



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

TCU Symphony Orchestra
Dr. Germán Gutiérrez, Music Director

April 27, 2023

7:00 pm

Van Cliburn Concert Hall at TCU

Program

“Victory Overture” (2021)

Martin Blessinger
(b. 1978)

An American in Paris

George Gershwin
(1898-1937)

- Brief Pause -

Overture to “The School for Scandal”

Samuel Barber
(1910-1981)

Concerto for Puerto Rico (2017)
for solo percussion and symphony orchestra - *USA Premiere*

Stephen Anderson
(b. 1971)

Juan Álamo, soloist

Dr. Germán Augusto Gutiérrez

Professor Germán Augusto Gutiérrez has served as Director of Orchestras and Professor of Orchestral Studies at Fort Worth's Texas Christian University (TCU) as well as Director of TCU's Latin American Music Center and biennial Latin American Music Festival since 1996. Since 2000, Dr. Gutiérrez has also served as Music Director of the Fort Worth Youth Orchestra (FWYO).

Dr. Gutiérrez is a frequent guest conductor of professional orchestras in the Americas, Europe, Middle East, Asia, Africa and Oceania. He recently recorded a CD with the Hong Kong Chamber Orchestra with Daniel Binelli and Polly Ferman as soloists. Recent invitations include the Qingdao Cosmopolitan Music Festival in China, the Fort Worth Symphony, the Shanghai Conservatory Symphony, the Alcalá de Henares Symphony Orchestra, in Spain; the Lebanon National Philharmonic and the Orquesta Filarmónica of Bogotá, Colombia. In 2011, the TCU Symphony Orchestra was awarded the Carlos Gardel Musical Prize for its CD "Cantar Latinoamericano" with Opus Cuatro as soloists. This award led to the invitation for the orchestra to perform in May, 2013 in Buenos Aires and Rosario. For the twelfth consecutive year Dr. Gutiérrez served as guest conductor of the Dallas Symphony's Hispanic Festival. In 2006, he was invited to conduct the Czech National Symphony in historic Smetana Hall as part of the 110th anniversary of Carl Orff's birth, where he led the orchestra in a performance of Carmina Burana. Maestro Gutiérrez has also appeared with the Argentina, Colombia, Puerto Rico, Perú and Cuba National Symphonies. Other orchestras include the Hu Bei State Symphony of China, the Free State Symphony Orchestra of South Africa, Shanghai Symphony (China), Xalapa and San Luis Potosí in Mexico, the Auckland Philharmonic (New Zealand), Sinfónica del Teatro Municipal de Rio de Janeiro, and Porto Alegre Symphony Orchestra (Brazil), among others. In 2002, Maestro Gutiérrez was invited to the Trentino region of Italy to conduct Rossini's opera The Barber of Seville for the 30th anniversary of the Pergine Spettacolo Aperto.

Under his baton, the TCU Symphony and the FWYO have achieved exceptional levels of recognition in Fort Worth and abroad. Both groups have traveled on numerous international tours, obtaining enthusiastic reviews, including repeat invitations as the featured orchestra to engagements such as the Iberoamerican Music Festival in Puerto Rico, and the Texas Music Educators Association Convention in San Antonio. With the TCU Symphony, Maestro Gutiérrez has also conducted the world premieres of more than fifty contemporary works. In 2017, Maestro Gutiérrez led the FWYO on a tour of Europe that included performances at Salzburg's Mozarteum, Eisenstadt's Esterházy Palace in Austria, and a concert in Prague.

Maestro Gutiérrez holds Músico Bachiller and Maestro en Música degrees from the Tolima Conservatory in Colombia. He also received a master's degree from Illinois State University and a doctoral degree from the University of Northern Colorado. In recognition to his achievements, Dr. Gutierrez was included in the Hall of Fame of Illinois State University, and was invited to give the Commencement speech in May 2018. For his involvement and dedication to TCU, Maestro Gutiérrez received the Dean's Teaching Award (1999), the Dean's Award for Research and Creative Activity (2002), and the 2003 Chancellor's Award for Distinguished Research and Creative Activity, the highest award that the university bestows.



