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Grammy Award Winning Jazz Flautist Nestor Torres to perform at Soka University of America

Aliso Viejo, CA – On Saturday, October 1, 2005 Jazz flautist and Latin Grammy-winner Nestor Torres will be performing at the Peace Gala **“Celebrating a Vision of Peace”** at Soka University of America as an expression of his commitment to support the development of youth through education and cultural exchange.

Jazz flautist and Latin Grammy Award winner Nestor Torres has been captivating audiences with his sensual mix of Latin, jazz and pop sounds for more than fifteen years. Blessed with handsome features, a warm smile and a charismatic demeanor, this remarkable virtuoso has earned a devoted following. By transforming the flute’s role in the contemporary musical landscape, Torres has practically established a new genre of popular music.

Torres was born in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, in 1957. He took flute lessons at age 12 and began formal studies at the Escuela Libre de Música, eventually attending Puerto Rico’s Inter-American University. At 18, he moved to New York with his family. “That’s where I first developed my improvisational skills as a *charanga* (Cuban dance music) flutist,” he says. “In *charanga*, the flutist improvises a great deal — the focus of his solos are to make people dance. Even when I play today, my approach is still very rhythmic and melodic.”

Torres went on to study both jazz and classical music at the Mannes School of Music in New York and the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, among other places.

He moved to Miami in 1981, and signed with PolyGram, where he released *Morning Ride* in 1989. His major label debut climbed quickly to the top of the *Billboard* Contemporary Jazz charts and soon brought him widespread acclaim. Tragedy struck a year later when an accident in a celebrity boat race left him with eighteen fractured ribs, two broken clavicles and a collapsed lung. His record company dropped him, he and his wife divorced, and his home was nearly repossessed.

An outpouring of sympathy followed from the community, including a benefit concert staged by a local radio station and individuals who stepped forward with money to save Torres’ home. “An appreciation for life and a realization that we are all interconnected is the greatest legacy of that experience,” he says. “I also learned firsthand about the value of the people behind the scenes — the nurses, my family and friends, and especially my fans. Were it not for them, I would not have been able to overcome this difficult situation.”

Torres began the long recovery process and released *Dance of the Phoenix* in 1990. In 1994, he recorded *Burning Whispers* for Sony. His Latin-jazz composition “Luna Latina” was nominated in 2000 for a Latin Grammy. A year later, he won a Latin Grammy for *This Side of Paradise*, a bittersweet victory given the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington at the time.

“Of course it was a great honor and privilege to win the Grammy,” Torres reflects. “That being said, the fact that I was to receive it on 9/11 gave my work and my music a stronger sense of mission and purpose. Terrorism and violence come from ignorance, anger, arrogance and hopelessness. Music and culture inspire and empower; they soothe the human heart and enlighten the spirit. I have made it my prime point to create music and live my life as an artist and a human being in a way that does just that.”

Mi Alma Latina: My Latin Soul, a compilation of Latin standards that proves he’s still in touch with his heritage, was released in 2002.

Torres' Heads Up debut, *Sin Palabras (Without Words)*, set for release in March 2004, features a re-working of the Latin classic "Contigo Aprendí," the Alejandro Sanz hit "Regalame La Silla Donde Te Espere," and nine original tunes. In addition to Torres' fine musicianship, the album features a number of talented producers, including James Lloyd (from Pieces of a Dream) on seven tracks, Carlo Pennisi from Miami and Jimmy Haslip (of Yellowjackets).

"Carlo has a very fresh sound and a European sensitivity that appeals to me a great deal," Torres says. "Jimmy, Danny and Baby Boy are a unique writing team with an impressive and impeccable pop music approach. James Lloyd is a master. His work with Pieces of a Dream has consistently been on top of the charts. Plus, he's a great producer and a lot fun to be around."

Torres has worked with everyone from Tito Puente to Gloria Estefan and many contemporary jazz greats. He still performs at benefit concerts all over the world, most recently at the Youth Concert for Peace in Jakarta.

"These types of activities are wonderfully rewarding and fulfilling," Torres says. "I enjoy people, I enjoy serving and consider it a blessing to be able to make a difference."