

Saucy, seductive vocalist Susana Baca to perform Afro-Peruvian Music Dec. 1 at UCSD

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"Barefoot on stage, stepping and swaying to seductive Afro-Peruvian rhythms," vocalist Susana Baca "conjures up an air of intimacy ... bewitching her audience with her vibrant and mellow voice," writes World Music.

Susana Baca will perform at 8 p.m. Dec. 1 in Mandeville Auditorium at the University of California, San Diego.

Afro-Peruvian music is distinct for its melodious nature, fusing the folkloric strains of Andean music with Spanish flamenco and African rhythms. "It's a blend," says Baca of Afro-Peruvian music. "Blacks came (to Peru) with the conquerors, so there was the Spanish presence, the black presence, and the Andean presence. For us the emphasis is on black culture."

Baca's Afro-Peruvian creations are complex. Accompanying musicians play guitar, bass and a number of Afro-Peruvian percussion instruments, including the cajon, a wooden box you sit on to play; the calabash, a gourd; the quijada de burro, donkey's jaw, and the cajita, a little wooden box that you open and shut in time. She also incorporates Andean pan pipes, percussion and musical themes to make what she calls Afro-Andean songs.

"No matter what the song," writes On the Town, "(Baca) sings with a seductive, smoky tone."

Baca has devoted considerable time unearthing and preserving the traditions of the Afro-Peruvians, but she insists she is a performer of the present. "These Afro-Peruvian songs are laments and they tell a lot of history," says Baca, "but I am a woman of this time also, a woman of now." Many of Baca's lyrics come from contemporary poets with whom she collaborates.

Born in 1944, Baca grew up in a neighborhood of Lima, Peru, surrounded by music that reflected Spanish, Andean, Indian and her own ancestral African traditions. Her mother danced. Her father played guitar and sang. "Afro-Peruvian music was always around," says Baca, "but it was never in the history books, and never something we learned in school."

Baca set out to discover more about its background, tapping the memories of her parents, relatives and elderly people in the community, recording everything, including songs. She formed a group which combined contemporary poetry with the traditional music.

In 1970 Baca won the sponsorship of the Institute of Modern Art and the National Institute of Peruvian culture, and the following year she won the prize for Best Interpreter of Song in the International Agua Dule Festival.

Baca and her husband and business partner, Ricardo Pereira, formed their own recording label, Pregon; wrote a book, *El Aporte de los Negros a la Cultura Peruana* (The Cultural Importance of Black Peruvians), and established the Centro Negro Continuo (Black Continuum Centre) which is devoted to experimental music, to teaching young people about Afro-Peruvian music, and to recreating instruments and music of past generations.

"We've worked our whole lives to open a window through which to transmit Afro- Peruvian music," says Baca. "Now it's gaining a voice."

"Whether you seek musical accompaniment for a seductive evening by the fire ... or sympathy for the human pursuit of comfort in a hostile world, Susana Baca's haunting voice will provide," writes World Music.

Tickets for the Susana Baca performance are \$17 general admission, \$15 for faculty, staff and senior citizens, and \$12 for students. Tickets are available at the UCSD Box Office, 5348497, and at Ticketmaster outlets at 220-8497. The performance is sponsored by the UCSD University Events Office. For information on the entire season of events sponsored by the University Events Office, visit the website, <http://ueo.ucsd.edu>, or call the UCSD University Events Office at 534-4090.

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