



Imani Winds

Saturday, January 28, 2023 7:30 PM

Performance Insights 6:30 PM

Bethel United Methodist Church

Lewes, Delaware

DE MEMORIAS **A Latin Perspective**

PROGRAM

La Fleur de Cayenne

Paquito D'Rivera
(b. 1948)

De Memorias

Tania León
(b. 1943)

Trio for Oboe, Clarinet and Bassoon

Animé

Languisamente

Vivo

Heitor Villa-Lobos
(1887 – 1959)

INTERMISSION

Um a Zero

arr. Jeff Scott

Pixinguinha
(1897 – 1973)

Quintet No. 2

Back in Time

In Heaven

Under the Earth

Far Away

Miguel del Águila
(b. 1957)

Suite de Piazzolla

Oblivion

Vayamos al Diablo

arr. Jeff Scott

arr. Monica Ellis

Astor Piazzolla
(1921 – 1992)

-Program Subject to Change-

Imani Winds is represented by
Arts Management Group, Inc.,
130 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019

Program Notes

PAQUITO D’RIVERA

La Fleur de Cayenne (2014)

Paquito D’Rivera defies categorization. The winner of fourteen Grammy Awards, he is celebrated both for his artistry in Latin jazz and for his achievements as a classical composer. Born in Havana, Cuba, he performed at age 10 with the National Theater Orchestra, studied at the Havana Conservatory of Music and, at 17, became a featured soloist with the Cuban National Symphony. As a founding member of the *Orquesta Cubana de Musica Moderna*, he directed that group for two years, while at the same time playing both the clarinet and saxophone with the Cuban National Symphony.

His numerous recordings include more than 30 solo albums. While Paquito D’Rivera’s discography reflects a dedication and enthusiasm for jazz, bebop and Latin music, his contributions to classical music are impressive. They include solo performances with the London Philharmonic, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra, the Baltimore Symphony, the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Brooklyn Philharmonic. In his passion to bring Latin repertoire to greater prominence, Mr. D’Rivera has successfully created, championed and promoted all types of classical compositions, including three chamber works recorded live in concert with cellist Yo-Yo Ma in September 2003.

Further recognition of his skills came with the award of a 2007 John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship in Music Composition, and the 2007-2008 appointment as Composer-In-Residence at the Caramoor Center for Music. His numerous commissions include works for Jazz at Lincoln Center, the Library of Congress, the National Symphony Orchestra and the Rotterdam Philharmonic. D’Rivera is the author of two books: *My Sax Life*, published by Northwestern University Press, and a novel, *Oh, La Habana*.

D’Rivera says of *La Fleur de Cayenne*: “It is a happy piece of Latin American spirited music. The *fleur de cayenne* is a very beautiful Caribbean flower...known as *Hibiscus* or (locally) *marpacífico*. My father planted it in the little garden of the house (in Cuba)...Except for the lyrical introduction, the piece is mainly written in the form of a dynamic *joropo*, the most representative of Venezuelan and Colombian rhythms.”

TANIA LEÓN

De Memorias (2000)

Tania León is a vital new music personality, highly regarded as a composer and conductor, and recognized for her accomplishments as an educator and advisor to arts organizations. Born in Havana, Cuba, León came to the United States in her early twenties. She became a founding member and the first musical director of the Dance Theater of Harlem in 1969, establishing their music department, music school, and orchestra. She instituted the Brooklyn Philharmonic Community Concert series. From 1993 to 1997 she was the New Music Advisor to Kurt Masur and the New York Philharmonic, and she served as Latin American Music Advisor to the American Composers Orchestra until 2001.

León has received awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the National Endowment for the Arts, Chamber Music America, the Lila Wallace/Reader's Digest Fund and ASCAP, among others. She received an Honorary Doctorate degree from Colgate University in 1999. She has conducted master classes at the *Hamburg Musikschule* in Germany, and has been Visiting Lecturer at Harvard University and Visiting Professor of Composition at Yale University. León was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 2021.

De Memorias was commissioned by The Mexico City Woodwind Quintet with support from the Mexico/US Fund for Culture. The composer said of the work:

“Dedicated to my teacher, Cuban composer Alfredo Diez Nieto, it has the sensation of days gone by, of my own memories, so familiar that I know them ‘by memory.’

“The internal movement of the piece contrasts sounds framed within a rhythmic atmosphere; and opposite them, an atmosphere that is completely free, giving the sensation of a dialogue between capricious imaginary resonances.

