

EDWARD SIMON WITH AFINIDAD AND IMANI WINDS



AFINIDAD:

Edward Simon, piano, composer
David Binney, alto saxophone
Scott Colley, bass
Brian Blade, drums
Optional: **Gretchen Parlato**, vocal

IMANI WINDS:

Valerie Coleman, flute
Toyin Spellman-Diaz, oboe
Mark Dover, clarinet
Monica Ellis, bassoon
Jeff Scott, French horn

Pianist **Edward Simon**, a native of Venezuela, has made a name for himself over decades in America as a jazz improviser, composer-arranger and bandleader, with his profile heightening in recent years as he has explored the commonalities of jazz with the folkloric sounds of Latin America. *JazzTimes* summed up his impact this way: "Simon is less talked about than many other important jazz pianists from the Caribbean and South America, but he may be the most complete creative artist among them." Based in the San Francisco Bay Area as a member of the all-star SFJAZZ Collective, he has been a Guggenheim Fellow and the recipient of multiple composition grants through Chamber Music America's New Jazz Works initiative.

His brand new recording ***Sorrows and Triumphs*** showcases the long-running virtuoso quartet **Afinidad** and the acclaimed chamber quintet **Imani Winds**, plus special guests including vocalist Gretchen Parlato. It brings together the distinct and often exclusive worlds of jazz and classical music, challenging chamber musicians to stretch their improvising and interpretive skills, while inviting jazz musicians into the formal structures of classical music. Their harmonious collaboration on two bodies of work commissioned by Chamber Music of America's New Jazz Works, the suites "Sorrows and Triumphs" and "House of Numbers," results in a holistic listening experience that brims with a lyricism both intimate and majestic. About this music, influenced by his Buddhist practice, the pianist says: "I wanted these compositions to bring joy to the listener, to be direct and accessible, with singable melodies." Summing up a string of glowing reviews for the album, *All About Jazz* said: "Edward Simon's sensitivity, eloquence, strength and intelligence stand in full view throughout this gorgeous collection."

(continued on next page)

"In my music, I aim to balance the structural clarity of classical music with the moment-to-moment interaction of jazz," Simon concludes. "I revel in the hybrids that come from combining ethnic rhythms, jazz harmony and improvisation. Of course, the music of Latin America – with its infectious rhythms, poetry and passion – has always been one of my greatest resources, as it offers an ocean of possibilities both rhythmically and melodically. But I've also been influenced by the works of minimalist composers, being attracted to the idea of taking an essential idea and exploiting it to its fullest potential. Aesthetically, I'm concerned with directness and economy. I strive to communicate, to get to the heart of the matter by making every note count, just as every word counts in a good story. I think of music as a living art, something that's constantly evolving."

SELECT PRESS QUOTES:

"There are multiple fluencies, along many frequencies, in the music of Edward Simon... His luxurious new album, *Sorrows & Triumphs*, is a sleek expression of modernist chamber-jazz writing." —**Nate Chinen, WBGO Take Five**

"Maybe it's the careful construction of his music, or the musical bond created by years of playing with the same band, or the influence of Buddhist practice and ideas that makes Simon's new CD so simultaneously complex, deeply satisfying and listenable. Probably it's all those factors, along with Simon's stunning pianism and the prowess of his longtime quartet Afinidad... Simon achieves a rare feat, creating music of extraordinary depth that's easy to listen to. Meditative, grooving, and above all joyful, *Sorrows & Triumphs* soars into the jazz stratosphere." —**Monarch Magazine**

"*Sorrow & Triumphs* really is quite triumphant. It is music that frees the spirit, music that is, at times, dreamlike and at other times, rooted to the rhythms Edward Simon heard growing up in Venezuela. The impressive melodies, the intelligent arrangements, and the delightful musicianship are all good reasons why you should dig into this sublime recording.

—**Richard Kamins, Step Tempest**

"This is majestic, lush music put together with intelligence and emotional depth. Simon writes as profoundly as Maria Schneider and fits a lot of disparate musical elements together with imagination. He also has the good fortune of working with excellent musicians—especially Gretchen Parlato, who sounds amazing here. This is one of 2018's finest musical achievements so far." —**Jerome Wilson, All About Jazz**

Edward Simon with **Afinidad** and **imani Winds** will be available for Jazz and Chamber Music Festivals in the summer of 2019 and during the 2019/20 concert season. Guest vocalist **Gretchen Parlato** can join the ensemble for select performances.

Please contact us for more information and promotional material.