

WallisAnnenberg
Center for the
Performing Arts

Paul Crewes
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Managing Director

PRESENTS

HARLEM QUARTET & ALDO LÓPEZ-GAVILÁN

Harlem Quartet
Members:

VIOLIN

ILMAR GAVILÁN

VIOLIN

MELISSA WHITE

VIOLA

JAIME AMADOR

CELLO

FELIX UMANSKY

Program

ALMENDRA

Abelardo Valdes(1911-1958)

Arr. Nicky Aponte, Harlem Quartet, and Aldo López-Gavilán

A NIGHT IN TUNISIA

John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie(1917-1993)

Arr. Dave Glenn, Harlem Quartet, and Aldo López-Gavilán

THE GIRL FROM IPANEMA

Antônio Carlos Jobim(1927-1994)

Arr. Dave Glenn, Harlem Quartet, and Aldo López-Gavilán

TAKE THE A TRAIN

Billy Strayhorn(1915-1967)

Arr. Paul Chihara, Harlem Quartet, and Aldo López-Gavilán

15 minute intermission

EPÍLOGO

Aldo López-Gavilán (b. 1979)

TALKING TO THE UNIVERSE

Aldo López-Gavilán

ECLIPSE

Aldo López-Gavilán

PAN CON TIMBA

Aldo López-Gavilán

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2016 AT 7:00PM

Bram Goldsmith Theater

Running Time: 90 minutes, including one 15-minute intermission

There will be a free pre-concert conversation with Brian Lauritzen, Harlem Quartet and Aldo López-Gavilán from 6-6:30pm in the Bram Goldsmith Theater.

Harlem Quartet appears by arrangement with Sciolino Artist Management.

About the Program



Notes from

Aldo López-Gavilán

• **Epilogue** was originally written for piano, clarinet, and orchestra. The central theme, lyrical and highly modulatory, explores a dream and makes a triumphant musical gesture reminiscent of "Nueva Trova," a style pioneered and made world-famous by troubadour singers Silvio Rodriguez and Pablo Milanés. The development section showcases Aldo López-Gavilán's take on a characteristic canon, with kaleidoscopic rhythms staggered across all instruments.

• **Talking to the Universe**, also the title of one of Aldo's earlier albums, originated as a solo piano work. It then evolved into a piece for piano and jazz band, then to one for piano, jazz band, and orchestra. It aims to convey the

emotions of a person sending a "message in a bottle" out to the universe, and the ensuing vibrancy and wholeness that comes with feeling at one with the cosmos. The quintet version captures these intimate and yearning qualities, employing complex and exhilarating counterpoint that gradually increases in energy as the piece progresses.

• **Eclipse**, originally for violin and piano, is a very personal piece written for Aldo's brother Ilmar. It addresses vulnerability and the emotional toll taken by the two brothers' involuntary separation due to outside political circumstances as Ilmar went to the United States while Aldo remained in Cuba.

• **Pan con Timba**, whose title means "bread with unknown something," is consistently joyful and contagiously optimistic. It reflects the classic mood of post-revolutionary Cuba: the younger generation, faced with scarcity and economic hardship, refused to indulge in self-pity and instead embraced humor as a psychological lifting device. This form of humor has become an essential part of the current Cuban identity. *Pan con Timba* features such rhythmic characteristics as the quintessentially Cuban form of ostinato known as "tumbao," and also intertwines elements of various dance styles popular in contemporary Cuba.

HARLEM QUARTET praised for its "panache" by *The New York Times*, is "bringing a new attitude to classical music, one that is fresh, bracing and intelligent," says the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. The quartet's mission is to advance diversity in classical music, engaging young and new audiences through the discovery and presentation of varied repertoire that includes works by minority composers. The 2015-16 concert season marks the debut of Felix Umansky formerly of the Linden String Quartet, as Harlem Quartet's cellist.

