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Pianist-composer Marta Sanchez Quintet presents her inventive new Album “El Rayo de Luz” on Fresh Sound Records

“It’s glimmering, propulsive music, with hints of elegiac Spanish folk song, cool jazz from the 1950s and the Romantic modern jazz of the 1990s”
(Giovanni Russonello for the New York Times)

“Marta Sánchez is a young pianist whose new album, “Partenika,” also shows her to be an intriguing composer.” (Nate Chinen for the New York Times)

“The music Marta Sanchez writes gets intricate, but she also gets memorable effects using simple means. That’s part of what she gets from pop or medieval music. She can make a melody out of one note and the right rhythm. Jelly Roll Morton called that kind of spark the Spanish tinge” (Kevin Whitehead for NPR’s Fresh Air)

Pianist **Marta Sanchez**’s follow-up to her critically acclaimed releases *Partenika* (2015) and *Danza Imposible* (2017) is her new album *El Rayo de Luz* (2019, Fresh Sound). Her unique vision for her quintet – celebrated by the **New York Times** (10 best albums of 2015), NPR’s **Fresh Air**, **DownBeat Magazine** and many others – is further developed and explored in her new music on *El Rayo de Luz*. Marta’s highly evocative music is textural, visual, and constantly surprising with invention and wit. About *Danza Imposible* DownBeat Magazine said: “The heartfelt compositions transcend their cerebral methodologies, painting compelling chiaroscuro canvases that are beautiful, mysterious and restlessly morphing.”

For her fourth album as a leader, *El Rayo de Luz* – to be released November 22 on Fresh Sound Records – Sanchez went to the studio with the same band from the last album with the exception of the tenorist. Saxophonist **Chris Cheek** stepped in for Jerome Sabbagh, alto saxophonist **Roman Filiu**, bassist **Rick Rosato** and drummer **Daniel Dor** round out the band. Their collective performance, and Marta’s highly personal and extraordinary writing, led to the compelling, gripping, music for quintet that at times sounds like it is made by an orchestra. *El Rayo de Luz* is a continuation of the style displayed on the band’s previous CDs, and follows the path that Marta began with *Danza Imposible* as her writing continues to grow more conceptual, darker and complex.

New York City is still Sanchez's main inspiration, Marta's musical interests display a wide range, and can be seen clearly in the musicians she plays with on a daily basis. "One of the best parts of being in New York," says Marta, "is that the musicians that I play with, on gigs and in home sessions, range from the traditional to the avant-garde. Having the opportunity to play with a broad spectrum of musicians inspires my compositions and improvisation by making it possible to access a broad palette of harmony, rhythm and melody."

Marta filters her daily musical life and experiences through the familiar format of a jazz quintet, but uses it in unfamiliar ways by rethinking the role that each instrument plays in the ensemble. On "Dead Flowers", for example, the saxes create a sonorous and complex texture that takes an accompanying role to the melody in the piano, highlighting the expressive touch and melodic subtlety that Marta brings to her playing. In "Cascadas" the saxophonists Roman Filiu and Chris Cheek dance in and out of synchrony, like the sound of a waterfall; while Marta and bassist Rick Rosato fill out the picture with a propulsive melody. The result is an unusual cinematic piece that is light as air and as heavy as water.

Stylistically, it is hard to categorize Sanchez's music, but what is clear is that her music sounds highly personal. "When I'm writing for my band, I think carefully about how each person and instrument brings a different piece to a larger puzzle," explains Marta. "A main priority of the music is to be constantly switching focus from one member of the band to another. Then, the whole ensemble creates a fresh and interesting texture, like in a conversation where people add their differing points of view on the same subject." You can hear it in the development of the melody on the beautiful ballad "Nenufar", where after a piano intro, tenor alto and piano emerge from the accompaniment zone to play phrases that create the melody.

With *El Rayo de Luz* Marta Sanchez has created a thoroughly compelling and striking work of thoughtful and intricate music that is a realized statement of a mature artist. As a pianist and composer she reminds us of the sonic possibilities of a quintet, while never forsaking the emotional for the complex. *El Rayo de Luz* is an impressive album to add to her growing discography and establishes her as one of the important compositional and pianistic voices of her generation.

