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YBCA FORUM

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YERBA BUENA
CENTER FOR
THE ARTS

DIANA
GAMEROS
EDWARD
SIMON
CARLOS
VARELA
AURELIO

SF
SONIDO
FEST

WELCOME TO YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Our organization was founded in 1993 as a citizen institution that would be home to the diverse local arts community while serving to connect the Bay Area to the world. YBCA's mission is to generate culture that moves people. We believe that culture—a collection of art, traditions, values, human experiences, and stories—is what enables us to act with imagination and creativity, to act socially, politically, and with conviction. Culture instigates change in the world.

We believe that more and different kinds of people need to be defining culture today and that more people need to have access to cultural experiences that are relevant to their lives and their communities. We need new definitions and new experiences that bring people together regardless of their differences in order to make the inclusive and equitable culture we need today. We believe that the arts should be on the front line of change and that cultural institutions exist to spur and support big societal movements. Through powerful art experiences, thoughtful and provocative content, and deep opportunities for participation, we are committed to kindling inclusive culture that cultivates empathy, awakens personal and societal transformation, and reaches for a world fueled by inspiration. The need has never been stronger than now, and there is no better place than YBCA to answer the call. We are so glad that you are here. We are grateful for your cultural participation, and we hope you will come back and enjoy all that YBCA has to offer.

Warmly,

DEBORAH CULLINAN
CEO of YERBA BUENA
CENTER FOR THE ARTS



Photo by Hanna Quevedo

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1

DIANA GAMEROS I AM HOME: A MUSICAL REFLECTION ON LOVE, MIGRATION, AND IDENTITY

Diana Gameros, singer-songwriter
Danny Cao, trumpet
Thomas Edler, upright and electric bass
Andrew Maguire, vibraphone, drums,
percussion
Patrick Wolff, clarinet, tenor sax
Amaranth String Quartet
Emily Botel, violin
Abigail Shiman, violin
Erica Zappia, viola
Helen Newby, cello

AWESÖME ORCHESTRA COLLECTIVE

David Möschler, conductor
Nick Carnes, French horn
Jeremy Carrillo, trombone
Nat Echols, bassoon
Ashley Ertz, oboe
Jenny Hanson, flute
Bin Love, tuba
Danny Cao, trumpet
Thomas Edler, upright and electric bass
Andrew Maguire, drums, percussion
Patrick Wolff, clarinet, tenor sax

Emily Botel, violin
Abigail Shiman, violin
Erica Zappia, viola
Helen Newby, cello

Patrick Wolff, horn arrangements on
SB1070, *Ligerita*, *I Begin*, and *Para Papa*

Yvette Holzwarth, orchestral
arrangement of *SB1070*

Minna Choi, string arrangement of
Medley of Traditional Mexican Tunes and
orchestral arrangement of *En Juárez*

Nahuel Bronzini, string arrangement of
Libre y Serena

Susana Aragón, lobby installation

Claudia Escobar, video clips

Cosponsors: Sol Food, Cypress Private
Security, The Curious Company

A NOTE FROM THE CURATOR

ISABEL YRIGOYEN
MUSIC CURATOR

How do memories shape us? How do we feel when we remember the color of a particular sky, the flora and fauna we breathed and walked among as youngsters, the sounds of a street, our grandmother's hands, our best friend's laughter? These memories are engraved in our bodies like tattoos. When we leave home to travel a long distance and returning is no longer possible, we feel *saudade*, a Brazilian expression that captures the feeling of longing, of feeling connected to our roots and culture when we are far away. When you have to make a new life in a new place, how do you find home? These are some of the questions that Diana Gameros explores so eloquently through her melodious ballads. These are songs that travel through your mind and reach the heart, songs that stay with you and become part of you, that are capable of changing you, that can awaken something buried or that you thought was dead. Gameros sings like a bird calling home, telling stories of borderlands, of Mexico, and of love. You're in for a treat! Enjoy!

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

*I Years had been from Home
And now before the Door
I dared not enter, lest a Face
I never saw before*

*Stare stolid into mine
And ask my Business there—
“My Business but a Life I left
Was such remaining there?”*

[...]

*I laughed a crumbling Laugh
That I could fear a Door
Who Consternation compassed
And never winced before.*

—EMILY DICKINSON, *Home*

In January 2018 I will receive the last official US document I need to travel outside the country. I will be going to Mexico for the first time in fifteen years to visit my childhood home in Ciudad Juarez, where my family still lives.

