

Welcome Newsletter Fall 2025

September 24, 2025

Dear Friends of the Latin American Music Center,

We welcome you to this new semester with the hope that it will bring renewed commitment to learning and discovery. We also hope this semester brings renewed energy and inspiration to your work and studies.

We are very proud to share some exciting news: **The Catholic University of America, through the Latin American Music Center (LAMC)**, has been awarded a prestigious *Recordings at Risk Grant from the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR)*. Out of 85 applications nationwide, only 21 projects were selected, and we are honored that our proposal was among them.

This grant will make possible the project *“Preserving the Latin American Music Center’s Audio Collection: Digitizing and Making Accessible Rare Brazilian Vinyl, Garmendia Tapes, and Reel-to-Reel Recordings (1950–1980).”* With this support, we will safeguard and share invaluable treasures of Latin American music for future generations of performers, scholars, and listeners. This adds to the two previous grants from the **Latin GRAMMY Cultural Foundation** that the LAMC has been awarded in past years.

LAMC is also thrilled to celebrate the accomplishments of its Visiting Researcher, Colombian guitarist **Leon Salcedo**, who, with Professor Ahualli’s guidance, has earned a Fulbright Scholarship to advance his research on Latin American composers uniquely represented in the Center’s collection.

In addition, the Latin American Music Center is proud to introduce the **LAMC Excellence in Latin and Ibero-American Music Award**, created to honor individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the promotion and

preservation of this rich musical tradition. We are thrilled, during this celebration of **National Hispanic Heritage Month**, to announce that the first award will be presented to **Professor Emerita Elaine Raftery Walter, Ph.D.**, founder of the LAMC and a lifelong advocate for music education. Dr. Walter will join the CUA community in a **special online event** to share reflections on her remarkable career and legacy. This award reaffirms our mission to celebrate excellence, inspire future generations, strengthen appreciation for Latin and Ibero-American music, and honor the cultural contributions of the Hispanic community.

While some events are still to be confirmed, we would like to invite you to a special event closing the semester: the presentation of renowned Puerto Rican composer **Carlos Alberto Vásquez**, who will present a selection of his most prominent works.

Thank you for your constant support, and we look forward to welcoming you as we share the beauty and diversity of Latin American music with our community.

God bless,

Gustavo Ahualli
Director, Latin American Music Center

Preserving the Sound of Latin America: LAMC Receives Prestigious CLIR Grant



The Latin American Music Center (LAMC) at The Catholic University of America is honored to announce that it has been selected to receive a **Recordings at Risk Grant** from the *Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR)*. This competitive national program supports the preservation of rare and at-risk audio materials, ensuring that valuable cultural and historical recordings remain accessible for generations to come.

From 85 applications nationwide, only 21 projects were awarded funding, and we are proud that the LAMC's proposal was among those selected. Our project, *"Preserving the Latin American Music Center's Audio Collection: Digitizing and Making Accessible Rare Brazilian Vinyl, Garmendia Tapes, and Reel-to-Reel Recordings (1950–1980),"* focuses on safeguarding some of the most fragile and irreplaceable items in our collection.

These recordings represent an extraordinary window into Latin American music and culture during the mid-20th century, capturing performances, compositions, and voices that might otherwise be lost to time. Among the materials to be digitized are:

- **Rare Brazilian vinyl records** documenting influential composers and performers;
- **The Garmendia tape collection**, which preserves unique performances and broadcasts;
- **Historic reel-to-reel recordings** from 1950–1980 that reflect the evolving soundscapes of Latin America.

Through this grant, we will be able not only to **digitize and preserve** these materials but also to make them **accessible to researchers, performers, students, and the general public**. This aligns with the LAMC's long-standing mission to promote, study, and disseminate the rich musical heritage of Latin America.

The project will unfold over the next year, beginning in September 2025, with the goal of completing all preservation work by August 2026. Once digitized, these recordings will become a lasting resource for scholarship and performance, ensuring that the vibrant sounds of Latin America continue to inspire future generations.

