

The Boston Globe

FALL ARTS GUIDE

Boston is pretty magical in the fall. Here are 101 ways to enjoy the season.

By [Don Aucoin](#), [A.Z. Madonna](#), [Murray Whyte](#), [Isabella Bernstein](#), Jeffery Gantz, Jon Garelick, Maura Johnston, Candace McDuffie, Stuart Munro and Nick A. Zaino III Globe Staff and Globe Correspondent,
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Cuban-born pianist, composer, singer, and Berklee assistant professor Zahili Zamora performs at Scullers Jazz Club on Oct. 24. ROBERT TORRES

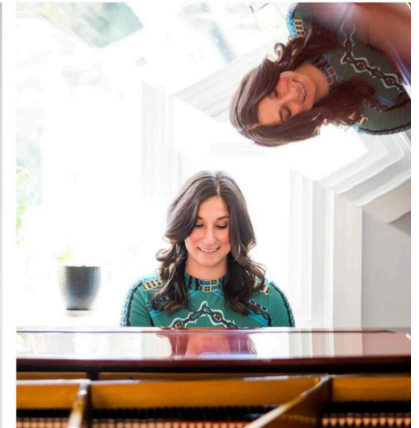
ZAHILI ZAMORA This charismatic Cuban-born pianist, composer, singer, and Berklee assistant professor matches virtuoso chops with uncommon emotional breadth. She celebrates the release of a new album, “Overcoming,” with a sextet (plus “surprise guests”). *Oct. 24, 7 p.m. Scullers Jazz Club, Boston. 617-562-4111, scullersjazz.com - JGarelick*

2025 FALL ARTS GUIDES

14 albums by New England musicians to listen to this fall

September 15, 2025

• [Noah Schaffer](#)



For many New England musicians, there is a constant nagging question: Would it be better to move to a music capital like Los Angeles, New York, Nashville or Atlanta?

As the fall album guide shows, the answer is often a definitive “no.” The most glaring proof is Couch, whose Boston home address hasn’t stopped the band from becoming an international touring attraction. There are plenty of other examples, too. Gregory Groover Jr. and Zahili Gonzalez Zamora are making jazz of the highest caliber right here in the city. Northern New Englanders Ali McGuirk and Jon Nolan have become roots music stalwarts. And Billy Dean Thomas’ queer hip-hop and Michael Prentky’s radical Jewish music show that

artists working proudly outside of the mainstream can always find a home here. Then there are the Gypsy Moths, who grew up loving Boston garage greats The Dogmatics — and now share a label (Rum Bar Records) and stages with them. It all gives open-minded listeners reason to be excited about both this batch of releases and the future generations of musicians these artists will inspire.

Zahili Gonzalez Zamora, 'Overcoming'

Oct. 24

Cuban-born, Boston-based pianist/vocalist Zahili Gonzalez Zamora says that “Rumination,” one of the compositions on her forthcoming album, is a reflection on the self-doubt that musicians can feel before or after they take the stage. Considering the power of her playing and the immense depth of her compositions, it’s hard to imagine Zamora has anything to worry about. The five pieces on “Overcoming” show that she’s more than come into her own as a major talent. She draws on everything from classical music to Afro-Cuban traditions and attracts such major jazz figures as Sean Jones and Pedrito Martinez to her recording band. Zamora’s journey has involved both the inner apprehensions that inspired the pieces in “Overcoming” as well as many years spent playing in Canada and Asia. Now Boston is fortunate to call the recently minted U.S. citizen a member of our musical community.

Zahili Gonzalez Zamora celebrates the album release at [Scullers Jazz Club](#) on Oct. 24.



Zahili Gonzalez Zamora: Overcoming



By [Andy Crowther](#)
October 1, 2025
[385 views](#)



Zahili Zamora's journey from Cuba to Boston via Southeast Asia is reflected in her aptly titled five-track album, *Overcoming*. A pianist, composer and now educator, she tackles her fears and difficult life experiences head-on in the work, through sound, emotion and rhythm.

At 22 Zamora was in a high-calibre all-female band that toured often outside of Cuba, when on a whim the band decided to stay in Canada after performing there. The country offered far more freedom than Cuba for Zamora to express herself musically, and she began to collaborate with musicians from other cultures. After six years she became a Canadian citizen, which opened doors to travel even more extensively, and led to performing in Southeast Asia and settling there for another six years. Even though much of her playing was in dance clubs, it was the early hour, slower sets that crystallized her love of jazz. Many of her fellow musicians in Southeast Asia had studied jazz at Berklee College in Boston, and encouraged her to do the same. She secured a scholarship, moved to Boston and has been there ever since. In 2019, she joined Berklee's piano department and is now an associate professor and teaches the master's program.



