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**THE AIDS HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION AND ITS AFFILIATES CALOR AND LOUD AFFINITY GROUP TO SPONSOR SONES DE MEXICO ENSEMBLE'S 2017 GALA CELEBRATING 23 YEARS IN THE SERVICE OF MEXICAN MUSIC AND CULTURE WITH A GALA DINNER DECEMBER 9 AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MEXICAN ART**

*The event will honor Henry and Juanita Roa with the organization's first ever "Keepers of Culture Award" and feature a specially created gourmet dinner prepared by Chef Dudley Nieto, a silent auction and an intimate concert by Sones de México Ensemble drawn from their 1997 debut album ¡Que Florezca! (Let it Bloom).*

**CHICAGO—Sones de México Ensemble**, the nation's premiere Mexican folk music organization specializing in the preservation and promotion of regional Mexican "son", will celebrate 23 years in service of Mexican music and culture as a multi-faceted educational and performing arts organization on **December 9 at 6pm at the National Museum of Mexican Art, 1852 W. 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Chicago**. The gala event, titled *¡Que Florezca! (Let it Bloom)* after their first album, will take as its theme the creative blossoming of the organization as a champion of Mexican folk music and culture.

*¡Que Florezca! (Let It Bloom)* is presented with the generous support of the **AIDS Healthcare Foundation** and their affiliates **CALOR** and **LOUD**. Additional support is provided by the **Wintrust Bank–Pilsen** branch for financial aid in the group's guitar program for youth.

"We appreciate the vision of the AIDS Healthcare Foundation and their affiliates CALOR and LOUD in supporting our community work" explains Queta Rodriguez Bauer, Board President of Sones de Mexico Ensemble. "The health of a community begins with your physical wellbeing, but it doesn't end there. A whole person lives in tune with its community and has a sense of

belonging. A cultural program like ours allows communities to learn more about their own culture and the culture of others and to find richness in diversity”

“Flowers have a symbolic meaning in Mexican culture,” adds Juan Díes, co-founder and executive director of Sones de México “They represent a compliment, poetry and song, love, youth, fertility, death and rebirth. We named our first album *¡Que Florezca!* to mark our creative birth in Chicago as four Mexican immigrants who found unique and fertile soil here in which to plant our seed. Now, with this gala, we will revisit that planting and celebrate everything that has happened since as well as prepare for our future growth.”

**Henry Roa and his late wife Juanita Roa** have long been important advocates of Mexican folk music and dance in Chicago. The couple will be presented with Sones de México’s first ever **Keepers of Culture Award** for a lifetime of service to Chicago’s Mexican-American community that included a role in the development of seminal organizations like Cuerdas Clásicas and the Mexican Folkloric Dance Company of Chicago. Mr. Roa has served on Sones de México’s Board of Directors since 1998.

The silent auction will include such rare items as a **vintage guitarrón** built by famed luthier **Roberto Morales**, a signed and numbered print by the great Mexican muralist **David Alfaro Siqueiros**, a private wine tasting, and a 5-night stay at a fabulous private **three bedroom home in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico**. For those who can’t attend the gala, the organization is providing the opportunity for supporters to bid on items in advance online at [sonesdemexico.com/auction](http://sonesdemexico.com/auction).

A special 5-course menu will be created by **Chef Dudley Nieto** for this event, with each course utilizing flower essences from Mexico and inspired by the four themes that Sones de México Ensemble used in structuring the *¡Que Florezca!* album: Concheros, Huapango, Mariachi and Negritud. Each of them symbolizes the three major ethnic contributions to Mexican culture.

The evening will conclude with an intimate recital by Sones de México Ensemble that will feature a suite of songs drawn from *¡Que Florezca! (Let it Bloom)*

#### **ABOUT SONES DE MÉXICO ENSEMBLE:**

The group is Chicago’s premier folk music organization specializing in Mexican ‘son,’ a genre encompassing the roots of mariachi music and other regional styles, including *huapango*, *gustos*, *chilenas*, *son jarocho*, and more. The ensemble was formed in 1994 and soon incorporated as a non-profit organization to keep the tradition of Mexican ‘son’ alive in its many regional forms. As a performer and recording artist, they have developed and popularized many original arrangements of Mexican traditional tunes. Its original work has experimented cross-culturally with symphonic, Irish, folk, blues, C&W, jazz and rock, though never abandoning its roots in Mexican son.

The group has released six CDs: *¡Que Florezca! (Let it Bloom)*; *Fandango on 18th Street*; the GRAMMY® nominated *Esta Tierra Es Tuya (This Land is Your Land)*; *Fiesta Mexicana* (a children’s album); *¡Viva la Revolución!*; and *13 B’ak’tun*.

The organization is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization with a commitment to teaching. The

mission of Sones de México Ensemble is to promote greater appreciation of Mexican folk and traditional music and culture through innovative performance, education, and dissemination.

For more information, visit [www.sonesdemexico.com](http://www.sonesdemexico.com)

**ABOUT THE AIDS HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION AND AFFILIATES:**

AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF), a global AIDS organization, currently provides medical care and/or services to more than 400,000 individuals in 36 countries worldwide in the US, Africa, Latin America/Caribbean, the Asia/Pacific Region and Eastern Europe. CALOR (Comprensión y Apoyo a Latinos en Oposición al Retrovirus) is a recognized leader in HIV/AIDS support services on Chicago's west side. LOUD seeks to address the social and health disparities that remain a threat to Latino Communities through innovative strategies and community mobilization.

For more information, visit [www.iamahf.net](http://www.iamahf.net)