

“Aldo López-Gavilán is not only a formidable virtuoso, but also exceeds in works that require extraordinary color and fascinating sounds. His natural talent never suffers and his original thinking as an artist assures a performance of amazing playing and individuality.”

— *The London Times*



ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

Praised for his “dazzling technique and rhythmic fire” in the *Seattle Times*, and dubbed a “formidable virtuoso” by *The Times* of London, Cuban pianist and composer Aldo López-Gavilán excels in both the classical and jazz worlds as a recitalist, concerto soloist, chamber-music collaborator and performer of his own electrifying jazz compositions. His authentic voice has a genre-defying sound rooted in European classical traditions, Latin jazz and Afro-Cuban rhythms.

Concert highlights in 2019 include performances of Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue* with the Chicago Philharmonic and the Florida Orchestra and headlining the Springboard 2019 festival in Napa, Calif. In 2014 López-Gavilán toured the U.S., appearing at Florida’s Miami Dade County Auditorium, the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and the San Francisco Jazz Festival, and he completed an ASCAP film music workshop under the direction of Robert Kraft at New York University. He also toured extensively in Europe, South America, Canada and the U.S. with Cuban singer-songwriter Carlos Varela, for whom he wrote all the string arrangements for an award-winning documentary that was broadcast by HBO Latino in the U.S.

A milestone in López-Gavilán’s professional and personal life came in early 2015, when he joined the New York-based Harlem Quartet—co-founded by his brother Ilmar, the quartet’s first violinist—for concerts in Calgary, Seattle and Phoenix. Mobile audiences are familiar with the Harlem Quartet from the group’s 2016-17 education residency with the MSO which included several free concerts and numerous education appearances at area schools.

His partnership with Harlem Quartet continued in summer and fall 2016 with a U.S. tour that includes concerts and residency activities at the Rockport Chamber Music Festival, Chautauqua Institution, Santa Fe College,

Las Vegas’s Smith Center for the Performing Arts, the Chamber Music Society of Detroit and the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Arts in Beverly Hills. In 2018 Aldo and the Harlem Quartet completed a residency with the Santa Fe Youth Symphony Association coaching young musicians from various ensembles, including jazz and mariachi groups as well as the full orchestra.

Aldo and Ilmar López-Gavilán are currently the subject of a documentary, *Los Hermanos/The Brothers*, exploring the different paths of their careers. Ilmar was sent at fourteen to study violin with a Soviet master. He never lived in Cuba again, ultimately landing in the U.S. Aldo grew up mentored by Cuba’s impressive jazz and classical pianists, his extraordinary talent achieving renown on the island but stymied abroad by the U.S. embargo. He too left Cuba – for the London Conservatory – but returned to his home country and family. Recently the brothers have toured the U.S. performing together.

Aldo López-Gavilán was born in Cuba to a family of internationally acclaimed classical musicians, his father a conductor and composer, his mother a concert pianist. At the age of two, he had written his first musical composition. By four, his mother introduced the budding prodigy to the piano, and he began formal piano studies at the age of seven. His first international triumph was at 11 when he won a Danny Kaye International Children’s Award, organized by UNICEF. López-Gavilán made his professional debut at age 12 with the Matanzas Symphony Orchestra. He later went on to perform Prokofiev’s Third Concerto with the National Symphonic Orchestra of Cuba. Parallel to his classical abilities, López-Gavilán developed remarkable skills in improvisation. He was invited to perform in the world-famous Havana Jazz Festival with the legendary Chucho Valdés, who called him “simply a genius, a star.”