

**MetLife Foundation**  
Music of the Americas  
Concert Series

**WILLANNY DARIAS, PIANO**



**February 24, 2015**

**7:00 PM**

**Americas Society  
680 Park Avenue  
New York**

**Americas** / SOCIETY

Dear friends,

Last year we had the pleasure of hearing Willa Darias in a brief guest appearance in her fellow Manhattan School of Music student Wenqiao Xiang's recital. Tonight we are delighted to present her New York recital debut with a hefty program that spans centuries and also serves as a long distance kickoff of Alberto Ginastera's centennial celebration in 2016. Thank you for joining us!

Sebastian Zubieta, Music Director

The MetLife Foundation Music of the Americas concert series is made possible by the generous support of **Presenting Sponsor MetLife Foundation**.

The Music of the Americas Winter 2015 season is also supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

This performance is part of the Cuban Culture Festival New York, presented by the American Friends of the Ludwig Foundation of Cuba.

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**WILLANNY DARIAS, PIANO**  
**NYC DEBUT**

**PROGRAM**

**Isaac Albéniz**

El albaicín from *Iberia*, Book III

**Robert Schumann**

Symphonic Etudes, op. 13, posthumous

Theme - Andante  
Etude I. Un poco più vivo  
Variation I (posth.)  
Etude II. Andante  
Etude III. Vivace  
Etude IV. Allegro marcato  
Etude V. Scherzando  
Variation III (posth.)  
Etude VI. Agitato  
Variation IV (posth.)  
Variation V (posth.)  
Etude VII. Allegro molto  
Etude VIII. Sempre marcatissimo  
Etude IX. Presto possibile  
Variation II (posth.)  
Etude X. Allegro con energia  
Etude XI. Andante espressivo  
Etude XII (Finale). Allegro brillante

**INTERMISSION**

**Claude Debussy**

“Reflets dans l’eau” from *Images*, Book I

**Ferruccio Busoni**

Sonatina no. 6, BV 284: Chamber Fantasy on Bizet’s *Carmen*

**Tania León**

*Momentum*

**Alberto Ginastera**

*Sonata* no. 2, op. 53

I. Allegramente  
II. Adagio sereno / Scorrevole / Represa dell’ adagio  
III. Ostinato aymará

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## About the program

Isaac Albéniz (1860-1909)

El albaicín from *Iberia*, Book III (1905-1909)

Book 3 of *Iberia* expands on the ideals of Spanish folk music with El Albaicín, El polo, and Lavapiés. In El Albaicín, Albéniz incorporates Gypsy music from Granada, imitating the strumming of a guitar: a reflection of his early explorations of instrumental imitation, as in the Prelude to *Chant d'Espagne*. The B section of El Albaicín, by contrast to the style of the Prelude, is more ethereal and uses more complex layering techniques.

Robert Schumann (1818-1856)

Symphonic Etudes, op. 13, posth. (1852)

Schumann's Symphonic Etudes, op. 13, is still a work in progress. Or, at least, it is a work that never seems to have settled into a final, permanent form. Beyond the two printed editions which were published during the composer's lifetime, the Symphonic Etudes existed in several forms called variously, Études symphoniques, or "Fantasies and Finale on a Theme by Baron de Fricken," or "Etudes in the Form of Variations," or "Variations pathétiques," or even "Etudes of an Orchestral Character from Florestan and Eusebius." Individual components were deleted and restored over the years. The version played tonight is the 1852 version, with the addition of five Posthumous Variations, edited and published by Brahms after the composer's death. It is now a performing practice, credited to the great pianist Alfred Cortot, for soloists to restore the Posthumous Variations into the fixed order of the published score in a sequence of their own choosing.

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The program listing will show that the printed edition of 1852, now usually found in versions edited by Clara, made no attempt to streamline or standardize the names of movements as variations stand alongside etudes; a legacy of the piece's unstable history. But what is distracting to the eye is ignored by the ear - what we hear is a monumental sequence of contrasting extrovert and introvert episodes, testing the extremes of technical facility and emotional expression, leading to a marching, jubilant finale.

