



¿QUIENES SOMOS?

A Celebration of Latinx Heritage
and Culture in Classical Music

PROTESTRA 

Benefit Concert for
Immigrant Aid and Defense

March 14, 2026 | 6:30 PM
First Congregational Church of Montclair
40 S Fullerton Ave, Montclair, NJ



100% of proceeds will go
to Make the Road NJ



THANK YOU

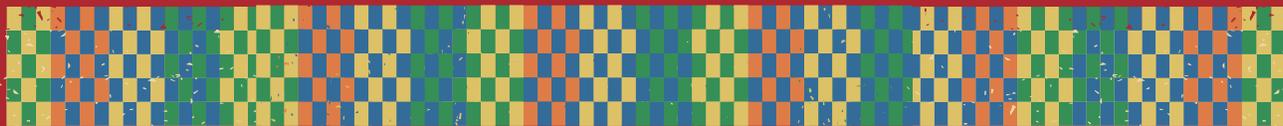
For Coming!

This concert was conceptualized by **PROTESTRA** flutist and concert organizer **Juan Carlos Narváez** of Elizabeth, NJ. The goal of this concert series will be to raise funds for organizations that assist, defend, empower, and advocate for change at a local level.

All proceeds from **¿Quiénes Somos?** will be donated to **Make the Road NJ**, an organization that builds the power of immigrant, working-class & Latinx communities to achieve dignity and respect through community organizing, high-quality legal services, policy innovation, and transformative education. This is especially important at a time when immigrants' rights are being violated and at risk. In the United States, we are seeing massive immigration rights violations and violence being committed. As of February 7, 2026, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has taken custody of a record number of detainees (over 68,000 people and counting), a vast majority of whom have no criminal record or precedents.

This event is a celebration of Latin-American culture and heritage and will highlight the historic and contemporary contributions that immigrants and Latinx culture have on art, music, and society. This concert will feature newly commissioned and newly published works by rising star composers **Arturo Rodriguez**, **Jorge Amado** and **Alyssa Mena**.

Between each musical performance, you will hear anonymous stories of immigrant experiences, humanizing immigrants and providing the audience with perspective on the state of immigration in the U.S.



PROGRAM

~Saxophone Quartet~

Veracruz!

Traditional
(arr. José Oliver Riojas)

Histoire Du Tango (1985)

A. Piazzolla
(arr. Claude Voirpy)

I. Bordel 1900
II. Café 1930

~Flute and Guitar Duo~

Key West Suite (2013)

José Manuel Lezcano

INTERMISSION

~PROTESTRA Wind Quintet~

El Ajiaco (2026)

Alyssa M. Mena

Aires Tropicales (1994)

Paquito D'Rivera

III. Habanera
IV. Vals Venezolano
V. Dizzyness
VII. Afro

~Flute and Piano Duo~

Borderless Dreams
World Premiere

Arturo Rodriguez

Relatos Migrantes
World Premiere

Jorge Amado





MUSICIANS

Saxophone Quartet

Ian Briffa - Soprano Sax Michelle Alcine - Alto Sax
Tim Egan - Tenor Sax Tiffany Lee - Baritone Sax

Flute and Guitar Duo

Carla Auld - Flute
David Galvez - Guitar

PROTESTRA Wind Quintet

Juan Carlos Narváez - Flute
Lara Mitofsky Neuss - Clarinet
Zachary Ashland - Oboe
Nadia Ingalls - Bassoon
Ian Vlahović - Horn

