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**Cuban percussion, vocal and dance ensemble
Los Muñequitos de Matanzas at the
Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

April 23 – Two performances only!

First U.S. tour by the ensemble in nearly a decade

(Philadelphia, March 29, 2011) — The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts presents the 16 member Afro-Cuban percussion and dance ensemble **Los Muñequitos de Matanzas** in two special performances on **Saturday, April 23, 2011**. The performances will take place at **7:00 PM and 9:00 PM in the Harold Prince Theatre** and are part of the 2010/11 season at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts. Each show will feature different repertoire by the ensemble. The performance at 7:00 PM will feature ritual rhythms, songs and dances from the Afro-Cuban folkloric heritage. The performance at 9:00 PM highlights Cuban rumba and culminates in a final party with the Carnival rhythm Conga Matancera. Audience members are encouraged to buy a ticket for both performances. Tickets for Los Muñequitos de Matanzas are \$20-\$35. For tickets or for more information, please visit AnnenbergCenter.org or call 215.898.3900. Tickets can also be purchased in person at the Annenberg Center Box Office.

Hailed as the “reigning regents of rumba” by the *San Francisco Chronicle* and “the essence of Cuba’s musical soul” by the *San Diego Union Tribune*, Los Muñequitos de Matanzas are amongst the highest regarded percussionists in the world and masters of Afro-Cuban ritual and rumba music and dance. Founded in 1952, the group currently spans three generations of an extended family of musicians, singers and dancers. The current line-up consists of six singers: Rafael Navarro Pujada “El Niño”, lead singer of the rumba; Israel Berriel González, akpwon; Ana Pérez, also a dancer; Luis Cancino, percussionist and dancer; and José Andro Mella Bosch and Reyniel López González, of the younger generation, previously of the group Rumba Timba. As percussionists the group is already well known to the American public: Agustín Díaz Cano, son of founder “Goyito”; Freddy Jesús Alfonso Borges, son of Jesús Alfonso; Eddy Espinosa Alfonso, son of “Titi,” and Facundo Pelladito Hernandez, also dancer and son of Angel Pellado, a founder of the group. The current dancers are almost all members of the Ramos family: Bárbaro Ramos, Yogilda Vivian, Esther Yamilet, Diosdado Enier “Figurín,” and Luis Deyvis, who started with Los

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Muñequitos at just 3 years old and who, together with Jaime Ona and Yunis Cleivis Ramos, as adolescents and grandchildren of Diosdado confirm the historical status of this group as an institution based on family and religious fellowship.

Named after Matanzas, Cuba, Los Muñequitos de Matanzas last performed in the United States in 2002. Performances at the Annenberg Center are part of a special 16-city North American tour during March and April 2011 that mark the groups return to touring in the U.S after an almost decade long absence. The program, *Tambor de Fuego en Homenaje a los Ancestros* (Drum of Fire in Tribute to the Ancestors), features two performances highlighting work from their latest recording, tributes to legendary members and new pieces created especially for this eagerly awaited tour.

The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

The University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts has been the region's leading multi-disciplinary performance venue for theatre, dance, jazz, world music, new music and children's programming since its inception in 1971. The Annenberg Center's curatorial vision emphasizes four primary values: artistic integrity, cultural diversity, curatorial balance and a willingness to take risks. By presenting world-renowned and cutting edge artists and companies who express adventuresome perspectives on contemporary issues, timeless ideas and diverse cultures, the Annenberg Center promotes critical thinking and dialogue among its audiences, creating a uniquely rewarding arts experience.

The Annenberg Center has achieved national recognition for its outstanding Dance Celebration series (presented in partnership with Philadelphia's Dance Affiliates), touring theatre series, and for its superior offerings for children, including both its Student Discovery Series and the acclaimed 27-year-old Philadelphia International Children's Festival, the oldest festival of its kind in the United States. Through a generous grant from The Wallace Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts, the Annenberg Center also showcases its commitment to local artists each year through its By Local series.

Throughout its history, the Annenberg Center has presented innovative and critically-acclaimed theatre productions with some of the biggest stars of stage and screen including Liv Ullmann and Sam Waterston in *A Doll's House*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* with Glenn Close, Jessica Tandy in Beckett's *Not I*, and Tennessee Williams' *Sweet Bird of Youth* with Irene Worth and Christopher Walken. University of Pennsylvania alumnus and noteworthy Broadway producer and director Harold Prince staged many of his plays at the Annenberg Center before taking them to Broadway.

CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

Los Muñequitos de Matanzas

Saturday, April 23 at 7:00 PM

Saturday, April 23 at 9:00 PM

Harold Prince Theatre at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

After nine long years, the Grammy® nominated rumba ensemble Los Muñequitos de Matanzas returns to the United States with a brand new program: Homenaje a los Ancestros featuring selections from their latest recording, tributes to legendary members and new works created especially for this eagerly awaited tour. Hailed as the "reigning regents of rumba" by the San Francisco Chronicle and "the essence of Cuba's musical soul" by the San Diego Union Tribune, Los Muñequitos de Matanzas are amongst the highest regarded percussionists in the world and masters of Afro-Cuban ritual, rumba music and dance. Founded in 1952, the group currently spans three generations of an extended family of musicians, singers and dancers.

Tickets: \$20-\$35. For more information please call 215.898.3900 or visit www.AnnenbergCenter.org

For further press information or to set up interviews, please contact:

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