Like archeological artifacts, the original titles tell us something about the inspirations for Op. 13. The Baron de Fricken mentioned in one draft was the guardian of Ernestine von Fricken, Schumann's betrothed before his subsequent infatuation with Clara brought the engagement to a sad close.

Before he gained wide fame as a composer, Schumann was primarily known as a writer and critic. The popular literature of his day was obsessed with stories of secret societies doing battle against the forces of evil and, caught in the current, Schumann created his own fictive league of heroes, alter-egos to vent his creative outpourings. Florestan (outgoing and charismatic) and Eusebius (introspective and dreamy) were the leaders of Schumann's Davidsbund, his imagined troop battling the Philistines of popular culture. Their contrasting personalities are the engines of the Symphonic Etudes, their march to victory its conclusion.

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### Claude Debussy "Reflets dans l'eau" from *Images*, Book I (1905)

In 1911 when Debussy was almost 50 years old, he wrote to the composer Edgard Varèse, "I love pictures almost as much as music." This statement belies the French composer's unique ability to paint pictures with tones and to create visions that had never been recorded in music. Despite his intense desire not to be categorized, it was inevitable that Debussy became associated with the Impressionist movement. His trio of piano pieces entitled *Images* (Book I) was published in 1905, the same year as his *Suite bergamesque*. Water, one of the favorite subjects of Impressionist painters, was likewise an inspiration for Debussy, as showcased in the first piece in this set, "Reflets dans l'eau" ("Reflections in the Water"). The repetition and growing complexity of the chordal melody has been compared to dropping stones onto the surface of water and watching the ripple patterns interweave. The music rises to a shimmering climax and disintegrates, fragmented, into silence.

### F. Busoni, Sonatina no. 6, BV 284: Chamber Fantasy on Bizet's *Carmen* (1910-18)

Composed between 1910 and 1918, the first five of Busoni's sonatinas were written in the effort to fashion a new, Faustian musical language that parallels that of Schönberg. Ending the series with an old-fashioned Lisztian operatic fantasy in the Sonatina no. 6 *super Carmen* therefore struck critics and commentators as incongruous. Heard against the backdrop of its era - aesthetic crosscurrents caused by virulent political jostling - this Sonatina looms as a musical manifesto, validating Nietzsche's anti-Wagnerian admiration for Bizet's *Carmen* and a realization of the philosopher's call to "Mediterraneanize music."

Born in Italy, Busoni was distinctly proud of his heritage, yet he lived in Berlin for 30 years and wrote his stage works and songs in German: a true outsider. While on tour in New York in 1915, when the First World War had turned grim, news that he had been seen chatting with Saint-Saëns during a performance of *Carmen* at the Metropolitan Opera provoked a scandal in Berlin: his cosmopolitanism could only be viewed as disloyalty. To his student Egon Petri, Busoni wrote: “The German is the greatest sufferer from Heimweh: he loves to make poems about it. Art is at home everywhere. The German is bourgeois, art is aristocratic.” A visit to Paris in March 1920 felt “like a homecoming for me...to find life on the grand scale again”; under this Parisian spell he composed the *Sonatina super Carmen*.

Busoni follows the formal model of Liszt’s *Norma Fantasy*, which seized upon high points of the original opera and milked them for all of their dramatic worth, with a few differences: where Liszt is expansive, flamboyant, and luxuriant, Busoni is rapid, concentrated, and allusive. Sparkling octaves and thirds evoke the Act Four opening—the crowd, the vendors, the anticipation—segueing into Don José’s “Flower Song” in the piano’s middle register, with sparkling arpeggios throughout the entire keyboard, cunningly combined with the Fate motif as it sinks to a murmur before Carmen’s teasing *Habanera*. Beginning *dolce, vagamente*, the dance intensifies to a dazzling seduction before dissolving suddenly into the entrance of the toreadors, which, too, dissolves into an *andante visionario* in which the eerily muted Fate motif looms.