Flute and Piano Duo

Juan Carlos Narváez - Flute
Po-Wei Ger - Piano



PROGRAM NOTES

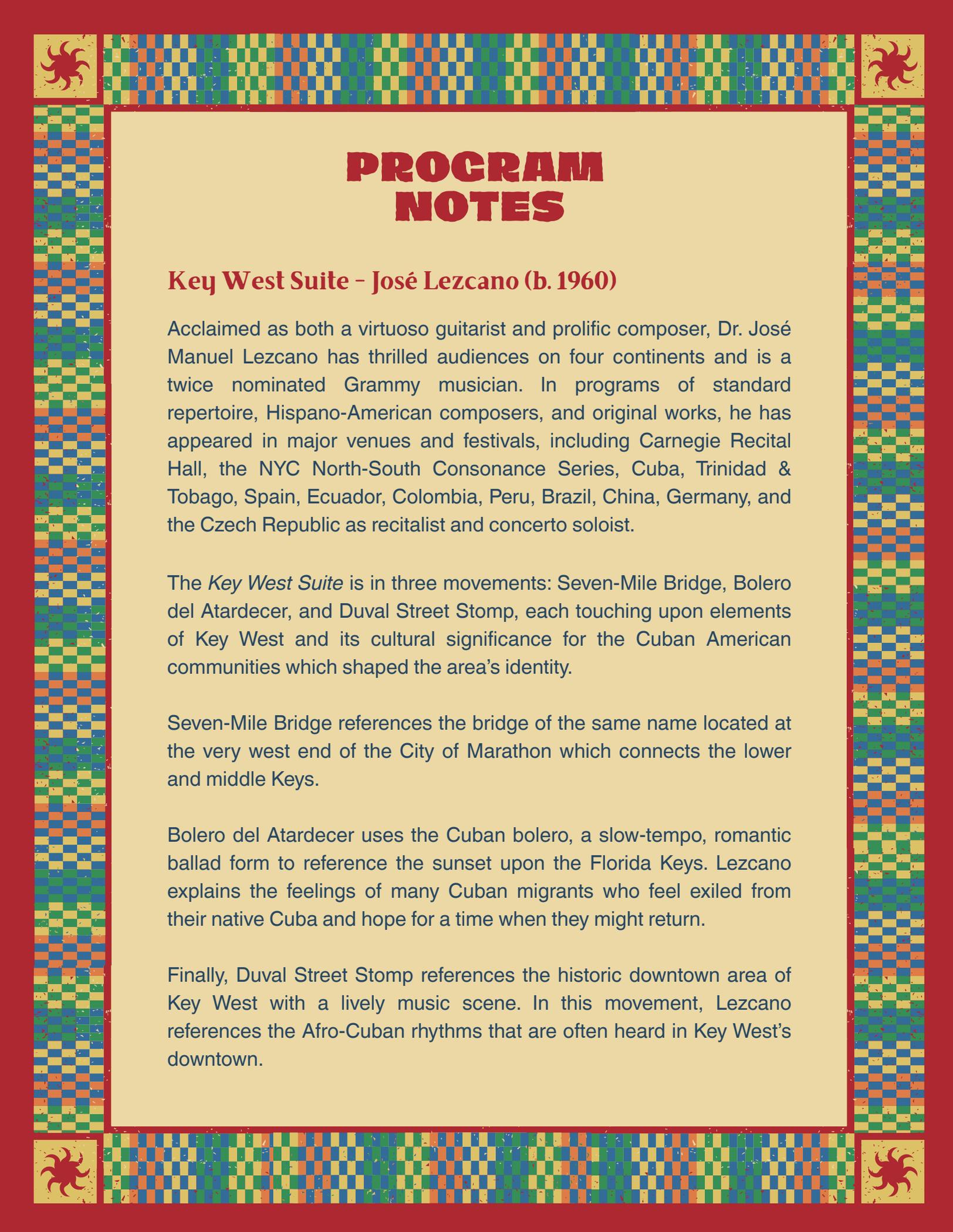
Veracruz! - Traditional

Compiled & Arranged by José Oliver Riojas (1982-2020)

Veracruz! is a collection of folk songs from Veracruz, Mexico, originally arranged for the New Century Saxophone Quartet by José Oliver Riojas. It is characterized by its frothy nature and prominent use of the Hispanic hemiola, which features an alternating rhythm of 3/4 and 6/8. The Mexican folk songs include: El Balajú; Veracruz; La Bamba; Le Canto a Mi Veracruz; El Cascabel; El Zapateado; El Pájaro Cu.