We are deeply grateful to CLIR for recognizing the value of this collection and for supporting our efforts to preserve it. This grant is a milestone for the Latin American Music Center, reaffirming our role as a leading institution dedicated to the preservation and celebration of Latin American musical heritage.

Discover more about DHC [here](#) !

Upcoming Events:

On Thursday, October 9, at 5:00 p.m. in an online event by [Zoom](#) with the LAMC Award Ceremony honoring Professor Emerita Elaine Walter, Ph.D., founder of the LAMC and a devoted advocate for music education.

As we kick off the celebrations for National Hispanic Heritage Month, Dr. Walter will join the CUA community for this special online event to share her reflections on her extraordinary career and enduring legacy. Presenting her with this award underscores our commitment to recognizing artistic and academic excellence, inspiring future generations, and fostering a deeper appreciation of Latin and Ibero-American music.

Elaine Raftery Walter, Ph.D.

A Lifetime of Commitment to Music, Learning, and the Arts



Dr. Elaine Raftery Walter is a distinguished leader in American music education and the arts, with a career spanning more than six decades. A graduate of Anna Maria College (B.M., 1959) and The Catholic University of America (Ph.D., 1973), she devoted most of her professional life to CUA's Benjamin T. Rome School of Music. Rising from teaching assistant to dean (1982–2001), she oversaw major curricular reforms, introduced new degree programs, and founded the Latin American Center for Graduate Studies in Music with OAS support. Her leadership also brought high-profile initiatives such as annual Kennedy Center performances and student tours to Rome, including audiences with Pope John Paul II.

Beyond her deanship, Dr. Walter inspired generations of students through her teaching in music history, opera, and arts administration. She also shaped the national opera scene as founder and director of the Summer Opera Theatre

Company (1978–2007), providing vital opportunities for emerging artists, many of whom went on to international careers.

Her professional service includes leadership roles with NASM, adjudicating major competitions, and panel work for organizations such as the NEA, USIA, and the National Symphony Orchestra. She collaborated with luminaries like Mstislav Rostropovich and Gian Carlo Menotti, and contributed to cultural diplomacy initiatives from the White House to international arts festivals.

Dr. Walter has been recognized with numerous awards, including the CUA Presidential Medal for Community Service, the WETA Woman of Achievement Award, and an honorary doctorate from Anna Maria College. Today, she continues to serve as Artistic Advisor for Partners for the Arts and recently authored *Legacy: Memorable People, Memorable Events*, chronicling the history of CUA's School of Music.

Her enduring legacy reflects vision, mentorship, and a lifelong commitment to the transformative power of music.

León Salcedo, Fulbright Visiting Scholar at LAMC

We are excited to announce that **León Salcedo**, Colombian researcher and guitarist, has been awarded a **2025–2026 Fulbright Visiting Scholar** grant. Starting soon, he will be joining the **Latin American Music Center (LAMC)** at the Catholic University of America for a **six-month collaboration**.

During his stay, León will carry out the “**Aya Guitar**” project, exploring the profound influence of African musical traditions on classical music across the Americas. His research focuses on 20th- and 21st-century guitar repertoire, examining how American and Latin American composers incorporate African rhythms, melodies, and harmonies.

As part of the project, León will present **two lecture-recitals** and publish an **academic article**, advancing intercultural dialogue and developing new analytical approaches in music. His work highlights the fusion of classical and contemporary styles, emphasizing the richness of Afro-American and Afro-Latin American musical heritage.

The **Fulbright Visiting Scholar Program** is the flagship international educational exchange program of the U.S. government. It promotes mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries by supporting scholars to conduct research, teach, and engage in academic collaboration in U.S. institutions.

León Salcedo



León Salcedo has performed as a soloist and member of classical and jazz ensembles in Colombia, Europe, and the United States. His appearances include the XV Festival de Guitarra de Girona – Costa Brava (Spain), the Colombian National Museum, Teatro Mayor Julio Mario Santo Domingo, Mellon Institute Auditorium (Pittsburgh), and Deca Auditorium at Universidade de Aveiro (Portugal).

