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**SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK RETURNS TO CAL PERFORMANCES**  
**SUNDAY, MAY 6 AT 7:00 P.M. AT ZELLERBACH HALL**

**SchoolTime: One-hour Performances for Bay Area Students Will Be Given  
On Monday, May 7**

**BERKELEY, April 6, 2012**—The soulful and ever-relevant a cappella group **Sweet Honey In The Rock** returns to Cal Performances **Sunday May 6 at 7:00 p.m.** at **Zellerbach Hall**. For decades the group has inspired and educated listeners with their immense repertoire pulled from the Civil Rights Era, and based on work songs, spirituals, gospel, blues, jazz and love songs. The spirited ensemble, currently a sextet composed of vocalists **Ysaye M. Barnwell, Nitanju Bolade Casel, Aisha Kahlil, Carol Maillard** and **Louise Robinson** plus sign language interpreter **Shirley Childress Saxton**, has inspired listeners with powerful and uplifting music since 1973. Sweet Honey In The Rock's "songs lead us to the well of truth that nourishes the will and courage to stand strong," said Harry Belafonte. Their program will be announced from the stage.

A one-hour *SchoolTime* performance for Bay Area K-12 students will feature select songs by Sweet Honey In The Rock on **Monday, May 7 at 11:00 a.m.** at **Zellerbach Hall**. Tickets are \$5.00 and must be arranged in advance; for further information, call 510.642.9988.

For over 36 years, **Sweet Honey In The Rock** has been a vital and innovative cultural presence in Washington, D.C., their home base, and in communities around the world. Founded by **Bernice Johnson Reagon** as an addition to her vocal workshop, the group has weathered the test of time due to its unwavering commitment to the struggle for justice, stunning vocal prowess, soulful harmonies and intricate rhythms. Steeped in the sacred music of the African American church and the clarion calls of the Civil Rights Movement, "great Black music is what we sing—a *cappella* style with a political ring," says Nitanju Bolade Casel. Reagon retired in 2004 and the remaining singers decided to continue performing.

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Sweet Honey In The Rock has recorded more than 20 albums in addition to various projects, special appearances and collaborations in film, books and music. The group won a Grammy Award in 1989 for work on the Smithsonian Folkways/Columbia recording, *Vision Shared: A Tribute to Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly*. In 2009, Sweet Honey was invited to participate in the first concert of Barack Obama's presidency in the White House in honor of Black History Month, to which First Lady Michelle Obama remarked that the group is a "national treasure." The group composed an original song entitled "My Family" for the HBO television special *A Family Is a Family Is a Family: A Rosie O'Donnell Celebration* that debuted in January 2010. In the current 2012 season, they are performing with the National Symphony Orchestra, their first concert with orchestra.

**Ysaye M. Barnwell** is a native New Yorker now living in Washington DC, where she has, since 1979, performed with Sweet Honey In The Rock. She appears as a vocalist and/or instrumentalist on more than 25 recordings with Sweet Honey and other artists. Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, **Carol Maillard** attended college in Washington DC, at the Catholic University of America, where she studied violin and majored in drama. A founding member of Sweet Honey In The Rock, she rejoined the group full time in 1992. **Louise Robinson** is a native New Yorker who began her relationship with music in the children's choir at church. A founding member of Sweet Honey In The Rock, Robinson left the ensemble intermittently, starring in and off Broadway productions as well as touring and performing with the vocal ensemble Street Sounds, which she founded in 1989. After 26 years, Robinson returned to Sweet Honey in 2004.

**Nitanju Bolade Casel's** extensive training, research and teaching experience in African-derived traditions has its base in those pioneering communities of the late 1960s that led the way to redefining and making accessible African expressive culture in the United States. Joining Sweet Honey In The Rock in 1981, **Aisha Kahlil**, vocalist, composer, dancer/choreographer and teacher, came as an extraordinary vocal innovator with an impressive range to explore jazz, blues, African traditional and contemporary vocal styles and techniques. **Shirley Childress Saxton** is a veteran professional sign language interpreter, having learned American Sign

Language from her deaf parents. She began working as sign-language interpreter for Sweet Honey In The Rock in 1980. Additional information can be found at [sweethoney.com](http://sweethoney.com).

### **TICKET INFORMATION**

Tickets for **Sweet Honey In The Rock** on **Sunday, May 6 at 7:00 p.m.** in **Zellerbach Hall** range from **\$20.00 - \$58.00** and are subject to change. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988; at [www.calperformances.org](http://www.calperformances.org); and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$5.00 discount (Special Events excluded). For select performances, Cal Performances offers UCB student, faculty and staff, senior, and community rush tickets. Rush tickets are announced three hours prior to a performance on Cal Performances' Facebook page and at 510-642-9988 and are available in person only at the Ticket Office beginning one hour before the performance; one ticket per person; all sales are cash only. For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit [www.calperformances.org](http://www.calperformances.org).

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Cal Performances thanks Wells Fargo, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and Bank of America for their major support of the Season.

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**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

### **CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

**Sunday, May 6 at 7:00 p.m.**

**Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus**  
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

*World Stage*

**Sweet Honey In The Rock**

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**Ysaye M. Barnwell**  
**Carol Maillard**  
**Nitanju Bolade Casel**  
**Aisha Kahlil**  
**Louise Robinson**  
**Shirley Childress Saxton**

**Program:** The women of Grammy-winning Sweet Honey In The Rock return with their soulful and inspirational music.

**Tickets:** Range from \$20.00-\$58.00 and are subject to change. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at [www.calperformances.org](http://www.calperformances.org); and at the door.

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**Monday, May 7 at 11 a.m.**  
**SCHOOLTIME PERFORMANCE**

**Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus**  
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

**World Stage**  
**Sweet Honey In The Rock**

**Program:** Sweet Honey In The Rock presents a special one-hour performance for schoolchildren.

**Tickets:** \$5.00 per student or adult chaperone, available in advance only through Cal Performances at (510) 642-1082. *SchoolTime* performances are open to students in kindergarten through grade 12 in Bay Area public and private schools. Supplemental study guides for the classroom are provided. For more information about the *SchoolTime* program, contact the *SchoolTime* coordinator at Cal Performances by email at [eduprograms@calperfs.berkeley.edu](mailto:eduprograms@calperfs.berkeley.edu) or by phone at (510) 642-0212.

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