

Adrienne Arsht Center

FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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JUST ANNOUNCED FOR SUMMER 2010!

**THE ADRIENNE ARSHT CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
PRESENTS
BABALU
LUCIE ARNAZ CELEBRATES THE MUSIC OF HER FATHER, DESI ARNAZ**

**Starring
Emmy® Award-winner LUCIE ARNAZ with
Tony® Award-nominees RAÚL ESPARZA
and VALARIE PETTIFORD**

**Plus Special Guest
DESI ARNAZ, JR.!**

Hear Desi Arnaz's greatest hits, including the hip-swiveling "Cuban Pete," his signature conga "Babalú," along with the beloved theme from "I Love Lucy," plus dozens of Latin and Broadway standards performed in a live stage show with a sultry Cuban beat!

**July 8 - 11, 2010
Tickets \$35 to \$70
John S. and James L. Knight Concert Hall**

MIAMI, FL May 13, 2010 – The Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County proudly announces the special engagement of **BABALU**, a loving tribute and phenomenal stage show celebrating the extraordinary musical legacy of **Desi Arnaz**. Created, directed, and hosted by **Lucie Arnaz**, **BABALU**'s engagement at the Adrienne Arsht Center multiple Tony Award-nominee and Miami native **Raúl Esparza**, Broadway's Tony-nominated diva of

dance **Valarie Pettiford** and in a rare, special guest appearance, **Desi Arnaz, Jr.** playing percussion on his father's classic hits! With a live 15-piece orchestra playing from the original **Desi Arnaz Orchestra** charts, **BABALU** brings the rhythm of the tropics and the glamour of the Tropicana nightclub to the Adrienne Arsht Center July 8-11, 2010 in the John S. and James L. Knight Concert Hall. Tickets range from \$35 to \$70 and will be available beginning on May 14 to premiere seat holders and members. Tickets go on sale to the general public on May 21, and may be purchased through the Adrienne Arsht Center box office by calling (305) 949-6722, or online at www.arshtcenter.org.

"BABALU is the perfect show for Miami," said M. John Richard, president and CEO of the Adrienne Arsht Center. "This performance celebrates one of America's most beloved entertainment pioneers with the music that made Desi Arnaz a timeless Cuban-American hero. To have his children, Lucie and Desi Jr., starring in this show alongside Miami native Raúl Esparza, ranks this engagement in the Adrienne Arsht Center hall of fame!"

More than 50 years ago, Cuban-born actor, musician, and producer **Desi Arnaz** became a household name, stealing our hearts as conga player and bandleader Ricky Ricardo in one of the most successful television show of all time, "I Love Lucy." From his family's humble roots as exiles in Miami, **Desi Arnaz** built a groundbreaking entertainment empire, revolutionizing the sitcom genre, and introducing the concept of intelligent, charming, hard-working and successful Latinos to audiences everywhere. With his endearing humor, debonair style, and powerful voice, **Desi Arnaz** infused each song with unique panache – and none more so than his signature conga, "Babalu."

The stage production of **BABALU** highlights **Arnaz's** greatest hits and pays homage to the major role he played in planting the first seeds of the Latin music explosion in this country. This extraordinary performance features **Arnaz's** daughter, actress-singer-dancer **Lucie Arnaz**, Broadway star **Raúl Esparza**, fiery *Fosse* femme fatale **Valarie Pettiford**, a rare, special appearance by **Desi Arnaz, Jr.** on percussion, and the *original* musical arrangements from the **Desi Arnaz Orchestra**. With music direction by **Ron Abel**; sizzling performances by local Miami dancers Richard Amaro (*Chita Rivera: The Dancer's Life*) and Jeanette Delgado (principal dancer, Miami City Ballet); and featuring stunning choreography by **Ramon Del Barrio** (NAACP Theater Award winner and choreographer of Academy Award-winning movie musical *West Bank Story*), **BABALU** is a Cuban-flavored theatrical *tour de force*.

Lucie Arnaz, Emmy Award-winning actress, Broadway star, recording artist, and famed nightclub performer created, directed, and stars in **BABALU**. At age 15 she co-starred opposite her mother, Lucille Ball, for six seasons on TV's *Here's Lucy* and went on to create a 45-year career in television, on film, in concerts, and on Broadway. Her famed career includes starring roles in some of Broadway's biggest hits including *They're Playing Our Song*, *The Jazz Singer*,

and *Lost in Yonkers*. **Arnaz** appeared to great acclaim in *The Witches of Eastwick* on London's West End, and in concerts at The White House, in Las Vegas, and at the famed Birdland jazz club and Feinstein's at The Regency in New York. **Arnaz** and her husband/actor Laurence Luckinbill teamed up to form ArLuck Entertainment, a film and television production company, and together produced the Emmy Award-winning documentary "Lucy & Desi: A Home Movie," which has aired on NBC, A&E, and Nickelodeon. In 2001, **Arnaz** partnered with her brother, **Desi Jr.**, to produce the "I Love Lucy 50th Anniversary Special," which also received an Emmy nod. **BABALU**, **Lucie Arnaz's** loving tribute to her famous father, inspired her newest CD, *LATIN ROOTS*, which she produced with musical director **Ron Abel** and released in February 2010 on LML Music.

Since making his Broadway debut in *The Rocky Horror Show* in 2000, Miami native **Raúl Esparza** has taken the theater world by storm. **Esparza** has garnered Tony nominations in all possible acting categories, and has earned multiple awards including the Drama Desk Award, Obie Award, and Outer Critics Circle Award. His Broadway credits include major hits such as *Speed the Plow*, *Cabaret*, and *Taboo*. **Esparza** portrayed Che in the 20th Anniversary national tour of *Evita*, and appeared in two musicals at the 2002 Kennedy Center Sondheim Celebration. He has appeared on TV in NBC's "Law and Order," ABC's "Pushing Daisies," and has a featured role in the new Wes Craven film, "My Soul To Take," which opens later this year.