Recently I discovered the Emily Dickinson poem I shared above. As I read, I found companionship. I felt understood. The uncertainty and other emotions Dickinson powerfully reveals in her stanzas accurately describe my own, as I prepare to stand “before the door” of my own distant home. After such a long time away, what should I expect when I return to Ciudad Juarez? Will I feel on some level out of place, as I did when I first moved to the United States as a teenager? Will the home I have longed for still feel like “home”?

Amid the many unknowns and feelings that come up as my return to my homeland gets closer, there is one feeling that brings me to a place of peace, and that is the feeling of gratitude. Gratitude for the opportunity to go back, for the lessons I have learned while away, and for the countless expressions of love I have received in my adoptive land.

May the music we are presenting tonight bring comfort to those who are in search of “home,” and may the hearts and minds of those who have found “it” be open to welcome, support, and love those who are still on the journey.

—DIANA GAMEROS

SONGS

¿CÓMO HACER?

¿cómo hacer que la vida perdure
(que nada ni nadie escasee)?
si nadie es eterno
nada nuestro

how can we make life last?
(so nothing and no one is scarce)
if no one is eternal
nothing is ours

¿cómo hacer que el que camina vuele?
¿cómo hacer que las fronteras se
evaporen?
y caminar sin prisa al hogar
sin miedo llegar

how can we make the walker fly?
how can we make the borders dissolve?
so he/she can walk home
fearless

¿cómo hacer que mi tierra me perdone?
¿cómo hacer para que su jardín ya vuelva a
florecer?
y hacerle saber que lejos duele
decirle también que vivo por volver a verle

how can i make my land forgive me?
how can we make her garden flourish
again?
how can I let her know as well that far
hurts,
that i live to see her again

LIGERITA

una hoja en blanco es lo que necesito
donde la ansiedad y la apatía se oculten
donde la ansiedad
y la impaciencia se refugien

a blank sheet of paper is what i need
where anxiety and apathy can hide
where anxiety
and impatience can take refuge

aliviando mis pesares va la hoja de papel
convirtiéndose en aliada
de los asuntos del ayer

there goes the sheet of paper, alleviating
my sorrows
becoming an ally
in the matters of the past

ligerita quiero ser
ligerita quiero ser
así de blanca como una hoja de papel

i want to be light
i want to be light
and white as a blank sheet of paper

una hoja en blanco
es lo que yo te pido
donde la soledad y el corazón se junten
donde la soledad y la conciencia se dibujen

y que escriba sobre mí la vida
que en mi cuerpo marque su alegría, su
placer
blanca he de ser, blanca he de ser
para que escriba en mi la vida
para que escriba en mi la vida

ARTIST PROFILES

Originally from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, **DIANA GAMEROS** is a singer, guitarist, and composer. Gameros creates authentic, inspiring music that reflects the twenty-first-century experiences of an indie artist at the borderlands between cultures, languages, and genres. Now living in the Bay Area, Gameros has played with many local favorites, including the Oakland East Bay Symphony and the Magik*Magik Orchestra, and has opened concerts for Bebel Gilberto, Latin Grammy winners La Santa Cecilia, Latin Grammy nominee Ximena Sariñana, and many others. In 2013 she released her first album, *Eterno Retorno*, a soulful retrospective of her journey as an immigrant. In October 2014 she received the Emerging Leader Award from the Chicana/Latina Foundation for her work in music and her support of social justice movements. Gameros's songs and stories have been featured on NPR's *All Songs Considered*, NPR's *Alt. Latino Podcast*, Public Radio International's *The World*, and PBS *NewsHour*. She is currently writing music for her second album, which will be coproduced by the Mexican songwriter Natalia Lafourcade.

AMARANTH QUARTET was founded in 2013 and strives to present classical music to diverse audiences in a variety of locales. Mentored by the Cypress String Quartet and members of the Ives Quartet, they have received additional guidance from members of the Kronos, Pacifica, Brentano, Concord, and St. Lawrence String Quartets. Amaranth Quartet firmly believes in the importance of community engagement. They are actively involved in and committed to outreach at grade schools across the United States. Commissioning and premiering new music for string quartets is essential to its mission. Beyond bringing the established string quartet repertoire to life, Amaranth Quartet is committed to working with a diverse group of Bay Area artists. Collaborators include Amy LaCour, Kendra McKinley, Diana Gameros, Madeline Tasquin, and Nahuel Bronzini. Amaranth Quartet is fiscally sponsored by the San Francisco Friends of Chamber Music. amaranthquartet.com

DANNY CAO is a trumpeter, singer, composer, arranger, and producer, born, raised, and living in San Francisco. His current projects include the DU UY Quintet, Inspector Gadje, Istanbul Connection, Mission Delirium, and Manicato. He has worked with Vinyl, LoCura, Bayonics, Royal Jelly Jive, J. C. Hopkins, Mars Villa, Big Bones, and many San Francisco Bay Area groups. duuy.net