Since its public debut in 2006 at Carnegie Hall, the New York-based ensemble has performed throughout the U.S. as well as in France, the U.K., Belgium, Brazil, Panama, Canada, Venezuela, and South Africa, where under the auspices of the U.S. State Department in May 2012 they spent two weeks performing concerts and engaging in outreach activities. In 2013 they completed their third and final year in the Professional String Quartet Training Program at New England Conservatory and participated in NEC's string quartet exchange program in Paris, working with violinist Günther Pichler in a masterclass setting.

In addition to performing on chamber-music series around the country, they have collaborated with such distinguished performers as violinist Itzhak Perlman; cellist Carter Brey; clarinetist Paquito D'Rivera; pianist Misha Dichter, with whom the quartet made their Kennedy Center debut in February 2013; and jazz legends Chick Corea and Gary Burton, whom they joined for their six-month "Hot House" tour that began at Tanglewood in summer 2012. Later that year the quartet made their performance debut with another jazz virtuoso, the British saxophonist, clarinetist, and composer Tim Garland.

Each member of the quartet is a seasoned solo artist, having appeared with such orchestras as the New York Philharmonic, the Boston Pops, and the Atlanta, Baltimore, Cleveland, Detroit, National, New World, and Pittsburgh symphony orchestras. As an ensemble they perform not only in chamber-music settings but also as soloists in works written for Solo String Quartet and orchestra. Their most recent such collaboration was with Music Director Mei-Ann Chen and the Chicago Sinfonietta, where in June 2012 they gave the world premiere of Bernstein's *West Side Story* as arranged for string quartet and orchestra by Randall Craig Fleischer. The quartet reprised their performance of that score in September 2012 with the Anchorage Symphony Orchestra under Fleischer's direction, and again in December 2012 with the Santa Fe Concert Association. Chicago Sinfonietta and the quartet recorded the *West Side Story* arrangement, along with works for string quartet and orchestra by Michael Abels and Benjamin Lees, for the Cedille label.

Harlem Quartet has been featured on WNBC, CNN, the "Today Show," WQXR-FM, and the "News Hour with Jim Lehrer." In 2009 they performed for President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama at the White House and appeared Christmas morning on NBC's "Today Show." They made their European debut in October 2009 performing at the residence of the U.S. ambassador to the U.K., and returned to Europe as guest artists and faculty members of the Musica Mundi International Festival in Belgium. In early 2011 they were featured guest artists at the Panama Jazz Festival in Panama City. In June 2012 they made their debut with the Montreal Jazz Festival.

Their recording career began in 2007 when White Pine Music issued *Take the "A" Train*, a release featuring the string quartet version of that jazz standard by Billy Strayhorn; the CD was highlighted that year in the November issue of *Strings* magazine. A second CD, featuring works of Walter Piston, was released in 2010 by Naxos. The quartet's third recording, released in early 2011, is a collaboration with pianist Awadagin Pratt and showcases works by American composer Judith Lang Zaimont. More recently the quartet collaborated with jazz pianist Chick Corea in two recording projects, including a Grammy-winning Hot House album that included *Mozart Goes Dancing*, which won a separate Grammy as Best Instrumental Composition.

Harlem Quartet was founded in 2006 by The Sphinx Organization, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to building diversity in classical music and providing access to music education in underserved communities. The quartet is managed by Sciolino Artist Management in New York City.

ALDO LÓPEZ-GAVILÁN Praised for his "dazzling technique and rhythmic fire" in the *Seattle Times*, and dubbed a "formidable virtuoso" by *The Times* of London, Cuban pianist and composer Aldo López-Gavilán excels in both the classical and jazz worlds as a recitalist, concerto soloist, chamber-music collaborator, and performer of his own electrifying jazz compositions. He has appeared in such prestigious concert halls as the Amadeo Roldán (Cuba), Teresa Careño (Venezuela), Bellas Artes (Mexico), Carnegie Hall and Jordan Hall (U.S.), Royal Festival Hall (U.K.), Nybrokajen 11 (Sweden), The Hall of Music (Russia), and Duc de Lombard et Petit Journal Montparnasse (France), as well as venues in Canada, Santo Domingo, Colombia, Spain, Greece, Hong Kong, Burkina Faso, Germany, and Austria.

