



SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

in collaboration with

NW SINFONIETTA

featuring

Cuban pianist and composer

ALDO LÓPEZ-GAVILÁN

APRIL 29 & 30, 2022

PROGRAM

Symphony Orchestra

Anna Wittstruck, conductor

From the United States

- I. Overture to *Candide* (1956).....Leonard Bernstein
(1918–1990)
- II. *Airborne* (1991).....Gary Schocker
(1959–present)

Jasmine Mikesell '22, flute soloist

INTERMISSION

From Cuba

- III. *Emporium for Solo Piano and Orchestra* (2017).....Aldo López-Gavilán
(1979–present)
- Aldo López-Gavilán, piano soloist

- I. Allegretto spiritoso
II. Liberamente
III. Presto

- IV. *Guaguancó* (1985).....Guido López-Gavilán
(1944–present)

Mr. López-Gavilán's appearance is made possible in partnership with the Northwest Sinfonietta, and through a generous donation by Bruce and Dixie Arneklev to the University of Puget Sound Symphony Orchestra.

Note from the Conductor

Welcome, and thank you for attending tonight's concert! This is an exhilarating moment for us: our return to performing together as a full symphony orchestra for the first time since the pandemic began. It has been pure joy for our string, woodwind, brass, and percussion players to reunite; the students' exuberance for making music together has been palpable. The program ahead is vibrant and lively, and showcases the many ways in which composers creatively blend different kinds of instruments, sounds, and textures.

Tonight's concert also celebrates cultural exchange, as we welcome Cuban composer-pianist Aldo López-Gavilán to our stage. Mr. López-Gavilán is touring the Pacific Northwest as a guest of the Northwest Sinfonietta, and is someone I had the pleasure of meeting in Havana while conducting a concert at the Teatro Nacional de Cuba in 2017. I am particularly grateful to the NW Sinfonietta, especially to executive director Karin Choo, for affording some of our students the opportunity to play alongside Mr. López-Gavilán in their concert last night, and for helping arrange for Mr. López-Gavilán to perform his own concerto, *Emporium*, with our orchestra tonight. Mr. López-Gavilán's appearance is made possible through a generous donation by Bruce and Dixie Arneklev to the University of Puget Sound Symphony Orchestra: heartfelt thanks go to the Arneklev family for supporting this performance, and our students!

The first half of the program features music written by American composers while the second features music by Cuban composers. We begin with the Overture from Leonard Bernstein's *Candide*. This irrepressible opener densely packs melody after melody into a short, whirlwind ride of dazzling orchestrational pyrotechnics. Every member of the ensemble is called upon to embody the challenge and fun of this piece. Songs from the witty and playful operetta are tunefully referenced – including the duet, "Oh Happy We" and the aria, "Glitter and Be Gay" – in this cleverly crafted, sonata-form fanfare. We follow with Gary Schocker's *Airborne* for flute and strings, featuring Jasmine Mikesell '22, one of the winners of the 2022 Concerto-Aria Competition. Schocker, who resides in New York City and Pennsylvania, is a composer, flute player, and harpist. He writes prolifically for flute – noted as the most published living composer for the instrument – and teaches at

New York University Steinhardt. The sonorous and catchy *Airborne* comprises two contrasting sections, taking inspiration from Latin music and jazz.

After intermission, we are joined by Mr. López-Gavilán to perform his concerto for piano and orchestra, *Emporium*. This piece originated from a melody the composer wrote and improvised over as a birthday present for his twin daughters. Upon receiving an invitation to perform a concerto at Classical Tahoe in 2017, López-Gavilán expanded the thematic material (which features prominently in the first movement, but returns throughout the piece) into a three-movement, large-scale work. In this thrilling and evocative piece, one can hear López-Gavilán's virtuosity and versatility as both a jazz and classical musician, and his eagerness for music to blend cultural traditions and to transcend the constraints of timbral and stylistic signification.

Emporium ties back to something quite personal: family. Music and family are interconnected in the professional persona of Mr. López-Gavilán, who studied with his mother, the late concert pianist Teresita Junco, and whose role within a highly visible and accomplished musical family was the subject of a recent PBS documentary, *Los Hermanos: The Brothers*. Some of our students were able to attend a screening of the film at The Grand Cinema in advance of Mr. López-Gavilán's residency, and our orchestra had the pleasure of speaking over Zoom with his brother, Ilmar López-Gavilán. Ilmar established his career as a violinist with the Harlem Quartet in New York while Aldo remained in Havana. The last piece on our program, *Guaguancó*, was written by their father, Guido López-Gavilán: former director of the Havana Symphony Orchestra and among the most famous living composers and conductors in Cuba.

