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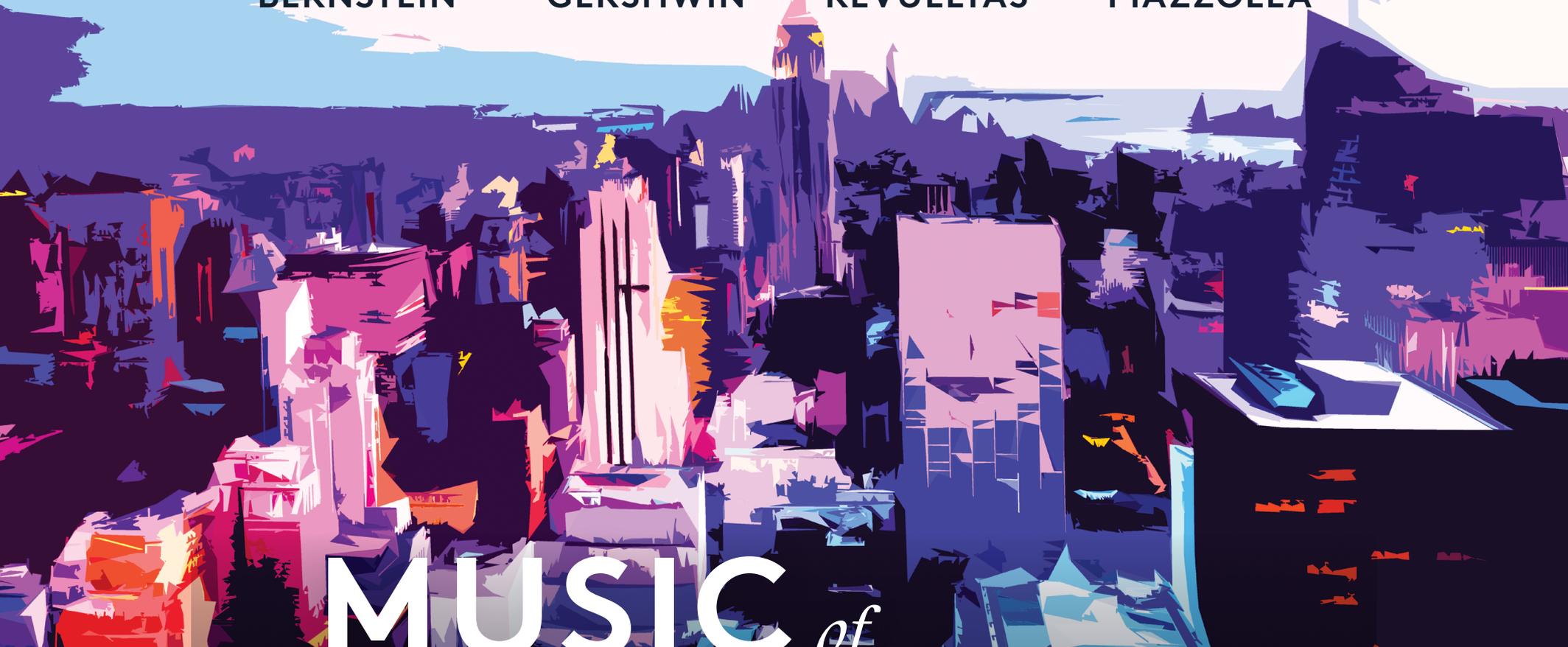
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PIAZZOLLA



# MUSIC *of* *the* AMERICAS

Houston Symphony

Andrés Orozco-Estrada

# Music of the Americas

Houston Symphony  
Andrés Orozco-Estrada

## Silvestre Revueltas (1899-1940)

1 Sensemayá (1938) 6.27

## Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)

Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story* (1961)

2 Prologue 4.39  
3 Somewhere 4.17  
4 Scherzo 1.27  
5 Mambo 2.28  
6 Cha-Cha 0.58  
7 Meeting Scene 0.50  
8 Cool 0.41  
9 Fugue 3.01  
10 Rumble 1.57  
11 Finale 3.20