He holds a bachelor's degree in music from Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira and a master's in guitar performance from Carnegie Mellon University, and is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Music at Universidade de Aveiro. He teaches at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas and Universidad de Cundinamarca, where he also coordinates the research area in the Music Program.

Professor Salcedo's work covers performance, improvisation, Latin American music, artistic research, public music policy, music technology, curriculum development, and transdisciplinary education. For more information, visit www.leonsalcedo.com.

Celebrating National Hispanic Heritage Month

This month, we join the nation in honoring National Hispanic Heritage Month, a time to recognize the rich histories, cultures, and contributions of Hispanic and Latino Americans. At LAMC, this celebration aligns with our ongoing mission to highlight the vibrant musical traditions of Latin America and the Iberian Peninsula. From composers and performers to educators and advocates, Hispanic artists have profoundly shaped the landscape of music, both historically and today.

Through concerts, lectures, and special events, we aim to showcase these artistic achievements, inspire future generations, and foster a deeper appreciation for the diverse cultural heritage that continues to enrich our communities. We look forward to seeing you at our sponsor events.

On December 6 – Carlos Alberto Vázquez: End-of-Semester Concert

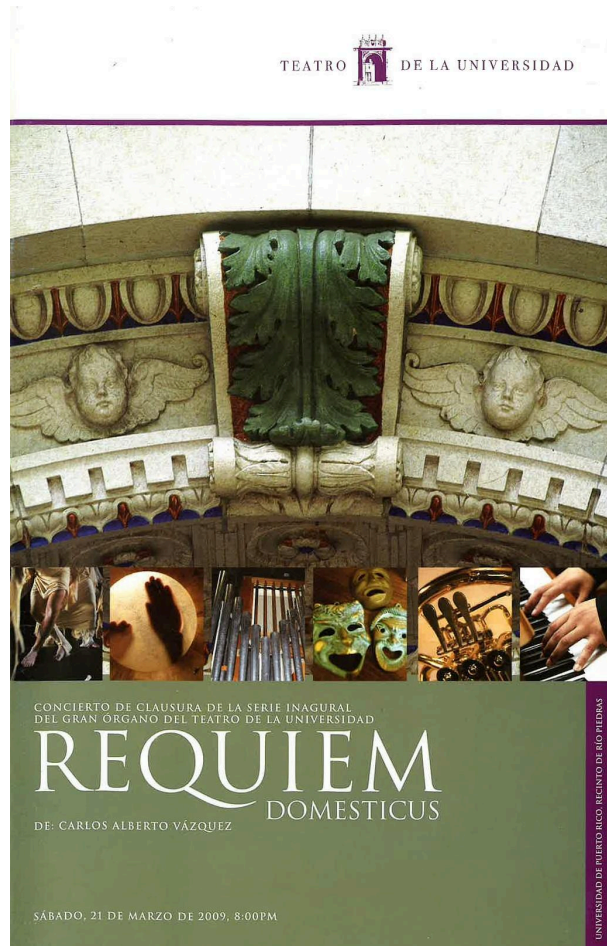
A celebratory closing concert featuring original works by Vazquez.

Carlos Alberto Vázquez



He is one of the most prominent contemporary Latin American composers from the Caribbean, with a versatile career spanning symphonic, choral, chamber, theater, and electronic music. He is the author of landmark works such as the opera *La Mina de Oro* and *Requiem Domesticus*, and his music has been performed throughout the Americas and Europe by leading orchestras including the Puerto Rico Symphony, Orquesta Simón Bolívar, and the Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Mainz.

Born in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, Vázquez studied at the University of Puerto Rico, the University of Pittsburgh, New York University, and La Sorbonne in Paris, where he earned his doctorate. Supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, he also pursued advanced studies in computer music at Stanford University.



Beyond his creative output, he has been a key cultural leader—founding the National Association of Composers of Puerto Rico, directing the Caribbean Composers Forum, and teaching for over three decades at the University of Puerto Rico, where he established the Electronic Music Lab. Today, his innovative works continue to be celebrated internationally, with many featured in commercial recordings that showcase his lasting impact on contemporary music.