THOMAS EDLER is a bassist living and playing in San Francisco. He relocated to this city in 1997 from Milwaukee, where he studied jazz with Richard Davis and Gerald Cannon. He studied classical performance with Shinji Eshima (San Francisco Ballet, San Francisco Opera) and Catherine McGinn (Milwaukee Symphony). He has played and recorded with George Braith, Vincent Davis (Roscoe Mitchell, Von Freeman), John Kruth (Violent Femmes, TriBeCaStan), Diana Gameros, Berkeley Fudge, Indianna Hale, Symphony Parnassus, and many other Bay Area jazz, folk, and rock musicians.

ANDREW MAGUIRE is a freelance percussionist living in Oakland. He was most recently the drummer for the 2014–15 national tour of the Broadway musical *Anything Goes*. When in the Bay Area, he is active on drums, mallets, and percussion with many local theater companies and in the Magik*Magik Orchestra, with whom he has joined ODC Dance and Zoe Keating, Gregory Alan Isakov, and Pop-Up Magazine's live shows. He is also a house session musician at John Vanderslice's Tiny Telephone Studios in San Francisco and Oakland. He records and tours regularly with Mirah and has played with Van Dyke Parks, the Kings of Convenience, Thao & the Get Down Stay Down, and the Oregon Symphony. He studied at the University of Miami Frost School of Music (BM) and the Henry Mancini Institute in Los Angeles. andrewmaguire.net

PATRICK WOLFF is a saxophone and clarinet player rooted in the bebop tradition, with a long history in the New York jazz scene. He has worked with Matt Wilson, Albert "Tootie" Heath, Peter Bernstein, Grant Stewart, Josh Roseman, Dean DeRose, and many other jazz greats.



Photo by Joan Cerqueiro

Since moving to San Francisco in 2009, Wolff has appeared regularly with Marcus Shelby, Adam Shulman, and Diana Gameros. With four albums released under his name, he is making his mark as a bandleader with a sextet playing his original compositions, and with a classic jazz quartet focused on obscure and forgotten repertoire. He teaches at the Stanford Jazz Workshop and the College of San Mateo, and hosts the weekly show *Have You Heard* on KCSM 91.1 FM, exploring the work of emerging and underrated jazz artists. patrickwolffmusic.com

DAVID MÖSCHLER is an award-winning freelance conductor and musical director, based in the San Francisco Bay Area, with more than one hundred professional productions in the Bay Area and in other regional theaters. Recent music direction

credits include working with American Conservatory Theater, San Francisco Playhouse, San Jose Repertory Theatre, and Shotgun Players, among many others. Möschler served on the music staff of College Light Opera Company of Cape Cod for seven seasons, and is now resident musical director for YMTC Berkeley and on faculty at Academy of Art University. Möschler has premiered more than forty new works, and has recorded orchestral accompaniment for a dozen full-length albums and live performances with artists such as Sly and the Family Stone, Van Dyke Parks, Inara George, James Williamson, Beats Antique, Casey Crescenzo and the Dear Hunter, and the Harry Nilsson Family. davidmoschler.com, awesomeorchestra.org



Photo by Scott Chemis

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2

EDWARD SIMON AND ENSEMBLE VENEZUELA WITH SPECIAL GUESTS MARIA ALEJANDRA RODRIGUEZ AND JACKELINE RAGO

Edward Simon, piano
John Ellis, tenor saxophone and bass clarinet
Marco Granados, flute
Jackeline Rago, cuatro and maracas
Roberto Koch, bass
Henry Cole, drums
Maria Alejandra Rodriguez, guest vocalist

Edward Simon's composition *Venezuelan Suite* was made possible with support from Chamber Music America's 2005 New Jazz Works: Commissioning and Ensemble Development Program, funded through the generosity of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

Edward Simon representation:
Hans Wendl Produktion, hanswendl.com

A NOTE FROM THE CURATOR

ISABEL YRIGOYEN
MUSIC CURATOR

Venezuelan music has a wonderful heritage, boasting some of the most gifted and versatile musicians from Latin America and the Caribbean, where music is a part of everyday life. Wherever you travel, music rings out from the cities, the countryside, schools, and street corners, and you're sure to run into a soulful singer who plays the four-stringed national instrument known as the cuatro, accompanied by a mesmerizing maraca player and the cheerful twang of the Venezuelan harp. Every state of Venezuela has its own particular rhythm, dance tradition, and influences characteristic of that region, creating a rich and joyful cacophony of sound that is rooted in place and in song.

