



Friday, April 21, 2023, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

Paquito D'Rivera,
clarinet and alto saxophone

with

Alex Brown, *piano*

Eric Doob, *drums*

Diego Urcola, *trumpet and valve trombone*

Hamish Smith, *acoustic bass*

Tonight's program will be announced from the stage.

NEA Jazz Master **Paquito D’Rivera** defies categorization. The winner of 14 combined Grammy and Latin Grammy awards, his celebrated musical career reflects a dedication to jazz, bebop, and Latin music, as well as his impressive contributions to classical music. In his passion to bring Latin repertoire to greater prominence, D’Rivera has successfully created and championed all types of classical compositions, including symphonies and chamber music written and premiered with distinguished cellist Yo-Yo Ma in 2003 and, most recently, *The Journey*, commissioned by the National Symphony Orchestra and premiered in 2023. (The work will have its premiere in Mexico this June.) The chamber work *Merengue* from a live concert at Carnegie Hall earned D’Rivera his seventh Grammy Award for Best Instrumental Composition in 2004.

D’Rivera’s “Reunion” band with his childhood friend Chucho Valdes continues to appear at festivals throughout in 2023, as does his quintet.

Recognition for D’Rivera’s achievements as a composer include a 2007 Guggenheim Fellowship, a 2007–08 appointment as Composer in Residence at the Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, a Latin Grammy for Best Classical Contemporary Composition in 2011 for his *Pan-americana Suite*, a National Medal of the Arts, and the 2017 Bogomolny National Service Award from Chamber Music America in recognition of D’Rivera’s efforts to inspire the next generation of musicians. D’Rivera also holds honorary doctorates from many institutions, including Berklee College of Music, Manhattan School of Music, University of Pennsylvania, the City University of New York (CUNY), and the Universidad de Alcalá de Henares, Spain.

D’Rivera’s works often reveal his widespread and eclectic musical interests,

which range from Afro-Cuban rhythms and melodies—including influences encountered during his many travels—back to his classical origins. D’Rivera’s *Conversations with Cachao*, a concerto for double bass and clarinet/saxophone, pays tribute to Cuba’s legendary bass player, Israel “Cachao” Lopez. Inspiration for *The Cape Cod Files* (2009) comes from such disparate sources as Benny Goodman’s introduction to the Eubie Blake popular song “Memories of You,” Argentine *milonga*, improvisations on the music of Cuban composer Ernesto Lecuona, and North American boogie-woogie.

Recent compositions include *The Journey*, a double concerto for clarinet and cello that D’Rivera premiered with Yo-Yo-Ma and the National Symphony Orchestra at Wolf Trap; *Dali in the Tropics* for horn, jazz trio, and orchestra, performed by the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, conductor Xian Zhang, and soloist Chris Komer; *Concerto Venezolano* for trumpet player Pachó Flores, who has performed the work with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, the Orquestra de Valencia, the San Diego Symphony, and the Orquesta Sinfonica de Minería; *Afro Tales* for clarinet and cello, premiered at Michigan State University College of Music; and *Fantasías Barcelónicas* for clarinet quartet, premiered by the Barcelona Clarinet Players, then recorded on the album *Fantasías Barcelónicas—Tribute to Paquito* alongside other D’Rivera ensemble works.

D’Rivera is the author of four books: *Letters to Yeyito: Lessons from a Life in Music*; *Ser o no ser, esa es la jodienda!*; *Oh La Habana*; and *My Sax Life*. During the pandemic, D’Rivera produced a series of YouTube videos called *The Paq-Man’s Korner*, through which he shared insights about his recordings, premiered chamber music, interviewed fellow artists, and gave master classes.

The *New York Times* says pianist and composer **Alex Brown** plays “with a crystalline touch and a worldly approach.” In 2021, Brown released his second album as a leader, *The Dark Fire Sessions*. He can also be heard on Grammy Award-winning albums with Paquito D’Rivera and Brian Lynch. Brown has performed and recorded with artists including Yo-Yo Ma, Dafnis Prieto, Chris Thile, Christian McBride, Sean Jones, Warren Wolf, the Imani Winds, and David Shifrin. In 2022, Brown collaborated with San Francisco-based rapper Andre Nickatina in a project reimagining Nickatina’s music for string orchestra. He has composed music for film as well as commercial campaigns for Orbitz, Zimmermann, Omega, and Vogue. Brown has served as a visiting professor at the Peabody Institute of The John Hopkins University as well as the University of Miami’s Frost School of Music.

An award-winning New Zealand jazz artist, **Hamish Smith** flows with rhythmic inventiveness and a unique groove-centric approach. He has been described by NEA (National Endowment for the Arts) Jazz Master Todd Barkan as “a modern marvel—one of the great young bassists in the world.” Currently living in New York, Smith has quickly become a highly sought-after musician. His career highlights include tours, performances, and/or recordings with artists such as Paquito D’Rivera, Dayna Stephens, Miguel Zenon, Manuel Valera, Yosvany Terry, Michael Rodriguez, Benito González, Elio Villafranca, Diego Urcola, and the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra. Smith is also a founding member of the collaborative group Immigrantet, along with Nicola Caminiti and Juan Diego Villalobos. He thrives on providing a sonic foundation with his formidable sound echoing the vibrations of New Zealand’s roots.

Hailed as “a drummer to watch” by *Modern Drummer Magazine*, and “a rising jazz drummer with a deft touch” by *Time Out New York*, drummer, composer, and producer **Eric Doob** is carving out a distinct voice for himself within the modern musical landscape. Doob’s exciting playing style has led him to work with a diverse range of leading artists, including Paquito D’Rivera, Chris Thile, Julian Lage, Miguel Zenon, Eldar Djangirov, and Linda Oh. Has appeared as a guest artist with the NDR Big Band of Hamburg (Germany) as well as with Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. A two-time Grammy nominee, Doob has held faculty positions teaching drum set at Hunter College and the New School of Jazz and Contemporary Music in New York City. He is a Sabian Cymbals and Vic Firth Drumsticks Artist.

Argentine trumpeter **Diego Urcola** is a gifted improviser and composer who infuses post-bop jazz with South American traditions. A vibrant presence on the New York scene since his arrival in the early 1990s, Urcola has built close associations with such globally minded performers as saxophonist Paquito D’Rivera, bassist Avishai Cohen, vibraphonist Dave Samuels, and pianist Guillermo Klein. He has also garnered acclaim on his own, including earning Grammy nominations for *Soundances* in 2003 and *Viva* in 2006. Urcola has continued to explore a cross-pollinated mix of sounds—from Astor Piazzolla to Miles Davis—releasing albums like his 2011 quartet date *Appreciation* and his 2020 collaboration with D’Rivera, *El Duelo*.