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“Growing up, I never really saw ‘myself’ anywhere in the world but specifically on TV. I think TV and images are important in this sense, in that what we ‘know’ is shaped by what we see. I’ve been seeing Daymé’s picture around campus and I looked her up and listened to her music and I just felt very appreciative to see someone who looked like me not only have success but to be having this success as herself, and not some image of herself that was created.”

UNIVERSITY STUDENT

A singer, composer, arranger, choir director, and bandleader, [Daymé Arocena](#) is a radiant performer carrying the flame for a new generation of Cuban musicians. Daymé brings a wealth of knowledge and unique perspective as a speaker and instructor fluent in Spanish and English.

Accepted age 9 into one of Cuba’s most prestigious music schools, Amadeo Roldan Conservatory, Daymé experimented with a series of instruments – violin, trumpet, piano and guitar – before she found that choir directing was her niche. Her conservatory studies rooted in Western classical traditions were augmented by the rich, folkloric musical traditions of Cuba that she learned at home. Born of a uniquely musical culture, she strives to forge a cohesive musical language from Cuba’s distinct musical dialects from Guantanamo’s fast-paced changüí, to the ever present guaguancó, ‘70s-style ballada, and Santería chant. After graduation, Daymé was hired as the conservatory’s choir director and continued to expand her knowledge of Afro-Cuban music history – focusing especially on women’s contributions to the genre.

Daymé was introduced to the world stage through Gilles Peterson’s Havana Cultura Mix project, which brought producers from around the world to Cuba to record with local musicians. Daymé enchanted a packed audience at the London launch of that album, and since then has released four breathtaking albums as a bandleader, including 2017’s *Cubafonía* – named one of *The Arts Desk*’s best albums of 2017. *NPR* claims there’s “never a dull moment” on the recording, and *Billboard* sums it up perfectly: *Cubafonía* is a “must-have on any playlist.”

In September 2019, Daymé released the critically acclaimed *Sonocardiogram*, a self-produced album released by Peterson’s Brownswood Recordings.

THE NEW YORKER // A NEW VANGUARD OF WOMEN IN CUBAN JAZZ

NPR // 200 GREATEST SONGS BY 21ST CENTURY WOMEN

WBGO // JAZZ NIGHT IN AMERICA

BILLBOARD // CUBAN ARTISTS YOU SHOULD BE LISTENING TO

NPR // TINY DESK CONCERT

SAVANNAH MUSIC FESTIVAL REVIEW

WALKER ART CENTER REVIEW

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