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LATIN JAZZ LEGEND RAY BARRETTO COMES TO UMASS

Jazz-in-July, the two-week jazz study intensive at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst presents **The Ray Barretto Sextet**, at **Bowker Auditorium** on **Thursday, July 14, 2005** beginning at **7:30pm**. **Insight** from Hartford, CT. will begin the evening.

For nearly 40 years, conguero and bandleader Ray Barretto has been one of the leading forces in Latin jazz. Born April 29, 1929, in Brooklyn, NY, Barretto is credited for being the first U.S.-born percussionist to integrate the African-based conga drum into jazz, skillfully balancing his Latin leanings and his love for bebop throughout a long and successful career. He can be found on hundreds of recordings by Gene Ammons, Sonny Stitt, Wes Montgomery and many others.

“Leader or sideman, from Prestige to Fania, Ray Barretto cultivates the double role with rare talent, a double-sided facet of one and the same piece of puzzle, the piece represented by American music’s African roots,” writes Ira Gitler. “Without paling, he can skillfully quote the screwball spirit of Thelonious Monk, and then summon the hammering spirit of Chano Pozo, and never be just a plain copy of either.”

In 1957 Barretto joined the big time, replacing the legendary Mongo Santamaria in the Tito Puente Big Band. At the same time he was exploring modern jazz, becoming a top studio percussionist for heroes like Art Blakey, Lou Donaldson and Kenny Burrell. After several years as the most in-demand hand percussionist in jazz, Barretto formed his first ensemble, *Charanga La Moderna*, in 1962. It was with *Charanga* that he recorded the boogaloo standard, "El Watusi". The song became a huge national hit and helped establish Barretto as a bandleader.

Also during the early 1960s, Barretto began his relationship with New York-based record label Fania, the Motown of Latin music. Over the next decade, Barretto became a member and eventually music director for the label's famed Fania All-Stars. He was inducted into the International Latin Music Hall of Fame in 1999.

Barretto spent nearly three decades with the Fania All-Stars before forming New World Spirit Sextet in 1992, with a rotating cast of top shelf improvisors. The group has released six recordings. *Time Was – Time Is* (Zero Plus) is the most recent. **The Ray Barretto Sextet** features **Chris Barretto**, sax; **Joe Magnarelli**, trumpet; **Robert Rodriguez**, piano; **Rickie Rodriguez**, bass; **Adam Webber**, drums, and special guest, **Adam Kolker**, sax.

Insight is a septet of early-20-somethings, who came together around Hartford to explore new frontiers in Latin, Caribbean, African and jazz music. Since their debut in the summer of 1994, Insight has participated in Havana’s International Latin Jazz Festival (as Chucho Valdes’ guests), performed at the San Jose Jazz Festival, La Peña Cultural Center in Berkeley, Kuumbwa Jazz Club in Santa Cruz and opened for the late Celia Cruz. Band members have toured with Herbie Hancock, Donald Harrison and Miguel Zenon. In spring of 2002, Zaccai Curtis, Insight’s musical director, was commissioned by the Hartford Symphony Orchestra to arrange Rimsky-Korsakov’s “Capriccio Espagnol”, performed by Insight and the Hartford Symphony Chamber Orchestra. Insight features: **Zaccai Curtis**, piano, **Luques Curtis**, bass, **Richie Barshay**, drums, **Reinaldo De Jesus**, congas, **Joel Gonzalez**, trumpet, **Zach Lucas**, alto sax and **Godwin Louis**, tenor sax.

For over two decades, **Jazz-in-July**, offered by the Fine Arts Center at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, has been teaching improvisation to hundreds of talented musicians of all ages in various stages of training and musical backgrounds.

Tickets are \$15/general public and \$8/students and seniors, and are available through the Fine Arts Center Box Office, 1-800-999-UMAS.