Histoire Du Tango (1985) - Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)

In its original version from 1985, *Histoire du tango* was scored for guitar and flute, which was how tangos were first played when they developed in Buenos Aires in 1882, according to Piazzolla's own program note. He captured that early history in the first movement, *Bordel 1900*, which he described as "music full of charm and vivacity, that gives the impression of the good spirits and volubility of the French, Italian, and Spanish women who lived in these brothels, enticing the policemen, thieves, sailors, and hoodlums who visited them." *Cafe 1930* captures the next phase in the evolution of the tango, when it "became slower, more melancholic, and incorporated new harmonies." *Night-club 1960* recalls Piazzolla's own roots, when Brazilian bossa nova mingled with established Argentine traditions to become the "new tango" that deserved careful listening. The final movement represents the tango of his present-day and the future, a style in which "Bartók, Stravinsky, and other composers reminisce to the tune of tango music."



PROGRAM NOTES

Key West Suite - José Lezcano (b. 1960)

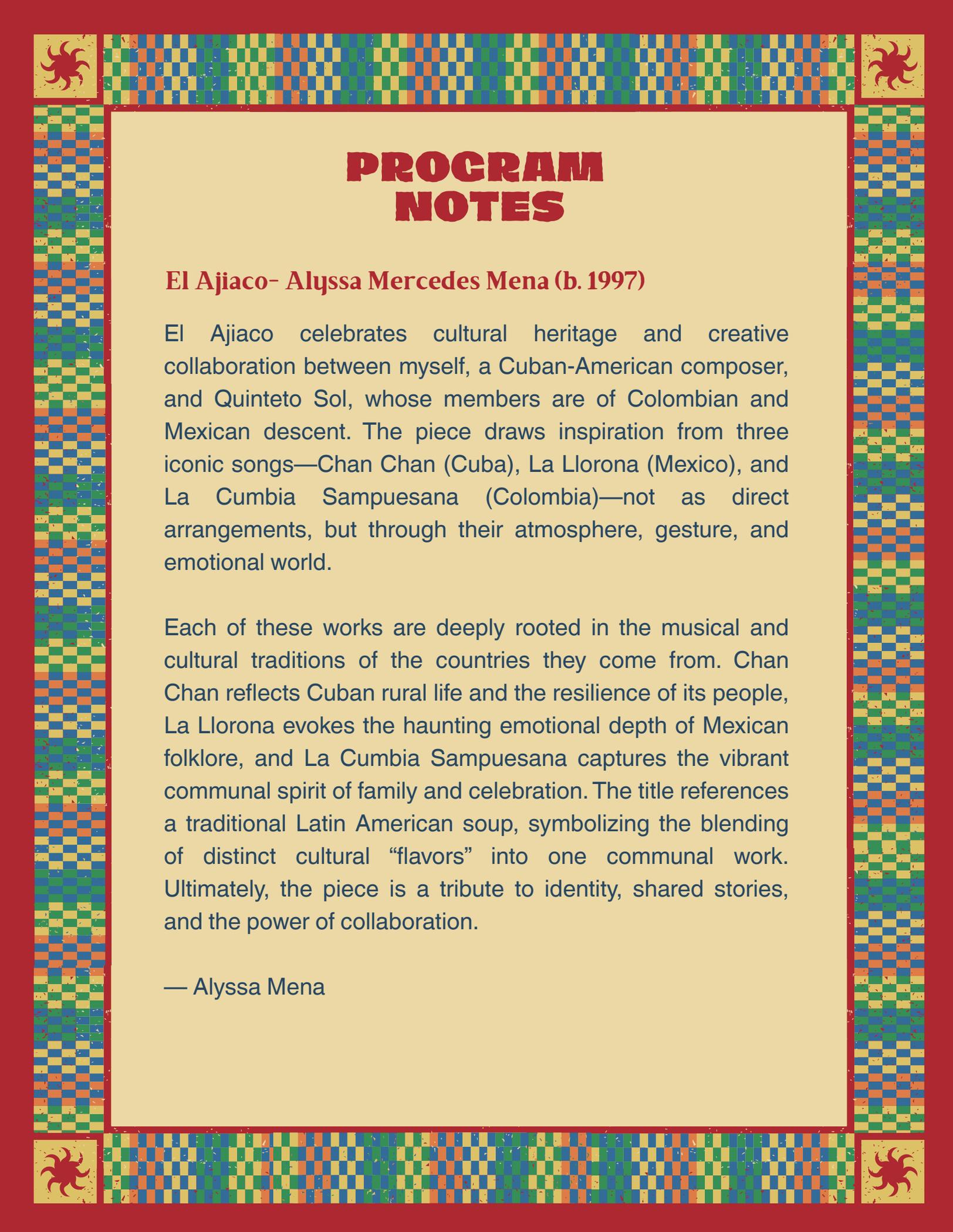
Acclaimed as both a virtuoso guitarist and prolific composer, Dr. José Manuel Lezcano has thrilled audiences on four continents and is a twice nominated Grammy musician. In programs of standard repertoire, Hispano-American composers, and original works, he has appeared in major venues and festivals, including Carnegie Recital Hall, the NYC North-South Consonance Series, Cuba, Trinidad & Tobago, Spain, Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, China, Germany, and the Czech Republic as recitalist and concerto soloist.

