

**Fernando Otero is a GRAMMY®-winning Argentine composer, pianist and vocalist based in New York City.**

He has been described by many critics as a classically-trained virtuoso pianist and composer who developed his own style by blending elements of classical contemporary music and improvisation while acknowledging Tango as a starting point. He found his voice when he began to incorporate the indigenous sounds of his native Buenos Aires into his work. Otero's pianism displays song-like melodicism, expressiveness and a wide palette of colors. He possesses a particularly strong rhythmic intensity when performing up-tempo pieces, playing notes repeatedly with piston-like precision that contrast with sudden detours into day dreamy pastels.

Otero has recorded 16 albums as a solo artist and performs more than 50 international concerts yearly. His works are published by Warner Chappell Music and his albums have been released by Nonesuch Records, Warner Music, Harmonia Mundi and World Village.

He received two Latin Grammy nominations for his album **Ritual**, released in 2015, as Best Classical Album and Best Classical Contemporary Composition. In 2016, Otero put out another studio work entitled **Enigma** and was nominated for Best Classical Contemporary Composition. His latest album, **Solo Buenos Aires**, came out in April 2017, in which Otero reconnects with the song form, comprising a collection of songs written in the 20<sup>th</sup> s, 30<sup>th</sup> s and 40<sup>th</sup> s, with arrangements for orchestra.

His first contact with music was receiving vocal lessons from his mother Elsa Marval—an internationally acclaimed singer and actress—and started taking piano lessons at age five. He also studied the guitar, bass, drums, and later composition with Domingo Marafiotti.

Otero has received commissions from performers and institutions worldwide and has written music for orchestra, chamber ensembles, string quartet and choir, as well as for solo instruments including piano, violin and cello. Many of his compositions were commissioned by The New York State Council on The Arts, Lincoln Center, Laguna Beach Festival (featuring Otero as composer-in-residence), St. Ursanne International Piano Festival in Switzerland, and by performers such as the Kronos Quartet, the Imani Winds ensemble, Inbal Segev, Jason Vieaux, Paquito

D’Rivera, and Arturo O’Farrill.

Shortly after moving to the US in the 1990’s he worked with correspondingly diverse collaborators including Paquito D’Rivera, the Kronos Quartet, Quincy Jones, and Eddie Gómez— who in 2005 introduced Otero as one of the great pianists of a new generation. Otero has scored the soundtracks for numerous movies, including *Sin Palabras*, *DD is Dead*, *Unloosened* and *Root*, *A Strange Turn*, and *Franketienne*.

Born in Buenos Aires to an internationally renowned opera singer, Pianist-Composer Grammy Winner Fernando Otero was by age 10 an insatiable musical polyglot, multi-instrumentalist and fledgling studio innovator. Careening between rigorous classical disciplines and the freewheeling improvisations typical of jazz and his homeland's native tango, his most indelible influences included Igor Stravinsky, Béla Bartók and Bill Evans, plus those who also incorporated folklore into their music, South American icons like fellow Argentine Astor Piazzolla, Brazilian composer Egberto Gismonti, and Hugo Fattoruso of Uruguay.

Otero first gained prominence in 2000 with his debut and eponymous album, a collection of pieces recorded in Buenos Aires in the early 90's, before moving his residence to New York. He released in 2008 his debut album on Nonesuch Records: "Pagina de Buenos Aires" , "Material" in 2009 (Warner Music), and "Vital" (Harmonia Mundi) in 2010, receiving the Latin Grammy as "Best Classical Album".

In 2012 he recorded "Romance", a chamber music work which offers original compositions that draw from traditional elements of Argentine music, but are decidedly cosmopolitan. While meticulously constructed, they also involve the freedom of improvisation. In 2014 he released *Prima Donna*, an intimate celebration of the artistic career of Elsa Marval, Fernando Otero's mother and musical mentor, who died in 2010. *Prima Donna* is a collection of Otero’s compositions for solo piano and includes a rendition of "El Porteño", a piece written by Argentine composer Angel Villoldo, which gives us an idea of how Otero can cover well-known pieces in order to expose his personal view of them.

The album also contains orchestral and chamber music works plus a Sonata for Solo Violin in one-movement using a wide palette of violin techniques, which Otero wrote for long-time collaborator Nick Danielson. The last piece in the program is a rendition of Quincy Jones' composition "The Pawnbroker", arranged by Otero. The arrangement showcases Quincy Jones's melodic style combined with Fernando's orchestral technique and pianistic language. The album was produced by Ruben Parra and recorded in New York and Los Angeles.