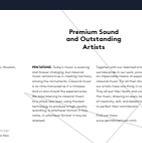
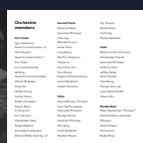
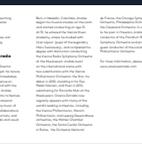
## Ástor Piazzolla (1921-1992)

12 Tangazo (1970) 15.16

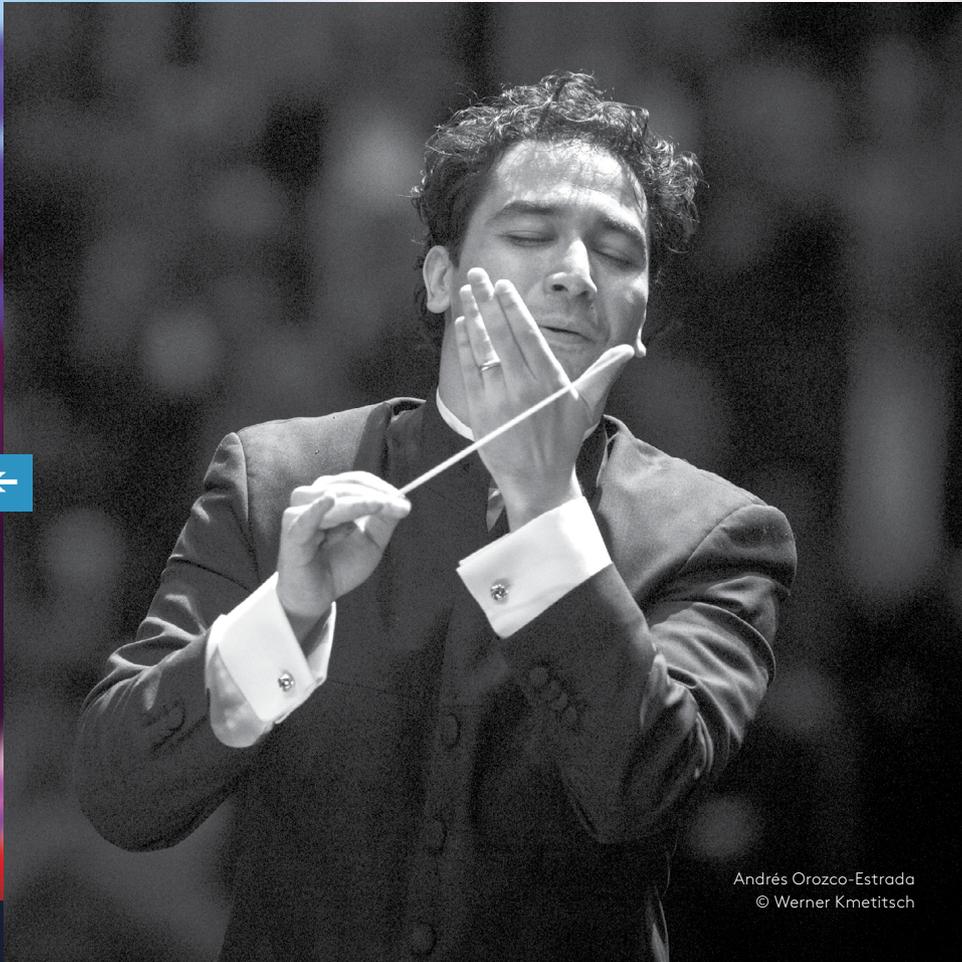
## George Gershwin (1898-1937)

13 An American in Paris (1928) 19.58

Total playing time: 65.42



It's back and easy



Andrés Orozco-Estrada  
© Werner Kmetitsch

For this new recording of 'Music of the Americas' we decided to feature four contrasting works - two of which are very well known - Bernstein's *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story* and Gershwin's *An American in Paris*. The other two works are perhaps much less familiar - these being *Tangazo* by the Argentinian composer Astor Piazzolla and *Sensemayá* by the Mexican composer Silvestre Revueltas. In choosing these particular works, we have tried not to cover the entire continent but rather to provide 'impressions' of America and to 'illuminate' as many colours in the music as possible.

