

# CARNEGIE HALL

2023–2024 Season

Debs Composer's Chair

# Tania León

**Tania León** is holder of the Richard and Barbara Debs Composer's Chair at Carnegie Hall for the 2023–2024 season. The Pulitzer Prize winner has become one of New York's most irreplaceable forces in arts and culture, including her roles as Dance Theatre of Harlem's first music director, new music advisor at the New York Philharmonic, and founder and artistic director of the commissioning, presenting, and advocacy organization Composers Now. Named a 2022 Kennedy Center honoree, Ms. León has garnered acclaim for her works for solo instruments, chamber ensembles, and orchestras, and her multifaceted work in ballet, musical theater, and opera.

Ms. León's Debs residency at Carnegie Hall begins with the New York premiere of a new work performed by Andris Nelsons and the Boston Symphony Orchestra in January. She curates three concerts in Zankel Hall in spring 2024 with artists and ensembles with which she has frequently collaborated, including Alarm Will Sound; Ensemble Modern in a program featuring two seminal works from Ms. León's category-defying catalogue: *Indígena and Rítmicas*; and jazz pianist David Virelles, who will compose a new multimedia piece commissioned by Carnegie Hall for this occasion performed by his Nosotros Ensemble with percussionist Dafnis Prieto. This program also features a piece by Mr. Virelles's mentor and NEA Jazz Master Henry Threadgill and opens with Ms. León's propulsive duo for piano and percussion, *A la par*. In addition, Ms. León will host and curate two Carnegie Hall Citywide performances by the Harlem Chamber Players and the JACK Quartet. She also works closely with fellows of Ensemble Connect, who will perform her music in Weill Recital Hall and collaborate with her in the creation of a multidisciplinary performance that features newly commissioned music by Nathalie Joachim with a dance soloist to be announced.

Over the last 35 years, more than 20 of Ms. León's works have been performed at Carnegie Hall, including many world and New York premieres. She first conducted at the Hall in 1980, returning in that role with the American Composers Orchestra as co-founder of the Sonidos de las Américas festival, beginning in 1994, and as part of *Two Wings: The Music of Black America in Migration*, a performance produced by Alicia Hall Moran and Jason Moran, presented as part of Carnegie Hall's *Migrations: The Making of America* festival in 2019. In 2009, at the invitation of the late Jessye Norman, she participated in Carnegie Hall's *HONOR!* festival, sharing reminiscences of a life in the arts.

Born in Havana, Cuba, **Tania León** began her musical career as a pianist and in 1967 came to the United States. She moved to New York City and soon became a founding member and first music director of Dance Theatre of Harlem with choreographer and dancer Arthur Mitchell, who encouraged Ms. León to compose music for the company. She went on to write music for several ballets, an opera, and a broad range of instrumental and vocal music.



Gail Hadani

Recent premieres include works for the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Arkansas Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony, Grossman Ensemble, International Contemporary Ensemble, Ensemble Modern, Jennifer Koh's project *Alone Together*, and The Curtis Institute. Appearances as guest conductor include Orchestre Philharmonique de Marseille, Gewandhausorchester, Orquesta Sinfónica de Guanajuato, and Orquesta Sinfónica de Cuba, among others. Upcoming commissions feature a work for the League of American Orchestras and a work for flutist Claire Chase and The Crossing with text by Rita Dove.

Honors include the New York Governor's Lifetime Achievement Award; inductions into the American Academy of Arts and Letters and American Academy of Arts and Sciences; and fellowship awards from ASCAP Victor Herbert Award and The Koussevitzky Music and Guggenheim foundations, among others. She also received a proclamation for Composers Now from the mayor of New York City and the MadWoman Festival Award in Music (Spain).

Ms. León has received honorary doctorate degrees from Colgate University, Oberlin, SUNY Purchase, and the Curtis Institute of Music, and served as US Artistic Ambassador of American Culture in Madrid. A CUNY professor emerita, she was awarded a 2018 United States Artists Fellowship, Chamber Music America's 2022 National Service Award, and Harvard University's 2022 Luise Vosgerchian Teaching Award.

**Monday, January 29, 2024 at 8 PM**

Stern Auditorium / Perelman Stage

## **Boston Symphony Orchestra**

**Andris Nelsons**, Music Director and Conductor

**Seong-Jin Cho**, Piano

TANIA LEÓN *New Work* (NY Premiere)

RAVEL *Piano Concerto for the Left Hand*

STRAVINSKY *The Rite of Spring*

**Part of Fall of the Weimar Republic: Dancing on the Precipice.**

Support for the *Fall of the Weimar Republic* festival is provided by The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation.

**Tuesday, February 20, 2024 at 7:30 PM**

Weill Recital Hall

## **Ensemble Connect**

Program to include

TANIA LEÓN *De Memorias*

SCHUBERT *Piano Quintet in A Major, D. 667, "Trout"*

**Monday, March 18, 2024 at 7:30 PM**

Resnick Education Wing

## **Ensemble Connect Up Close**

**Ensemble Connect**

**Tania León**, Artistic Partner

Program to include

NATHALIE JOACHIM *New Work* (World Premiere, commissioned by Carnegie Hall)

**Tuesday, March 26, 2024 at 7:30 PM**

Zankel Hall

## **Alarm Will Sound**

**Alan Pierson**, Artistic Director and Conductor

Program to include

TANIA LEÓN *Toque*

**Saturday, April 13, 2024 at 7:30 PM**

Zankel Hall

## **Ensemble Modern**

**Stefan Asbury**, Conductor

TANIA LEÓN *Indígena*

NANCARROW *Study No. 7* (transcr. Yvar Mikhashoff in cooperation with Charles Schwobel)

ANDILE KHUMALO *Invisible Self*

NANCARROW *Study No. 6* (transcr. Yvar Mikhashoff in cooperation with Charles Schwobel)

CHRISTOPHER TRAPANI *no window without a wall* (NY Premiere)

NANCARROW *Study No. 12* (transcr. Yvar Mikhashoff in cooperation with Charles Schwobel)

TANIA LEÓN *Rítmicas*



Fadi Khairi

**Tuesday, May 21, 2024 at 7:30 PM**

Zankel Hall

## **David Virelles Nosotros Ensemble featuring Dafnis Prieto**

**David Virelles**, Piano and Synthesizer

**Dafnis Prieto**, Percussion

**Gary Thomas**, Flute, Bass Flute, and Tenor Saxophone

**Ranee More**, Bass Clarinet

**Rashaan Carter**, Double Bass

**Brandon Ross**, Guitar and Banjo

**Curtis McDonald**, Conductor

with

**Orion Weiss**, Piano

**Ian Rosenbaum**, Percussion

TANIA LEÓN *A la par*

HENRY THREADGILL *Where Coconuts Fall*

DAVID VIRELLES *Oro* (World Premiere, commissioned by Carnegie Hall)