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## **Six NW Composers Selected for First of its Kind Cuban Arts Exchange**

***Cascadia Composers' Music Featured at Cuba's Festival de La Habana, de Música Contemporánea November 17, 2016.***

**PORTLAND, OR** – The Cascadia chapter of the National Association of Composers/USA (NACUSA) is thrilled to announce a first-of-its-kind exchange between six Northwest-based composers and a select number of their Cuban composer colleagues. Currently there are 76 Cascadia Composer members, making it the largest NACUSA chapter. Six composers from this chapter were recently selected to attend the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Festival de La Habana, de Música Contemporánea in Cuba this November. At the invitation of festival director Guido López-Gavilán, this year's festival will include a special concert on the fifth night of the Festival featuring the Cascadia Composer members' works.

The delegation will enjoy a six-day tour of Cuba; the highlight comes on November 17, 2016 when the NW composers take centerstage and their pieces are performed by some of Cuba's most respected musicians inside the converted Basilica Menor de San Francisco de Asis (built in 1591). It has been almost six decades since American and Cuban composers and musicians have been able to participate in an exchange like this. This international arts exchange is organized with assistance from the LA-based organization Project Por Amor.

The six Northwest-based composers and a description of their selected compositions are listed below:

**David Bernstein** of Portland, OR, presents *Late Autumn Moods and Images* at the 2016 Cuban Festival. This piano trio reflects the variations seen during this season of transition. Exuberant, introspective, intense and even pleasantly relaxed, this piece contains moments of pure happiness and profound sadness.

**Daniel Brugh** teaches piano and music composition in Beaverton OR. He has two pieces being presented in the Cuban festival: *Fantasia* is for the clarinet and tape, *Reticulum* is for a tenor voice and string Quartet.

**Ted Clifford** of Portland, OR presents his piece *Child's Play* for two pianos in Cuba. Inspired by the idea of musical games engaged by dueling pianos, this involves a series of semi-programmatic pieces. There are three movements and accompanying texts about various children's games which are turned into melodies. The playful nature is further emphasized by the use of bean bags on the piano strings and a toy melodica.

**Art Resnick** of Portland, OR received the 2015 composer of the year award for the Oregon Music Teachers Association and is a jazz pianist/composer by profession. He also composes modern classical pieces and recently completed *Images of a Trip* that will be presented to Cuban audiences at the festival. *Images of a Trip* is presented in five movements as a piano trio that includes the violin and cello. Each movement musically describes a scene from the trip: the departure is called, *The Storm* followed by *Hiking the Trail*, *Waltz* (dancing around the evening fire), the peaceful *Lake* and finally, *The Return*.

**Paul Safar** of Eugene, OR composed *A Trio of Dances* for the piano, violin and cello. It was written during a humorous and humbling period in Paul's life. An impromptu birthday basketball game, in flip-flops, left the

composer with a broken foot and an infectious riff that later became the first movement. His second piece, *Cat on a Wire* is for a solo cello and hand drum (a dumbek). It was originally performed with an aerial artist at the Oregon County Fair's "Cat and Bird" show.

**Jennifer Wright** of Portland OR has two pieces being presented and they both fall into the wild and adventurous classical category. *Looper* is composed for one piano, eight hands! Four pianists sit cheek to jowl on two benches at one piano. *Looper* requires crossed hands keyboard acrobatics and careful timing to avoid getting in each other's way or knocking each other off the bench. *X Chromosome* is generally played on five toy pianos but other instruments may be used for the Cuban performance. With *X Chromosome* Jennifer plays up her role as the only female composer in the delegation. She was intrigued by the "X" and its suggestions of intersection and the synchronicity of chance meetings.

In addition to the pieces presented in Cuba on November 17, 2016 as part of the Festival de La Habana, Cascadia Composers will also produce three Portland, OR area concerts. Early in 2017, Cascadia Composers will announce the names of the Cuban composers participating in the NW leg of the exchange. These Cuban composers will attend the two May concerts (details below). An October 2016 concert is also planned in Portland so American audiences not travelling to Cuba can get a sneak peek at the pieces being performed at the Festival de La Habana, de Música Contemporánea the following month.

