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Brava presents

Direct from Cuba
Pablo Menéndez & Mezcla
In concert

**A musical celebration of the indestructible bridge of friendship
between the San Francisco Bay and Cuba!**

Special guests include Bay Area's musical greats who have dedicated their lives to this musical friendship – Barbara Dane, John Santos, John Calloway, Greg Landau, Walfredo de los Reyes, DJ Leydis de Cuba and many more!



Plus the Bay Area premiere of David Sandoval's documentary film *Tan Cerca... Tan Lejos / So Near... So Far*, the life story of Oakland born musician Pablo Menéndez

Saturday, October 14, 2017
Brava Theater Center
Tickets: \$25 – \$75

6:30 | Pre-performance reception w/DJ Leydis de Cuba
7:30 | Film Screening, *So Near...So Far*
9pm | Live Concert, Pablo Menéndez & Mezcla

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOGXOJq3sJQ>

<http://www.cubamezcla.org/UPCOMING.html>

At a critical juncture in US-International relations, Brava celebrates the indestructible bridge of friendship between the San Francisco Bay Area and Cuba in a concert featuring Pablo Menéndez direct from Cuba with his world fusion vband, Mezcla, along with some of the Bay Area 's musical giants. Including Barbara Dane, John Santos, John Caloway, Greg Landau, Walfredo de los Reyes, DJ Leydi de Cuba and many more!

Menendez's legendary band, Mezcla mixes Afro-Cuban/Yoruba roots music, rumba, Cuban rock, Cuban Jazz and Cuban new song resisting the commerciality of being defined by one style or sound. With Mezcla, Pablo transforms a long and meaningful artistic life into spiritual richness – building on the strength of traditions while continuing to re-invent the future.

The recent Cuba/USA documentary, *So Near...so far*, about the life of Pablo Menéndez by the award-winning Cuban director Lourdes Prieto and L.A. Chicano filmmaker David Sandoval, will have its Bay Area premiere at Brava Theater Center. The film follows the life of Pablo – born Paul in Oakland, CA, named after Paul Robeson – who arrived in Cuba in 1966 at age 14 to study music for a year and ended up staying there his whole life. Over the last 50 years, Menendez has become a part of the soundtrack of Cuba as a member of such legendary bands Grupo de Experimentación Sonora of the Cuban Film Institute (ICAIC), and Sintesis and a founder and director of Mezcla. His mother, legendary singer Barbara Dane, was the first performing artist to defy the U.S. State Department ban on travel to Cuba after the 1959 Revolution. Her historic 1966 concert tour made her a symbol of the friendship between the US and Cuba. *So Near...so far* reflects Pablo Menéndez' journey and his life story as a “musical bridge” between the two countries.

For Calendar Editors:

What: Direct from Cuba – Pablo Menéndez & Mezcla In Concert; Bay Area premiere of documentary film, *So Near...So far*

When: Saturday, October 14, 2017, 6:30

Where: Brava Theater Center, 2781 24th Street (at York), San Francisco 94110

Tickets: \$25 – \$75 b brava.org

About Pablo Menéndez & Mezcla:

Pablo Menéndez is the son of blues and jazz singer Barbara Dane and the brother of Bay Area Flamenco impresario Nina Menéndez. He has lived in Cuba since 1966 and has been an indelible part of the Cuban music scene for the past five decades. He has participated in the Nueva Trova movement as part of the Grupo de Experimentación Sonora with Silvio Rodríguez and Palo Milanés; the jazz world with Sonido Contemporaneo at the old Club Rio alongside legendary pianist Gonzalo Rubalcaba and others; Afro rock with the group Sintesis (with Carlos and Ele Alfonso) and more. On the basis of this rich experience, Menéndez founded Mezcla in 1989. He also released a solo project on Zoho Music entitled *Havana Blues Mambo*; and under the