Dr. Martin Blessinger

Martin Blessinger is an Associate Professor of Music Theory and Composition at Texas Christian University. He holds a DM in music composition from Florida State University where he was a University Research Fellow, studying with Ladislav Kubik and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich. He received undergraduate and master's degrees from the State University of New York at Stony Brook, studying with Sheila Silver and Perry Goldstein. Prior to arriving at TCU, he worked as a Lecturer in Music Theory at the Ithaca College School of Music.

His works have been performed around the country and abroad by distinguished soloists, collegiate ensembles, professional groups, and community organizations, as well as on conferences at the national and international level. His orchestration of Jessica Grace Wing's score for the critically-acclaimed off-Broadway musical *Lost* won Best Music in the 2003 New York City Fringe Festival and received a revival performance by the Arizona Onstage Theater Company. Further, he has won awards from the Diana Barnhart American Song Competition (*cum laude*, for *Cradle Song*), the Eppes String Quartet Competition (for *Postcard from the Americas*), the Illinois Wesleyan University Young Composers Competition (for *Fanfare for Brass Quintet*), the NACUSA Young Composers Competition (for *Duo for Saxophone and Piano*), and ASCAP.

In 2014, he served as guest composer for the Talis Festival & Academy in Saas-Fee, Switzerland and in 2015 he was a featured composer on the Cliburn Foundation concert series. Most recently he was an invited composer at the 2018 Beijing Modern Music Festival/International Society for Contemporary Music World New Music Days Festival in Beijing, China.

His music is published by Reed Music and C. Alan Publications and can be heard on Albany Records.



Dr. Juan Álamo

Dr. Juan Álamo is an internationally known performer, composer, and educator. He holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music, and Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees with Jazz as related field from the University of North Texas.

Originally from Cidra, Puerto Rico, Dr. Álamo has presented solo recitals at universities and percussion and jazz festivals throughout the United States, Central and South America, and the Caribbean. He has been featured as a soloist and with Jazz ensembles in television and radio shows in Puerto Rico, Mexico, Venezuela, and the United States. Currently Juan is an Associate Professor and the Director of the Percussion Ensemble at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

As a Marimba soloist and percussionist, Álamo has presented recitals in different areas of United States, Central and South America and the Caribbean. Dr. Alamo has been featured in TV and Radio shows in Venezuela, Puerto Rico and United States. Also he has performed and shared the stage with renowned artist such as Keiko Abe, William Cahn, Ney Rosauero, Orlando Cotto, Steve Shick, Tito Puente, Arturo Sandoval, John Wooton, Dave Samuels, Tom Toyama, Dan Moore, Michael Spiro, Ted Piltzecker and famous conductors such as Sergiu Comissiona and Krzysztof Penderecki.

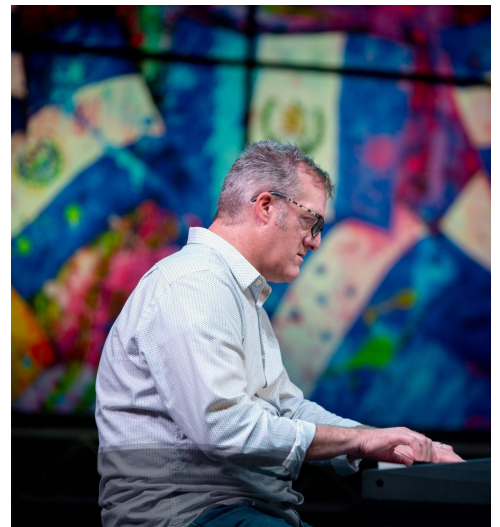


His first solo marimba recording, *Remembrance*, was released in 2007. It features standard repertory as well as two of his compositions for marimba. In 2014, Dr. Álamo released his second CD, entitled *Marimjazzia*, featuring original compositions and arrangements of jazz standards such as “Afro Blues” and “Waltz for Debby.” *Marimjazzia* was selected to represent Parma Records at the 58th Grammy Awards in the category of “Best Latin Jazz Album,” and “Best Instrumental Solo.” His 2016 recording, *Pursuing Freedom*, was selected to represent Albany Records at the 2017 Latin Grammy Awards in the category of “Best Solo Classical Album.” His 2019 Latin Jazz album reached and remain for four weeks on the list of the top 50 jazz tunes in the US, and it has been praised by critics and musicians for his unique blend of classical marimba, Latin rhythms and jazz. In September of 2021, Dr. Álamo will be releasing his fourth solo marimba album *Ensoñacion*. The album scheduled to be published by Summit records and it features an original composition written in the style of a Puerto Rican danza as well as Bach’s Cello suites number one and five and Beethoven’s Bagatelles op. 119.