In 2014 López-Gavilán toured the U.S., appearing at Florida's Miami Dade County Auditorium, the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and the San Francisco Jazz Festival, and he completed an ASCAP film music workshop under the direction of Robert Kraft at New York University. He also toured

extensively in Europe, South America, Canada, and the U.S. with Cuban singer-songwriter Carlos Varela, for whom he wrote all the string arrangements for an award-winning documentary that was broadcast by HBO Latino in the U.S.

A milestone in López-Gavilán's professional and personal life came in early 2015, when he joined the New York-based Harlem Quartet—co-founded by his brother Ilmar, the quartet's first violinist—for concerts in Calgary, Seattle, and Phoenix. That same year he was invited to play with his Jazz Quintet at the Centro Cultural Kirchner in Buenos Aires, Argentina; performed *Rhapsody in Blue* with the Orquesta Filarmónica de Bogotá, Colombia; and closed the year with a sold-out concert at the Teatro del Museo de Bellas Artes in Havana.

His partnership with Harlem Quartet continues in summer and fall 2016 with a U.S. tour that includes concerts and residency activities at the Rockport Chamber Music Festival, Chautauqua Institution, Santa Fe College, Las Vegas's Smith Center for the Performing Arts, the Chamber Music Society of Detroit, and here at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Arts. Additional tour concerts by the quintet are in the works for fall 2017 and spring 2018.

During the past decade, López-Gavilán's collaborators have included some of the greatest artists in the classical, popular music, and jazz fields. The late Claudio Abbado, one of the world's most celebrated and respected conductors, invited him to perform with the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela in 2006, in a special concert dedicated to the 250th anniversary of Mozart's birth. Maestro Abbado subsequently invited him to perform Prokofiev's *Concerto No. 1* in Caracas and Havana. In 2009 López-Gavilán was invited by Carlos Varela to join his band for a tour of Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay; his acoustic arrangements of the music won many accolades from critics and fans. In 2010 he joined the São Paulo Jazz Symphonic Orchestra to perform his music in a concert that was recorded and broadcast on national television in Brazil.

López-Gavilán's Carnegie Hall debut took place in November of 2012, when he was invited to participate in the hall's prestigious "Voces de Latino América" festival. That same month he played a two-piano concert with his colleague Harold López-Nussa in Miami.

Aldo López-Gavilán was born in Cuba to a family of internationally acclaimed classical musicians, his father a conductor and composer, his mother a concert pianist. At the age of two, he had written his first musical composition. By four, his mother introduced the budding prodigy to the piano, and he began formal piano studies at the age of seven. His

first international triumph was at the age of eleven when he won a Danny Kaye International Children's Award, organized by UNICEF. López-Gavilán made his professional debut at age twelve with the Matanzas Symphony Orchestra. He later went on to perform Prokofiev's Third Concerto with the National Symphonic Orchestra of Cuba. Parallel to his classical abilities, López-Gavilán developed remarkable skills in improvisation. He was invited to perform in the world-famous Havana Jazz Festival with the legendary Chucho Valdés, who called him "simply a genius, a star."

His recording career began in 1999 with the CD *En el ocaso de la hormiga y el elefante*, which won the 2000 Grand Prix at Cubadisco as well as awards in the jazz and first-works categories. In 2005, he was invited to join a group of prestigious Cuban pianists to create an album and documentary in honor of Frank Emilio, Amor y piano. He was also included in a DVD set, "Cuban Pianists: The History of Latin Jazz." López-Gavilán's second album, *Talking to the Universe*, was a success with audiences and critics alike. In 2006, he gave a concert of his newest works that was later turned into his third album, *Soundbites*. Two years later he was included in a documentary on the history of Latin jazz in Cuba titled "¡Manteca, Mondongo y Bacalao con Pan!," directed by Pavel Giroud. It was in that same year that he recorded his fourth CD, *Dimensional*, which afforded him the flexibility for more musical experimentation. He was also hired to compose the music for a TV documentary titled "El Proceso: la historia no contada." In 2009 he released his fifth album, *Aldo López-Gavilán en vivo*, and finished his first live DVD, "Más allá del ocaso," which included orchestral selections and jazz compositions. He also composed original music for the film "Casa vieja" by acclaimed Cuban director Lester Hamlet. In May 2014 he released his sixth album, *De todos los colores y también verde*.