Tonight we present a group of extremely talented musicians from Venezuela. Some reside in the Bay Area, others in Venezuela, some elsewhere in the United States. They perform their own contemporary music, rooted in the gorgeous folkloric music of the country. Led by the remarkable pianist Edward Simon with his Ensemble Venezuela, this evening is a special tribute to the people of Venezuela, who are right now facing such a difficult moment in their history. I hope that tonight's concert is a respite for those who are affected by the ideology of hatred. I truly believe that artists can bring people together through their music and art. This group of artists show the camaraderie and solidarity that has always been characteristic of ordinary Venezuelans, and we're honored to bring forth this positive energy that is so needed right now. Enjoy!

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The music of Venezuela has yet to gain the wider renown of many other beloved Latin American musical traditions, but jazz pianist-composer Edward Simon aims to change that with Ensemble Venezuela. Simon—a Guggenheim Fellow and member of the SFJAZZ Collective, as well as leader of his own fine bands—blends the color-rich lyricism and rhythmically buoyant sounds of his native Venezuela with the harmonically sophisticated, forward-looking manner of jazz.

The sound of Ensemble Venezuela is distinctive, with the bright timbre of traditional Venezuelan instruments—including harp, flute, and cuatro—mixed with the darker sounds of jazz saxophone, piano, double bass, and trap drums. Simon notes that even though his music fluctuates between sounds more familiar to jazz and sounds more familiar to the folkloric, “the goal is always an integrated, holistic sound. Latin American music has such rhythmic vitality, and when you combine that with the harmonic richness and real-time invention of jazz, it yields a profoundly beautiful mix—a real best of both worlds.”

Ensemble Venezuela is a band of remarkably versatile musicians from the worlds of both jazz and Venezuelan music. Simon explains: “In a band like this, who fills the drum chair is key, and I can't think of anyone better for this than Adam Cruz. We've formed a strong rapport after several years of playing together. He knows so many traditions and can combine jazz and Latin music in an informed, seamless, personal way. Playing tenor saxophone and bass clarinet is John Ellis. He's an experienced jazz improviser who has lived in New Orleans, so he has that city's feel for the music of the Caribbean. I met bassist Roberto Koch in Venezuela. He is one of the most respected bassists there today and was essential for translating the language of Venezuelan music to jazz. The flute is a common lyrical voice in Venezuelan music, and Marco Granados is a classically trained flutist with a beautiful sound. Piano, bass, and drums aren't the traditional rhythm section in Venezuelan music—it's cuatro, harp, and maracas. The cuatro and maracas are taken very seriously in Venezuela, and I feel fortunate to have the Bay Area's own Jackeline Rago playing both of them with great expertise and passion.”

ARTIST PROFILES

EDWARD SIMON made his first recording as a leader in 1994 (*Beauty Within*, Audioquest), giving birth to the Edward Simon Trio. That same year he took third place in the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Piano Competition. Since then he has founded several other jazz ensembles, including the Edward Simon Quartet, Ensemble Venezuela, and Afinidad. Subsequently Simon became interested in the folk music of his native land, Venezuela. In 2003 he founded Ensemble Venezuela, an outlet for exploring the marriage between jazz and Venezuelan music through new works and arrangements of works by Venezuelan masters. Two years later he was awarded a second grant from Chamber Music America to compose and perform the “*Venezuelan Suite*,” a work that ranges across jazz, chamber music, and Venezuelan folk music.

In 2010 Simon was named a Guggenheim Fellow by the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. That same year he became a member of the SFJAZZ Collective, a prominent musician-composer jazz ensemble dedicated to creating new work and highlighting the music of historically significant jazz composers of the modern era. The collective is comprised of “eight of the most in-demand” (*New York Times*) artists performing today. Simon’s latest project is *House of Numbers*, a series of pieces for jazz quartet and chamber ensemble, commissioned by a 2014 Chamber Music America New Jazz Works grant. Performed by Afinidad and the acclaimed Imani Winds, *House of Numbers* premiered in September 2016 at the University of the Pacific’s Brubeck Institute in Stockton, California. Edward Simon is a Yamaha Artist.

The versatile saxophonist, clarinetist, and composer **JOHN ELLIS** occupies a space directly between the celebratory, welcoming spirit of New Orleans and the edgy, frantic streets of New York. Both as the leader of his own eclectic projects and as an in-demand sideman for a mind-boggling number and variety of artists,

Ellis expresses a keen intellect and easy virtuosity while maintaining a mischievous gleam in his eye and never letting tongue stray far from cheek.