Also as a composer, Dr. Álamo has several pieces published by major publishing companies such as; Innovative Percussion, Drop 6 Media, C. Alan Publications, and Mallet Work Inc. He has also collaborated with Arthur Lipner in the creation of the jazz vibes book *Milt Jackson – Transcribed Solos of the Master*. In 2011, Dr. Alamo released his marimba method entitled: *Music for Four Mallets*. A collection of original etudes for beginners and intermediate marimba players. In 2014, Encore Mallets released his Signature Marimba Mallets, which can be purchased at Steve Weiss Music. Dr. Álamo is a performing artist and clinician for Yamaha, Meinl Percussion, and Encore Mallets Inc.

Dr. Stephen Anderson

Described as “a true piano monster” (All About Jazz) and as “a bright star on the jazz horizon” (Musical Memoirs), STEPHEN ANDERSON is a critically acclaimed and award-winning composer and pianist whose music has been published on nineteen compact discs through Summit, Albany, Nagel Heyer Records, and other labels. Many of Anderson’s recordings have appeared on the Grammy® Awards (53rd, 56th, 58th, 59th, 64th) and Latin Grammy® Awards (17th and 23rd) ballots representing Summit Records. For his work as composer, pianist, and band leader for the Dominican Jazz Project, his recordings have been praised as “vibrant, passionate music” (JAZZIZ) and “more sizzling than fried peppers and onions” (Jazz Weekly). The Dominican Jazz Project Desde Lejos CD won two awards in the Premios Indie Dominicano 3ra edición in the categories of Best Jazz Album and Best Jazz Song (for Anderson’s composition, Fuera de la Oscuridad) (January 2023). Anderson was formally recognized and distinguished by the Minister of Culture, Señora Milagros Germán, of the Dominican Republic government for “his research and contributions to the national musical heritage” which have “generated pieces and compositions whose contents are based on the roots of native Dominican music that “have traveled with our seal of identity” (May 2022). The Dominican Jazz Project was invited to the Palacio Nacional for the "condecoración" ceremony of bandmate, Guillo Carias, by President Luis Rodolfo Abinader, President of the Dominican Republic (April 2022) and appeared on MúsicaPress TV (March 2021). Several articles have been published about the group in Santo Domingo newspapers (REPORTEEXTRA, Areito, Vivir.Alegría).



Anderson was a finalist for the 2021 American Prize in Composition in the Orchestra division for his symphonic work, Concerto for Puerto Rico. His concert works have been performed internationally, including performances at the Festival Internacional Musiquem Lleida! (Coral Shalom and string orchestra, Lleida, Spain), the Festival Internacional de Percusión Tamborimba (Orquesta Filarmónica de Cali, Colombia), the

College Band Directors National Association, the International Tuba Euphonium Association, and the Australian Trumpet Guild, in addition to performances by the West Point Military Academy Band, Dallas Chamber Orchestra, and other ensembles across the United States. He received two commissions from the Barlow Endowment (2005, 2010), was a finalist West Point Jazz Knights Composers Forum competition (2011), received the Chapman Family Foundation Teaching Award (2014), Junior Faculty Development Award-UNC (2008), and the “Village Pride, Hometown Hero Award” WCHL Chapel Hill Radio (2008).

Anderson was pianist with the Lynn Seaton Trio (2000-03), the North Texas One O'clock Lab Band (Lab 2000-01), was winner of the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival piano competition (1997), and keyboardist for gold-recording country artist, Kevin Sharp (1996-97). Dr. Anderson is Professor of Composition and Jazz Studies at the University of North Carolina and serves as

Director of Jazz Studies. He holds D.M.A. (2005) and M.M. (2000) degrees from the University of North Texas, the B.Mus. (1997) from Brigham Young University.