Guaguancó is based on a traditional Cuban partner dance, typically accompanied by chanting. Its musical construction derives from the rhythmic repetition of rumba clavé: a distinct timeline (or "bell pattern") from West Africa that alternates two- and three-note groupings. Historically performed during the nineteenth-century by lower-class Afro-Cubans, guaguancó has since been embraced as a national embodiment of Cuban culture. When speaking over Zoom, Mr. Ilmar López-Gavilán described the dance as defiant but soulful, joyful but rooted in adversity. He characterized his father's

decision to compose the piece in a minor key in such paradoxical terms; that, while the music contains optimism (including an exuberant improvisatory percussion break led by string and percussion players while the wind players clap along), the music's pivot to a triumphant major key on the last chord is meant as a joke. *Guaguancó* was first recommended to me by conductor Daiana García, who directs the Chamber Orchestra of Havana (and who is married to Mr. Aldo López-Gavilán!). It is a pleasure to return to this wonderful music and to bring it to the campus of Puget Sound!

This is a moment of reunion, but also one that is powerfully bittersweet, as we give thanks and best wishes to our graduating seniors. This cohort assumed positions of leadership during an unprecedented time: a time defined by fracturing, adapting, and recomposing. Through our many pandemic-related pivots, from remote to hybrid to in-person operations, they have remained stalwart and dedicated. These extraordinary young people have led through the example of their creativity and resilience. They will be sorely missed. Congratulations, Class of 2022! Thank you for your outstanding contributions to our orchestra's musical community.

To our audience: thank you for supporting our students and concerts. We hope you enjoy the show!

—Anna Wittstruck

Congratulations, Class of 2022!

Jordan Anderson, cello

BS in Neuroscience
Minors in Music and
Mathematics
From Mount Vernon, WA

Eli Chenevert, violin

BM in Musical Performance
(Violin)
From Santa Monica, CA

Sam Crosby-Schmidt, cello

BM in Musical Performance
(Vocal)
From Woodbury, MN

Christina Fritschen, bassoon

BA in Sociology and
Anthropology
Minor in Music
From Sunnyvale, CA

Mackenzie Johnson, violin

BS in Natural Science
BS in Environmental Policy
Minor in Music
From Excelsior, MN

Miguel Ledezma, trombone

BA in Music Education
From San Jose, CA

Evelyn Martin, viola

BS in Economics
Minor in Mathematics
From University Place, WA

Austin Mangle, percussion

BA in Business Administration
BM in Musical Performance
(Percussion)
From Tacoma, WA

Jasmine Mikesell, flute

BS in Biochemistry
Minor in Music
From Shoreline, WA

Sophie Paul, cello

BM in Musical Performance
(Cello)
From Salem, OR

Bailey Ulrich, flute

BS in Exercise Science
Minor in Music
From Pleasant Hill, CA

Symphony Orchestra

Anna Wittstruck, conductor
Jules Tan '23, orchestra manager

First Violin

Eli Chenevert '22,
concertmaster
Jules Tan '23

Katie Hayhurst '24
Else Mayo '24

Eli Connolly '25
Christina Nguyen '23

Second Violin

Ela Escobar '24, principal
Silvana Byram '25

Owen White '24
Liv Hauge '25

Nikki Hindman '25
Mackenzie Johnson '22

Viola

Charlotte Saric '23,
principal
Evelyn Martin '22

Deniz Kelemet '24
Rai Chernyavsky '25

Kianna Davis '25

Cello

Sophie Paul '22, principal
Connor Adams '25

Jordan Anderson '22
Avi Graf '25

Isabella Brady '24
Jordan Verkh-Haskell '25

Seren Hawtrey '24
Aiden Higgins '24

Aimee Baldwin '25
Mandy Ausman '24

Sam Crosby-Schmidt '22
Angela Ronces Cortes '24

Double bass

Chris East '23, principal
Adam Yeazel, community
member

Flute/Piccolo

Jasmine Mikesell '22
Grace Playstead '24
Bailey Ulrich '22
Julia Vahey '24

Oboe/English Horn

Mariah Canton '24
Clara Gibbs '25

Clarinet

Jenna Hlavaty '24
Maddie Johnson '25
Hailey Matas '25
Levi Walsh '24

Bassoon

Christina Fritschen '22
Claire Garvais,
community member

Horn

Rosa Dale-Moore,
alumna
Sam Sherwood,
community member
Marie Ternes,
community member
Dave Morgan,
community member

Trumpet

Olivia Fross '23
Abbey Hansen '24
Wyatt Logan '25

Trombone

Miguel Ledezma '22
Maia Nilsson '24
Brock Salatino '25
Elias Thiemann '24

Tuba

Ian Dunlap '24
Aidan Sjothun '25

Percussion

Ray Carlsen '25
Ally Davey '24
Skyler Hedblom '25
Austin Mangle '22
Dylan Petersen '23
Abby Pierson '24

BIOGRAPHIES

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. By the age of 5, he had written his first musical composition. His mother introduced the budding prodigy to the piano at the age of 4, and he began formal piano studies at 7. His first international triumph came at the age of 11 when he won a Danny Kaye International Children's Award, organized by UNICEF. He made his professional debut at age 12 with the Matanzas Symphony Orchestra and later went on to perform Prokofiev's Third Piano 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 and performance career blossomed, and he has collaborated with great artists in the classical, popular music, and jazz fields. Learn more at aldomusica.com.

