



Saturday, September 30, 2017, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

Lila Downs

Lila Downs, *lead vocals, jarana, guiro*
Paul Cohen, *music director, saxophone*
Rafael Gomez, *electric and acoustic guitars*
Luis Guzman, *electric bass*
Sinuhe Padilla Isunza, *jarana, chaquiste, quijada de burro, acoustic guitar, zapateado*
Leo Soqui, *accordion, jarana, keyboards, zapateado*
George Saenz, *trombone, accordion*
Josh Deutsch, *trumpet*
Jerzain Vargas, *trumpet*
Nikeiltha Campbell, *percussion*
Yayo Serka, *drums*
Rocio Marron, *violin*
Felicia Rojas, *violin*

*This program will last approximately 90 minutes
and be performed without intermission.*

Cal Performances' 2017–18 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.



Lila Downs has one of the world's most singular voices and innovative approaches to music. Born in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico, she is the daughter of a Mixtec Indian woman, Anastasia Sanchez, who ran away from her village at age 15 to sing in Mexico City *cantinas*, and Allen Downs, a University of Minnesota professor. Lila grew up both in Minnesota and Oaxaca, and studied classical voice and cultural anthropology at the University of Minnesota. Her music and vocal artistry have many influences and are as varied as the ancient cultures that serve as her inspiration. Downs' compositions are often striking commentaries on social conditions, reflecting migration and the search for roots as a core human need. She makes an important and deep connection with her fans, who are of all ages, races, and backgrounds. "I am very fortunate," Downs says. "People who follow our music belong to all walks of life. Every day we connect with them."

For two decades Downs has traveled throughout the world, reinterpreting the roots of music, from blues, jazz, and soul to *cumbia*, rock, and even rap and klezmer music. She weaves various musical forms together with traditional Mexican and native Mesoamerican music, singing in Spanish, English, and the languages of the Mixtec, Zapotec, Maya, and

Nahuatl cultures. Downs' tremendous voice and the originality of her compositions create a musical presentation that is highly innovative and unique. Hard to define, she is not simply a Mexican artist, a jazz, blues, or a world music artist—there is no real way to categorize her music except to say it is an exciting fusion of international sounds and musical genres.

Downs has recorded nine studio albums, earning a Grammy Award and four Latin Grammys. She has also won numerous honors for her live performances, including the Lunas del Auditorio de México, Prix Miroir (Festival d'été de Québec), and the Antônio Carlos Jobim Award (Montreal Jazz Festival).

Downs' current album, *Salón Lágrimas y Deseo*, sees her as regal and defiant as ever, combining the staggering power of her instrument with interludes of spoken word, smoldering duets, and sensual *boleros*. Speaking of her current work, Downs says, "I ended up making an album that is very much feminine in spirit. I've grown up in a field dominated by males, many of whom are difficult to deal with. As a result, I learned to become strong and stubborn. I fought those men, but I also learned from the vast knowledge that they have. This album mirrors my point of view—my existence, the specific way in which I ended up experiencing life."

Downs has performed at many of the world's most prestigious music festivals and venues. She has sung at the White House, and performed on the Latin Grammys telecast (2012) and at the 75th Academy Awards, where she performed the Oscar nominated song "Burn It Blue" from the movie *Frida* with Caetano Veloso. Her music has been included in several other feature films, including *The Counselor*, *Tortilla Soup*, *Real Women Have Curves*, *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada*, Carlos Saura's *Fados*, *Mariachi Gringo*, and *Hecho en México*.

Other artists with whom she has collaborated in recordings and concerts include the San Francisco Symphony, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Mercedes Sosa, Carlos Santana, Juanes, Enrique Bunbury, Café Tacuba, Los Tigres del Norte, 1 Giant Leap, Wynton Marsalis, Niña Pastori, Angélique Kidjo, Kevin Johansen, and Juan Gabriel.