The *Key West Suite* is in three movements: Seven-Mile Bridge, Bolero del Atardecer, and Duval Street Stomp, each touching upon elements of Key West and its cultural significance for the Cuban American communities which shaped the area's identity.

Seven-Mile Bridge references the bridge of the same name located at the very west end of the City of Marathon which connects the lower and middle Keys.

Bolero del Atardecer uses the Cuban bolero, a slow-tempo, romantic ballad form to reference the sunset upon the Florida Keys. Lezcano explains the feelings of many Cuban migrants who feel exiled from their native Cuba and hope for a time when they might return.

Finally, Duval Street Stomp references the historic downtown area of Key West with a lively music scene. In this movement, Lezcano references the Afro-Cuban rhythms that are often heard in Key West's downtown.



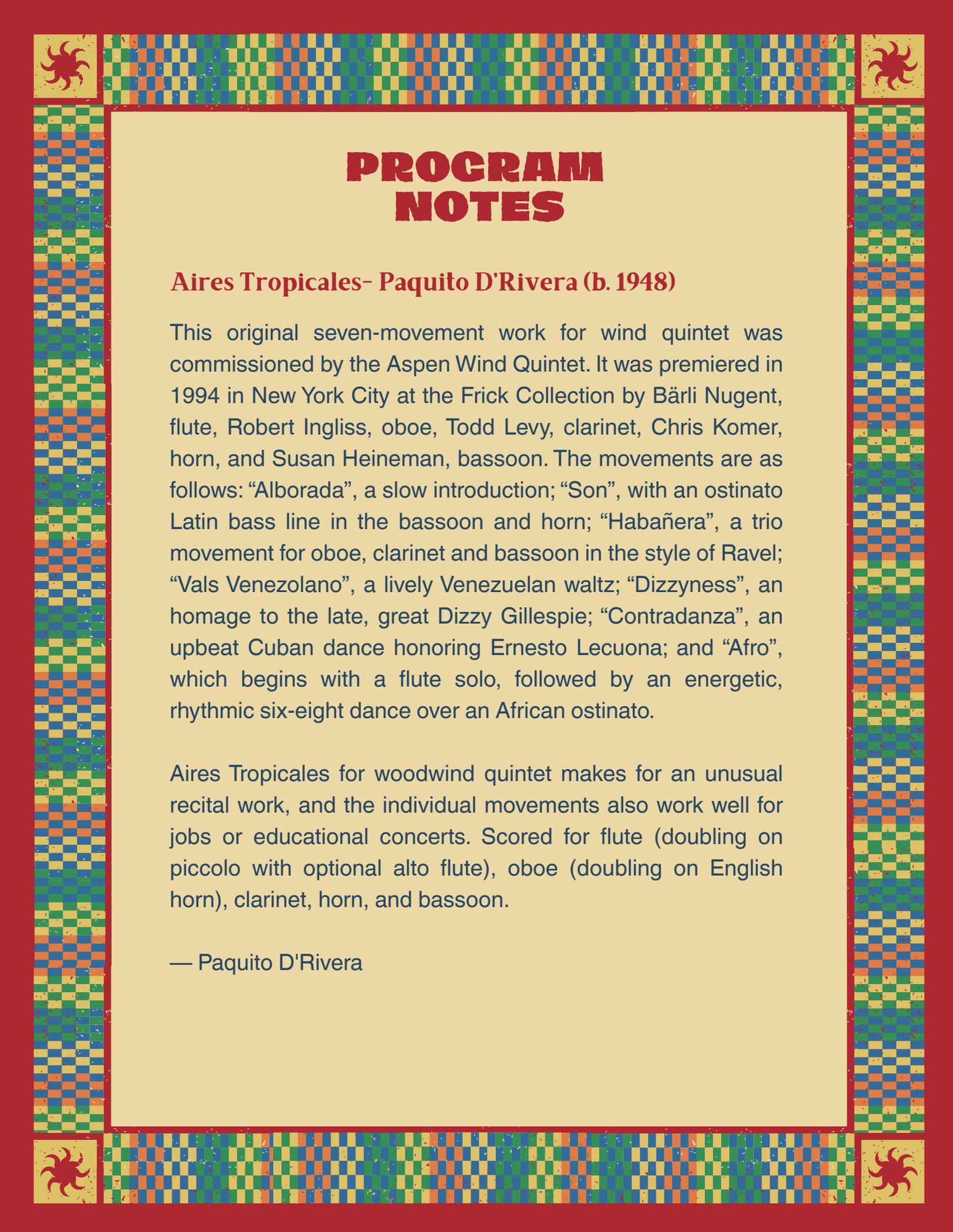
PROGRAM NOTES

El Ajiaco- Alyssa Mercedes Mena (b. 1997)

El Ajiaco celebrates cultural heritage and creative collaboration between myself, a Cuban-American composer, and Quinteto Sol, whose members are of Colombian and Mexican descent. The piece draws inspiration from three iconic songs—Chan Chan (Cuba), La Llorona (Mexico), and La Cumbia Sampuesana (Colombia)—not as direct arrangements, but through their atmosphere, gesture, and emotional world.

Each of these works are deeply rooted in the musical and cultural traditions of the countries they come from. Chan Chan reflects Cuban rural life and the resilience of its people, La Llorona evokes the haunting emotional depth of Mexican folklore, and La Cumbia Sampuesana captures the vibrant communal spirit of family and celebration. The title references a traditional Latin American soup, symbolizing the blending of distinct cultural “flavors” into one communal work. Ultimately, the piece is a tribute to identity, shared stories, and the power of collaboration.