MARCO GRANADOS, a native of Venezuela, maintains an active international career as a soloist, chamber musician, and educator. His diverse repertoire spans from classical to folk, with Latin American music his specialty. He is currently a member of the innovative Chamber Ensemble Classical Jam, and was a founding member of the Amerigo Ensemble, the Camerata Latinoamericana, and the Granados/ Abend Duo. Granados has collaborated with the Cuarteto Latinoamericano, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and such distinguished artists as Paquito D’Rivera, flutist Ransom Wilson, harpist Nancy Allen, oboist Heinz Holliger, flutist William Bennett, soprano Renée Fleming, and baritone Dwayne Croft. The first musician to have appeared as soloist for three consecutive seasons with the New York City Symphony at Alice Tully Hall and Merkin Concert Hall in New York, Granados has also appeared as a soloist with Philharmonia Virtuosi of New York, members of the Cleveland Orchestra, the Juilliard Chamber Orchestra, the Haydn Festival Orchestra of Maine, and L’Orchestra in the Berkshires, among others.

JACKELINE RAGO, a native of Venezuela, is a multi-instrumentalist, composer, arranger, producer, and educator who specializes in Venezuelan folk music as well as music from other countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Prior to moving to the United States, she spent years studying the Venezuelan national stringed instrument the cuatro and mandolin at the Manuel Antonio Carreño Primary School. While in Venezuela, Rago also pursued studies in Afro-Venezuelan percussion under folklorists Hector Pacheco and Alexander Livinalli from the Fundación Bigott in Caracas. In addition to her cuatro and mandolin expertise, Rago is an accomplished percussionist and vocalist. She is the artistic and musical director of the Venezuelan Music Project and a founding member of the VNote Ensemble (formerly the Snake Trio).

ROBERTO KOCH, born in Caracas, is considered one of the most versatile bassists in Venezuela. Graduated from Escuela de Música Lino Gallardo in Caracas, and with a master’s degree in jazz performance from Jazzcampus in Basel, Switzerland, he has played with many of the most prominent artists and groups in Venezuela, including Aldemaro Romero, Simón Díaz, Alcides Rodríguez, Alexis Cárdenas, Eddy Marcano, Gualberto Ibarreto, Cecilia Todd, Claudia Calderón, Ilan Chester, BAK Trío, C4 Trío, and Ahonda. He has appeared on more than fifty recordings. He has also played and/or recorded with many Venezuelan jazz artists, such as Pablo Gil, Gerry Weil, Leo Blanco, Pedro Eustache, Roberto Quintero, Orlando Poleo, Alfredo Naranjo, and Andrés Briceño, and many international artists, including Paquito D’Rivera, Dave Samuels, Edward Simon, Dave Kikoski, Steve Khan, Mike Stern, Adam Rogers, Anat Cohen, Mike Holober, Rudi Berger, and Wolfgang Muthspiel. He has presented workshops on Venezuelan music at the Berklee College of Music and the University of Tokyo, among other schools.

HENRY COLE, drummer, is at the forefront of a growing wave of jazz innovation and cross-cultural rhythm in the twenty-first century. With his flexibility, grace, and sheer power behind the drum kit, he has proven indispensable to the sound of some of the world’s most acclaimed jazz groups, including the Grammy-nominated Miguel Zenón Quartet (*Awake, Esta Plena*, Alma Adentro), Grammy winner David Sánchez (*Cultural Survival*), the Alfredo Rodríguez Trio, and the all-star quartet 90 Miles featuring David Sánchez, Stefon Harris, and Nicholas Payton. Cole is also asserting himself as leader of the Afrobeat Collective, which released its debut album *Roots Before Branches* in 2012. Drawing on the raw groove and momentum of Fela Anikulapo Kuti as well as the depth and complexity of modern jazz, Cole strives with the Afrobeat Collective to integrate his varied influences, from Puerto Rican folklore to funk, R&B, jazz, and Afro-Caribbean rhythmic traditions. henrycolemusic.com

MARIA ALEJANDRA RODRIGUEZ is one of the most important Venezuelan singers of her generation. Her taste and expressive vocal approach have made her a favorite among world music lovers in South America. She was born in Maracay, the “Garden City,” in the state of Aragua, Venezuela. She comes from a musical family and is the grandniece of the acclaimed Venezuelan popular music composer Enrique Hidalgo. She began in music very early, when she joined the instrumental group Wenca, but singing has become her greatest passion. She has shared stages with several renowned international artists, among them Gal Costa, Dulce Ponte, and Teresa Salgueiro. In the Venezuelan musical scene, she has accompanied Aquiles Báez and Gerry Weil, among others. She has performed at numerous festivals, concert halls, and clubs in Brazil, Cuba, France, and the United States. She has recorded five albums to date, including the successful *Canciones de Enrique Hidalgo*.