“The work is marked by the use of insistent accents, over which are woven contrasting, lyrical fragments. The use of various methods of tone production contributes to the creation of a special, unified atmosphere. Contrasting elements in the work exist between parallel movements and other materials of an apparently opposing nature. Brief *ostinati* throughout the piece impart a definite structural cohesiveness as do *glissandi*, a discrete use of microtones, and a few specific dialogues between pairs of instruments.”

HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS

Trio for Oboe, Clarinet and Bassoon (1921)

Heitor Villa-Lobos eschewed formal musical training to become a towering artistic presence in twentieth-century Brazil. Born in Rio de Janeiro, he came of age in the midst of political turbulence. After the overthrow of the Empire of Brazil in 1889, his new nation cast off European dominance to rediscover the richness of its indigenous cultural heritage. In his youth, Villa-Lobos spent time exploring Brazil's interior, hearing firsthand the music of native Brazilians. Upon returning to Rio de Janeiro, he performed in classical and street ensembles alike. Compositionally, Villa-Lobos came to synthesize this potpourri of classical, folk, and popular influences into a distinct and novel style. He

sought to be uniquely Brazilian, replacing European Romanticism with a new, nationalistic musical vocabulary.

Villa-Lobos composed this trio early in his career, shortly before his first trip to Europe. Like his better known *Chôros* and *Bachianas*, the *Trio for Oboe, Clarinet and Bassoon* produces a spontaneous and improvisational mood, flowing and largely devoid of standard formal construction.

The complex first movement frequently pits two players against one another in intricate cross-rhythms, incorporating recurring dissonances and even onomatopoeic effects.

The second movement evokes both the style of French Impressionism and that of a South American dance.

With the driving, primitive rhythms of the third movement, undoubtedly influenced by both his native Brazil and the *Ballet Russe* works of Igor Stravinsky, Villa-Lobos brings the work to an exhilarating close.

Villa-Lobos composed his *Trio for Oboe, Clarinet and Bassoon* in 1921 in Rio de Janeiro, and the piece premiered at the *Salle des Agriculteurs* in Paris on April 9, 1924.

Soon after Villa-Lobos had arrived in Paris he said: "Did you think I came here to absorb your ideas? I came here to show you what I had done!" His *Trio for Oboe, Clarinet, and Bassoon* is prominent among the major works he had completed before he went to Paris, and in its own right it is significant enough to make his boast seem reasonable.

PIXINGUINHA

Um a Zero (probably written 1918; first recorded 1946)

Alfredo da Rocha Viana Filho, known as Pixinguinha, was a Brazilian composer, arranger, flautist and saxophonist born in Rio de Janeiro. Pixinguinha is considered one of the greatest Brazilian composers of popular music, particularly within the genre known as *choro*. The Brazilian "choro" ("cry" or "lament") style arose in the late 19th Century as a blend of yearning Portuguese melodies with West African rhythms. The style developed and changed all through the first half of the 20th Century, though it had virtually died out by the 1960's, with the development of *bossa nova*. Choro music regained popularity in the late 1970's, and still has a strong following in Brazil today.

By integrating the music of the older *choro* composers with contemporary jazz-like harmonies, Afro-Brazilian rhythms, and sophisticated arrangements, Pixinguinha introduced *choro* to a new audience and helped to popularize it as a uniquely Brazilian sound. He was also one of the first Brazilian musicians to take advantage of the new technologies of radio broadcasting and studio recording. Pixinguinha composed dozens of *choros*, including some of the best-known works in the genre such as *Carinhoso*, *Glória*, *Lamento* and *Um a Zero*.

In the 1940's, after Pixinguinha's band folded, he became the tenor sax soloist in Benedito Lacerda's band. *Um a Zero* was first recorded during this period and is therefore sometimes credited to both composers. The recording was inspired by and dedicated to the Brazilian composer, pianist, soccer commentator, and talent-show host Ary Barroso. *Um a Zero* means "one to zero" – the score of a soccer game in which Brazil defeated Paraguay in a key match. This piece is hardly a "cry" or "lament"! It remains one of the most technically demanding and popular *choros* of all-time.

MIGUEL DEL ÁGUILA

Quintet No. 2 (1994)

Miguel del Águila was born in Uruguay and in his early twenties moved to California. After graduating from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music he traveled to Vienna, where he studied at the *Hochschule für Musik and Konservatorium*. Early premieres of his works in Vienna's *Musikverein*, *Konzerthaus* and *Bösendorfer* halls introduced his music and distinctive Latin sound to European audiences. In 1989, del Águila brought his works to New York's Carnegie Recital Hall (now Weill Hall), and Lukas Foss conducted the U.S. premiere of his *Hexen* (Witches) with the Brooklyn Philharmonic. After ten years in Vienna del Águila returned permanently to the U.S. and currently lives in Seattle.

