

presents...

BERTA ROJAS | Guitar
PAQUITO D'RIVERA | Clarinet

Saturday, October 24, 2026 | 7:30pm
Herbst Theatre

Berta Rojas:

AGUSTÍN BARRIOS "Un Sueño en la Floresta"
MANGORÉ

Paquito D'Rivera and Berta Rojas:

AGUSTÍN BARRIOS "Choro da Saudade"*
MANGORÉ "Caazapa"*
"Maxixe"*

"Preludio en Do Menor"*
"Las Abejas"*

INTERMISSION

Paquito D'Rivera:

Tribute to Dizz
(Improvisations on Dizzie Gillespie's music)

Paquito D'Rivera and Berta Rojas:

DEMETRIO ORTIZ "Recuerdos de Ypacarai"***
"Mis Noches sin Ti"***

**JOSÉ ASUNCIÓN
FLORES** "Choli"*



**GUILLERMO BREER/MAURICIO
CARDOZO OCAMPO** **“Pájaro Chogüí—Galopera”***

PAQUITO D’RIVERA **“Contradanza”***

* Duet arrangement by Mauricio Cardozo Ocampo (h)

** Duet arrangement by Edin Solis

Berta Rojas is represented by Maria Sanchez/Meli Peña management@bertarojas.com

Paquito D’Rivera is represented by Greenbug Production, Ltd.,
Brenda Feliciano brenda@greenbugltd.com

ARTISTS PROFILES

San Francisco Performances presents Berta Rojas for the second time. She made her SF Performances debut in December 2008.

San Francisco Performances presents Paquito D’Rivera for second time. He made his SF Performances debut in June 1996.



With the 2025 release of *The Journey of the Strings*, an ambitious multimedia exploration of the guitar’s rich history in the Americas, Latin Grammy® winner **Berta Rojas** reaffirms her status as not only one of today’s foremost classical guitarists but also an influential force in the music world.

Hailed as a “guitarist extraordinaire” by the *Washington Post*, she is a global ambassador for the classical guitar, bridging cultural divides through music.

She earned a Latin Grammy in 2022 for her album *Legado*, on which her performance of Anido’s Portrait earned composer Sergio Assad the award for Best Contemporary Classical Composition. She has received three additional Latin Grammy nominations: Best Tango Album for *History of Tango* (2015) with the Camerata Bariloche, Best Classical Album for *Salsa Roja* (2014), and Best Instrumental Album for *Día y Medio*, a collaboration with Paquito D’Rivera (2012). In 2025 she was appointed to the Latin Recording Academy’s Board of Directors.

Her artistry has captivated audiences at venues including the 92nd Street Y, Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center in New York, the South Bank Centre in London, the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., and Flagey Studio 4 in Brussels with the Brussels Philharmonic. In 2011, Berta and Paquito D’Rivera launched the four-year

tour “In the Footsteps of Mangoré,” tracing Paraguay’s Agustín Barrios across 20 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Beyond performing, Berta champions the classical guitar and Latin American music, supporting young guitarists through the Barrios WorldWideWeb Competition, Ensemble Pu Rory, Instrumentoteca and Jeporeka.

She trained in Paraguay under Felipe Sosa and Violeta de Mestral, in Uruguay under Abel Carlevaro and Eduardo Fernández, and earned a master’s at the Peabody Institute under Manuel Barrueco. In 2017 she joined Berklee College of Music as an Associate Professor.

Her honors include a Kennedy Center Fellowship of the Americas title, honorary doctorates from three Paraguayan universities, the Carlos Colombino Award, the Golden Guitar Award from Milan’s Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory, and, in 2023, Paraguay’s National Order of Merit “Grand Cross.”



Saxophonist, clarinetist, composer, and writer **Paquito D’Rivera** is passionate about jazz and classical music, Brazilian music, rumba, tangos, and more. D’Rivera began studying with his father, Cuban classical saxophonist Tito Rivera, and by age ten was playing with the orchestra of the National Theater of Cuba and studying at the Alejandro G. Caturla Conservatory. At 17 he became a founding member of the Cuban Modern Music Orchestra, which he conducted for two years, while frequently playing clarinet and saxophone with the National Symphony Orchestra of Cuba.

In his passion for giving the Latin repertoire greater relevance, D’Rivera has created and promoted compositions for classically trained ensembles and soloists.

