

THROUGH MY EYES: SOUNDS OF THE AMERICAS

In the spring of 2024, composer Omar Najmi introduced me to his song cycle *My Name is Alondra*, set to the poetry of Dominican-American poet Alondra Bobadilla, the 2020 Boston Youth Laureate. As a Dominican artist, I was instantly drawn to its poignant themes and rhythms and was thrilled to include it in this program, where it beautifully complements other Latin American pieces. To balance the program, I selected works by Latin American women composers like Irma Urteaga, Gisela Hernández, and Mariela Rodríguez, as well as Patricia Caicedo, a prominent advocate of Latin American art songs. My collaborator, pianist Alexandra Lutkevich, loved the concept of *Through My Eyes: Sounds of the Americas*, and we are excited to bring this unique journey to you.

Program Highlights

Cánticos Para Soñar

Music by Irma Urteaga | Text by Ofelia Sussel-Marie and Eva Frías

This song cycle blends Cuban and Argentinean influences, emphasizing lullabies and maternal love. With pieces like *Canción de cuna para mi corazón solitario* and *Canto de nodriza*, the work captures Latin American folk traditions in lullaby form.

Nueve Canciones

Music by Gisela Hernández Gonzalo | Text by Federico García Lorca and Rabindranath Tagore

Gisela Hernández Gonzalo was a Cuban composer who integrated Afro-Cuban sounds into her music. This cycle combines the Spanish surrealist poetry of García Lorca with Tagore's meditations on impermanence, creating a vivid soundscape inspired by the natural world.

Tres Poemas Negros

Music by Mariela Rodríguez | Words by Emilio Ballagas

Cuban composer Mariela Rodríguez's *Tres Poemas Negros* draws from Afro-Cuban poetry by Emilio Ballagas. This cycle explores playful, rhythmic Cuban life through pieces like *Poema de la Jícara*, the bozal Cuban dialect in the lullaby "*Para dormir a un negrito*," and *Pregón*, celebrating cultural vibrancy through dance-like rhythms and vivid images.

My Name is Alondra

Music by Omar Najmi | Text by Alondra Bobadilla

This powerful song cycle from composer Omar Najmi, with text by Dominican-American poet Alondra Bobadilla, explores identity, mental health, and resilience through a Dominican lens. It's a deeply personal work that brings Alondra's voice to life, connecting her heritage to universal themes.

América mía

Music and text by Patricia Caicedo

Inspired by the centenary of Peruvian composer Chabuca Granda, "*América mía*" seeks to capture the essence of Latin American identity, unity, and cultural heritage. The song blends Andean rhythms, drawing from traditions like *zamacueca*, *bambuco*, *chacarera*, and *cueca*, and integrates both popular and classical Ibero-American musical elements.

Each piece in *Through My Eyes* reflects Latin America's rich heritage, offering earthy tones, delicate melodies, and heartfelt themes. We hope you experience the depth, warmth, and resonance that each composer and poet brought to these works, echoing the stories of the Americas.