— Alyssa Mena



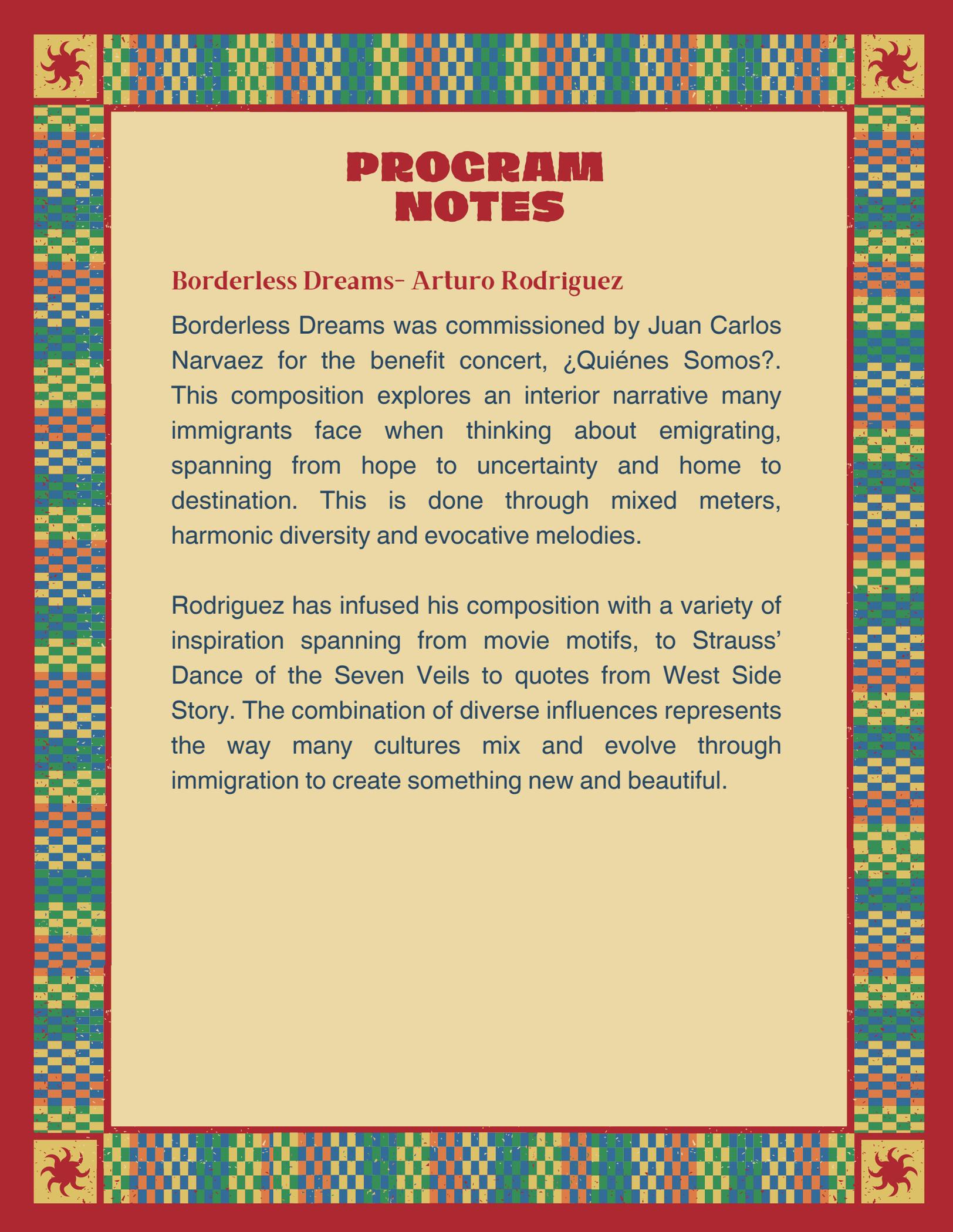
PROGRAM NOTES

Aires Tropicales- Paquito D’Rivera (b. 1948)

This original seven-movement work for wind quintet was commissioned by the Aspen Wind Quintet. It was premiered in 1994 in New York City at the Frick Collection by Bärli Nugent, flute, Robert Ingliss, oboe, Todd Levy, clarinet, Chris Komer, horn, and Susan Heineman, bassoon. The movements are as follows: “Alborada”, a slow introduction; “Son”, with an ostinato Latin bass line in the bassoon and horn; “Habañera”, a trio movement for oboe, clarinet and bassoon in the style of Ravel; “Vals Venezolano”, a lively Venezuelan waltz; “Dizzyness”, an homage to the late, great Dizzy Gillespie; “Contradanza”, an upbeat Cuban dance honoring Ernesto Lecuona; and “Afro”, which begins with a flute solo, followed by an energetic, rhythmic six-eight dance over an African ostinato.

Aires Tropicales for woodwind quintet makes for an unusual recital work, and the individual movements also work well for jobs or educational concerts. Scored for flute (doubling on piccolo with optional alto flute), oboe (doubling on English horn), clarinet, horn, and bassoon.

