

# Cuba! *Music* and history from 1868 to today

performances by Gustavo Corrales Romero related to the exhibition

# Cuba! *Art* and history from 1868 to today

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## DATES & LOCATION

Friday 29 May 2009	Concert
Friday 31 July 2009	Concert and lecture
Friday 28 August 2009	Concert
Friday 18 September 2009	Concert and lecture

20:00 **Groninger Museum**. Adult fee €10,00 including entry to the exhibition. Please visit [www.groningermuseum.nl](http://www.groningermuseum.nl) for all other information and to buy tickets online. In addition, advance reservations should be made to attend these concerts, through 050 3666 555 or [boekingen@ GroningerMuseum.nl](mailto:boekingen@ GroningerMuseum.nl)

## ABOUT GUSTAVO CORRALES ROMERO'S PERFORMANCES at the GRONINGER MUSEUM

**Gustavo Corrales Romero** is a young, seasoned and impassioned pianist living in The Hague, who has been solidly trained in Cuba and in Russia according to the Russian school for piano. He commands a broad European classical as well as contemporary repertoire, yet it is his special intention to present a Latin-American and particularly Cuban classical and contemporary repertoire to international audiences. He is delighted about his participation in the activities surrounding the

exhibition at the Groninger Museum to help bring more publicity to two art forms from Cuba that are perhaps lesser known to the public. He has taken it upon him to lay a link between art and classical and contemporary music from Cuba. Specifically, **he will be performing** at the museum as part of the opening day activities (exclusive event for special museum guests) and subsequently he will be giving two concerts and two concert-and-lecture combinations.

Aside from his great enthusiasm for the exhibition, **there are several factors that make his musical contribution to it special:**

- He commands a **repertoire** that makes a journey through Cuban history, just like the exhibition.
- He probably plays the only solo **instrument** with which such an excursion is possible. Cuban composers in the course of time only in relation to the piano appear to have consistently felt inclinations to capture what was going on in their -Cuban- world, just like some of their contemporaries in visual art. These were academic composers who let themselves be inspired by the very rich folkloric and popular music in Cuba that was heavily influenced by the Spanish and African heritage of the country.
- In addition, he has **special ties with several of the composers** whose works he will perform in the contemporary part of the program:
- Of these, **Harold Gramatges** was the most prominent. This teacher and later colleague of Corrales was awarded the Spanish "Tomás Luis de Victoria" prize for music (Premio Iberoamericano de la Música Tomás Luis de Victoria) in 1997. In relation to this, Corrales was personally chosen by Gramatges to perform in several of the homage events organized to honor the composer: first to participate in a series of concerts, radio and television programs dedicated to him; then to record an ensemble piece for the CD "Homenaje" and finally also to join Gramatges for a presentation of his work in Colombia at the International Festival for Contemporary Music in 1997 during a very well-received concert. To make all of this happen, Corrales worked very closely with Gramatges on the very pieces included in the program. It can therefore truly be said that when Corrales plays these pieces he does this with great veracity as to the intentions of the composer.

- Like Gramatges, **Carlos Fariñas** was also a teacher and later colleague of Corrales. Noteworthy is the fact that Corrales was probably the 3<sup>rd</sup> pianist who, at 16 years of age, obtained Fariñas well-known tango "Altagracia" to perform, again with direct instruction from its composer. This piece has also been included in the concert program to be performed at the Groninger Museum. Corrales also did a first recording on his CD "Palimpsesto", of Fariñas six "sones", of which he will be playing three at the museum concert in which Corrales will also offer two short pieces of this composer that will probably be played for the first time.
- And then the **younger generation**, whom Corrales also knows personally from the Superior Institute for Art in Havana, where they all studied. Corrales in this program has chosen works of **Keyla Orozco** and **Eduardo Morales**, respectively living in Amsterdam and Spain. Corrales worked with Orozco on several projects (co)organized by her, in Cuba as well as here in The Netherlands; respectively on the project "Con to'y la Cáscara" and the festivals "Q-Ba Música" and "Latin-American composers at the Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ" in respectively 2004 and 2007. Corrales' CD "Palimpsesto" also holds a first recording of her work "Won't Blue". Side remark: So as not to make the program too long, Corrales omitted the six "piezas" (pieces) of Yosvani Quintero, living in Switzerland, a work he also did the first performance of during the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the International Festival for Contemporary Music in Havana in 1996. Lastly, works have also been especially composed for and/or dedicated to Corrales by his peers, among which Orozco and Quintero as well as Ailem Carvajal, who lives in Italy.
- What makes it possible for Corrales to draw the envisioned parallels between music and visual art is the fact that aside from music, he has an additional passion for and is consequently **well-informed about art**. On the one hand because he has had a very skillful and versatile teacher and mentor (César Lopez) who instilled this passion in him. On the other thanks to Corrales' long relation (as a student and later a teacher) to the Superior Institute for Art in Havana, where he became acquainted with the young visual artists who later became his friends and who have presented him with several works of art, among others several portraits that were made of him.

## PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

### To *hear* a painting, to *see* the music

The program that Gustavo Corrales Romero offers, presents a musical translation of the exhibition **"Cuba! Art and history from 1868 to today"**. Connoisseur as he is of the art history in his country, especially of its music, Corrales commands a broad repertoire that includes the entire evolution of the piano in Cuba from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to date.



His passion for the visual arts irrevocably compels him to draw parallels in music and find fascinating moments of correlation.

So the 19<sup>th</sup> century look at daily life of Landaluze can be heard in the elegant "danzas" by Cervantes, in essence both making a report of that which is Cuban. As some landscapes and portraits by Collazo and Menocal could also be seen as visual representations of Cervantes' more intimate dances.

When at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the first avant-garde turns its back on academic tradition and Victor Manuel paints his "Gitana Tropical" and Abela "Los Guajiros" and a total reversal occurs in the technique of painting and topics to be treated, Lecuona composes his Afro-Cuban dances, beautiful recreations of the Afro-Cuban culture in Cuba; a line that Caturla and Roldán would elevate to its maximum expression by backing it up with a composition technique resonating with the European modernism at the head of which Stravinsky shined.

The concretism and abstract expressionism of the fifties can be heard in the works of Gramatges: *Contrastes*, *Móvil*; perhaps the most perfect esthetic parallel although perhaps not chronological, since they were composed in the period following the revolution, where this musical/visual journey culminates in a true explosion of Cuban creativity.

# CONCERT PROGRAM

## 19th CENTURY: DEPICTING CUBA

### I. CERVANTES

(Danzas)  
Ilusiones Perdidas  
Los Tres Golpes  
Lejos de tí  
Homenaje  
No llores más  
Soledad  
Un recuerdo  
Adiós a Cuba

Around the time that Cubans began to feel proud of being Cuban; began to appreciate themselves as a racially mixed nation with a personality of its own, for the first time a refined composer, educated in Paris, used his technical excellence to extensively recreate what was "Cuban". Thus, the Musical Nationalism that was developed by Manuel Saumell in the first half of the century at the same time as this was happening in Europe, reached its critical point in Cuba in the end-of-the-century work of Ignacio Cervantes.

## 20th CENTURY: AVANT-GARDE (1927-1938)

### A. ROLDÁN

Mulato

### E. LECUONA

(Danzas Afro-Cubanas)  
Danza Negra  
Danza de los ñañigos  
Danza Lucumí  
La Comparsa

### A.G. CATURLA

Danza Lucumí  
Preludio corto no. 3  
Preludio corto  
Danza del Tambor

The 20th century was born under a sign of introspection and reinvention, search and change. The intelligentsia woke up revitalized and made its intelligence felt; its shrewdness, its transforming, regenerative power. Ernesto Lecuona strengthened Musical Nationalism with his Afro-Cuban dances; unpretentious stylizations of folklore, while Amadeo Roldán and Alejandro García Caturla deeply ventured into that vast black sonorous universe unexplored until then, taking it to the concert halls, fusing it with the most modern techniques of composition, harmonic resources and instrumentation.

In 1927 painters totally upset pictorial tradition and fully entered modernity. At the same time, the musical vanguard would put Cuban composition in a place of respect and international prestige and would establish the basis for a modern school of composition in the country.

## CUBANNESS (1938 – 1959)

### E. LECUONA

(Danzas)  
La Primera en la Frente  
A la Antigua  
La Cardenense  
Interrumpida

Compositions Lecuona based on the dances of the 19th century; binary, bi-thematic, with a less erudite pianism; more direct, unrestrained and with a Spanish aroma over their freshly elegant Cuban essence.

## INTERMISSION

## H. GRAMATGES

Estudio de Contrastes  
Móvil I

MOVIL I by Harold Gramatges sounds like an abstract painting. Like one of those action paintings by Llinas, Vidal or another abstractionist from the group "Los Once" (the eleven) in the fifties. The score itself at times looks like a sketch, a scheme of abstract expressionism. It requires a great deal of improvisation from the pianist. This is not the case with his Estudio de Contrastes, which is comprised of melodic symmetrical cells that constitute short patterns that are constantly replaced by other patterns and is comparable to a composition of geometric abstraction.

## THE REVOLUTION

### C. FARIÑAS

3 Sones (of 6)

Trinitaria (premiere)

Habanera (premiere)

Altagracia

The spirit of irreverence, one's self-respect as an artist and an intellectual and a strong sense of individuality, in combination with a solid theoretical and technical training, have given light to the most fascinating and unsuspected moment in the Cuban visual arts. There has been a real explosion of individualities, ways to express oneself, subjects and approaches. In music the same thing has occurred: a creative individuality squarely turning its back to common movements and esthetics utilizing atonality, polytonality, serial working methods, electronic music and neo romanticism; technical tools to express oneself in the most personal way possible. Appropriations, parodies, precise quotations or subtle allusions; all serving to create a sonorous world as diverse as composers are capable of creating.

### K. OROZCO

Won't Blue

De chismes y confiancias

### E. MORALES

Las sombras divinas