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Overcoming was born during her own master's studies, and clearly demonstrates the blending of her diverse musical influences from across the world, and from Bach to [Bill Evans](#). It was recorded with a formidable band, many from Cuba too including [Pedrito Martinez](#) on percussion, who has recorded and performed with the likes of Paul Simon, [Paquito D'Rivera](#), [Eddie Palmieri](#), and [Sting](#). Also featured is [Sean Jones](#) on flugelhorn, an internationally recognized trumpet player and educator, and Artistic Director of Carnegie Hall's NYO Jazz ensemble.

The album is a deep, engaging listen full of variety. For a five-track album, it covers a lot of ground. One to listen to and enjoy on repeat. The Cuban rhythms are there, driven by Martinez and [Keisel Jimenez Leyva](#), but are not overpowering. "Rumination" includes a spoken word section from Zamora, with solos and accompaniment from Jones. A bubbling reflective piece with Latin swing. Zamora and the band really let loose on "Blissful Sorrow," with [Yosvany Terry](#), another Cuban musician, on soprano sax. There is the feel of the later [Wayne Shorter](#) bands to this, both in sound and composition, with added wordless vocals again from Zamora. "Despair" is just Zamora and Jones, piano and flugelhorn working beautifully together. "Duality Embrace" is an outstanding solo piece from the pianist, time standing still as she channels her classical and jazz influences. The final track, "Negra," is in Zamora's own words "about embracing my roots, the color of my skin, the texture of my hair, and the rhythms that resonate within me. It celebrates the full acceptance of my identity, encompassing the Black, the white, the Asian and the Native in me." A piece with tension, fiery Cuban support, and like the whole album, ultimately resolution.



Zahili Zamora: New Album Release Concert

Oct 24 at 7:00PM - 11:00PM

Scullers Jazz Club
400 Soldiers Field Rd
Boston



GET TICKETS

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Entitled *Overcoming*, each track on the new album explores Zahili's deeply moving inner journeys through the challenges of "overcoming" her personal apprehensions that held her back from the renown she so deserves. "Rumination," Blissful Sorrow," "Despair," "Duality Embrace," and finally, "Negra" take listeners inside the different pieces of her very personal odysseys, creating a beautiful and beguiling landscape into the deepest metamorphoses of her inner soul.

Zahili Gonzalez Zamora is a pianist, composer, and educator. Born in Manzanillo, Cuba, she started playing piano at the age of six and graduated from the National School of Music with a performance degree. Now, she feels most defined by her Cuban heritage and her status as an immigrant.

Her passion for music has taken her to Canada, to South East Asia and, now, to the United States —a land of immigrants. She is always moving forward, guided and driven by her music and the need to grow as an artist and a person, to share her music and her love of life with others.

She's an artist who's out of her comfort zone – her home – for the sake of her work. Her rich musical background, career experience and extraordinary improvisation skills render her as not only a leader in the modern Latin jazz idiom but also, an influential, emulated musician.



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Latin Jazz Pianist Zahili Zamora to Release New Project “Overcoming” on Oct. 24th, 2025 | LISTEN!

Administration

August 29, 2025

Jazz, Latin Jazz, New Jazz Releases, New Music Releases, New Singles, News-Update, Urban Jazz



Latin Jazz Pianist Zahili Zamora to Release New Project “Overcoming” on Oct. 24th, 2025

Zahili González Zamora, the brilliant Cuban-born Afro Latin jazz pianist, vocalist, composer, bandleader, arranger and educator, is getting ready to release a landmark new album and she’s coming to Boston’s famed Scullers Jazz Club on Friday, October 24 for a very special date. Tickets at \$35 and \$45 are on sale now [HERE](#). Zahili’s band at Scullers will feature Zahili on piano and vocals, Keisel Jimenez on percussion, Yosvany Terry on sax, Gerson Lazo on bass, Julian Miltenberger on drums; Yandy Garcia on drums and . Zahili will also feature a special surprise guest!

Scullers Jazz Club is located in Boston’s DoubleTree Guest Suites Hotel at 400 Soldiers Field Road in Allston, MA 02134. Parking is available on site. Website: <https://www.scullersjazz.com>.

Entitled ***Overcoming***, each track on the new album explores Zahili’s deeply moving inner journeys through the challenges of “overcoming” her personal apprehensions that held her back from the renown she so deserves. “Rumination,” Blissful Sorrow,” “Despair,” “Duality Embrace,” and finally, “Negra” take listeners inside the different pieces of her very personal odysseys, creating a beautiful and beguiling landscape into the deepest metamorphoses of her inner soul.



Recorded in New York City at the prestigious Power Station—once the key recording studio home for artists such as Springsteen, Bruno Mars, Lady Gaga, Bob Dylan and Tony Bennett—the new album features a formidable cast of some of today’s jazz finest musicians: Sean Jones on flugelhorn, Pedrito Martinez on percussion, Keisel Jimenez on percussion, Yosvany Terry on sax, Gerson Lazo Quiroga on bass, Julian Miltenberger on drums and Yandy Garcia on drums.