Photo Courtesy Graffiti Music Group

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3

CARLOS VARELA THE POET OF HAVANA

CARLOS VARELA'S BAND

Carlos Varela, lead, guitar, vocals

Aldo López-Gavilán, piano

Julio Cesar González, bass

Roberto Luis Gómez, electric guitar

David Suarez, drums and percussion

A NOTE FROM THE CURATOR

ISABEL YRIGOYEN
MUSIC CURATOR

It is an honor and a wonderful moment for us here at YBCA to present one of the most enduring and powerful singer-songwriters from Havana, who is making a rare visit to San Francisco. Carlos Varela has been an inspiration to me personally, as a Cuban-born immigrant to the United States and an admirer of his gorgeous songs, many of them widely famous in the Latin world and in Spain, but lesser known in the United States. A poet has the ability to unite people, to bring forth a spirit of hope and humanity, to inspire us to live fully and be better. Varela does this with his songs, opening our ears and hearts, giving weight to universal stories as well as advocating for individual freedoms, human rights, and social justice.

Varela's songs have been interpreted by famous artists around the world, including Joaquín Sabina, Ana Belén, Miguel Bosé, Ana Torroja, Luis Enrique, Pablo Milanés, Jackson Browne, and many others. It is rare for San Franciscans to hear this type of sound outside of Cuba; audiences in Northern California are more familiar with typical Cuban dance music. But Cuba has a diverse musical palette—that is one of its cultural gifts to the world—so I'm very excited for those of you who are not familiar with it to hear this music, and to welcome those who love Varela's songs to be captivated once again by this thrilling artist and humanitarian. Enjoy!

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Cuban singer-songwriter Carlos Varela showcases a contemporary, rock-affiliated musical style that he developed called *novísima trova* (newer song), an evolution of *nueva trova* (new song), the Cuban postrevolutionary folk music of the early 1960s created by Silvio Rodríguez and Pablo Milanés. Varela's music was first introduced to a larger public by the legendary—indeed, superstar—Cuban singer-songwriter Silvio Rodríguez when he took the young Varela on tour with him throughout the Latin world in the late 1980s.

The 2014 documentary *The Poet of Havana*, directed by Ron Chapman, shown in conjunction with this concert, celebrates Varela's thirty years in music, featuring interviews with Jackson Browne, Benicio del Toro, Ivan Lins, Luis Enrique, and other Cuban artists, who discuss one of Cuba's most beloved contemporary artists.

Uplifting and defiant, at times soothing and at others explosive, Varela is courageously outspoken in the manner of a true revolutionary, albeit one who now finds himself in the curious position of sometimes being critical of the ongoing (fifty-seven years now) revolution in his own country. Songs that have become classics include *Una Palabra*, *Monedas al Aire*, *Muros y Puertas*, *Muros*, *Tan Joven y Tan Viejo* (cowritten with Joaquín Sabina), *Estas* (with Bonnie Raitt), and *El Humo del Tren* (with Los Van Van). Throughout his career, Varela has toured with other internationally renowned Latino and Caribbean artists. His collaborations and compelling solo performances have won him important recognition, such as the Ondas award in Spain in the Artistic Revelation category.

Even though Varela is often described as Cuba's Bob Dylan, he [wryly observes?] that he prefers to be identified as the Carlos Varela of Cuba. Having endured many censorship battles with the Cuban government because of his social commentaries on Cuba's postrevolutionary society, Varela persists in making music that is personal, poignant, and poetic. His valiant and daring lyrics have made him a voice of his generation. He has sought to build bridges between Cuba, the United States, disenfranchised Cubans, and the people of the world through his universal songs and profound lyrics. For tonight's concert, Varela is backed by his band, composed of some of the most talented musicians of the island.

ARTIST PROFILE

CARLOS VARELA was born in Havana in 1963. He wrote his first songs at the age of fifteen, and in 1980 he became part of the musical movement nueva trova (new song). In association with other young singer-songwriters, he eventually developed his own voice inside the Cuban cultural scene, which audiences and critics came to call novísima trova (newer song). He has performed in important theaters in major international cities and is one of the most popular musicians from the island.