His chamber work, *Merengue*, recorded with cellist Yo-Yo Ma, won a Grammy for Best Instrumental Composition in 2004. Numerous commissions include music for Lincoln Center, the Library of Congress, National Symphony Orchestra, Turtle Island String Quartet, Imani Winds, Ying String Quartet, and the Kennedy Center.

He is the winner of 18 Grammy and Latin Grammy awards and was the first artist to win in both classical and Latin Jazz categories. Most recently, he took home 2023 Latin Grammys in the Best Contemporary Classical Composition category for *Concerto Venezolano*, written for trumpet player Pacho Flores, and Best Latin Jazz/Jazz Album for *And I Missed You, Too!*, a reunion with Chucho Valdés.

Among his numerous honors he has received the NEA Jazz Masters Award, National Medal of the Arts, and the Kennedy Center’s Living Jazz Legend Award. D’Rivera is also the author of the literary works *My Sax Life*; *¡Oh, La Havana!*; *To Be Or Not To Be, That’s the Joke!*; and *Letters to Yeyito: Lessons from a Life in Music*.

PROGRAM NOTES

AGUSTÍN BARRIOS MANGORÉ (1885–1944)

The Paraguayan guitar virtuoso Agustín Barrios Mangoré was a Romantic composer who tried to capture the pure essence of emotion in his music. Everyday life seemed dull, repressed and over rational to the romantics who felt it could be transcended only through heightened emotional expression. They idealized Romantic love, wore odd clothes and led irregular lives that were frowned upon in their time as Bohemian. Barrios saw himself as a brother of the medieval troubadours; undergoing an artistic journey through life, suffering a romantic madness, but inspired by destiny.

*I am dancing in a mad whirlwind
to the four corners of the planet!
I carry in my blood a restless life,
and in my pilgrimage,
uncertain and wandering,
Art lights up my path
as if it were a fantastic comet!*

DIZZIE GILLESPIE (1917–1993)

Dizzie Gillespie was an American jazz trumpeter, bandleader, composer, and

singer who revolutionized modern music as a co-founder of bebop and a pioneer of Afro-Cuban jazz. Renowned for his virtuosic technique, harmonic complexity, and vibrant showmanship, he became one of the most recognizable icons in jazz history. Dizzy Gillespie and Paquito D'Rivera shared a legendary musical partnership and a deep lifelong friendship that bridged American jazz and Afro-Cuban traditions. Gillespie, a pioneer of bebop and Afro-Cuban jazz, served as a vital mentor and champion for D'Rivera, the virtuoso Cuban saxophonist and clarinetist, especially after D'Rivera defected from Cuba in 1981. In 1988, Dizzy Gillespie formed the United Nation Orchestra, a 15-piece ensemble explicitly designed to fuse Latin, Caribbean, and jazz influences and which featured Paquito D'Rivera as a soloist. Their collaboration culminated in a critically acclaimed live album, *Live at the Royal Festival Hall*, which won a Grammy® Award in 1991. In January 1992, just a year before Gillespie's

passing, D'Rivera performed alongside him at New York's famous Blue Note jazz club and made the live album *To Bird with Love*, featuring an explosive take on Charlie Parker's "Anthropology".

DEMETRIO ORTIZ (1916–1975)

Demetrio Ortiz was a prominent Paraguayan musician, composer, playwright, and choreographer who played a crucial role in popularizing the traditional Paraguayan guaranía music style worldwide. *Recuerdos de Ypacaraí* (Memories of Ypacaraí) portrays the beauty of Lake Ypacaraí and has been translated into multiple languages and covered by hundreds of international artists. *Mis Noches sin Ti* (My Nights Without You) is melancholic and deeply emotional guaranía reflecting intense longing.

MAURICIO CARDOZO OCAMPO (1907–1982) **NÉSTOR ZAVARCE** (1936–2010)

Mauricio Cardozo Ocampo was a prominent Paraguayan composer, guitarist, and singer widely recognized as a leading figure of the "golden generation" of Paraguayan popular folk music. Néstor Zavarce was a prominent Venezuelan singer, actor, and politician well known for his performances of Cardozo Ocampo's songs. *Pájaro Chogüí* is a famous Paraguayan folk song (a polka paraguaya). The song tells a beautiful, bittersweet Guaraní legend about a little indigenous boy who transforms into a joyful blue bird. Galopera honors traditional female dancers of Paraguay who perform in circles during patron saint festivals, often balancing a clay water pitcher (cántaro) on their heads.

—Program notes by Scott Cmiel



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