



ALFREDO RODRÍGUEZ *THE LITTLE DREAM*

“The Little Dream,” the title track of Cuban pianist and composer **Alfredo Rodríguez’s** fourth studio album (Mack Avenue Records), gently builds into an uplifting statement – one that reflects the hope children hold in building a brighter future, where tiny dreams manifest into grandiose realities.

There is no better example of this than Rodríguez’s own personal journey: from his humble beginnings in Cuba to being discovered by Quincy Jones, ultimately leaving his family behind to immigrate to the United States and pursue his own dream. Over the past decade, Rodríguez has gone from a young local Cuban artist to a globally recognized Grammy[®]-nominee with three critically acclaimed releases on Mack Avenue Records: *Sounds of Space* (2011), *The Invasion Parade* (2014), and *Tocororo* (2016).

Over the years, Rodríguez’s worldwide tours have shaped his diverse global point of view. “I believe people are more similar than different. We live in a time where we have so many ways to inform ourselves, and yet some places – and people – choose to remain isolated. As a result, the world can lack peace and empathy, instead of showing unity and tolerance.”

In a time where governments want to build walls instead of bridges, and uplifting programs like DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) are being rescinded, Rodríguez understands how important “dreams” are, especially for today’s youth – and the immigrant children known as “DREAMers” – for shaping a more unified future. He expresses, “the title of my new album, *The Little Dream*, is my response to our current world climate. The title comes from my fascination with the dream world, which is a beautiful manifestation of our reality. My greatest dream is one where all humans live happily and in peace. Children are the hope and the answer to creating a world of love, peace, unity and understanding.”

The Little Dream was recorded in just two days, with a majority of the songs being done impressively in one take. Rodríguez explains, “I don’t like perfection in the common sense of the word. For me, perfection is how we react to something initially, and that makes my music better and more honest. The most beautiful thing to me is when I play and the opposite of what I had intended happens, so I have to find a solution while I am playing! Music is like life, it’s about adaption and transformation in the moment.” Rodríguez’s commitment to improvisation is evident in his popular cover song videos, which have racked up millions of views on his social media channels.

Two musicians who join Rodríguez on *The Little Dream* and helped shape the album’s sound are **Michael Olivera** and **Munir Hossn**. “I’ve been touring and playing with Michael and Munir for the last several years, so *The Little Dream* is a testimony to the sound we have developed.”

Quincy Jones continues to serve as producer, and Rodríguez never stops learning from his teacher. “Quincy always impresses me, and for a young musician, it’s such an incredible opportunity to get to be around a

legend. Quincy has affected my life in so many positive ways; he is my mentor, and the most open-minded musician I know. His influence has made me a better person as well as a better musician.”

As jazz music sees a resurgence in younger audiences, Rodríguez is leading the way for the new wave of Cuban musicians, including past collaborators Ibeyi and Pedrito Martinez. The rich musical history of Cuba is finally being exposed to a wider audience, which has always been a hope for many upcoming artists.

Rodríguez circles back on the title ***The Little Dream***, which he concludes “is about the child that is within us all, and how imagination and creativity are messages for hope. No one knows better than me that a little dream can become a big dream, and big dreams can become reality.”

Alfredo Rodríguez · *The Little Dream*
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