The common denominator in all of these works is the rhythm which is highly articulated, flexible and energised. These 'American' rhythms actually have their roots in Africa - therefore the richness of this repertoire lies very much in its connection to so many musical traditions.

Andrés Orozco-Estrada



Go back and enjoy



## Listening to “The Pan-American Dream”

Moving chronologically from George Gershwin’s 1928 piece *An American in Paris*, through Silvestre Revueltas’s *Sensemaya* (1938) and Leonard Bernstein’s *Symphonic Dances* from *West Side Story* (1961), before concluding with Ástor Piazzolla’s *Tangazo* from the 1970, this recording brings together composers from across the twentieth century, all connected by their belonging to the Americas. Moreover, all of these composers reconfigured the barriers between classical and popular music, combining them to produce a sound that illustrates their home region. Throughout the twentieth century many politicians, artists and intellectuals expressed their intention to build an alliance (cultural, political, and economic) between the North and the South, which can be reduced to the

English

ideal of “The Pan-American dream”. The works that have been brought together here could be thought of as a humble contribution towards that utopia.

### Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story* (1961) – Leonard Bernstein

This piece comprises dances from the famous 1957 Broadway Show *West Side Story*. A contemporary version of William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* set in New York in the 1950s, the musical presented two rivaling gangs: one American, the other Puerto Rican. The story could well have been very different, had the authors (writer Arthur Laurents, composer Leonard Bernstein and choreographer Jerome Robbins) followed preliminary ideas to focus on a Jewish vs. a Catholic gang, under the potential title of *East Side Story*.

The main style of the work reflects the characteristics of the gangs: a jazz-blues ‘American’ idiom, and a more ‘Latin American’ Puerto Rican sound. This Puerto Rican sound, however, was not based exclusively on Puerto Rican genres, but in the Cuban mambo and cha-cha, and the Mexican huapango. Thus, the sound of Puerto Rico is actually the sound of the Caribbean Spanish-American region. Bernstein’s own personal background also affected the style of the music and, according to some experts, traces of synagogue music and Yiddish secular songs can be heard.

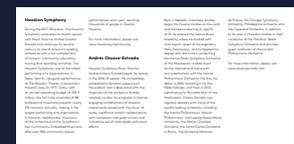
The orchestration of Broadway shows was customarily entrusted to specialists, particularly due to the reduced time they had between writing the orchestration and the premiere of the show. In accordance with this practice, the orchestration was done by Sid Ramin

and Irwin Kostal, though Bernstein was closely involved in the process.

The recording of this piece is being released at a very special moment, since 2018 marks Leonard Bernstein’s centenary.

### Sensemaya (1938) – Silvestre Revueltas

Mexican composer Silvestre Revueltas (1899-1940) began his music education with violin lessons from the age of 6. In 1913 his father sent him to Mexico City to study at the National Conservatory. He continued his music studies at Saint Edward’s College in Austin (Texas), and in 1918 moved to Chicago to study at the Chicago Musical College, where he obtained a degree in Violin, Harmony and Composition.



Go back and enjoy



During the 1920s he organized several musical events in Mexico with other composers, such as Carlos Chávez (from whom he would distance himself some years later) to present the works of contemporary composers such as Stravinsky, Schoenberg, and Varèse, as well as their own compositions. Revueltas's political ideology made him close to the Soviet cause, advocating for a Stalinist communism.

Revueltas's music can be labeled as both nationalist and modernist. The composer usually combines native elements – not those of colonial-period America, but ones that illustrate the pre-colonial indigenous past – with avant-garde techniques, developing his own musical discourse.