**To Cuba With Love, Por Amor: Sat. Oct. 15, 2016; 7:30 Portland State Univ., Lincoln Hall 75** This concert previews the Cascadia composers' works performed by the Cuban musicians at the Festival de La Habana in November, 2016. General Admission Tickets are \$20 and will be available for purchase in August through [brownpapertickets.com](http://brownpapertickets.com) or at [www.cascadiacomposers.org](http://www.cascadiacomposers.org)

**Viva Cuba and the US!: Fri. May 19, 2017; 7:30 Portland, OR location TBD**  
The contemporary ensemble "Fear No Music" performs pieces by the eight visiting Cuban composers. They will attend that performance and a reception will follow. General Admission Tickets are \$20 and will be available in 2017 at [www.cascadiacomposers.org](http://www.cascadiacomposers.org)

**From Cascadia With Love, Por Amor: Sat. May 20, 2017; 7:30 Portland OR location TBD**  
This concert is for the Cuban composer delegation and showcases compositions by Cascadia members, other than those previously heard at the festival in November of 2016. General Admission Tickets are \$20 and will be available in 2017 at [www.cascadiacomposers.org](http://www.cascadiacomposers.org)

In addition to the six Cascadia composers attending the November festival in Cuba; there is space for approximately 20 arts patrons and Cascadia composer supporters on the journey. Travel dates for this Patron Tour are Sunday, November 13 through Saturday November 19, 2016. Details and costs are available at [www.cascadiacomposers.org/the-cuba-initiative](http://www.cascadiacomposers.org/the-cuba-initiative) or by contacting Sage Lewis at Project Por Amor in Los Angeles, [sagelewis@gmail.com](mailto:sagelewis@gmail.com).

Interviews with the Northwest-based composers are available upon request. Contact Jennifer Rice at the email and phone listed above.

### **About Cascadia Composers**

Cascadia Composers is a non-profit membership chapter of NACUSA (National Association of Composers USA) based in Portland, Oregon and dedicated to the promotion and support of regional composers. Since its founding in 2008, Cascadia Composers has grown to be NACUSA's largest chapter with over 70 members. It has produced over 50 concerts, bringing to the stage more than 400 works of musical art by local and West Coast members. The group presents five to seven public concerts each year in collaboration with local musicians; included also are educational events and many community outreach programs. Cascadia members work in virtually every musical genre: chamber music, jazz, choral music, musical theater, electronic and electro-acoustic, world and orchestral music. Members include independent professionals, composer/educators and students. Together they foster a rich collaboration with local musicians, members share the benefit of being part of

a regional community of composers who share common goals and aspirations.

### **About Festival de La Habana, de Música Contemporánea**

Each November the National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC) and the Cuban Institute of Music present the Festival de La Habana, de Música Contemporánea. Founded in 1984 and under the current direction of maestro Guido López-Gavilán, the festival is dedicated to various formats of contemporary music including chamber, vocal and instrumental. Unique concert settings inside the Historic Center of Havana include: the Minor Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi, the Ernesto Lecuona salon inside the National Lyric Theater of Cuba, the San Felipe Neri Oratorio, the Ignacio Cervantes room and the theater inside the National Museum of Fine Arts.

### **About Project Por Amor**

Project Por Amor (PPA) is an organization which harnesses the power of arts and culture to bring Cubans and Americans together. Through travel dialogue and artistic exchange PPA is committed to building a better future between our two close but distant societies. PPA's network throughout the island puts them in the unique position to be able to arrange special travel exchanges for US arts organizations and individuals to understand Cuban culture and build meaningful relationships with the people. PPA designs custom delegations for US professionals to visit Cuba and pioneer new partnerships with its leading players. PPA is fully licensed by the US Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control to legally bring Americans to Cuba on People-to-People exchanges.