ANNA WITTSTRUCK joined the University of Puget Sound School of Music in 2017 as Assistant Professor, Director of Orchestra. Before that, she spent two years at Stanford University as Acting Assistant Professor, serving as Interim Music Director and Conductor of the Stanford Symphony Orchestra and Stanford Philharmonia. In 2019 she was appointed Music Director of the West Seattle Symphony Orchestra.

Wittstruck has conducted concerts across the United States, in Latin America, Europe and in Asia. She has served as a guest conductor with the Harbin Symphony in China and as the 2017 and 2018 Conducting Fellow with the Eastern Sierra Symphony. She conducted concerts at Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City and Teatro Nacional de Cuba in Havana, where she performed with Litz Alfonso Dance Cuba and the Chamber Orchestra of Havana. She conducted the first-ever symphonic concert on Catalina Island, and returned with her touring ensemble the following three seasons. She has conducted concerts at the Rudolfinum in Prague and the Musikzentrum Augarten (home of the Vienna Boys' Choir) in Vienna, as well as concerts in Berlin, Bad Elster, and Teplice.

Wittstruck is also an active orchestral musician whose performances as a cellist span from the Beijing Modern Music Festival to the 2011 YouTube Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Michael Tilson Thomas. Her string quartet gave a concert tour of Thailand sponsored by the Yonok and American-Thai Foundations, in honor of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn's 60th birthday celebrations. She won a blind audition at the age of 14 to become the youngest contracted member of the Asheville

Symphony Orchestra, and has participated in orchestra festivals such as Tanglewood, Round Top, and the National Symphony/Kennedy Center Institute. She has appeared as a soloist with the Charlotte and Hendersonville Symphonies, on the Public Radio International show, "From the Top," and with the Stanford Symphony Orchestra.

Wittstruck appears regularly as a judge and clinician for WorldStrides Heritage Festival. She served on the jury of the 2014 Alice and Eleonore Schoenfeld International String Competition in Harbin, China.

She received her Bachelor of Arts in music from Princeton University with certificates in orchestral conducting and creative writing, and her Ph.D. in musicology from Stanford University. While a graduate student, she conducted the Summer Stanford Symphony Orchestra for six consecutive seasons, served as assistant conductor of Stanford's orchestral studies program, and directed the Stanford Wind Symphony, the Stanford New Ensemble, and the Stanford Chinese Ensemble. She also helped create the Stanford Youth Orchestra, an international program for advanced high school students, and taught courses through Stanford Pre-Collegiate Studies. At Princeton, she spent two years as assistant conductor of the Princeton University Orchestra and as associate conductor of the Princeton Sinfonia.

Wittstruck has attended the Pierre Monteux School of Conducting in Hancock, Maine, where she studied with Michael Jinbo, and the Conductor's Retreat at Medomak, where she studied with Kenneth Kiesler. Other conducting teachers include Michael Pratt, Ruth Ochs, Stephen Sano, Jindong Cai, and Edwin Outwater.

JASMINE MIKESELL '22 is a biochemistry major with a minor in music, and has studied flute under the wonderful Karla Flygare here at the University of Puget Sound. She previously studied with Bonnie Blanchard and has worked with flutists including Jasmine Choi, Viviana Guzman, and Amy Porter. She currently is part of the Wind Ensemble and a number of chamber ensembles. Jasmine was selected as a winner in the School of Music's 2021 Honors Recital Competition, and is honored to be a winner of the 2022 Concerto-Aria Competition.

UPCOMING SCHOOL OF MUSIC EVENTS

All events are free. R.S.V.P. required for audience health and safety. Proof of vaccination and masks are required for in-person attendance. Performances are broadcast at [PUGETSOUND.EDU/SCHNEEBECKLIVE](https://pugetsound.edu/schneebecklive)

SUNDAY, MAY 1

Spring Choral Concert

Steven Zopfi, conductor
Kilworth Memorial Chapel, 4 p.m.

MONDAY, MAY 2

B Natural Clarinet Ensemble

Jennifer Nelson, director
Puget Sound campus, 6:30 p.m.

MONDAY, MAY 2

Puget Sound Percussion Ensemble

Jeff Lund, director
Schneebeck Concert Hall, 7:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 4

Pops on the Lawn

Puget Sound Karlen Quad, 4 p.m.

R.S.V.P. for in-person attendance at pugetsound.edu/mymusic.

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