Busoni gave the work its premiere in London’s Wigmore Hall on June 22, 1920. Critic and composer Kaikhosru Sorabji was in the audience and commented: “The vulgar commonplace Bizet tunes lose all their own identity, although not rhythmically distorted, and are for the time being ‘controlled’ by Busoni in a way that recalls the control of a psychic sensitive by some powerful discarnate entity.... It was amusing to feel the audience at the Wigmore a little horrified and frightened by something the likes of which they had certainly never known before.”

**Tania León (b. 1943)**

*Momentum* (1985)

León's first solo piano piece, *Momentum*, was commissioned by the International Congress of Women in Music. *New York Newsday* perhaps best described the piece as "a brief, dense synthesis of American, Latin and international styles. After one echoing note produced by holding a string inside the instrument, the work combines what sounds like serial tone rows with touches of Latin dance rhythms, stride piano and blues in a thick, moody jumble. It is quick, intense and highly personal."

© CD liner notes to *Character Sketches: Solo Piano Works by 7 American Women*, used with permission of *Leonarda Productions, Inc.*

**Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983)**

*Sonata no. 2, op. 53* (1981)

Almost three decades separate Ginastera's First and Second Piano Sonatas. *Sonata no. 2, op. 53* (1981) is without doubt one of the most significant and creative pieces ever written for the piano as Ginastera, having gone through his neo-expressionist phase, emerged from a darker world and looked again at pre-Columbian music, drawing on it for his second and third piano sonatas and the *Variazioni e Toccata* for organ.

The composer writes:

Just as the first sonata was inspired by the music of the Argentine pampas, this sonata evokes the Aymara and Quechua (extra-European) music of the north of my country, with its pentatonic scales, melancholy melodies or lively rhythms, *kenas* (Andean flutes) and drums, and microtonal mellismas.

The first movement, *Allegramente*, comprises a principal theme which acts as a kind of introduction and conclusion, framing developments based on its rhythms and on various different songs, including the Argentine *pala-pala*. The *Adagio sereno* — *Scorrevole* — *Ripresa dell'Adagio* is nocturnal in character. The first part is a *harawi*, a melancholy love song, pentatonic and of pre-Columbian origin (from Cuzco), featuring the characteristic inflections of the primitive peoples. The scherzo-like *Scorrevole* evokes the nighttime sounds of the solitary Andean plateaus. The movement ends with the *Ripresa dell'Adagio*, which gradually dissolves and fades into silence. The final *Ostinato aymarà* is in toccata form and its basic rhythm is taken from a dance known as a *karnavalito*. It is robust and impetuous, typical of South American music.

## About the artist

Willanny Darias (b. 1993, Havana) graduated from Manhattan School of Music (MSM) in 2014 with a Bachelor of Music under the tutelage of Dr. Solomon Mikowsky, where she was the recipient of the International Advisory Board Scholarship. Recent performances include an appearance with Cuba's National Symphonic Orchestra (Cesar Franck's Symphonic Variations); solo recitals in Cuba; and other performances at the Juilliard School and Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, as part of the Young Musicians Concert organized by the AMT League. She also frequently performs both vocal and instrumental chamber music.

Darias began her piano studies at age 4 with Rosalia Capote and was trained in solfège from age 5 with Lucía Varona. At 7, she started at the Escuela Elemental de Música Manuel Saumell and made her first-ever public performance at the Teatro Amadeo Roldán. She had her symphonic debut at 13 with Mozart's Piano Concerto no.12 in A major; at 14, renowned Russian pedagogue Dr. Stanislav Pocheikin invited her to the music and dance course held in Andorra.

She was later accepted into Cuba's Escuela Nacional de Arte, where she studied piano with Dr. Teresita Junco and Harmony and Musical Analysis with Dr. Iliana García. That same year, she performed Tchaikovsky's first Piano Concerto with Cuba's Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Cuba, conducted by Mexican maestro Eduardo Sanchez Zuber, who later invited her to tour in Mexico with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Michoacan, with a final performance at the Sala Nezahualcóyotl (Mexico City).

In 2010 she won first prize at the Unión de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba Piano Competition, Cuba's preeminent national classical music event, and was awarded all special mentions and recognitions by the jury, becoming the youngest performer ever to win this competition.

