



UNC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
TONU KALAM, MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR
JUAN ÁLAMO, PERCUSSION SOLOIST

Wednesday, December 6, 2023 at 7:30 P.M.
Beasley-Curtis Auditorium, Memorial Hall

PROGRAM

Concerto for Puerto Rico (2017, revised 2020)

Stephen Anderson
(b. 1970)

Juan Álamo, percussion

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67 (1808)

Allegro con brio
Andante con moto
Allegro—
Allegro

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770–1827)

PROGRAM NOTE

CONCERTO FOR PUERTO RICO BY STEPHEN ANDERSON

Concerto for Puerto Rico was composed for my friend, colleague, and musical collaborator at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Puerto Rican born marimba virtuoso and percussionist, Dr. Juan Álamo, and symphony orchestra. As a member of Dr. Álamo's Marimjazzia, he and I have performed together frequently over the years, and I have learned much about Puerto Rican music and about the history of the island from him. In composing the concerto, I wanted to characterize the phrasing, edgy beat placement, articulations, and other stylistic traits that I hear in his playing into the piece, while at the same time compose a serious symphonic classical work that draws on various folkloric rhythms, thematic materials, and programmatic elements that relate to the history of Puerto Rico and rich traditions of the island.

Through my own studies, I've been struck and saddened by the oppression that the native people of Puerto Rico have suffered due to the nations that have conquered the island for their own commercial and military gain at various times over the past few centuries. In recent history, I was saddened to learn that beautiful Vieques, a smaller island municipality off the eastern coast of Puerto Rico, was used as a bombing range by the United States military to test bombs from 1941 until 2003, and that as a result, there is a high cancer rate, still to this day, among the inhabitants there due to the pollutants from the bombs. The various downward string glissandi that meet explosive percussive attacks in the bass drum found in the middle portion of the piece are intended to reflect this bombing. After the explosive "bombing section" of the piece, in stark contrast, Dr. Álamo and the concertmaster perform a duet that quotes the 1920s Puerto Rican folk song, "Papa Roosevelt," by the musical group Los Jardineros. The song references Theodore Roosevelt, who later became the 26th President of the United States in 1901, and previously led the "Rough Riders" in the Battle of San Juan Hill (Cuba) during the 1898 Spanish-American War, which soon resulted in Puerto Rico coming under control of the United States military.

Portions of the piece incorporate the nightly song of the native Coquí frog—the "lead singer" Coquí sings octave Fs in the high register while a group of "backup singer" Coquí sing a softer pitch cluster (F, F#, G) in random rhythms, likewise in the high register, always the same each night with the same precise intonation. Other times throughout the piece, Dr. Álamo and the other percussionists play traditional instruments, such as the Pandero de Plenera, Cuá, and Güiro, to the traditional Plena and Bomba Sicá Puerto Rican rhythms, while the strings, woodwinds, and brass have various contrapuntal interplay between them.

The harmonic language of the piece is varied, ranging from 12-tone technique, a jazz parallel harmonization technique of the chromatic lines, to folkloric pentatonic melodies from the island. Fast-swirling figures in the upper woodwinds pay homage to the damaging storms that have ravished the island. *Concerto for Puerto Rico* was nearly completed when the Category 5 Hurricane Maria destroyed much of the island. Watching Dr. Álamo, his family, and friends from the island cope with the long impact over several months of the destruction likewise concerned and saddened me. We all wished we could do more to help. It was only then that I began to see how all the themes—the somber chromatic harmony, the bombastic crashes, the windy high register swirling motion in the woodwinds, as well as the hopeful folkloric, and the peaceful song of the Coquí—fit together, to my ear, in a very natural way related to beautiful Puerto Rico.

BIOGRAPHIES

Stephen Anderson has received three major international awards since May 2022. On May 13, 2022, he was formally distinguished by the Ministra de Cultura, Señora Milagros Germán, on behalf of

the government in the Dominican Republic in a historic award that recognized his contributions to the “national heritage as a pianist, composer, and music producer.” Translated into English, the award reads:

“Government of the Dominican Republic, The Minister of Culture of the Dominican Republic, distinguishes with this recognition the pianist, composer, and music producer, Stephen Anderson, for his research and contributions to the national musical heritage. With his work, he has generated pieces and compositions whose contents are based on the roots of native Dominican music. In his sound works of fusion with jazz, our rhythms have traveled with our seal of identity.”

This formal distinction by the government of the Dominican Republic, which recognizes a musical artist who has contributed to the “national musical heritage,” had never before been awarded to an American.

The Dominican Jazz Project *Desde Lejos* CD, for which Anderson composed five pieces, was the pianist, and served as musical director, won “Best Jazz Album,” and his composition *Fuera de la Oscuridad* won “Best Jazz Song” at the Premios Indie Dominicano (Dominican Indie Awards) on January 31, 2023. In addition to winning these two significant awards, the Dominican Jazz Project *Desde Lejos* CD was announced at the award ceremony as final nominees in two “all musical styles” categories where we competed with major internationally renowned Latin American pop stars and Caribbean artists in the categories of “Best Album” and “Best Song.”