— Paquito D’Rivera

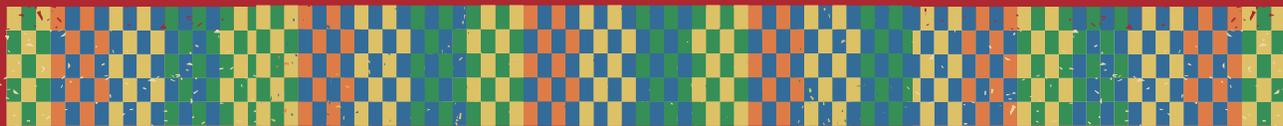


PROGRAM NOTES

Borderless Dreams- Arturo Rodriguez

Borderless Dreams was commissioned by Juan Carlos Narvaez for the benefit concert, ¿Quiénes Somos?. This composition explores an interior narrative many immigrants face when thinking about emigrating, spanning from hope to uncertainty and home to destination. This is done through mixed meters, harmonic diversity and evocative melodies.

Rodriguez has infused his composition with a variety of inspiration spanning from movie motifs, to Strauss' Dance of the Seven Veils to quotes from West Side Story. The combination of diverse influences represents the way many cultures mix and evolve through immigration to create something new and beautiful.



PROGRAM NOTES

Relatos Migrantes

Relatos Migrantes was commissioned by Juan Carlos Narvaez for the benefit concert, ¿Quiénes Somos?

This composition is split into four movements titled *Raíces* (Roots), *Por Caminos Inciertos* (Through Uncertain Paths), *A la espera* (In Waiting), *De la Luz* (Of the Light). The movement titles come together to form a poetic phrase that reflects the narrative of journey infused throughout the piece. This piece explores shared humanity and lived experience.

The first movement explores roots and a sense of home introducing a recurring motif in the flute with light piano accompaniment and soaring melodies. Following that, the second movement is an energetic Stravinsky-esque “dance of death” which evokes a sense of uncertainty through shifting meters and jagged rhythms. In this movement there is an expanding sense of desperation and anger culminating in an exclamatory figure in the flute line.

In the third movement, this tension turns to rumination as the piano waits through a flute cadenza. With repeating figures and accelerating passages, one might imagine anxiety and ruminating thoughts, supported by the silent holding of the piano peddle, helping the flute echo. The third movement begins to transition as the piano enters playing chords with the flute in song. Finally, the fourth movement, inspired by Andean pasillo distills the essence of the musical genre into the universally understood form of a ballad or love song. Simple melodies are augmented by jazzy chords in the piano and a steady heartbeat which infuses the music with passion and hope. The final chord of this work is a D(Major11) chord played as a whisper evoking the image of light and hope for tomorrow.



FEATURED COMPOSERS

Alyssa Mena



Alyssa Mercedes Mena is a Cuban-American flutist, composer, and educator whose work bridges performance and storytelling. As a composer, Alyssa draws inspiration from her Cuban roots, exploring themes of identity, memory, and connection through music that celebrates cultural heritage and human experience. Her works *Hasta La Raíz* and *Hermanas* are published by Coleman Page Music, with *Hasta La Raíz* receiving the 2025 NFA Newly Published Music Award. Recent commissions include *El Ajiaco*, a woodwind quintet commissioned by *Quinteto Sol*, and *Los*

Sueños de Mis Abuelos, a trio for flute, oboe, and piano commissioned by the Seattle Symphony. Rooted in her Cuban-American heritage, Alyssa composes with deep intention—creating music that resonates with both performers and audiences, and that feels at once personal and communal.

Jose Lezcano



Acclaimed as both a virtuoso guitarist and prolific composer, Dr. José Manuel Lezcano has thrilled audiences on four continents. In programs of standard repertoire, Hispano-American composers, and original works, he has appeared in major venues and festivals, including Carnegie Recital Hall, the NYC North-South Consonance Series, Cuba, Trinidad & Tobago, Spain, Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, China, Germany, and the Czech Republic as recitalist and concerto soloist. Jose is a performing artist with the Heda Arts Agency of Zurich, Switzerland, joining their roster in January 2025. Described by *Fanfare Magazine* as

"an excellent guitarist as well as an imaginative composer," Jose has earned numerous professional recognitions, including first prize in the MTNA National Guitar Competition, the NHSCA Individual Artist Fellowship, NHMTA Composer of the Year (twice), KSC Distinguished Research Award, and a Fulbright Award to Ecuador. As composer, Jose aims to write works that celebrate his Cuban-American heritage, while also drawing on influences, including the rhythmic and harmonic idioms of jazz, Spanish folklore, medieval and Renaissance polyphony, and mid-century trends. Jose strives to write music that is communicative, complex, lyrical, and authentic.