By the age of 13, **Desi Arnaz, Jr.** was producing hits as a member of the rock trio Dino, Desi & Billy, and soon after became a major television star, appearing with his mother and sister in "Here's Lucy." He is a Golden Globe winner and appeared to great critical acclaim in the movie "The Mambo Kings," in which he played his father alongside Armand Assante and Antonio Banderas. **Arnaz** has appeared in more than 20 TV movies, and performed on Broadway opposite such luminaries as Liza Minnelli and Linda Purl. Together with his wife Amy, **Arnaz** runs the Boulder Theatre and Boulder City Ballet Company in Boulder City, NV.

Valarie Pettiford has illuminated stage, screen and television as one of the finest singer/actress/dancers today. **Pettiford** was a regular dancer with Bob Fosse and a principal dancer in his first national tour of *Dancin'*. Her role in the original Broadway production of *Fosse* garnered **Pettiford** a Tony and Outer Critic's Circle nomination. Other Broadway credits include featured roles in *Sophisticated Ladies* and *Grind*. **Pettiford** made her West End debut as Velma Kelly opposite Chita Rivera in *Chicago*, and has also appeared in numerous films including *Stomp The Yard*, *The Cotton Club*, and *The Wiz*. A multitude of television guest star credits include four seasons on UPN's *Half and Half* which garnered **Pettiford** three NAACP nominations, a featured role on *One Life To Live* and *The West Wing*. Her debut CD, *Hear My Soul*, has been credited for a series of sold out, live concerts in Los Angeles and New York.

CALENDAR LISTING

Adrienne Arsht Center presents

BABALU

Starring Lucie Arnaz, Raúl Esparza, Valarie Pettiford, and special guest Desi Arnaz, Jr.

"Mr. Esparza, whose parentage is Cuban, infused the songs with a fiery theatrical intensity and nostril-flaring passion!" -- *The New York Times*

It's show time at the Tropicana! Hear Desi Arnaz's greatest hits, including the hip-swiveling "Cuban Pete," his signature conga "Babalu," and the beloved theme from "I Love Lucy," plus dozens of Latin and Broadway standards -- performed to a Cuban beat -- in this one-of-a-kind tribute to the most glamorous music of the '40s and '50s.

BABALU is not only Lucie Arnaz's loving tribute to her father, but also a chance for all of us to celebrate Desi's extraordinary musical career and the major role Latin music has played in American pop culture. Joining Lucie on stage is four-time Tony Award-nominated Miami native Raúl Esparza, acclaimed for his performances in the Broadway hits *Company*, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, *Taboo*, and *Cabaret*, plus Broadway star Valarie Pettiford (*Dancin'*, *Fosse*, *Sophisticated Lady*), a pair of smoldering Latin dancers, and a 15-piece band playing all original music from the Desi Arnaz Orchestra.

Thursday, July 8 at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, July 9 at 8 p.m.

Saturday, July 10 at 2 p.m. & 8 p.m.

Sunday, July 11 at 7:30 p.m.

Knight Concert Hall

Adrienne Arsht Center

1300 Biscayne Boulevard, Miami, FL 33132

Tickets: \$35 - \$70

For reservations, visit www.arshtcenter.org or call the box office at (305) 949-6722

Visit www.arshtcenter.org for up-to-date information for details and schedules.

Editor's Note:

Related high-resolution photos are available at www.arshtcenter.org/press and www.mediafire.com/arshtcenterphotos.

Prices, artists, dates, times, and program are subject to change without notice.

Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County is made possible by the public support of the Miami-Dade County Mayor and the Board of County Commissioners, the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Tourist Development Council and the City of Miami Omni Community Redevelopment Agency. The Adrienne Arsht Center also receives generous support from private contributions to the Adrienne Arsht Center Foundation through its Visionary Society membership program and Encore Circle major gifts program; American Express Company; Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; Arison Arts Foundation; Association of Performing Arts Presenters; Bank of America Charitable Foundation; Dade Community Foundation; Doris Duke Charitable Foundation; Ford Foundation; Funding Arts Network; John S. and James L. Knight Foundation; Community Connections Fund of MetLife Foundation; New England Foundation for the Arts; Southern Arts Federation; The Cowles Charitable Trust; The Wachovia Wells Fargo Foundation; the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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About the Adrienne Arsht Center for Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County:

The Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County is one of the world's leading performing arts organizations and venues. Made possible by Miami-Dade County's largest ever public/private-sector partnership, the Center plays host to three resident companies (Florida Grand Opera, Miami City Ballet and New World Symphony, America's Orchestral Academy) in addition to numerous South Florida arts organizations that perform in its theaters regularly. Since opening in 2006, the Center has emerged as a leader in offering and presenting world-class programming that mirrors South Florida's diversity, as a catalyst for development in Miami, and as a host of impactful community and educational programs.

Designed by world-renowned architect Cesar Pelli of Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects, the venue is comprised of the 2,400-seat Sanford and Dolores Ziff Ballet Opera House, the 2,200-seat John S. and James L. Knight Concert Hall, the black box Carnival Studio Theater, a restored Carnival Art Deco Tower, the Peacock Foundation, Inc. Studio, the Peacock Foundation, Inc. Education Center, and the outdoor Parker and Vann Thomson Plaza for the Arts. Events impresario and restaurateur Barton G. Weiss brought his signature style to the Center in 2009 with PRELUDE BY BARTON G, a full-service upscale restaurant open five days a week.

Visit www.arshtcenter.org for more information.