Her other awards include five grand and first prizes in national and provincial contests held in Cuba; First Prize at the Maracaibo International Piano Competition (Venezuela); and First Prize at the Bradshaw and Buono International Piano Competition in New York.



# MetLife Foundation Music of the Americas Concert Series

## About the concert series

Since 1965, the **Music of the Americas Concert Series** has presented musical luminaries such as Plácido Domingo, Antonio Meneses, Mercedes Sosa, Egberto Gismonti, Hermeto Pascoal, Continuum Ensemble, Bobby Sanabria, Inti-Illimani, Cuarteto Latinoamericano, Jaime Laredo, the Spanish Harlem Orchestra, Tanya Tagaq, and many others.

**MetLife Foundation Music of the Americas** concerts take place at Americas Society's headquarters and partnering organizations across New York City. The concert series brings together an ever-expanding urban audience with consistently high-caliber musicians from across the hemisphere, showcasing oft-underrepresented music and rendering it immediate and accessible.



The Bishop's Band at Trinity Wall Street, December 2014. Image by Roey Yohai.

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SPRING/SUMMER 2015

Thursday, February 12 7 pm	Colombian vocalist Lucía Pulido <i>Canciones de despecho: Songs of Heartbreak</i>
Tuesday, February 24 7 pm	Cuban pianist Willanny Darias Schumann, Albéniz, León, Ginastera
Thursday, March 5 7 pm	Arakaendar: Music from Bolivian Jesuit Missions @ Hispanic Society of America
Friday, March 13 7 pm	International Contemporary Ensemble Mario Davidovsky World Premiere
NEW DATE: Monday, March 30 7 pm	Exponential Ensemble with Adaskin String Trio Beethoven, Adaskin, Golijov
Friday, April 24 7 pm	Teen ensemble Face the Music New music from Puerto Rico
Monday, April 27 7 pm	Meridionalis: Music of Francisco López Capillas @ Hispanic Society of America
NEW DATE: Tuesday, May 5 7 pm	Argentine folk singers Juan Quintero & Luna Monti with special guest Miguel Zenón
Monday, May 11 7 pm	Wendy Mehne & Pablo Cohen New music for flute and guitar
Wednesday, May 20 7 pm	<i>Hércules en el Mato Grosso: US premiere</i> @ Dixon Place
Sunday, June 21 time TBD	Make Music New York: Valéria Bonafé Premiere @ Central Park Lake
Tuesday, June 30 7 pm	Jorge Caballero, guitar Russian orchestral masterworks

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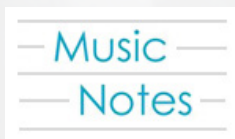
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- Bring one or more guests free of charge to members-only and VIP culture events.



## **Eddy Marciano Cuarteto Acústico & Musica Ficta**

Music of the Americas now has two CDs available for purchase! The first, recorded live at Americas Society in 2009 and produced by Americas Society's own Sebastián Zubietta, features Eddy Marciano Cuarteto Acústico and is available for download on iTunes, Amazon, and other stores. The second, recorded at Hispanic Society of America in 2014, features the Spanish vocal ensemble Musica Ficta in a program of early Latin American music with harpist Manuel Vilas, conducted by Raúl Mallavibarrena.



**Music Notes** is a continuing series of online articles that looks at recent concerts in the Music of the Americas Series. Available at the Americas Society website, the articles showcase videos, photos, and audio from the concerts, and discuss issues and ideas brought up by the artists and the music.

Visit [www.as-coa.org/music](http://www.as-coa.org/music) for more information.

Americas Society is the premier forum dedicated to education, debate and dialogue in the Americas. Its mission is to foster an understanding of the contemporary political, social and economic issues confronting Latin America, the Caribbean and Canada, and to increase public awareness and appreciation of the diverse cultural heritage of the Americas and the importance of the inter-American relationship.

## UPCOMING CONCERTS

Thursday, March 5 7 pm  
**Arakaendar: Music from Bolivian Jesuit Missions @ Hispanic Society of America**

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**International Contemporary Ensemble  
World premiere by Mario Davidovsky**

NEW DATE: Monday, March 30 7 pm  
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### Cultural Programs Admission:

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