To date Varela has recorded nine albums under his name. His song *Una Palabra (A Word)* was used in the 2004 film *Man on Fire*, starring Denzel Washington and Dakota Fanning. The Oscar-winning director Alejandro González Iñárritu used *Una Palabra* in *Powder Keg*, a short for the BMW film series *The Hire* starring Clive Owen. Varela first toured outside of Cuba with Silvio Rodríguez and Pablo Milanés in the 1990s. He reached the height of his fame during that time with *Monedas al Aire (Tossed Coins)*, which included his song *Muro (Wall)*, which was selected by Spanish superstar Miguel Bosé for his record *11 maneras de Ponerse el Sombrero (Eleven Ways to Put on a Hat)* (WEA, 1998). In 1995 Varela toured Spain with the legendary Spanish songwriter Joaquín Sabina, and recorded *Como los Peces (Like the Fish)*, which won him the important Ondas award in Spain in the Artistic Revelation category. That same year Varela and Sabina co-composed *Tan Joven y Tan Viejo (So Young and So Old)*, a massive hit that appeared on Sabina's record *Yo Mi Me Contigo (I Did, Me, with You)*. In 1998 the video for *Robinson* debuted on MTV Latino and in the United States. *Nubes (Clouds)*, recorded in 2000, would become one of his most popular albums; it includes the iconic songs *Muros y Puertas (Walls and Doors)* and *Una Palabra (A Word)*. The latter has been translated and performed in dozens of languages.

In 2006 and 2007 Varela and his band went on tour to Canada, where they featured at important music festivals, including



Ottawa's Cisco Blues Fest and Quebec's City Summer Festival. *No Es el Fin (It's Not the End)* came out at the end of 2009, and Varela toured Canada, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, and Panama to promote it. On tour at home in Cuba, he broke attendance records in almost all the theaters he played in. That same year he performed at the Peace Without Borders II concert organized by the musicians Juanes, Miguel Bosé, and Olga Tañón, attracting more than one million people to Havana's Plaza de la Revolución. In June 2011 he and his band returned to the United States for a third tour and participated in important festivals,

including the Playboy Jazz Festival in Los Angeles, Pete Seeger's Clearwater, and the Blue Note Jazz Festival in New York.

To celebrate his career's thirtieth anniversary, Varela invited a group of renowned artists and friends to join him for two legendary concerts at the Teatro Nacional de Cuba in January 2013. Jackson Browne, Ivan Lins, Luis Enrique, Eduardo Cabra (Calle 13), Juan Formell, X Alfonso, Alexander Abreu, Diana Fuentes, and others sang his greatest hits backed by his band and a twelve-piece string orchestra. The concerts inspired the Canadian film director Ron Chapman to

make *The Poet of Havana*, a documentary about Varela narrated by Benicio del Toro, which won awards at film festivals around the world and has aired on HBO Latino in the United States. Last year Varela received an honorary degree in law from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, in recognition of his musical talent and the importance of his voice inside and outside Cuba. In June 2015 Cuba celebrated seventy years of diplomatic ties with Canada, and the Canadian embassy organized a concert where they invited Carlos Varela and his band to emcee for the popular Canadian Sam Roberts Band.



Photo by Jaime Oriz

SUNDAY DECEMBER 4

AURELIO A HONDURAN GARIFUNA DANCE PARTY!

Aurelio Martinez, lead vocals and guitar
Tony Penalva, guitar and vocals
Alex Ciego, bass and vocals
Denton Figueroa, shaker and vocals
Charles Garcia, Garifuna drum
Philip Garcia, Garifuna drum

A NOTE FROM THE CURATOR

ISABEL YRIGOYEN
MUSIC CURATOR

I first saw Aurelio—that marvelous showman, vocalist, and musician—perform in the magical city of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, Spain, at WOMEX, the world's largest expo of world music. His soulful voice engulfed us with contagious polyrhythms and gorgeous melodies. Feelings of joy and sadness filled my body as I danced nonstop alongside hundreds of other festival goers. With a smile as big as life and guitar in hand, Aurelio created an instant bond with the audience. I felt such an emotional reaction, I didn't need to understand the lyrics to know that the songs reflected his own life and that of his people, the Garinagu people of Honduras, commonly known as the Garifuna.

Aurelio sings in the Arawakan language, which is spoken by about two hundred thousand people mainly in Honduras but also in Belize, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. It was originally spoken on the island of St Vincent in the Caribbean Antilles, then spread to Honduras and neighboring countries in Central America. It is believed the Garinagu people descended from West Africans who were transported to South America as slaves; after an unexpected shipwreck off the island of St. Vincent, some of the slaves escaped to the Lesser Antilles. They intermarried with the local indigenous Arawak tribe and Amerindian peoples, and a new culture was formed. Aurelio is one of the most important exponents of this endangered music. His songs carry the oral histories as well as the sociopolitical struggles faced by his people in present-day Honduras. Acting as a spokesman, social activist, and cultural ambassador, Aurelio, with his voice and music, is a precious gift to the world. We're so happy to celebrate it with you today. Enjoy!

