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Puerto Rico Nació en Mi: Tales from the Diaspora

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming

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The music for this performance is inspired by the idea of the Puerto Rican experience in the United States, specifically in the area of New York City. In 2002, Zenón conducted interviews with New Yorkers of Puerto Rican descent, focusing on their experience as second-generation Puerto Ricans. Our conversations can basically be broken into one single question: What makes a Puerto Rican a Puerto Rican? Is it where you were born? Is it the language that you speak? Or maybe it’s how you connect to Puerto Rican traditions? There is, of course, no definitive answer to these questions, but the many answers and impressions that came from these conversations eventually served as the main source of inspiration for the music you’ll hear tonight. Video images and audio clips from these interviews are meant to interact with the music and to make for a more intimate musical experience. This type of intimate (and by that we mean base- national identity) can be multiple and changeable—in that many cases our nationality can be within us, no matter where we’re from or the language we speak. The video, by David Dempewolf, was prepared for this occasion and expands on these ideas even further.

As a means to represent this unique concept of individuality, multiplicity, and community, the music itself, all the compositions explore the idea of multiple rhythmic structures coexisting with one another (e. g., 5/4 and 3/4, or 5/8 and 3/8). In addition, each piece is meant to be a narrative of the different questions and man y answers and impressions that came from these conversations eventually served as the main source of inspiration for the music you’ll hear tonight. Video images and audio clips from these interviews are meant to interact with the music and to make for a more intimate musical experience. This type of intimate (and by that we mean base- national identity) can be multiple and changeable—in that many cases our nationality can be within us, no matter where we’re from or the language we speak. The video, by David Dempewolf, was prepared for this occasion and expands on these ideas even further.

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Miguel Zenón

Puerto Rico Nació en Mi: Tales from the Diaspora

In consideration of both audience and performers, please turn off all electronic devices. The taking of photographs or videos and the use of recording equipment are not permitted. No food or drink is permitted inside the theater.

Dr. Susan A. Cole, President
Dr. Geoffrey W. Newman, Dean, College of the Arts
Jedediah Wheeler, Executive Director, Arts & Cultural Programming

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Commissioned by Peak Performances @ Montclair State (NJ).

This presentation of Puerto Rico Nació en Mi: Tales from the Diaspora is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Duration: 90 minutes, no intermission.

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