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NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Shawn Farley AT 413-545-4159 or
Carolyn Kilmer at 545-3671

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 4, 2006

WHAT: Center Series presents: NEA Jazz Master Paquito D’Rivera, clarinet and Sérgio and Odair Assad, *guitars in Dances from The New World*

WHEN: Thursday, November 9 at 7:30pm, 2006

**WHERE: Concert Hall
University of Massachusetts Amherst
Call 1-800-999-UMAS or 545-2511 for tickets or
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(Dynamic Trio Bring Latin Repertoire to the Forefront in *Dances from the New World*)

The preeminent guitar duo in the world is joined by the preeminent jazz clarinetist in the world in a very special concert at the UMass Amherst Fine Arts center Concert hall on Thursday, November 9th at 7:30pm. In a program called *Dances from the New World*, the trio will perform works by several Cuban and Brazilian composers such as Piazzolla, Ginastera, Sergio Assad and D’Rivera to name a few, as well as, a piece by Aaron Copland. D’Rivera and the Assad brothers will share their thoughts and experiences of collaboration in a pre-performance talk at 6:30pm. All are welcome to attend. D’Rivera appears as part of the NEA Jazz Masters on Tour program.

D’Rivera is primarily renowned for his jazz work, but in his quest to bring the Latin repertoire into the forefront of the classical arena, he has successfully created, championed and promoted all types of classical compositions. The Assad brothers first met D’Rivera during Yo Yo Ma’s “Obrigado Brazil” project, a 2003 Grammy winner. During the “Obrigado Brazil” tours in Europe, Asia and the US, they had several opportunities to improvise backstage with D’Rivera. As Sergio recalls it, “We especially liked to relax and have fun playing Latin American music. After the Brazil project, we decided to continue our musical partnership playing as a trio.”

The winner of four Grammy Awards, Paquito D’Rivera is celebrated both for his artistry in Latin jazz and his achievements as a classical composer. 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.

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D'Rivera co-founded the Orquesta Cubana de Música Moderna and served as the band's conductor for two years. In 1973, he was co-director of Irakere, a highly popular ensemble whose explosive mixture of jazz, rock, classical, and traditional Cuban music had never before been heard. The band toured extensively and in 1979 was awarded the Grammy Award for Best Latin Jazz Ensemble. In 1981, while on tour in Spain, D'Rivera sought asylum in the United States embassy. Since then he has toured the world with his ensembles - the Paquito D'Rivera Big Band, the Paquito D'Rivera Quintet, and the Chamber Jazz Ensemble.

The artistry and unique ensemble playing of the Sergio and Odair Assad have set new performance standards in the world of contemporary music for guitar duos. The brothers have recorded with such famed artists as cellist Yo-Yo Ma, violinist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, clarinetist and six-time Grammy-winner Paquito D'Rivera and Latvian violinist Gidon Kremer. Their repertoire ranges from original pieces written by Sérgio Assad to transcriptions of great pieces written by Bach and Couperin, as well as adaptations of works by Gershwin. Their concerts are distinctive for their blend of musical styles, time periods and cultures. The Assads' 2001 CD *Sergio and Odair Assad Play Piazzolla* was awarded a Latin Grammy. Their 1998 CD with Yo-Yo Ma received a Grammy, and they have collaborated with him on a second CD that features many of the most revered Brazilian artists. The Assads began playing the guitar together at an early age and went on to study for seven years with classical guitarist and lutenist Monina Távora, a disciple of Andrés Segovia. Their international career began with a major prize at the 1979 Young Artists Competition in Bratislava. Now based in Brussels and in Chicago (where Sérgio teaches at Roosevelt University's Chicago College of Performing Arts), they continue to perform regularly in Europe, North America and Japan as well as in Brazil.

Tickets are \$35, \$25, \$15; Youth 17 and under are \$12; and Five College Students are \$15, \$10, and \$7. For tickets and information, call the Fine Arts Center Box Office at 413-545-2511 or 1-800-999-UMAS, or tickets may be safely purchased online at www.fineartscenter.com. This performance is sponsored El Diálogo and 93.9 The River. NEA Jazz Masters on Tour is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts sponsored by Verizon.

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