In more than 115 works, that couple drama and driving rhythm with nostalgic nods to his South American roots, del Águila has established himself among the most distinctive and highly regarded composers of his generation. Also a pianist, del Aguila understands music from the performer's perspective, which has earned him a devoted following among soloists and ensembles. His multicultural background gives his works international appeal with multiple worldwide performances and 51 CD recordings.

Wind Quintet No.2 was premiered in 1994 in Santa Barbara by the Bach Camerata. In 1995 it was awarded a Kennedy Center Friedheim Award for excellence in chamber music composition.

Its four movements are held together by a program that takes the listener through four different places (movements), as would the four acts of a play.

Back in Time has a primitive, ritualistic character. The flute, accompanied by chant, plays a simple, modal theme. The basic musical structure and melodic material are retained as the movement progresses.

In Heaven is a delicate, relaxed and stylized Caribbean dance. Extensive new performance techniques and effects are used in this movement.

Under the Earth is perhaps the composer's darkest and most realistic musical depiction of death. In his own words: "The wind quintet is often thought of as an ensemble dominated by the high instruments with limited bass support. I tried to prove

the contrary with this movement, which explores not only the expressive depth of the wind ensemble but (also) the extreme low registers of some of the instruments”

Far Away transports the listener to a busy scene in the Middle East. Several Arabic *maqāms* (melody types) and oboe solos, combined with a digeridoo sounding *ostinato* bass, are used to create an exotic fabric. Here players are challenged to the limits of their technical abilities before bringing the piece to a fiery conclusion.

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA

Ástor Pantaleón Piazzolla was born in Mar del Plata, Argentina, but spent most of his childhood in New York City, where his family moved when he was only four. Here he was exposed to both jazz and the music of J. S. Bach at an early age, and acquired fluency in four languages: Spanish, English, French, and Italian. He began to play the *bandoneón* (type of accordion) after his father, nostalgic for his homeland, spotted one in a New York pawn shop.

Piazzolla returned to Argentina in 1937, where strictly traditional tango still reigned. He played in night clubs with a series of groups including the orchestra of Aníbal Troilo, then considered the top bandoneón player and bandleader in Buenos Aires. The pianist Arthur Rubinstein—then living in Buenos Aires—advised Piazzolla to study with the Argentine composer Alberto Ginastera. It was at Ginastera's urging that, in 1953, Piazzolla entered his *Buenos Aires Symphony* in a composition contest, and won a grant from the French government to study in Paris with the legendary Nadia Boulanger. In 1954 Piazzolla and his wife left Buenos Aires behind and travelled to Paris.

Piazzolla developed the traditional tango into a new style termed *nuevo tango*, which was distinct in its incorporation of elements of jazz, its use of extended harmonies and dissonance, as well as counterpoint, and its ventures into extended compositional forms. This new approach to the tango made him a controversial figure among Argentines both musically and politically. The saying "in Argentina everything may change — except the tango" suggests some of the resistance he found in his native land. However, his music gained popularity in Europe and North America, and his reworking of the tango was embraced by some liberal segments of Argentine society, who were pushing for political changes in parallel to his musical revolution.

Biographers estimate that Piazzolla wrote around 3,000 pieces and recorded around 500. A virtuoso musician, he regularly performed his own compositions with different ensembles.

Oblivion (1982)

This work has taken on a life of its own as a tremendously popular and beautiful Argentine ballad. It is one of Piazzolla's most well-known and haunting compositions.

It was originally written for the soundtrack of the 1984 movie *Enrico IV* (Henry IV), adapted from the play by Luigi Piradello, in which the lead character suffers a fall during

an historical pageant. Upon regaining consciousness, he assumes the identity of the character he was playing, the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV. The nostalgic tune starts out as a slow *milonga*, a genre of Uruguayan and Argentine music considered to be a forerunner of the tango, which mimics a kind of rhythmic walking without complicated figures. A middle section offers a minimally contrasting theme, lush but less intense.

Vayamos al Diablo (1965)

The title literally means "Let's go to the devil". It is a good example of Piazzolla's *nuevo tango* style. With a highly energetic dance rhythm - an unusual seven beats per bar - and coarse dissonances permeating the music, the work propels itself headlong to its finale.