

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 23, 2009

CAPA PRESENTS SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL TREASURE **LADYSMITH BLACK MAMBAZO** FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY AT THE SOUTHERN THEATRE

In a career spanning nearly 30 years, Ladysmith Black Mambazo has recorded 40 albums and sold over six million records. First brought to the attention of an international audience through Paul Simon's *Graceland* recording, Ladysmith's first US album, *Shaka Zulu*, won the Grammy Award for Best Traditional Folk Album. Since then, the group has received 15 Grammy nominations, including a recent nomination for the 2008 Best Traditional World Music Album for their latest CD, *Ilembe: Honoring Shaka Zulu*.

CAPA presents **Ladysmith Black Mambazo** at the **Southern Theatre** (21 E. Main St.) on **Tuesday, February 24**, at **8 pm**. **Tickets** are \$32.50 and \$27.50 at the Ohio Theatre Ticket Office (39 E. State St.), all Ticketmaster outlets, and www.ticketmaster.com. To purchase tickets by phone, please call (800) 982-2787 or (614) 469-0939. The Southern Theatre Ticket Office will open two hours prior to the performance. Students between the ages of 13-19 can purchase \$5 High Five tickets while available. This Spectrum Series performance is made possible through the generous support of series sponsors **David and Mo Meuse**.

Ladysmith Black Mambazo represents the traditional culture of South Africa and are regarded as the country's cultural emissaries at home and around the world. In 1993, at Nelson Mandela's request, Ladysmith Black Mambazo accompanied the future President to the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony in Oslo, Norway. Mambazo sang again at President Mandela's inauguration in May of 1994. They are a national treasure of the new South Africa in part because they embody the traditions suppressed in the old South Africa.

More than 20 years ago, Paul Simon was captivated by the stirring harmonies of Ladysmith Black Mamabazo and incorporated them into his *Graceland* album, a project regarded by many as seminal to today's explosive interest in World Music.

The music sung by Ladysmith Black Mambazo was born in the mines of South Africa and is called isicathamiya (Is-Cot-A-Me-Ya). Men were transported by rail to work far away from their homes and families. Inadequately housed and poorly paid, they would entertain themselves after a six-day week by singing songs into the wee hours every Sunday morning. They called themselves "tip toe guys," referring to the dance steps choreographed so as not to

disturb the camp security guards. When the miners returned to their homelands, the tradition returned with them.

Subsequently, a fierce, but social, singing competition began which became the highlight of the social calendar. The winners were awarded a goat for their efforts and, of course, the adoration of their fans. These competitions are held even today in YMCA assembly halls and church basements throughout Zululand South Africa.

In the late 1950s, Joseph Shabalala left the family farm to work in a factory in Durban. Leaving his family was difficult, but during this time, Shabalala demonstrated a talent for singing. After singing with several groups in Durban, he returned to his hometown of Ladysmith and began to put together groups of his own. In the early years, Shabalala recruited family and friends, teaching them the harmonies from his dreams. With time and patience, his work began to gel into a special sound.

The name Ladysmith Black Mambazo came about as a result of winning every singing competition in which the group entered. "Ladysmith" is the hometown of the Shabalala family; "Black" references the black oxen, considered to be the strongest on the farm; "Mambazo" refers to the Zulu word for ax, symbolic of the group's ability to "chop down" the competition. Eventually, they were forbidden to enter the competitions, but welcomed to entertain.

A radio broadcast in 1970 brought about their first record contract. Since then, the group has recorded more than 40 albums, selling over seven million records and establishing them as the number one selling group from Africa. Their work with Paul Simon on the *Graceland* album attracted a world of fans that never knew that the sounds of Zulu harmony could be so captivating.

Their first album release for the US, *Shaka Zulu*, was produced by Simon and won the 1987 Grammy Award for Best Traditional Folk Recording. Since then, they have received 12 additional Grammy nominations. In 2005, they were awarded their second Grammy Award for Best Traditional World Music Recording for *Raise Your Spirit Higher*.

Long Walk to Freedom (2006) was nominated for two Grammy Awards—Best Contemporary World Music CD and Best Surround Sound Production—and became the sixth best selling World Music CD of that year.

www.mambazo.com

The **Ohio Arts Council** helped fund this program with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, education excellence, and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. CAPA also appreciates the support of the **Robert Bartels, Virginia Hall Beale, and Barbara Clement Memorial Funds of The Columbus**

Foundation, assisting donors and others in strengthening our community for the benefit of all of its citizens, and the **Greater Columbus Arts Council**, supporting the city's artists and arts organizations since 1973.

Owner/operator of downtown Columbus' magnificent historic theatres (Ohio Theatre, Palace Theatre, Southern Theatre) and manager of the Riffe Center Theatre Complex (Columbus) and the Shubert Theater (New Haven, CT), **CAPA** is an award-winning presenter of national and international performing arts and entertainment. For more information, visit www.capa.com.

CALENDAR LISTING

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Tuesday, February 24, 8 pm

Southern Theatre (21 E. Main St.)

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