In the case of *Sensemayá* (1938), Revueltas's most performed work, however, the key influences are not

strictly Mexican, but Afro-Cuban. Based on a poem by Cuban writer Nicolás Guillén originally called *Sensemayá o canto para matar una culebra* (*Sensemayá* or song to kill a snake), the composer starts building up a juxtaposition of short rhythmical and melodic patterns that repeat and recombine throughout the piece, to reproduce a series of “primitive” Afro-Cuban sounds with the harmonic “complexities” of European modern techniques. The words of the poem resonate with these musical patterns, reaching a climax at the end that reflects musically the “killing of the snake”.

**An American in Paris (1928) – George Gershwin**

Taking elements from both jazz and classical music, *An American in Paris* – subtitled “Tone poem for orchestra”–

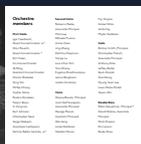
is Gershwin's second-most famous composition. After his first symphonic work, *Rhapsody in Blue*, Gershwin wrote *An American in Paris*, which premiered at New York's Carnegie Hall on 13 December 1928. This piece was meant to illustrate the impressions of an American tourist strolling around Paris, based on Gershwin's own experience during his trips to the city throughout the 1920s. Gershwin even incorporated French taxi horns into the piece in order to evoke the sounds of the city. The first part of the work reflects the impressions of the American visitor in Paris. In a second section, the music slows down into a sorrowful blues, as nostalgia and homesickness strike the tourist, reflected through an “American” sound. But at the end it returns to the cheerful views of Paris posed at the beginning of the work.

The reception of the work after its premiere was mixed. Gershwin's piece

was included in a fully classical program, consisting of César Franck's *Symphony in D minor*, Guillaume Lekeu's *Adagio for Strings* and Richard Wagner's *Magic Fire Scene from Die Walküre*. In this context, Gershwin's work was thought too humorous in comparison with those of the European composers with which it was surrounded. Yet, Gershwin's work came to be understood as a clear example of American modern music.

**Tangazo (1970) – Ástor Piazzolla**

During Ástor Piazzolla's childhood in New York, he used to play George Gershwin's music on the bandoneon, Piazzolla's instrument, and the signature instrument of tango music. For Piazzolla, Gershwin's music represented the soundscape of New York, while his own music reflected the ambience of Buenos Aires.



Go back and enjoy



His 1970 piece is not just a “tango” but a “tangazo” (grand tango). The title might be suggesting the leap from the small ensemble – on which Piazzolla had been focused at the time – to a large-scale orchestral piece. *Tangazo* was premiered in Washington D.C. by Argentine conductor Pedro Ignacio Calderón in February 1970. The European premiere of *Tangazo* took place more than ten years later in Antwerp in 1982, conducted by the Argentine Alicia Farace.

The piece starts in a slow tempo, mainly led by the strings. At the opening of the second section (in a much faster tempo than the previous one), the oboe starts playing a melody that sounds typical of Piazzolla’s tangos. The fugue style developed in this section, although not completely new in Piazzolla’s compositions at this time, would later become a trademark of his music.

Although Piazzolla is well-known as a tango composer who revolutionized the genre with his “Nuevo Tango” (New Tango), he was eager to be treated as a “serious” composer, that is, he wanted to transcend the realm of popular music. For this reason, he studied with classical composers such as Nadia Boulanger, who was one of his most famous teachers. Less well known, however, is that in the 1940s Piazzolla studied composition with Argentine composer Alberto Ginastera who – according to Piazzolla expert Omar García Brunelli – was his most important teacher. Studying with Ginastera allowed Piazzolla to explore a more neoclassical style influenced by the composers he admired, such as Igor Stravinsky and Béla Bartók. *Tangazo* allows us to hear how Piazzolla combined these two worlds of the classical and the popular.



