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PRESS RELEASE

Grammy nominated, MacArthur Fellow Miguel Zenón Releases New Project Honoring Classics from his Homeland

Alma Adentro: The Puerto Rican Songbook Out August 30

Many of the most cherished standards in jazz were born as popular songs. In fact, through the course of jazz history, popular songs have served as a source of inspiration for jazz artists. They still do.

Now, in *Alma Adentro: The Puerto Rican Songbook*, his new recording of classic Puerto Rican songs, saxophonist, composer and arranger Miguel Zenón brings that jazz tradition home – his home.

The album is comprised of ten pieces, two each by Bobby Capó, Tite Curet Alonso, Pedro Flores, Rafael Hernández, and Sylvia Rexach, who Zenón refers to as “the George Gershwins, Cole Porters and Jerome Kerns of Puerto Rican song,” and it features his regular quartet augmented by a 10-piece wind ensemble. The music was arranged by Zenón and orchestrated by Argentine pianist, composer and arranger Guillermo Klein.

“This project grew out of my interest in exploring the history and development of The Puerto Rican song,” says Zenón. “... I started focusing on the similar characteristics between The Puerto Rican Songbook and The Great American Songbook, not only musically, but also in terms of cultural impact. From there on, the project started to take shape.”

Zenón has explored his musical heritage previously in albums such as *Jibaro* (2005), in which he revisited the country music of Puerto Rico, and last year’s *Esta Plena*, in which he reinterpreted the traditional plena style.

But in *Alma Adentro* the subject is popular song – and it transcends regionalisms.

For Zenón, the connection to these songs is deeply personal.

“These are songs I know well because either my parents listened to them or they were very popular when I was a kid, so I grew up listening to them,” he says and, he notes, he’s not alone. “We have been playing some of these songs with the quartet for awhile, and after every concert we have people who come to tell us ‘You know, my mom used to listen to that song on the radio...’ or ‘I used to hear that song when I was younger...’.”

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The wind ensemble and Zenón's core quartet – Luis Perdomo, piano; Hans Glawischnig, bass; and Henry Cole, drums – were recorded in the same room, live.

"Very often when I play this type of material I'm thinking about the lyrics to the song," he says. "In this case these are songs I know well so it's actually difficult for me *not* to think about the lyrics. But eventually, you internalize the words and make it more your own, then it becomes something much more personal."

Remaking popular songs is part of the stock in trade of a jazz musician, but *Alma Adentro* was a profoundly different experience for Zenón. "This was not just about melodies and harmonies," he says. "There was a deeper, more emotional connection here. I grew up with these songs and they all had a very special and lasting effect on me."

2011 TOUR DATES

All performances with the Miguel Zenón Quartet unless otherwise noted

August 7: Newport Jazz Festival - Newport, RI *Miguel Zenón Quartet + Alma Adentro Ensemble*
 August 14: San Jose Jazz Festival - San Jose, CA
 September 15: Jazz Standard - New York, NY
 September 16: Jazz Standard - New York, NY
 September 17: Jazz Standard - New York, NY
 September 18: Jazz Standard - New York, NY
 October 2: Club de Leones - Adjuntas, Puerto Rico *Caravana Cultural - The Music of Ornette Coleman w/ Miguel Zenón, Avishai Cohen, Ben Street & Adam Cruz*
 November 2: Jazzhaus Montmartre - Copenhagen, Denmark
 November 3: Jazzhaus Montmartre - Copenhagen, Denmark
 November 4: Budapest Jazz Club - Budapest, Hungary
 November 5: Salzburger Jazz Festival - Salzburg, Austria
 November 9: "Jazz @ The Atlas", Atlas Performing Arts Center - Washington, DC
 November 10: Harlem Stage - New York, NY
 November 12: Vermont Jazz Center - Brattleboro, Vermont
 November 17: The Loft at UC San Diego - San Diego, CA
 November 19: The Broad Stage - Los Angeles, CA
 November 20: Bach Dancing & Dynamite Society - Half Moon Bay, CA
 December 9: Berklee Performance Center - Boston, MA

For more tour dates, please visit www.miguelzenon.com or www.marsalismusic.com

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