He also performed with clarinetist Paquito D'Rivera on stage, at Birdland, Blue Note, the Caramoor Festival and in the recording studio. He joined the Paquito D'Rivera Quintet for the recording of Funk Tango, which includes Otero's composition "Milonga 10". With Funk Tango, The Paquito D'Rivera Quintet received in 2008 the GRAMMY® award for "Best Latin Jazz Album".

### **Recent works**

"Agosto 22", - Concerto for Cello & Orchestra for Inbal Segev.

"Infatuation" - For Imani Winds Ensemble

"El Cerezo" for String Quartet, which was premiered by the Kronos Quartet at Carnegie Hall.

"Diagonal", a Concerto for Vibraphone and Orchestra.

"One Heart", a Chamber music work commissioned by The New York State Council of The Arts, performed by clarinetist Thomas Piercy .

"Buenos Aires Now", Five Suites for Piano & Orchestra, premiered by Fernando Otero on piano.

"Suite: Pagina De Buenos Aires- La Vista Gorda" for Inbal Segev & Jason Vieaux

"Three Pieces for Violin & Orchestra" for violinist Nick Danielson

### **About "Ritual" - New Album - 2015**

In his album entitled "Ritual", Fernando Otero brings a collection of his new compositions for Orchestra, Voices, Chamber Ensembles and Solo Piano.

He appeared to be working more towards the production of formal classical works, which display a significant grounding in the Argentine lyricism -usually associated with Tango- plus elements of classical music and piano improvisation. "Ritual" features emotive vocal and violin lines, full orchestra textures and Otero's highly evolved pianism.

The ten pieces emphasize melodic aspects, slow tempos and rich orchestral colors

in a work delivered as an concept album, with thematic consistency and the recurrence of leitmotifs throughout the program.

As in most of Fernando Otero's output, the bandoneón found its presence in "Ritual" -this time in two of the pieces- driving the listener into an unmistakable Argentine atmosphere, both in a timbrical and melodic sense. The album was produced by Ruben Parra and recorded entirely in New York City during January 2015.

Otero reaffirms his own style -identifiable at any moment during "Ritual"- which was already exposed in his previous studio albums and live performances, and simultaneously offers new fresh compositional ideas and moves forward artistically.

### **Discography**

Fernando Otero (1997) (Remastered in 2014)

Tango De Mier y Pesado (1998)

Escenas (1999)

Chamber Music (2000)

Siderata (2001)

Factor (2002)

Plan 2003)

Revision (2005)

Pagina de Buenos Aires (2007)

Expansion (2008)

Material (2009)

Vital (2010)

Romance (2013)

Prima Donna (2014)

Ritual (2015)

Enigma (2016)

Solo Buenos Aires (2017)

### **Reviews**

"Mr. Otero vibrantly summoned tango ancestors while also acknowledging Bartok and Prokofiev. Steve Smith -New York Times-

Mr. Otero hails from Argentina, where romance has often been cast as a kinetic pursuit. The expressive drama of tango generally animates his compositions, which also involve aspects of classical chamber music and improvisation."Beginning with "El Circulo Rojo," which appears on both recent albums, Mr. Danielson and Mr. Otero locked in tightly, playing a compact melody in sync and then spiraling outward to set up some counterpoint. During one passage in the piece, and on a brisk subsequent composition, there was a faint echo of the dynamic that existed between the pianist Chick Corea and the violinist Jean-Luc Ponty some 30 years ago..."

*Nate Chinen, New York Times-*

"Otero is a seriously talented pianist, and his orchestrations are equal parts Bernard Hermann and Charlie Parker. That is, they alternate between jagged suspenseful crescendos and long, sinuous melodies. This music bounds out of the speakers and leaps into every corner of the room at once, exhilarating but also bewildering -

*Phil Freeman., Jazziz Magazine-*

"Mr. Otero, a resourceful pianist and composer from Buenos Aires, recently released a darkly ravishing album with the plain but connotative title of "Romance" (Soundbrush). This concert will feature that material, a sensuous blend of tango and classical and chamber jazz, with a cohort that includes the vocalist Kristin Norderval, the bandoneón player Juan Pablo Jofre Romarion, the clarinetist Ivan Barenboim and a string quartet headed by the violinist Nick Danielson."

*Nate Chinen, New York Times-*