FEATURED COMPOSERS

Arturo Rodríguez



Arturo Rodríguez is a distinguished Chicano flutist, composer, and educator based in the vibrant San Francisco Bay Area. Renowned for his dynamic and versatile flute and piccolo performances, Arturo has become a sought-after artist, gracing both pit orchestras and concert stages with his talent. His performances have illuminated productions for esteemed companies such as Mountain Play, YMTC, and Spindrift, as well as with celebrated ensembles including the San Francisco Philharmonic, Bay Area Rainbow Symphony, San Jose

Symphonic Choir, Awesöme Orchestra Collective, and Oakland Civic Orchestra.

Arturo's compositional portfolio is extensive, featuring works for solo flute, chamber ensembles, and flute orchestras. His pieces have been showcased at prestigious events, including multiple premieres at the National Flute Association (NFA) Conventions, highlighting his innovation and mastery in the field.

Jorge Amado



Jorge Amado is a Cuban-born composer, violinist, and violist whose music bridges Afro-Cuban traditions with contemporary classical language. His work explores the cultural memory of his homeland while embracing modern aesthetics, creating a distinctive voice rooted in rhythm, lyricism, and identity.

His compositions have been performed in major venues such as Carnegie Hall, Chicago Symphony Center, Merkin Hall, Concertgebouw Amsterdam and Wiener Konzerthaus, commissioned by artists and ensembles including the Orpheus

Chamber Orchestra, Catalyst Quartet, Niurka González, Chicago Civic Fellows, Jon Kimura Parker, Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, Desirée Ruhstrat, ~Nois Quartet, Flannau Duo, and Quijote Duo. His music spans chamber, orchestral, and stage works, often marked by intricate textures, expressive lyricism, and a profound sense of cultural storytelling, and has premiered at festivals including Ear Taxi Festival, Virginia Arts Festival, Annapolis Chamber Music Festival, and Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival.

ABOUT JUAN CARLOS NARVAEZ



First-generation American flutist Juan Carlos Narváez works as a freelance performer and teacher in New York City and the surrounding area and is dedicated to creating a difference through music, including making music more accessible as a board member with the Carter-Glennon Center for Arts and Nature and the NJ Flute Society.

Narváez also works closely with other nonprofit organizations including PROTESTRA as an organizer and performer to create activism through the music-making process.

SPECIAL THANKS

Concert Organizers

Juan Carlos Narvaez
Erin Schwab
Ian Vlahović

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SPECIAL THANKS

Heartfelt thanks to the **First Congregational Church of Montclair** for use of their sanctuary and beyond! We are especially grateful to **Siobhan Morello**, who has so graciously guided us every step of the way!

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making concerts like *¿Quiénes Somos?* possible!

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ABOUT MAKE THE ROAD NJ

Founded in 2014, Make the Road New Jersey's centers in Elizabeth, Perth Amboy, Passaic and satellite hub in Newark are welcoming spaces for community organizing, leadership development and legal, health and educational services. Make the Road New Jersey has led successful campaigns to impact more than 1 million low income, immigrant and BIPOC New Jerseyans in the areas of immigrant, youth, tenant and workers' rights. Make the Road New Jersey is a project of Make the Road States, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. **Learn more at maketheroadnj.org.**

ABOUT PROTESTRA

PROTESTRA (protest + orchestra) bridges the divide between advocacy and classical music. Since 2017, PROTESTRA has educated audiences about contemporary issues of social justice through music, donating a portion of ticket proceeds to mission- and policy-driven nonprofit organizations related to the concerts' themes. Since September 2020, PROTESTRA has held ten issue-centered benefit concerts that have reached several thousand in-person and online viewers, collectively raised \$38,000+ in audience donations for nonprofit beneficiaries, and provided \$40,000+ of paid work to 300+ musicians. **Learn more at protestra.org**



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Make the Road NJ - Click or scan!**