In conjunction with the 2022 Jazzomania Jazz Festival, the Dominican Jazz Project was invited to the Palacio Nacional in Santo Domingo for the condecoración (i.e., formal “decoration”) ceremony of bandmate Guillo Carias by the President of the Dominican Republic, President Luis Rodolfo Abinader Corona on April 28, 2022, where the band met with President Abinader and took photos together.

In 2021, Dr. Anderson was a finalist for the American Prize in the Orchestral Composition Division for his composition, *Concerto for Puerto Rico*. He has participated in 20 recordings that were published by major record labels—Summit Records, Nagel Heyer Records, and Albany, many of which have appeared on the Grammy Award and/or Latin Grammy Award ballots representing Summit Records.

Originally from Cidra, Puerto Rico, **Dr. Juan Álamo** has presented solo recitals at universities and percussion/jazz festivals throughout the United States, Central and South America, Europe, and the Caribbean. He has been featured as a soloist and with jazz ensembles and symphony orchestras in television and radio shows in Puerto Rico, Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, and the United States. Currently, Juan is an Associate Professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Álamo is also a William Wilson Brown, Jr. Distinguished Term Associate Professor in Latin American Studies.

Dr. Álamo has published five recordings: *Remembrance* (2007), *Marimjazzia* (2014), *Pursuing Freedom* (2016), *Ruta Panorámica* (2019), which reached the 29th position in the top 50 jazz albums in the United States, and *Ensoñación* (2021). Also, as a composer, Dr. Álamo has several pieces published by major publishing companies such as Musicon Publications, Row-Loff Publications, C. Alan Publications, and MalletWorks Inc. He is also the co-author of the jazz vibes book *Milt Jackson – Transcribed Solos of the Master*. Dr. Álamo is also the author of two marimba methods: *Music for Four Mallets: A Collection of Original Etudes for Beginners and Intermediate Marimba Players* (2011) and *Marimbissimo: A Musical Guide to Chordal Voicing and Improvisation* (2023). Álamo is a performing artist and clinician for Yamaha, Meinl Percussion, Sabian, and Innovative Percussion Mallets. For more information, please visit www.juanalamomusic.com.

UNC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

TONU KALAM, MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR

VIOLIN I

Frances Norton, *concertmaster*
Stella Chen
Tony Feng
Gilda Ferrie
Sharayu Gugnani
Martha-Grace Jackson
Woody Livesay
Maria Manning
Karyn Ostrom
Nidhi Pandrangi
Ameer Qaqish
Shanna Swaringen, DO
Siana Wong
Henry Woodburn
Alanna Zhang
Amber Zhen

VIOLIN II

Anant Malpani, *principal*
Nicolas Asanov
Avanish Bharadwaj
Luke Bleuel
Lauren E. Burris
Nathan Butler
Olivia Coyne
Daphne Davis
Delphine Liu
Hope Lusby
Mani Pourfazli
Nicole Razhanskiy
Lilliana Soucaze
Emmy Tang
Perry Tseng
Alice Zhong

VIOLA

Lauren Southwell, *principal*
Jacob Bandy
Abigail Benzinger
William Jackson
Andrew Jensen
Broderick Merz
Charlotte T. Spurr
Maria Workman

CELLO

David Kim, *principal*
Shudy Du
Olivia Fults
Cameron Hayward
Arush Narang
George Nielsen
Aaron Osborne
Marion Rambler
Ellie Rogers
Vidur Shah

BASS

Matt Gimbel, *principal*
Catie Banks
Benjamin F. Burch
Julien Cox
Olivia Jones
Katherine Ropp
Cindy Xu

FLUTE AND PICCOLO

Hylton Baker, *principal*
Abigail Poirier, *co-principal*
Emily Qiu

OBOE

Emily Harmon, *principal*
Anna Lassiter
Stephen Litt

CLARINET AND BASS

CLARINET

Kevin Chen, *principal*
Garrett Sapp
Jillian Z. Diaz, *bass*

BASSOON AND CONTRABASSOON

Bartley Meinke, *principal*
J Suddreth, *co-principal*
Sam Brunetz, *contra*

HORN

Monet Jowers, *principal*
Thayer Hicks, *co-principal*
Neha Bharadwaj
Harrison L. Dixon

TRUMPET

Mia Sabin, *principal*
Naomi Major, *co-principal*
Emma Wrenn

TROMBONE

Andrew Kuntz, *principal*
Derek Y. Yao, *co-principal*
Ian Matthies, *bass*

TUBA

Daniel Horn

TIMPANI

Ben Frens

PERCUSSION

Elijah Collingwood
Joey Padow
Nikolai Sbityakov

STAGE MANAGER

Katherine Gu

String players are listed alphabetically following the principals in each section