Program note

Ileana Perez-Velazquez writes about her work, *The Window that Opens your Soul*

*The title reflects my idea of capturing the essence of the soul of a loved one, and reflect it through music. We are complicated individuals, full of spiritual beauty simultaneously with other feelings that at times are contradictory with our beautiful essence. This piece is written in one movement, including sections reflecting these contrasts, these other sides of ourselves in addition to our true soul that will always be present in different ways. Musically I use different ideas in a fusion of aesthetics coming from different places in space, and time. The piece contains a fusion of post impressionism, post minimalism, jazz, and Cuban music. The pianistic textures of the XIX century are present combined with displacement of accents and rhythms, at times treating the piano as two different instruments resulting in a displacement of gestures in the piano and clarinet, as echoes or waves. The combination and development of the interaction of these different styles produced musical ideas of my own.*

*This composition was written for Sally Pinkas and Patricia Shands.*

Cuban born composer **Ileana Perez Velazquez** lives in upstate NY and is a Professor of Music Composition at Williams College, MA. The New York Times has praised the “imaginative strength and musical consistency” and the “otherworldly quality” of her compositions. Her music has been heard in concerts and international festivals in Cuba, the United States, Mexico, Panama, and throughout South America, Europe, China and the Middle East. Perez Velázquez has been awarded a 2015 Commission from the Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard University.

Writing largely to commission, Perez Velázquez has written works for numerous performers and ensembles, including Continuum (New York City), Momenta String quartet (NYC), Ensemble Dal Niente from Chicago, Flux Quartet (NYC), Quartet Eco (Madrid, Spain), Insomnio ensemble (the Netherlands), Berkshire Symphony Orchestra, the Minneapolis Guitar Quartet (by the Jerome Foundation), Aguava New Music (IN), the instrumental ensemble Nuestro Tiempo from the National Symphony Orchestra of Cuba (Casa Editorial de Cuba), Miranda Cuckson and NUNC (NYC), Nodus Ensemble (Miami), the Hammond piano duo (IN), the Williams Chamber Players, and by performers such as Joan La Barbara, Sally Pinkas, Tom Chiu, Adrian Morejon, Matt Gold and Doris Stevenson, Pola Baytelman, Thierry Miroglio and Ancuza Aprodu, and Iliana Matos, among others.

Her music has been featured regularly in numerous international festivals and concerts around the world including the Sonidos de las Americas Cuba Festival at Carnegie Hall, by the American Composers Orchesta Chamber Players; Composers Now Festival in New York City, Latino Music Festival in Chicago, International Double Reed Society Conference; New York City, at the Here and Now Series of the Bargemusic Concert Hall, NYC; at The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra “Liquid Music Concert Series”; at the Sonic Circuits XII International Electronic Music Festivals at Berklee College, Boston (American Composers Forum); Boston Cyber Arts Festival, Bowling Green State University New Music Festival; New Music Miami Festival; Festival of Women Composers International, Pittsburgh; “Music From Almost Yesterday” concert series, Milwaukee; Third Practice Electronic Music Festival in VA; Indiana University’s “Crossroads of Traditions: a Latin American music festival” at Indiana University; and the Dartmouth College New Music Festival, and by the ensemble Sequitur at Merkin Hall, NYC. The list of international festivals that have also featured Ileana’s music is equally impressive, including the Q-ba Festival in Amsterdam, the Netherlands at the Muziekcentrum De Ijsbreker; New Music International Festival of the Tres Cantos Auditorium of Madrid, Spain; International Festival of Contemporary Music in Bogotá, Colombia: VIII Forum of Caribbean Composers in Venezuela; 4th International Festival of Electroacoustic Music, Santiago de Chile; III International Festival of Asuncion, Paraguay, II Festival Iberoamericano de Guitarra in Beirut, Lebanon; at the Vendsyssel Festival, Denmark; at
the Music Festival Counterpoint Italy in Lucca, Tuscany; at a concert of the International Musical Academy “Masters of Pontlevoy,” Ivry-sur-Seine, France, and at a concert in the Auditorium St. German in Paris, France; at the Auditorium di Vittorio in Milan, Italy; at the Foro Internacional de Musica Nueva Manuel Enriquez of Mexico City, and at the MusicArte Festival of New Music in Panama. Her music has also been performed in National Conferences of the Society of Composers Inc. and the College Music Society, by the Chamber Music of the League of Composers New York City, ISCM, ICEM in Beijing, China, and at the IAWM Congress, Miami.

Velazquez has also worked in interdisciplinary projects, including the composition of original music for the Theater Play “Blood Wedding” directed by Kameron Steele in 2016 at the 62 Center, Williamstown, MA.

Born in Cienfuegos, Cuba, Perez Velázquez received her B.A. in piano and composition from the Higher Institute of Arts (ISA), Havana, Cuba. When she moved to the United States in 1993, she was already recognized as one of the up-and-coming talents in Cuban composition, winning several national composition awards in Cuba, including the first prize of composition for chamber music in the contest of the National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC), and the first music composition prize from the first national competition of the Youth Music of Cuba (Juventudes Musicales).

After obtaining her Master’s in 1995 in electroacoustic music from Dartmouth College—where her teachers included Jon Appleton, Charles Dodge, Larry Polansky, and Kathryn Alexander—Perez Velázquez began her doctoral studies at Indiana University, studying with Claude Baker, Eugene O’Brien, and Marta Ptaszynska, receiving her DMA in 2000. Perez Velázquez was a recipient of a 1999 Cintas Fellowship in Composition. She was on the faculty of Portland State University for two years (1998-2000), and since 2000 she has been a Professor of Music Composition and Electronic Music at Williams College.

Albany Records released a CD of her music on January 2008. Recordings of her music have also been released by Innova Recordings, and Urlicht Audiovisual.