

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Jorge Luis González at 413-545-4482 or jlq@admin.umass.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 27, 2010

WHAT: CHUCHO VALDÉS and THE AFRO-CUBAN MESSENGERS
WHEN: Tuesday, October 19th at 7:30 PM
WHERE: Fine Arts Center Concert Hall
University of Massachusetts Amherst
TICKETS: Call 1-800-999-UMAS or 545-2511 for tickets or go online to <http://www.umasstix.com/>
IMAGES: To download images relating to this press release please go online to <http://www.fineartscenter.com/centerwide/pressRoom/>

LEGENDARY PIANIST AND COMPOSER CHUCHO VALDÉS PERFORMS FROM HIS NEWEST RELEASE, *CHUCHO'S STEPS*, WITH THE AFRO-CUBAN MESSENGERS AT THE FINE ARTS CENTER CONCERT HALL

"Chucho Valdés, the pianist who is the dean of Latin jazz... has never been anything less than impressive when he has played in New York, showing magnificent power, clarity and speed in his playing." –New York Times

Chucho Valdés' newest release, *Chucho's Steps*, is as much of a discovery for the preeminent pianist as for his audience. In his first solo project since 2003's *New Conceptions*, Valdés speaks through his distinctive and extraordinary compositions and arrangements, reflecting upon his own evolution throughout the previous years. He brings this personal reflection along with his Afro Cuban Messengers to the Fine Arts Center Concert Hall on Tuesday, October 19th at 7:30PM. This performance is part of his first national tour in seven years. There will be an exhibit in the lobby featuring Latin album covers highlighting the beautiful, sexy, colorful, innovative, and creative Latin music graphics. Cuban-American designer, visual artist, DJ and musician, Pablo Yglesias, shares his stunning perspective on Latin album covers and his own personal collection.

Born in Quivicán, Cuba, in 1941, Chucho Valdés is one of Cuba's most famous pianists, bandleaders, composers and arrangers. Having began his music training with his father, famed pianist Bebo Valdés, when he was 3 years old, Chucho's style melds his diverse experiences and skills: classical, jazz, bop, Cuban and swing, all combined by his virtuosic dexterity on the piano. Perhaps best known for founding the influential Latin jazz band IRAKERE in 1972, Valdés continues to develop unique works of art, generating ideas for a change of style, orchestral format and concept that nonetheless end up characteristically reflecting pure Chucho.

While exploring his own growth, Valdés, joined by the Afro-Cuban Messengers,

pays tribute to those that have influenced him and aided his musical development. For example, the title track, a tribute to John Coltrane and his masterpiece *Giant Steps*, rounds off the harmonic structure in 50 bars without repetition. The improvisation and variations heard in this track create the illusion of a concert or suite, while exhibiting the virtuosity of Valdés and the Afro-Cuban Messengers. The upbeat and funky opening track, "Zawinul's Mambo," pays homage to Austrian keyboardist and composer, Joe Zawinul, whom Valdés cites as an integral inspiration to the development of his composition and technique.

"New Orleans," a tribute to the musicians of New Orleans, specifically the Marsalis family, is a walk through the history of the "birthplace of jazz" beginning with Jelly Roll Morton's transformation of ragtime to jazz.

In the opening notes of "Yansa," Valdés and the Afro-Cuban Messengers deftly evoke Yoruba mythology's "Queen of the Wind and Storms." In conjuring this powerful Goddess, Valdés juxtaposes the powerful cacophony of violent storms with the melodic resolution found in the call and response of a chorus. His interpretation of this classic deity weaves the clave rhythm in and out of the composition in a very non-traditional manner, providing a fresh modern insight to an ancient religious belief.

"Julian," a bluesy lullaby dedicated to Chucho's youngest son, is a melodic tune ranging from the lyrical to the playful. The beautiful melody, along with the saxophone and trumpet solos, contribute to the wonder of simplicity inspired by father-son tenderness.

Valdés' appearance marks his return to the US for the first time in seven years. Full tour dates below.

Chucho's illustrious career has garnered him seven Grammy wins and 16 nominations over the past three decades. His most recent wins, a 2010 Grammy and a 2009 Latin Grammy for the record *Juntos para Siempre*, saw him collaborate with his father, Bebo Valdés, a major player on the Cuban jazz scene in his own right. Chucho Valdés has recorded over eighty CD's and performed with everybody who is somebody in the world of jazz, from Herbie Hancock and Dizzy Gillespie, to Wynton Marsalis and Chick Corea. His reputation as one of the greatest living Cuban jazz pianists has earned him appearances on the greatest stages in music, including Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, and The Hollywood Bowl.

Tickets for Chucho Valdés and the Afro-Cuban Messengers are \$35, \$30 and \$15; Five College/GCC/STCC and youth 17 and under are \$10. Tickets are available from the Fine Arts Center Box Office at 545-2511 or 1-800-999-UMAS, or on the Fine Arts Center ticket website at <http://www.umasstix.com/>. This performance is sponsored by El Sol Latino and WEIB 106.3FM and funded in part by the Expeditions program of the New England Foundation for the Arts, made possible with funding from the National

Endowment for the Arts, with additional support from the six New England state arts agencies. For more information about the Chucho Valdés including video, audio and interviews visit fineartscenter.com and www.valdeschucho.com.

For more information, to receive a copy of *CHUCHO'S STEPS*, or to set up an interview with Chucho Valdés, please contact:

Pamela Lipshitz | Lip Service Media | pam@lipservicemedia.com | 917-859-6852

PHOTOS

Hi-res photos available for download:

<http://www.umass.edu/fac/centerwide/pressRoom/index.html>

PRESS PASSES

Limited press passes are available. Please contact Shawn Farley at 413-545-4159 or sfarley@admin.umass.edu

ABOUT THE FAC

The Fine Arts Center, located on the UMass Amherst campus, is a presenter of music, dance, theater and the visual arts, bringing hundreds of outstanding and provocative artists to the Pioneer Valley for over 35 years.

CHUCHO VALDÉS CHUCHO'S STEPS TOUR DATES

DATE	CITY	VENUE
October 9	Urbana, IL	Tryon Festival Theatre @ Krannert Center
October 10	Chicago, IL	Orchestra Hall @ Symphony Center
October 11	San Francisco, CA	San Francisco Jazz Festival @Herbst Theatre
October 14	Irvine, CA	Irvine Barclay Theatre
October 16	Los Angeles, CA	The Luckman Theatre @California State University
October 18	Wilmington, DE	Grand Opera House
October 19	Amherst, MA	Fine Arts Center Concert Hall @ University of Massachusetts at Amherst
October 20	Utica, NY	Stanley Theatre
October 22 & 23	New York, NY	Allen Room @ Jazz at Lincoln Center
October 24	Burlington, VT	Flynn Theatre
October 26	Hanover, NH	Spaulding Auditorium @ Hopkins Center – Dartmouth College
October 28	Boston, MA	Berklee Performance Center
October 30	Washington, DC	The Warner Center
November 1	New York, NY	Village Vanguard