interests, ages, and abilities in state-of-the-art studios and classrooms. Some of Southeast Wisconsin's finest arts organizations offer professional instruction at the Wilson Center, including Danceworks, Inc., First Stage Theater Academy, and the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music. Wisconsin fine artists are showcased at the Hidden River Art Festival in September and in the Ploch Art Gallery with five exhibitions each year. **The Wilson Center for the Arts is just minutes west of Milwaukee, nestled in Brookfield's Mitchell Park south of 198th & Capitol Drive. For information about the Wilson Center call (262)781-9470.**

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