





Notes by **Sheila E. Anderson** Host, Late Night Jazz, WBGO, 88.3FM

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Upon hearing the intro of the first song, I knew that Oscar Perez's new release *Afropean Affair* was going to be exciting and memorable. At age 36, he has proven to be not only a great composer but also a great leader. *Afropean Affair* is rich with beautiful melodies that are harmonically challenging yet lyrical. The seven original compositions weave a tapestry of sounds and sophisticated rhythms that are hip, not heady, lively, and joyful. Perez has a skillful way of writing music that is brilliantly executed by his band called Nuevo Comienzo (New Beginnings). \* Assembled in 2004, Oscar Perez Nuevo Comienzo features some of the most talented musicians on the New York jazz scene today: Greg Glassman on trumpet, Stacy Dillard on saxophones, Anthony Perez (Oscar's brother) on bass, Jerome Jennings on drums, Emiliano Valerio on percussion, and vocalist Charenee Wade. After seven years of working and touring together, Oscar Perez Nuevo Comienzo continues to sound fresh and new. Perez welcomes the band's input and says, "They interpret my music the way that I enjoy hearing it. This has become a very special ensemble to me. I used guest artists on my debut, but the circumstances are now different. This brotherhood has been together for seven years. These are the musicians you will see on the gigs. This is the music we make." \* On this recording everyone gets a chance to shine. Listen to the interplay between Stacy Dillard and Greg Glassman in the opening of the first two songs, "The Illusive Number" and "Canaria." Together they state the melody, something usually handled by the pianist. Adding a different texture, Perez plays both acoustic piano and the Fender Rhodes throughout the offering. The 7/8 time signature used by Perez in "Paths and Streams" gives the song a quiet intensity. Between these tracks he has masterfully placed a beautiful ballad, "As Brothers Would," another referral to the brotherhood this ensemble shares. \* The last three pieces of this collection comprise *The Afropean Suite*. Thanks to Chamber Music America, Perez was commissioned to write and present a new work that resulted in this suite, which premiered in 2009. Charenee Wade is introduced using her voice as an instrument where she adds another color that gives the project a folk music-like quality difficult to achieve without the human voice. At the end of "Cosas Lindas Que Viven Ahora," the fluid percussion solo flawlessly leads into "Last Season's Sorrow," a perfect blending of voice, soprano saxophone and flugelhorn. Rounding out the CD is "A New Day Emerging." With a dramatic beginning it then builds into an energetic, danceable Afro Cuban groove. \* "Afropean" is a term Perez hit upon to describe this music. "It is the filter . . . European, African and Latin music is being interpreted by American jazz musicians who love to play all kinds of music, including straight-ahead jazz." Perez is influenced by European classical music; one hears it as an important element in the melodies and harmonies of his writing. Equally crucial in his music are the strong jazz and Cuban rhythms. Regardless of the genre in which it will be placed, the bottom line is, without a doubt, *Afropean Affair* SWINGS! And I agree with Duke Ellington's assessment that "There are only two kinds of music, the good kind and the other kind." This stellar recording is beyond category!

Produced by **Oscar Perez**

*All music composed and arranged by Oscar Perez (ASCAP)*

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*Afropean Affair* was recorded and mastered by Paul Wickliffe at Skyline Productions, Warren, NJ  
Photography: Christopher Drukker, Steve Lesnick & Mo Menzel  
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## Thank You:

To God: from whom all blessings really do flow.

To my amazing family: Aimee, Alex and Ofelia. Your unconditional love and sacrifice give my music meaning and purpose. I love you.

To my parents Regino and Martha, my brothers Anthony and Juan Carlos, Bob and Rose Sweatland and the rest of my family: Your continued support and guidance will never be lost on me.

To the musicians in my ensemble: Greg, Stacy, Anthony, Jerome, Nano, and Charenee. Your artistry and commitment always inspires me, let's continue to push each other to new ground.

To Paul Wickliffe, Paul Gallasch, Sheila Anderson, Chris Drukker and Ann Braithwaite.  
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To everyone who backed this project, especially Annabel Brown. Through your pledges and enthusiasm this finished product has become a reality. Your generosity and faith in me is truly appreciated. My music is now *our* music.

1 8:45 The Illusive Number

2 9:31 Canaria

3 4:55 As Brothers Would

4 6:52 Paths and Streams

5-7 The Afropean Suite:

10:54 Cosas Lindas Que Viven Ahora

10:42 Last Season's Sorrow

9:38 A New Day Emerging

Oscar Perez - Piano / Fender Rhodes

Greg Glassman - Trumpet / Flugelhorn

Stacy Dillard - Tenor / Soprano Saxophones

Anthony Perez - Bass

Jerome Jennings - Drums

Emiliano Valerio - Percussion

Charenee Wade - Vocals

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