Andrés Orozco-Estrada  
Houston Symphony  
© Anthony Rathbun



**Music of the Americas**  
Andrés Orozco-Estrada

1. <i>Tangazo</i> (L. Piazzolla)	1:00
2. <i>Concerto for Violin and Orchestra</i> (L. Ginastera)	1:00
3. <i>Concerto for Piano and Orchestra</i> (L. Ginastera)	1:00
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Andrés Orozco-Estrada is a distinguished Argentine conductor and pianist. He has served as the Music Director of the Houston Symphony since 2011. He is known for his interpretations of both classical and contemporary music, and for his work in promoting Argentine composers like Piazzolla and Ginastera.

**Album Notes**  
This album features a selection of works by Argentine composers, including the grand tango *Tangazo* by Astor Piazzolla. The music is performed by the Houston Symphony, conducted by Andrés Orozco-Estrada.

**Artist Bio**  
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**Houston Symphony**  
The Houston Symphony is a leading orchestral institution in the United States. Under the leadership of Music Director Andrés Orozco-Estrada, the orchestra has achieved significant artistic and financial success.

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It's back and away



## Houston Symphony

During the 2017-18 season, the Houston Symphony celebrates its fourth season with Music Director Andrés Orozco-Estrada and continues its second century as one of America's leading orchestras with a full complement of concert, community, education, touring and recording activities. The Houston Symphony, one of the oldest performing arts organizations in Texas, held its inaugural performance at The Majestic Theater in downtown Houston June 21, 1913. Today, with an annual operating budget of \$33.9 million, the full-time ensemble of 88 professional musicians presents nearly 170 concerts annually, making it the largest performing arts organization in Houston. Additionally, musicians of the orchestra and the Symphony's four Community-Embedded Musicians offer over 900 community-based

performances each year, reaching thousands of people in Greater Houston.

For more information, please visit [www.houstonsymphony.org](http://www.houstonsymphony.org)

## Andrés Orozco-Estrada

Houston Symphony Music Director Andrés Orozco-Estrada began his tenure in the 2014-15 season. He immediately established a dynamic presence on the podium and a deep bond with the musicians of the orchestra. Andrés carefully curates his programs to feature engaging combinations of classical masterworks paired with the music of today, significant artistic collaborations with composers and guest artists, and innovative use of multimedia and visual effects.

Born in Medellín, Colombia, Andrés began his musical studies on the violin and started conducting at age 15. At 19, he entered the Vienna Music Academy, where he studied with Uroš Lajovic (pupil of the legendary Hans Swarowsky), and completed his degree with distinction conducting the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra at the Musikverein. Andrés burst on the international scene with two substitutions with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra: the first, his debut in 2010, standing in for Esa-Pekka Salonen, and then in 2012, substituting for Riccardo Muti at the Musikverein. Orozco-Estrada now regularly appears with many of the world's leading orchestras, including the Vienna Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, and Leipzig Gewandhaus orchestras, the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, the Santa Cecilia Orchestra in Rome, the Orchestre National

de France, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra and the Cleveland Orchestra. In addition to his post in Houston, Andrés is chief conductor of the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra and principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

For more information, please visit [www.orozcoestrada.com](http://www.orozcoestrada.com)





Andrés Orozco-Estrada  
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## Orchestra members

### First Violin

Igor Yuzefovich,  
Guest Concertmaster +x^  
Marc Rovetti,  
Guest Concertmaster \*  
Eric Halen,  
Co-Concertmaster  
Qi Ming,  
Assistant Concertmaster  
Marina Brubaker  
Tong Yan  
MiHee Chung  
Sophia Silivos  
Rodica Gonzalez  
Ferenc Illenyi  
Si-Yang Lao  
Kurt Johnson  
Christopher Neal  
Sergei Galperin  
Anastasia Sukhopara  
Katrina Bobbs Savitsky +x^

### Second Violin

Rebecca Reale,  
Associate Principal  
Hitai Lee  
Mihaela Frusina  
Annie Chen  
Jing Zheng  
Martha Chapman  
Tianjie Lu  
Lisa Ji Eun Kim  
Tina Zhang  
Evgenia Zharzhavskaya  
Jenna Barghouti  
Jordan Koransky