Born and raised in Madrid, Spain, pianist and composer Marta Sánchez is actively working in the contemporary creative music scene in New York City and around the globe. Charting a significant path through her innovative and original music, she has reached an international audience, gaining significant global recognition.

After finishing her classical training at the Conservatory, she began her academic training in jazz and contemporary music at School of Music Populart, earning a grant from A.I.E. (Spanish Association of Musicians.) The first band she created, *Zafari Project*, was selected by the Spanish agency for youth (INJUVE) as one of the most

promising on the Spanish scene, giving them the opportunity to tour Spain playing in different jazz festivals. This band also won first prize at the international jazz contest Debajazz, which is not the only jazz contest Ms. Sánchez won. She also was awarded the first prize at the Jazzargia International Jazz Contest with the Javier Moreno Trio and the first prize at San Martin de la Vega Jazz contest with Natalia Calderon Quartet. She is the only musician in Spain who has been selected on three occasions by AECID (government agency for international development cooperation) to represent Spain at jazz festivals in different countries around South America, Central America and Europe; with her own band on two occasions (2009, 2012) and with the Natalia Calderon Quartet (2009). In 2010, she received the “A.I.E en Ruta” Touring Grant from the Spanish Association of Musicians. In 2011, she was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship, which allowed her to continue her studies at New York University (M.M.). During her time there, she went on an international tour in Costa Rica, where her group represented NYU at the famed Costa Rica Jazz Festival.

As a bandleader, she is currently working with her New York based Quintet with respected saxophonists Chris Cheek and Roman Filiu; and with her band *Room Tales*, featuring singer Sara Serpa. She is involved in many other music projects as a collaborator, performer, and/or studio musician in the United States and abroad.

Marta’s main project, her quintet, was created soon after she moved to New York, and since then has released two albums: “Partenika” (2015) and “Danza imposible” (2017), with the Spanish label Fresh Sound. Both “Danza Imposible” and “Partenika” received high praise from American press. “Partenika” received great reviews from [The New York Times](#), [Downbeat](#), [All Music](#), [All About Jazz](#), and many more. Not only that, but the recording was selected by *The New York Times* as one of the [10 best albums of 2015](#), including all genres, and it was also included on the lists of the best recordings of the year from the *Jazz Journalist Association*, *Downbeat* and *All Music*. The quintet’s next work, “Danza Imposible” was reviewed and highly praised in the famous public radio program [“Fresh Air”](#), it got 4 stars from [DownBeat](#), an excellent review from [The New York Times](#), on Nate Chinen’s program at [WBGO](#), and it was also included in some lists of the best of 2017. After “Danza Imposible”, Marta’s music has been the subject of articles in publications including [Jazziz](#) and [The New York Times](#). The New York Times highlighted Marta as an example in a year full of great projects led by women.

She has toured the United States, Europe, South America and Central America, performing as a leader or as a sideman at prestigious venues and prominent festivals such as North Sea Jazz Festival in the Netherlands, Eurojazz in Mexico City, Eurojazz in Athens, Jazz Festival Vitoria Gasteiz, Winter Jazz Festival in New York, festivals in

Nicaragua, Guatemala, Antigua, Guatemala, Festival de Jazz de Atenas, Buenos Aires, Montevideo and Santiago de Chile, and Madrid Jazz Festival, Castellón, Lleida, Málaga, including many others. In the States she has performed at some of the most prestigious club including Blue Note, Jazz Gallery, 55 Bar, The Cell Theater, Cornelia Street Cafe, and ShapeShifter Lab among many others. She has toured on the West Coast, Michigan, Maine, Maryland and Connecticut.

In 2017 she received the prestigious grant for a residency from the MacDowell Colony, where Marta wrote prepared piano solo repertoire.

Marta Sanchez: El Rayo de Luz

All compositions by Marta Sanchez.

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