



University of North Texas
College of Music

Ensemble Concert | Sunday, April 27, 2025 | 6:30 p.m. | Lab West

Juan Álamo and Latin Jazz Lab

José Aponte, director

Marimbíssimo:

A Latin American Suite for Marimba and Big Band

Encrucijada (2017).....	Juan Álamo
Puerto Rican Bomba Cuembe / Jazz	(b. 1978)
Elegia (2017).....	Juan Álamo
Afro Cuban Bembé / Cha Cha Cha / Jazz	
Ita (2017).....	Juan Álamo
Cuban Mambo / Jazz	
Little Angel (2018).....	Juan Álamo
Brazilian Bossa Nova / Jazz	
Tupananchiskama (2020).....	Juan Álamo
Peruvian Festejo / Jazz	
I Rather Remember You (2018).....	Juan Álamo
Cuban Danzón / Son Montuno / Jazz	arr. Carly Maldonado
One of Kind (2017).....	Juan Álamo
Puerto Rican Plena / Jazz	

Program six hundred seventy-nine of the 2024–2025 season
Photography and videography are prohibited

Program Notes

Marimbissimo is an eight-movement suite that blends musical and technical elements of contemporary classical marimba literature, Latin American rhythms, and jazz. The first three pieces are inspired by the tragic events caused by the passing of hurricane María over Puerto Rico on September 16, 2017. *Encrucijada* (crossroad) depicts the feelings of despair and sorrow I experienced regarding the wellbeing of my family and friends on the island. This is represented in the piece by the syncopated marimba ostinato, the dissonant harmonies, and angular melodies along with the complex polyrhythmic Afro-Puerto Rican bomba cuembé and yubá corrido rhythms. *Ita'* represents the resilient and unbreakable spirit of the Puerto Rican people through the prolonged and grueling recovery process. This piece is written in the style of a mambo jazz but with influences from salsa, Cuban timba, and classical music—e.g. the final marimba cadenza. *Elegia* (Elegy) is an ode to the victims of the hurricane, and it is written in the structure of a minor blues with a rhythmic accompaniment that alternates between an Afro-Cuban batá rhythm called *La Lu Banché* and cha-cha-cha.

Written in the style of a bossa nova, *Little Angel* is a musical portrait of my beloved goddaughter Nilh Callian. The opening rhythmic motives in the bass, piano, and marimba depict her energetic spirit, whereas the lyrical theme presented in the marimba and trumpets represents her innocent and angelic soul. *Tupananchiskama* (Peruvian Quechua word meaning we will see each other again) is a tone-poem dedicated to the memory of my dear friend Andrew Lázaro. This piece incorporates an Afro-Peruvian rhythm called *Festejo*, and it begins with a dialogue between the marimba and the cajón. Also, there is an extended polyphonic section that features all the sections in the ensemble. *I Rather Remember You* (dedicated to my wife Christina) is written in two contrasting parts. The first part is written as a prelude in which the main themes are introduced and then further developed in the second part subtitled *guajira* and *danzón*. *One of a Kind* is dedicated to my mother Carmen and was written during the time she moved to North Carolina in the wake of Hurricane Maria. This composition is written in the style of bebop and inspired by two of my musical heroes, Charlie Parker, and Milt Jackson. In addition, the rhythmic accompaniment in the piece is based on a Puerto Rican folkloric rhythm called plena.

– Juan Álamo

Latin Jazz Lab Personnel

Margaret Nicholson, voice

Saxophone

Alexander Siler

Adan Mantri

Nabil Muquit

Lucas Haratsaris

Brady Markin

Trumpet

Alejandro Muñoz

Eli Rogers

Andrew Camey

Isidoro Ramos

Trombone

Ian McGuire

Madison Shupe

Annika Bjorn

Vince Certo

Rhythm

Prajwal Lama, piano

Jacob Landrum, guitar

Anthony Casolari, bass

Ashton Weigel, drumset *

Elijah Marrewa, congas

Simon Von Hatten, timbal

Bailey Dixon and Samuel Ferrer, bongó

* Section Leader

Jasper Kashou, composer-arranger in residence

Elijah Caver, teaching assistant