Since December 2014, when a new era in the relationship between the U.S. and Cuba was announced, a lot has happened in the cultural exchange between the two countries. López-Gavilán has played a very active role in this development. In April 2016, through Obama's President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, he was part of the group of Cuban musicians who collaborated in Cuba with such renowned U.S. artists as Joshua Bell, Usher, Dave Matthews, and Smokey Robinson. A few weeks later López-Gavilán's music was used to accompany Chanel's Cruise 2017 Collection—the first fashion show to take place in Havana in recent times—and he partnered with American trumpet virtuoso Byron Stripling in a concert at Havana's Teatro del Museo de Bellas Artes.

PLAYLIST:

THE WALLIS ASKED THE MUSICIANS PERFORMING THIS EVENING WHAT *THEY'RE* LISTENING TO...

ILMAR GAVILÁN, FIRST VIOLIN:
ARTIST: **HARLEM QUARTET WITH ALDO LÓPEZ-GAVILÁN**
SONG: **EPILOGUE**

I identify with this piece because it has many emotional layers. Musically speaking it has a "New Trova" influence which I grew up with in Cuba, a Ravel like mysterious and somewhat melancholic middle section, and a very optimistic ending. In some ways, Epilogue describes my life's journey leaving Cuba when I was 14 and feeling homesick. Reuniting with my brother now is the happy ending!

MELISSA WHITE, SECOND VIOLIN:
ARTIST: **PAT METHENY AND BRAD MEHLDAU**
SONG: **UNREQUITED** ALBUM: **METHENY/MEHLDAU**
This song is one of my go-to favorites because of its simple beauty. The melody is nostalgic, but the dialogue between Metheny and Mehldau is so very hopeful and heartfelt, that it always makes me smile.

ARTIST: **STEVIE WONDER**
SONG: **DON'T YOU WORRY 'BOUT A THING** ALBUM: **INNERVISIONS**
This song is very upbeat, which makes it fun for an impromptu dance break, and I really like the message of the lyrics!

JAIME AMADOR, VIOLA:
ARTIST: **ALBORAN TRIO**
SONG: **PIANISSIMO** ALBUM: **MELTEMI**
This album is one of my favorites – full of beautiful melodies and excellent musicianship. Great work of art.

ARTIST: **DAVE HOLLAND & PEPE HABICHUELA**
SONG: **HANDS** ALBUM: **HANDS**
A favorite album of mine ahead to listen to while boarding a flight and taking off.

FELIX UMANSKY, CELLO:
ARTIST: **GENE WILDER**
SONG: **"PURE IMAGINATION" FROM WILLY WONKA AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY**

This song has always been a favorite since the first time I saw this film when I was a kid, and with the recent passing of Gene Wilder, the song has been pretty much on a loop in my head ever since. It is so simple yet its message is so inspiring.

ARTIST: **RADIOHEAD**
SONG: **THE NUMBERS** ALBUM: **A MOON SHAPED POOL**
Honestly, it's hard to choose just one song from Radiohead. I think Thom Yorke is a brilliant lyricist (even if his lyrics are sometimes difficult to understand upon just listening to the songs). Each of Radiohead's albums are so unique, yet there is always the Radiohead "stamp" on each one. This constant re-inventing yet always retaining one's own individuality is such a tricky, fine line that few people have been able to successfully achieve, in my opinion. Radiohead's most recent release, *A Moon Shaped Pool*, really exemplifies this idea, as the album incorporates unique string arrangements into the band's signature sound on songs like "The Numbers."