

# Guest Artist Recital

**2017–2018 Season**  
**150th Concert**

Tuesday 14 November 2017  
Dalton Center Recital Hall  
7:30 p.m.

**DAFNIS PRIETO SEXTET**

**Peter Apfellbaum, Saxophone**

**Roman Filiu, Saxophone**

**Mike Rodriguez, Trumpet**

**Manuel Valera, Piano**

**Johannes Weidenmueller, Bass**

**Dafnis Prieto, Drums**

*Program to be announced from stage.*

Over the past two decades or so a wave of astonishing musicians from Latin America has surged across the New York jazz scene providing a torrent of energy. Cuban-born drummer Dafnis Prieto exemplifies this wide-open generation as a conservatory-trained artist steeped in Afro-Cuban folkloric forms, the European classical tradition and post-bop jazz improvisation.

The recipient of a 2011 MacArthur Genius Fellowship, Prieto is an increasingly commanding composer whose most recent album *Triangles and Circles* showcases his dazzling **DAFNIS PRIETO SEXTET** featuring the members of his Si o Si Quartet: saxophonist Peter Apfellbaum, pianist Manuel Valera, and bassist Johannes Weidenmueller with the addition of trumpeter Mike Rodriguez and saxophonist Roman Filiu. All brilliant soloists, they are also exemplary team players who, like Prieto, are experts at crafting musical narrative from Pan-American source material.

Long-awaited after his sextet's highly praised 2008 debut CD *Taking the Soul for a Walk*, the most recent recording illuminates the master drummer and multiple Grammy nominee even more brightly as a composer of complex but infectiously melodic tunes, melding the folklore of his Afro-Cuban roots with modern harmonies rich with counterpoint and virtuosic rhythmic concepts. *Triangles and Circles*, released in 2015, was also immediately lauded by the press, including glowing reviews by both jazz critics of *The New York Times*, a feature on NPR's Fresh Air, and a DownBeat Editor's Pick, continuing the tone *The Wall Street Journal* set when it described the first record as "emotionally charged and stylistically diverse, carried along not just by rhythm but also through lovely harmonized passages, horn fanfares, and powerfully conjured moods."

"Dafnis Prieto has an infectious dedication to the Afro-Cuban groove, and it's on full display with his latest recording, *Triangles And Circles*. The album shimmers and swells with his heart-pounding drum work, but it's wrapped by beautiful melodic structure and thoughtful compositions that draw from a broad musical ocean. ...all deliver killer solos, but not at the expense of the grand vision of the song. That's the magic of Prieto: He has the ability to offer compositions and arrangements that are distinctly him, but he craftily leaves room for pedal-to-the-metal improvisation from a truly great band." —DownBeat Editors' Pick

**DAFNIS PRIETO**, drummer, composer, and educator, is the recipient of a 2011 MacArthur Fellowship (the “genius grant”). He has electrified audiences with his dazzling technical abilities and rhythmically adventurous and groundbreaking compositions. A classically trained musician who absorbed from an early age the multifaceted percussive traditions of his native Cuba, Prieto transposes elements from his Afro-Cuban musical heritage onto a jazz drum kit, incorporating congas, timbales, and the layered rhythmic patterns of rumba and son. Whether performing as a solo artist, bandleader, or sideman, his playing is characterized by a finely calibrated command of textures and nuances and an ability to execute highly complex, polyrhythmic structures with extraordinary speed and precision.

As a composer, Prieto melds modern jazz harmonies, Cuban clave rhythms, other Latin and African influences, and funk-inspired arrangements to create works of great stylistic diversity that evoke a broad spectrum of moods. Through his leadership of numerous ensembles from trio to big band, and additional projects involving dance, film, and opera, he is expanding Latin jazz with a bold new energy and sound.

Prieto obtained a thorough classical education as a young student at the School of Fine Arts in Santa Clara and later at the National School of Music in Havana, all the while broadening his knowledge of jazz, Afro-Cuban, and world music outside of the academy.

He first toured Europe with pianists Carlos Maza and Ramon Valle and the groundbreaking group “Columna B.” After moving to New York in 1999, he quickly became the drummer of choice for many prominent artists such as Henry Threadgill, Steve Coleman, Eddie Palmieri, Chico and Arturo O’Farrill, Dave Samuels & The Caribbean Jazz Project, Jane Bunnett, D.D. Jackson, Edward Simon, Michel Camilo, Chucho Valdez, Claudia Acuña, Roy Hargrove, Don Byron, and Andrew Hill, among others. As a bandleader and as a sideman, Prieto has performed at many venues and festivals throughout the United States and around the world.

Dafnis Prieto has created compositions for dance, film, chamber ensembles, opera, and most notably for his own bands, ranging from duets to a “small big band,” including the distinctively different groups featured on the six albums he has released to date, all available on his own label, Dafnison Music: *About The Monks* (2005), *Absolute Quintet* (2006), *Taking The Soul for a Walk* (2008), *Si o Si Quartet Live at Jazz Standard* (2009), *Proverb Trio* (2012), and *Triangles and Circles* (2015). He just recorded his first Big Band album, *Tribute*, featuring some of New York’s best musicians, with plans for a spring 2018 release and performances in the 2018–19 concert season.

Besides the MacArthur Fellowship, Prieto has received new works commissions, grants, and fellowships from Chamber Music America, Jazz at Lincoln Center, East Carolina University, and Meet the Composer. Various awards include “Up & Coming Musician of the Year” by the Jazz Journalists Association in 2006, a Grammy® Award Nomination for “Absolute Quintet” as Best Latin Jazz Album, and a Latin Grammy Nomination for “Best New Artist” in 2007. Prieto is also an esteemed educator who taught at New York University for ten years before his move to Florida in 2015 to join the faculty at the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami. Last year, he published *A World of Rhythmic Possibilities*, a book that is bound to become an indispensable resource for drummers, percussionists, and all lovers of rhythm.

## Chamber Music America

This performance of the Dafnis Prieto Sextet, presented in collaboration with Summer Solstice Jazz Festival and The Carr Center, is supported by Presenter Consortium for Jazz, a program of Chamber Music America funded through the generosity of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

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