direction of Pablo Menéndez, Mezcla has been a part of the Cuban musical landscape for more than 30 years. Mezcla brings together several veteran masters with some of the best young players on the scene today. At home in Cuba, they perform regularly at Havana's premiere jazz club La Zorra y el Cuervo and at the annual Havana Jazz Festival. Mezcla has issued nine recordings with their legendary 1993 release *Cantos* – re-release in 2014 – featuring the late Lázaro Ros, one of Cuba's foremost singers of Afro-Cuban Yoruba santería chants. Their CD *Akimba!*, was pre-nominated for a Latin Grammy in 2002, and their 2010 release *I'll See You in C-U-B-A* was nominated for the Best of Latin Jazz Awards as well as were several of the group's soloists. In 2014, Mezcla released the live concert DVD "Pablo Menendez & Mezcla todos Estrellas del Jazz Cubano"; and in 2015 they released the CD *Pure Mezcla* recorded live at Yoshi's jazz club in Oakland. Mezcla's animated videoclip "See you in C.U.B.A.", created by Juan Padrón and Ernesto Padrón, was a finalist in the prestigious Lucas Awards in 2016. Current band members are percussionist Octavio Rodríguez, violinist and pianist Christopher Simpson, bassist Ibanez Hermida, drummer Ruy Lopez Nuñez, and new members (first time in the US) Lien Diaz and Yuko Fong.

Lien Diaz is said to be the hottest female rumba singer in Cuba right now, and has an amazing background of having been trained and worked as a doctor. She was part of the Afro-Rock band Sintesis, and is now recording on every major musical project taking place in Havana, from Team Cuba (the now deceased all-woman rumba project), to Eliades Ochoa's latest (with an all-star cast of young jazz players). She has sung with Bonnie Raitt, Brenda Russell, Joan Osborne, and with Beth Nielsen Chapman in the movie *Bridge to Havana*.

Yuko Fong is an amazing musician who came to Cuba 17 years ago from Tokyo to study Afro-Cuban dance and music at the University of the Arts in Havana. She has been living in Cuba since then, performing with such Super Afro-Cuban bands as Obini Bata and Rumberos de Cuba; performing and recording with Super "Son" bands such as Ignacio Piñero Septeto Nacional de Cuba; and creating bridges between the artistic culture of Japan and the musical arts of Cuba. One of the most "African" sounding music Mezcla has ever recorded is a composition of Yuko's based on a traditional Japanese poem about Mt. Fuji, *The Moon in the Mist...* or "Oboro Zuki Oh!", where alongside her wonderful singing Mezcla percussionist Octavio Rodríguez sings Rumba in Japanese.

Special Bay Area guests:

Barbara Dane, a legendary folk, blues and jazz singer, was dubbed "Bessie Smith in stereo" by Playboy Magazine jazz critic Leonard Feather in the late 1950s. Time magazine called her voice "pure, rich...rare as a 20-karat diamond." Born in Detroit, Dane moved to San Francisco in 1949 and became a popular singer at clubs along the Embarcadero, landing her first professional jazz job with Turk Murphy at the Tin Angel in 1956. In 1961, she opened her own club, Sugar Hill: Home of the Blues on San Francisco's Broadway, presenting many great musicians including Jimmy Rushing, Mose Allison, and Big Mama Thornton. Throughout her career, Dane has worked with the Chambers Brothers, Earl Hines, Lightnin' Hopkins, Memphis Slim, Willie Dixon, Muddy Waters and many others. She appeared on television on the Timex Jazz show

with Louis Armstrong and was featured on Playboy After Dark, receiving an award from Hugh Hefner as one of the outstanding jazz artists of the year. During all her years singing blues and jazz, Barbara participated in the movements for peace and justice, civil rights and an end to the Vietnam war. She met and performed with Fannie Lou Hamer and in 1966, Barbara Dane became the first U.S. Musician to tour post-revolutionary Cuba. The impact on the Cuban public was indelible and she soon returned to take part in an international festival where she met like-minded singers from all over the world. This led to invitations to tour Europe Mexico, Nicaragua, the Far East and even North Vietnam as the war still raged. In the summer of 2016 – at age 89 – Barbara released a new recording, *Throw It Away*, with a trio led by pianist Tammy Hall, offering new and original material.