The single from the album, *“Rumination”* is streaming now on all platforms

“Rumination is a composition that evolved in many ways. Initially, this track was titled “Thick Wall,” then later “Introspection” and finally I settled on *“Rumination,”* says Zahili.

“I created this work during the pandemic after a three-month complete break from playing music. During that time, I sought to comprehend the unexpected sense of relief I felt, when the pandemic began. I had been experiencing burnout—and music has always been my guiding force—it has taken me from Cuba to Canada to Asia and then to the USA . . . it represents my identity, yet suddenly, I found myself engulfed in fear.”

“Rumination” draws inspiration from the emotional journey that many artists face before or after a performance. Questions swirled in my mind: Did I do well? I made a mistake, and then I feared that I wouldn’t be respected. Was I good enough?”

“This piece serves as a letter to myself expressed through spoken word and sound. It reflects the insights I gained in therapy, where I discovered that my stage fright originated in my childhood, as a result of unresolved conflicts.”

The track features Zahili on piano, Julian Miltenberger on drums, Pedrito Martinez on bata drums, Gerson Lazo Quiroga on electric bass and Sean Jones on flugelhorn. “Rumination” also includes ‘spoken word’ written by Zahili herself in collaboration with Sheila Del Bosque.

[Zahili González Zamora](#) | Photo Credit: Robert Torres

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QUOTES!

"The five pieces on "Overcoming" show that she's more than come into her own as a major talent." - Noah Schaffer, *WBUR.org*

"Zahili Zamora's new release is a timeless evocation of Cuban musical traditions, an aural tapestry of the diaspora's sorrows and the beauty of spiritual yearnings."
-- Journalist/Author/Filmmaker Jason Berry

"Rarely do musicians like Zahili Zamora and albums like *Overcoming* arrive on the scene so fully formed. Clearly this "new" artist has spent years mastering her art in ways that reflect the rich heritage of Afro-Cuban music while lending a powerful new take on where it overlaps with Jazz. Gifted, vibrant, inspirational and with an authentic voice that will go far, Zamora's compositional talents are pristine as *Overcoming* shines throughout." - Jazz Journalist Michael Ambrosino, *33third.org*.

The buzz around Cuban pianist Zahili Zamora is powerful: her elegant keyboard wizardry and precision vocals jump fresh from Havana's worldwide stage, polished bright in Berklee College's graduate program. True: Zahili's quartet opened the 10th Cambridge Jazz Festival in a joyous, action-packed hour that launched the crowd giddy with delight. Yet this debut CD reveals her candid, intimate side in a surprisingly laid-back chamber suite that tracks her personal journey in musical vignettes with a stellar cast of simpatico colleagues: Sean Jones, flugelhorn; Gerson Lazo, bass; Yosvany Terry, sax; Pedrito Martinez, percussion and Julian Miltenberger, Yandy Garcia and Keisal Jimenez on drums. We await more!
- Fred Bouchard, journalist for *Downbeat*, *The Boston Globe*, more

LA JAZZ SCENE

Zahili Zamora *Overcoming* (Self-Produced)



A few years ago, Zahili Zamora performed at the Monterey Jazz Festival, making a strong impression on me when she improvised on piano while singing in harmony at the same time. While other performers might sing while playing unisons on piano or guitar, I have still never heard anyone else improvise vocal harmonies at that tempo.



Years have passed and now Zahili Zamora has a new 34-minute EP, *Overcoming*. Unknown to me and most of her audience, she often felt nervousness and emotional turmoil before and after her performances, wondering if she was good enough. Although the answer was obviously yes, it has taken her some time to overcome the fear. The five originals on this set address that problem.

The opener, "Rumination," begins with some brief spoken word, features Sean Jones on flugelhorn playing the theme and an inventive solo, and Ms. Zamora contributing some thoughtful piano accompanied by bassist Gerson Lazo Quiroga, drummer Julius Millenberger, and Pedrito Martinez on bata drums. "Blissful Sorrow," which is about learning new ideas while letting go of some of the values from the past, has Zahili Zamora singing wordlessly a little. It includes some adventurous playing from Yosvany Terry on soprano and is more blissful than sorrowful. Quiroga and Millenberger are part of the rhythm section again.



"Despair," a flugelhorn-piano duet with Sean Jones, is not as bleak as the title might make one believe and is actually a bit optimistic. The pianist takes "Duality Embrace" as an unaccompanied solo. That piece is about meshing together her many influences from classical music to jazz while becoming a very individual musical melting pot. *Overcoming* concludes with "Negra" which triumphantly finds her accepting who she is without apology. Zahili Zamora contributes another powerful piano solo while joined by Quiroga, drummer Yandy Garcia Palacio, and percussionist Keisel Jiminez.

The release of *Overcoming* (available from www.zahilizamora.com) is a major step forward for the pianist. Hopefully next time one will get to experience those improvised vocal harmonies!

-Scott Yanow