Violin I

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Lev Ryadchenko* | <i>Russia</i> |
| Allie Siegwald | <i>Kansas City, KS</i> |
| Samuel Rolim | <i>Brazil</i> |
| Joao Pérez+ | <i>Puerto Rico</i> |
| Andres Bravo Canedo | <i>La Par, Bolivia</i> |
| Juan Pablo de León | <i>Mexico</i> |
| Preston Robertson | <i>Fort Worth, TX</i> |
| Rima Abram | <i>Coppell, TX</i> |
| Eden Agabs | <i>Summit, NJ</i> |
| Crystal Hernandez | <i>Newport Beach, CA</i> |
| Chase Morrison | <i>Argyle, TX</i> |

Violin II

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Elijah Vn-Hao Ong | <i>Arlington, TX</i> |
| Lucas Raulino | <i>Brazil</i> |
| Henry Haas | <i>Dallas, TX</i> |
| Karah Cruse | <i>Roanoke, TX</i> |
| Alexia Wixom | <i>Fort Worth, TX</i> |
| Joey Tullis | <i>Fort Worth, TX</i> |
| Daniel Compton | <i>Frisco, TX</i> |
| Alexis Lizama | <i>Katy, TX</i> |
| Gloria Viera | <i>Irving, TX</i> |
| Amanda Ochranek | <i>Southlake, TX</i> |
| Mia Vu | <i>Rockwall, TX</i> |

Viola

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| Noah Bowles | <i>Oklahoma City, OK</i> |
| Christian Ruelas | <i>San Antonio, TX</i> |
| Hope Ward | <i>Tallahassee, FL</i> |
| Lyndsey Walker | <i>Arlington, TX</i> |
| Holly LeMoine | <i>Fort Worth, TX</i> |
| Elissa Hengst | <i>Boone, NC</i> |
| Jacob Burk | <i>Hurst, TX</i> |

Cello

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Giuliano Bucheli#> | <i>San Antonio, TX</i> |
| Alejandra Ramirez | <i>Carrollton, TX</i> |
| Max Healy^~ | <i>San Antonio, TX</i> |
| Emily Torkelson. | <i>Dousman, WI</i> |
| Alexander J. Jaime | <i>Frisco, TX</i> |
| Edna Rincón | <i>Colombia</i> |
| Natalie Benefield | <i>Fort Worth, TX</i> |
| Riley Kee | <i>Tomball, TX</i> |
| Grady O'Gara | <i>San Roman, CA</i> |

Double Bass

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|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Tommy Pusateri | <i>San Antonio, TX</i> |
| Peidong Li | <i>Tianjin, China</i> |
| Iván Yael Talancón Flores | <i>Mexico</i> |
| Blaine Bryan | <i>Fort Worth, TX</i> |
| Kaleb Comstock | <i>San Antonio, TX</i> |
| Jack Montesinos | <i>Austin, TX</i> |
| Chengjin Tian | <i>Shanghai, China</i> |

Piccolo

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Ethan Dempsey^ | <i>Porter, TX</i> |
| Nikkie Galindo | <i>Midland, TX</i> |
| Alexandra Langley> | <i>Lindsay, TX</i> |

Flute

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Ethan Dempsey | <i>Porter, TX</i> |
| Savannah Ekrut^> | <i>Denton, TX</i> |
| Nikkie Galindo#~ | <i>Midland, TX</i> |
| Alexandra Langley | <i>Lindsay, TX</i> |
| Paige Jackson | <i>Plano, TX</i> |

Oboe

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Samantha Ely | <i>Crowley, TX</i> |
| Lauren Hanifan> | <i>The Colony, TX</i> |
| Katie Lilley | <i>Fort Worth, TX</i> |

English Horn

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| Lauren Hanifan | <i>The Colony, TX</i> |
| Katie Lilley | <i>Fort Worth, TX</i> |

Clarinet

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Tania Betancourt^> | <i>Colombia</i> |
| Demitri Halasa~ | <i>Arlington, TX</i> |
| Lucas Lynn | <i>Houston, TX</i> |
| Diego A. Torres Reyes# | <i>Bogota, Colombia</i> |

Bass Clarinet

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Diego A. Torres Reyes | <i>Bogota, Colombia</i> |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|