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Aurelio Martinez gives a musical performance that will have you on your feet. A torchbearer of the Garifuna musical tradition, he marries the music and the movements of his Caribbean coastal culture. Set to the infectious sounds of the Central American paranda style, framed by drums and maracas, Aurelio's lyrics highlight the social and political challenges faced by the Garifuna community, historically African descendants. The songs are from his critically acclaimed album *Landini*, plus premieres of unreleased music from his forthcoming album. His record will be available for sale so you can relive the rhythms!

ARTIST PROFILES

Singer-songwriter, guitarist, and percussionist **AURELIO MARTINEZ** is one of Central America's most gifted performers. Born in Honduras, he is known for his powerful and evocative voice. He is a major tradition bearer of Garifuna music and a cultural ambassador of the Garifuna nation. The Garinagu, known as the Garifuna, are people of Amerindian and West African ancestry who live along the coasts of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. The original home of the Garifuna is St Vincent (one of the windward islands in the West Indies), from which they were deported in 1796 by the British government and landed on Roatan island, situated in the Bay Islands of Honduras.

Aurelio grew up in a small Caribbean village called Plaplaya, surrounded by a family of talented musicians. His father was a well-known local troubadour who improvised paranda songs containing Garifuna roots rhythms and Latin sounds. Following the influence of his uncles and grandfather, he became a brilliant drummer in his early childhood. From his vocally gifted mother, he learned to sing and picked up many songs she crafted.

Aurelio has released six recordings. The first, *Garifuna Soul* (Stonetree Records, 2004), was produced by his friend and longtime collaborator Ivan Duran, with backing by some of Belize and Honduras's best studio musicians. Aurelio's rich, resonant voice and soulful acoustic songs

caught the attention of the global music press, who saw him as a tradition bearer with an innate musicality and subtle innovative streak. AfroPop Worldwide named him "Newcomer of the Year."

Two years later, Aurelio took on another role as a politician in the Honduran National Congress, becoming the first Garifuna congressman from his region in the country's history. As a politician his main goal was to represent and support the Garifuna people through concrete manifestations that would protect their integrity. The idea was to lead innovative actions to improve the daily life of this population as well as to feed and preserve their cultural treasures.

In 2007 Aurelio was invited to participate in the album *Watina* (Stonetree Records, Cumbancha, 2007), featuring the highly acclaimed musician Andy Palacio and the Garifuna Collective, who received the prestigious WOMEX Award. *Watina* was declared the Greatest World Music Album of All Time by Amazon.com in 2010.

One of the highlights of Aurelio's career was to record in 2008 with Afropop legend Youssou N'Dour. This major event brought Aurelio and Garifuna music into contact with famous African musicians. Three years later, in part as a result of the N'Dour collaboration, Aurelio released his second solo album, *Laru Beya* (Stonetree Records, Real World Records, Sub Pop, 2011), a compilation of soulful songs linking back to African roots. "Aurelio is

a highly talented musician, conscious composer and passionate performer with an excellent band behind him, as well as being the prime advocate for a unique culture. If anyone is going to put the Garifuna culture onto the map, it is Aurelio Martinez," commented *WorldMusic.co.uk*.

Aurelio returned to his musical roots with his third album, *Lándini* (Stonetree Records, Real World Records, 2014). Traditionally, after a long day of fishing, Garifuna villagers bring their boats back to the river landing and gather for a convivial paranda session. This symbolic image gave the album its name: *lándini*, related to the English word landing. According to Aurelio, "I consider this album to be the sound of my Garifuna people. On the previous album [*Laru Beya*] we experimented and collaborated with other artists to reconnect what was lost between Africa and America. This album is purely Garifuna, and the entire spirit of the music reflects the Garifuna experience. My mother is the sole inspiration for this album; she's the best example I have in my life of what a human being should be, my main consultant and confidante."

Lándini was named to multiple 2014 year-end critics' lists, including: number 3 on the Sunday Times Ten Best World Music Albums of 2014, number 3 on fRoots Critics Poll's New Albums of 2014, number 2 on World Music Central's Best World Music Albums 2014, Songlines's 10 Best Albums of the Year 2014, Curious Animal's Best Albums of 2014, and number 1 on Songlines's 50 Greatest World Music Albums of the Last Years. In March 2015 the Garifuna community of New York honored Aurelio with a special musical tribute and concert to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of his career. "We're not going to let this culture die," the artist says. "I know I must continue my ancestors' legacy and find new ways to express it. Few people know about it, but I adore it, and it's something I must share with the world." His new album, *Darandi: Celebrating Thirty Years at the Heart of Garifuna Music*, will be released in January 2017 on Real World Records.

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