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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**August Wilson Center presents Cuba's Greatest Folkloric Ensemble
Los Muñequitos de Matanzas**

*Three generations of dancers/singers keep alive 500 years of the
African cultural Diaspora intrinsic to Cuba's living legacy*

PITTSBURGH, PA—April 12, 2011—The August Wilson Center for African American Culture will present Los Muñequitos de Matanzas at its Downtown facility on Thursday, April 28 at 8 pm. Direct from Cuba, the 16-member Grammy nominated ensemble will transport audiences to the streets and soul of Matanzas, Cuba, with authentic Afro-Cuban drumming, captivating vocals and spectacular dancing.

While sustaining their cultural heritage, Los Muñequitos de Matanzas' choreography and new musical compositions innovate from the African roots of Cuban culture. In one concert, they may play the rhythms and drumming of the Santería religion, which originated with the Yoruba people; the songs of the Abakuá, a secret fraternal organization originally from Nigeria and contemporary Cuban rumba in its varied and ever-evolving forms.

Matanzas is the capital of the Cuban province of Matanzas, and is officially sister cities with Pittsburgh. The city, located about 50 miles from Havana, is famed for its poets, culture and Afro-Cuban folklore. Matanzas is also known as the "City of Bridges," of which there are 17 crossing over three rivers.

"We're deeply honored to bring Los Muñequitos de Matanzas to Pittsburgh," said Shaunda Miles, Director of Programming and Cultivation at the August Wilson Center. "Connecting to the Pittsburgh region an ensemble so highly revered and esteemed is truly a thrilling experience for us. They truly embody a spirit of cultivation that keeps the flames of culture and tradition burning brightly."

"It promises to be a great evening, representing two Cities of Bridges with three rivers," Ms. Miles added. "Our city has done tremendous work with Matanzas and we are looking forward to continuing this celebration of culture."

Hailed as the "reigning regents of rumba" by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the group's percussionists and dancers are highly regarded around the world for their skill. Los Muñequitos de Matanzas continues a tradition of 500 years of drumming, chanting and dance, preserving the vibrant culture of the African Diaspora intrinsic to Cuba's living legacy.

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Also on that evening, The Center will unveil new work from 2011 August Wilson Center Visual Arts Fellow Alisha Wormsley in the REMIX Right Gallery. The multimedia installation, entitled *The Transformation of Oshe*, explores Afro-Cuban themes. A wine and cheese reception, open to all visitors, will begin at 7 pm.

The exhibition represents the culmination of a year-long anthropological, psychological and artistic journey—between Cuba and the United States. Through the telling of an Afro-Cuban religious narrative, Ms. Wormsley's pieces explore issues of identity, social justice and duality. The exhibit incorporates operatic music, photography, collage and installation.

RECENT PRESS FOR *Los Muñequitos de Matanzas*

[Musical Dialogue Beyond Embargoes, *The New York Times*](#)

[Los Muñequitos de Matanzas Keep Rumba Flame Alive, *San Francisco Chronicle*](#)

[The Arts of Cuba, Set to Wow New York, *The New York Times*](#)

FOR TICKETS TO *Los Muñequitos de Matanzas*

Tickets are \$20-\$30. Call 412.456.6666, visit the Box Office at Theater Square or buy on-line at CulturalDistrict.org. For group discounts, call 412.471.6930. Tickets also are available at the August Wilson Center Box Office, 980 Liberty Avenue, Downtown Pittsburgh, or by calling 412.338.8742.

The August Wilson Center extends grateful appreciation to the following contributors of major support during its 2011 winter/spring season: Allegheny Regional Asset District, The Buhl Foundation and Henry C. Frick Education Fund, The Heinz Endowments, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, Richard King Mellon Foundation, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts and The Pittsburgh Foundation.

ATTENTION MEDIA: Hi-res images are available. Please contact Treshea N. Wade, Manager, Marketing & Communications, at 412.338.8734 or twade@AugustWilsonCenter.org for any interview or image requests.

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About August Wilson Center for African American Culture

Named for Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning playwright and Hill District native August Wilson, the August Wilson Center for African American Culture engages regional and national audiences in its mission of preserving, presenting, interpreting, celebrating and shaping the art, culture and history of African Americans in Western Pennsylvania and people of African descent throughout the world.

Located in Downtown Pittsburgh's Cultural District, the multidisciplinary August Wilson Center is reflective of all aspects of African American culture.

The Center's striking, two-story, green building houses seven exhibition galleries, a 486-seat theater for performances in all disciplines, a gift shop, and multipurpose spaces for education and community programs and events. The Center is among a select few African American cultural institutions presenting visual and performing arts, the humanities and educational programs in a state-of-the-art venue.

The August Wilson Center – At The Center of It All!

More information is available on The Center's website at AugustWilsonCenter.org and by calling 412.258.2700.