Bassoon

| | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Matt Assis | <i>Garland, TX</i> |
| Dorian Holley | <i>Hurst, TX</i> |

Horn

| | |
|----------------|------------------------|
| James Brandt# | <i>League City, TX</i> |
| Megan Kraus> | <i>Arlington, TX</i> |
| Emily Martin^~ | <i>Cortez, CO</i> |
| Joshua Wheeler | <i>Edmond, OK</i> |

Trumpet

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Emmanuel Arellano>~ | <i>Fort Worth, TX</i> |
| Hannah Baer# | <i>New Braunfels, TX</i> |
| Michael Strobel^ | <i>Colleyville, TX</i> |

Trombone

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| Axel Bevensee# | <i>Frisco, TX</i> |
| Xander Byrd> | <i>Prosper, TX</i> |
| David Clary~ | <i>Pflugerville, TX</i> |
| Nick Meyer^ | <i>Bedford, TX</i> |

Bass Trombone

| | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| Trey Mulkey^~ | <i>Mansfield, TX</i> |
| Brendan Roth#> | <i>Thibodaux, LA</i> |

Tuba

| | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| Collin Elmore | <i>Irving, TX</i> |
|---------------|-------------------|

Timpani/Percussion

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Isaac Chiang | <i>Flower Mound, TX</i> |
| Josh Foust | <i>Muscle Shoals, AL</i> |
| Eric Goodheer | <i>Abilene, TX</i> |
| Luke Hammond | <i>Austin, TX</i> |
| Andréa Phillips | <i>Watauga, TX</i> |
| Austin Probst | <i>Frisco, TX</i> |
| Gabe Sanchez | <i>McAllen, TX</i> |

Harp

| | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| Augusta Walsh | <i>Frisco, TX</i> |
|---------------|-------------------|

Celeste

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Mitchell Manlapig | <i>Shawnee, OK</i> |
|-------------------|--------------------|

*Concertmaster for Blessinger/Gerswin
+Concermaster for Barber/Anderson
#Principal for Blessinger
_> Principal for Gershwin
^Principal for Barber
~ Principal for Anderson

Program Notes

Blessinger – Victory Overture

Victory Overture was written in the summer of 2021 during a difficult time for the world and for me personally. After a burst of creativity at the start of 2020, I fell into a yearlong musical silence, unable to find the will or motivation to compose. The victory referenced in the title celebrates not only survival but also a season of growth and healing—overcoming the global pandemic, overcoming personal trauma, and rediscovering my musical imagination.

- Martin Blessinger

Gershwin – An American in Paris

George Gershwin (1898-1937) is credited as the man who brought jazz to the concert hall. His early compositions were for Tin Pan Alley and Broadway but he soon branched out into the classical music world. His first large work was the piano concerto, *Rhapsody In Blue*, which in ten years earned him over a quarter of a million dollars. Gershwin's early exposure to music was via school and the penny arcades. Although not wealthy, his family was comfortable and when he was eleven his parents bought a used piano, initially for his older brother Ira to learn. However, George had been teaching himself piano by following the keys on a neighbor's player piano; when he could already play pieces on the family's new piano, his impressed parents sent him instead of Ira for piano lessons. His first significant piano teacher was Charles Hambitzer, a respected teacher in New York, who was so impressed with Gershwin's musicality that he refused payment for the lessons and wrote to his sister, "I have a new pupil who will make his mark if anybody will. This boy is a genius."

At fifteen Gershwin got a job in Tin Pan Alley as a song plugger. He was probably the youngest person to ever have this position. He also began making player piano rolls and playing at nightclubs. The Tin Pan Alley work provided significant training in both improvisation and transposition so that even as a teenager popular singers sought him out as an accompanist. Gershwin spent his adult career working in two music worlds, the popular venues and classical music. He listened to a broad spectrum of music, including the new practices such as Schoenberg's twelve-tone system and Stravinsky's primitivism that were encroaching into the art music world as early as the 1910s in Europe.