John Santos is one of the Bay Area's best known and loved musicians. He is a seven-time Grammy-nominated percussionist, U.S. Artists Fontanals Fellow, and from 2013-14 was the SFJazz Resident Artistic Director. Born in San Francisco, he is one of the foremost exponents of Afro-Latin music in the world today. A prolific performer, composer, teacher, writer, radio programmer and record/event producer whose career has spanned four decades, John has performed and/or recorded with masters such as Cachao, Dizzy Gillespie, Tito Puente, Bebo Valdès, Max Roach, Bobby Hutchinson, John Handy – to name just a few.

John Calloway is a multi-instrumentalist, composer and arranger who has performed with renowned jazz artists Israel Cachao Lopez, Max Roach, Omar Sosa, Dizzy Gillespie, Pete Escovedo, Jesus Diaz, John Santos and Wayne Wallace. As a faculty member at San Francisco State University, John founded the university's Afro-Cuban Ensemble, which has enjoyed wide acclaim and popularity for many years. His recording credits as a performer and composer include his two CD projects, *Diaspora* and *The Code*, and longtime collaborations with John Santos, Jesus Diaz and Omar Sosa. Included in his recording and writing credits are the Grammy nominations given to "SF Bay" (2003) with the Machete Ensemble, and Ritmo y Candela (1996) and Ritmo y Candela II (1998), produced by Greg Landau and featuring Cuban percussionists Changuito, Patato, and Orestes Vilato. He has frequently traveled to Cuba as program coordinator for PlazaCuba, an arts company that offers courses in conjunction with the National School of the Arts in Havana, Cuba. In 2012, the Jazz Journalists Association honored Calloway as a "Jazz Hero."

Greg Landau is an award-winning music/video producer, educator, and music historian with a doctorate from UC San Diego's prestigious School of Communication. Over the last 20 years, he has produced six Grammy nominated CD's and among the over 50 CDs, numerous film sound tracks and videos. He has worked with renowned artists including: Carlos "Patato" Valdez, Maldita Vecindad, Jerry Gonzalez, Kepa Junkera, Buena Vista Social Club Producer Juan de Marcos Gonzalez, Susan Baca, Bobi Cespedes, Dr. Loco, Pete Seeger, Omar Sosa, John Santos, Pancho Quinto, Quetzal, Los Mocosos, Fuga!, Sambada, Manicato, John Calloway and David Byrne's record label Luaka Bop, Vanguard Records, Six Degrees and many others. His musical productions have been featured in films and television including the new Benjamin and Peter Bratt film, La Mission, The Other Barrio, Oliver Stone's Comandante, Survivor: Nicaragua, CSI Miami, The Family Guy, Dexter, Burn Notice, Nash Bridges, Punk', HBO's Hemingway and Gelhorn, and several PBS documentaries

Walfredo de los Reyes, Jr. is a Cuban American percussionist and educator. Dubbed an expert in drum set and auxiliary percussion, he has performed and recorded with numerous bands and is known as a long-term member of Santana. He is a current member of the renowned band Chicago and is the title character in the Phish song “Walfredo.”

DJ Leydis de Cuba was born and raised in Cuba. Involved in the Cuban hip-hop movement since its inception, DJ Leydis helped organize some of Cuba’s most respected events and community programs. In 2005, she co-founded Omegas Kilay, a hip-hop theater collective in Havana. With her partner, DJ Yari, DJ Leydis created the first all-female DJ mixtape in Cuba. She has been a featured subject of the critically acclaimed documentaries such as *Inventos: Hip Hop Cubanò*, *Jovenes Rebeldes y Mi Revolution*. In 2006, DJ Leydis migrated, arriving to the U.S on a small boat, moving to the Bay Area to expand her work as a DJ. She has performed with Erykah Badu, Quest Love, Mos Def, Talib Kweli, and local hip hop sensations Los Rakas and Las Krudas. She returned to Cuba for the first time in March of 2016.