

# MANUEL VALERA

*Grammy Nominated Artist, Pianist, Composer, Educator*

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## Education

Manuel Saumell Conservatory in Havana, Cuba

Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 1998-2000

The New School, New York, NY 2000-2003

## Bandleader Bio

Born and raised in Havana, Grammy nominated pianist and composer Manuel Valera since arriving in NYC has become well known in the modern jazz scene, garnering national reviews and lending his talents as a pianist and composer to such notable artists as Arturo Sandoval, Paquito D'Rivera, Brian Lynch, Dafnis Prieto, Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, Jeff "Tain" Watts, John Benitez, Samuel Torres, Joel Frahm, Yosvany Terry and classical violin virtuoso Joshua Bell among many others.

This dynamic and prolific artist has recorded 13 cds as a bandleader with touring projects ranging from his Grammy nominated group New Cuban Express to his modern contemporary trio to solo piano.

Valera is the recipient of many composition grants — most notably Chamber Music America's New Jazz Works three different times, the Dranoff International 2 Piano Foundation 2 times and the ASCAP Young Jazz Composer Award. He has travelled the world performing in more than 30 countries at some of the biggest international venues and festivals in the world.

## Selected Grants, Commissions & Awards

Grammy Nominated Artist, New Cuban Express, 2012

Chamber Music America New Jazz Works 2005, *Impressions of Expressions*

Chamber Music America New Jazz Works 2014, *José Martí en Nueva York*

Chamber Music America New Jazz Works 2017, *The Planets*

Dranoff International 2 Piano Foundation 2016 Bacardi Commission, *Migrant Voyage*

Dranoff International 2 Piano Foundation 2018 Commission, *Nine Stories for 2 pianos*

ASCAP Young Jazz Composer Award, 2005

Arrangements of Ernesto Lecuona and Gonzalo Roig for Joshua Bell and Orchestra for PBS

Commission for Yosvany Terry Bohemian Trio, *Impressionistic Romance* and *Impromptu*

Commission for Paquito D'Rivera with Jazz at Lincoln Center Big Band

## **Selected Teaching Experience/Masterclasses**

New School for Social Research, New York, NY  
New York University, New York, NY  
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI  
Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH  
jazzUV in Xalapa, Mexico  
Tonica Jazz in Guadalajara, Mexico  
Escuela Fernando Sor in Bogota, Colombia  
American Music School in Paris, France  
Accademia Musica Moderna, Modena, Italy  
Centro Cultural Roberto Cantoral, Mexico City, Mexico  
Stanford Jazz Workshop in Palo Alto, CA

## **Recordings as a Leader**

Manuel Valera, *Forma Nueva*, 2004  
Manuel Valera, *Historia*, 2005  
Manuel Valera, *Melancolia*, 2006  
Manuel Valera, *Vientos*, 2007  
Manuel Valera, *Currents*, 2009  
Manuel Valera & New Cuban Express, 2012  
Manuel Valera & New Cuban Express, *Expectativas*, 2013  
Manuel Valera, *Self Portrait*, 2014  
Manuel Valera & New Cuban Express, *In Motion*, 2014  
Manuel Valera Trio, *Live at Firehouse 12*, 2015  
Manuel Valera & Groove Square, *Urban Landscape*, 2015  
Manuel Valera Trio, *The Seasons*, 2017  
Manuel Valera Trio, *The Planets*, 2017

## **Selected Work as Sideman - Tours/Recordings**

Dafnis Prieto Si o Si, Sextet and Big Band  
Jeff "Tain" Watts Quartet  
Joel Frahm Quartet  
Essiet Essiet Trio featuring Jeff Tain Watts  
Yosvany Terry (multiple groups)  
Clarence Penn and Penn Station  
John Benitez Group  
Lenny White Quartet  
Carlos Henriquez (multiple groups)  
Arturo Sandoval Sextet  
Paquito D'Rivera Duo and Group  
Brian Lynch Spheres of Influence  
Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra  
Samuel Torres Group

## References

**Yosvany Terry** - Professor at Harvard University

[yosva@yosvanyterry.com](mailto:yosva@yosvanyterry.com) (917) 640-9589

**Brian Lynch** - Professor at the University of Miami

[Brianlynchjazz@mac.com](mailto:Brianlynchjazz@mac.com)

**Paquito D'Rivera** - Grammy Winning Composer and Multi Instrumentalist

[Paquito1@aol.com](mailto:Paquito1@aol.com)

Conrad Herwig - Chair of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University

[radjazzmusic@verizon.net](mailto:radjazzmusic@verizon.net)

**Roland Vazquez** - Composer and Drummer

[Roland@RolandVazquez.com](mailto:Roland@RolandVazquez.com)

**Gargie Shande** - Chamber Music America head of New Jazz Works Program

[gshinde@chamber-music.org](mailto:gshinde@chamber-music.org)