The tone poem, *An American in Paris*, was composed in 1928 and inspired by Gershwin's stay in Paris that year. He wrote much of the piece during that trip. Gershwin expressed his intention was "to portray the impressions of an American visitor in Paris as he strolls about the city, listens to various street noises, and absorbs the French atmosphere." The orchestra includes some atypical instruments such as three saxophones and, even more unusual, car horns. It is almost a medley of melodies, one critic describing the piece as "five sections held together more or less by intuition." This tone poem beautifully depicts varying scenes and neighborhoods the American tourist might pass on a walk through Paris.

Twenty-three years after this piece was composed, Gene Kelly chose it for a dance in his movie also titled *An American in Paris*. Reflecting Gershwin's musical combination of jazz, blues, and classical idioms, Kelly's dance combines classical ballet with vaudeville tapping.

- Heidi I. Irgens

Barber – Overture to “The School for Scandal”

Overture to The School for Scandal (1931) was the first large orchestral piece composed by **Samuel Barber** (1910–1981). This piece won him a Bears award while still a student at the Curtis Institute. A substantial monetary prize, it funded Barber’s study trip to Europe which unfortunately coincided with the Philadelphia Orchestra’s 1933 premiere. The play *The School for Scandal* by the Anglo-Irish playwright Richard Sheridan inspired this overture. Although Barber never intended the piece for any official association with the farce, it punctuates the characters’ behaviors. Barber said he composed the overture “as a musical reflection of the play’s spirit.” Written in 1777, this comedy satirizes the hollow, insincere, and pretentious behavior of eighteenth-century aristocratic society that Sheridan personally experienced in his late teens. Even the names of the characters—Lady Sneerwell, Charles Surface, and Sir Teazle—illuminate the social environment Sheridan portrays.

Barber’s musical language colorfully depicts the atmosphere of the play. One first hears the solo oboe launch a juicy piece of gossip that is embellished and distorted by the clarinet followed by the flute, and then explodes like an unruly rumor with the entrance of the full orchestra. Barber strengthens this illusion by contrasting the full orchestra with smaller ensemble combinations—for example, solo oboe or clarinet with only the strings, and woodwinds with only violins and violas.

Like much of Barber’s music, *Overture to The School for Scandal* is tonal. The opening is clearly in D major even with the trumpets’ superimposed E-flat minor chords. Barber maintained nineteenth-century tonal characteristics his entire career, striving to write music that appealed to a wider audience, and steering away from the contemporary experiments that began to infiltrate music in America as early as the 1920s and even more so after World War II. However, unlike Copland who also experimented with atonality only to return to a musical style full of American flavor, one rarely hears in Barber’s music any reminiscences of folk music, jazz, or other Americana. In his thirties, Barber began incorporating more dissonance and chromaticism and briefly explored tonal ambiguity and serialism but even in those contexts he preserved tonal harmonies and lyrical melodies.

- Heidi I. Igrens

Anderson – Concerto for Puerto Rico

Concerto for Puerto Rico was composed for my friend, colleague, and musical collaborator at the University of North Carolina, 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. I have also come to know the nuances of his playing very well, and when Dr. Álamo invited me to compose a symphonic concerto for him, 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 composing 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 concert master 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.

Peaceful themes are incorporated into the concerto at unexpected times. Each night starting at dusk in Puerto Rico, one can hear the native Coquí (frogs) sing the same song—a “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. What is amazing to me is that they sing the same pitches every night with perfect intonation until the sun rises in the morning—I’ve checked it with a keyboard in my room and have transcribed the figures. 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.

I have never really been a serious composer of 12-tone music, but when I first began composing *Concerto for Puerto Rico*, I woke up one morning hearing very clearly the opening notes of the piece—a 10-tone chromatic row in the strings in the middle register. Working with the row, I added two more tones to the row, and I began discovering various relationships of chords that were embedded in the row. I then complemented and transformed the linear flow of notes at times by using a parallel harmonization technique that is commonly used in jazz arranging.

As the piece began to take shape, I had also instinctively heard many fast-swirling figures in the upper woodwinds. For some time during the early creation process, I wrestled with what the somber chromatic language and swirling motion in the upper woodwinds had to do with the more peaceful and cheerful Puerto Rican folkloric themes and rhythms that I had hoped to eventually incorporate into the piece. *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 then that I began to see how all of 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.

- Stephen Anderson