### Viola

Wayne Brooks, Principal  
Joan DerHovsepan,  
Associate Principal  
George Pascal,  
Assistant Principal  
Wei Jiang  
Linda Goldstein  
Sheldon Person

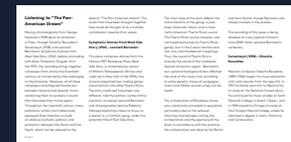
Fay Shapiro  
Daniel Strba  
Jarita Ng  
Phyllis Herdliska

### Cello

Brinton Smith, Principal  
Christopher French,  
Associate Principal  
Anthony Kitai  
Jeffrey Butler  
Kevin Dvorak  
Xiao Wong  
Myung Soon Lee  
Louis-Marie Fardet  
Yewon Ahn

### Double Bass

Robin Kesselman, Principal \*  
David Malone, Associate  
Principal  
Mark Shapiro  
Eric Larson  
Burke Shaw



It's back and easy



Donald Howey  
Michael McMurray  
Andrew Pedersen +x^

**Flute**

Aralee Dorough, Principal  
Matthew Roitstein,  
Associate Principal  
Judith Dines +^\*  
Kathryn Ladner x^

**Piccolo**

Kathryn Ladner +x^  
Matthew Roitstein +

**Oboe**

Jonathan Fischer, Principal  
Colin Gatwood

**English Horn**

Adam Dinitz +^\*

**Clarinet**

Mark Nuccio, Principal  
Thomas LeGrand,  
Associate Principal  
Christian Schubert

**E-flat Clarinet**

Thomas LeGrand +^

**Bass Clarinet**

Sasha Potiomkin +^\*

**Bassoon**

Rian Craypo, Principal  
Eric Arbiter, Associate  
Principal +  
Elise Wagner

**Contrabassoon**

Micah Doherty +^

**Horn**

William VerMeulen, Principal  
Brian Thomas  
Nancy Goodearl +^\*  
Ian Mayton +^\*  
Jesse Clevenger +^\*

**Trumpet**

Mark Hughes, Principal +^\*  
John Parker, Associate  
Principal +^\*  
Caroline Schafer +^\*  
Charlie Geyer +^

**Trombone**

Allen Barnhill, Principal +^\*  
Bradley White, Associate  
Principal +^\*  
Phillip Freeman +^\*

**Tuba**

Dave Kirk, Principal +^\*

**Timpani**

Ronald Holdman,  
Principal +^\*

**Percussion**

Brian Del Signore,  
Principal +x\*  
Mark Griffith  
Matthew Strauss  
Terry McKinney  
Lindsey Höhn +^

**Harp**

Megan Conley, Principal ^

**Keyboard**

Scott Holshouser, Principal

**Saxophone**

Nathan Nabb ^  
Masahito Sugihara \*  
Woody Witt \*  
Graham Tobin \*

**Drum Set**

Brian Del Signore ^

**Key:**

+ = Revueltas

X = Piazzolla

^ = Bernstein

\* = Gershwin

Musicians with no symbols  
are featured on all pieces.



It's back and easy



## Acknowledgments

### PRODUCTION TEAM

Executive Producer **Renaud Loranger** | Producer **Dirk Sobotka**  
Balance engineer **Mark Donahue**

Liner notes **Vera Wolkowicz** | Design **Joost de Boo**  
Product management **Kasper van Kooten**

*This album was recorded at the Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts, Houston, Texas in January and February 2017.*

### PENTATONE TEAM

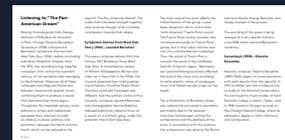
Vice President A&R **Renaud Loranger** | Director **Simon M. Eder** | A&R Manager **Kate Rockett** | Marketing & PR **Silvia Pietrosanti** | Distribution **Veronica Neo**

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