

NEW FOCUS RECORDINGS

Espacio absoluto is a collection of nine works for solo cello that conjure sonic landscapes of dramatic timbral contrasts, hypnotic repetition, and multidimensional texture and feeling. Written by **James Díaz** and performed by longtime collaborator **John Popham**, the album draws inspiration from the concept of absolute space, an infinite, unchanging space that exists independently of its internal inhabitants. In these nine works, Díaz uses the cello as a source of both rich melodic material as well as kaleidoscopic textures that give form to these vivid spaces.

Track List

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|---------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Espacio absoluto | 9:46 |
| 2. Interludio I | 2:06 |
| 3. Desiertos verdes | 7:10 |
| 4. Interludio II | 3:09 |
| 5. From Pink to Orange | 10:42 |
| 6. Interludio III | 1:44 |
| 7. Grand Oasis | 7:39 |
| 8. A Warm Place without Memory | 3:42 |
| 9. Espacio tiempo | 3:20 |

John Popham, cello

Total Time: 49:18

Program Notes

Colombian composer James Díaz creates immersive works characterized by shifting textures, vibrant sonic masses, and gradual fluctuations of energy. In his orchestral, chamber, and electroacoustic music, Díaz constructs sonic worlds that feel unrestrained by time and space. Over long expanses, instrumental textures are layered upon one another creating ever changing, hyperactive musical structures. The listener can engage with individual lines as they wax and wane and observe the interaction of restless musical agents. In **Espacio absoluto**, Díaz explores the full creative potential of a solitary acoustic instrument. Here complex structures are replaced by simpler forms comprising fragmented melodies, fragile harmonics, and melancholic gestures. Díaz thinks of these works as imaginary landscapes, writing, “each piece occupies a different location, yet returns to the same intangible field: a field where silence and sound drift freely, unanchored by time.”

James Díaz: Espacio absoluto

Nine works for solo cello by composer
James Díaz, performed by cellist
John Popham

US Street Date	9/11/2026
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Catalog Number	FCR508
Audio Resolution	44.1kHz, 16 bit; 48kHz, 24 bit
MSRP	\$20.99
Featured Track	Track 1

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Espacio absoluto
James Díaz | John Popham



The title track, ***Espacio absoluto***, opens with a series of fragmented memories. Crystalline harmonics preface simple melodic lines. The music unfolds gradually, proceeding through repetitive gestures—brushed bow strokes, gentle ricochets, and quick harmonic bursts—before finding places of repose.

In ***Interludio I***, a single line pushes and pulls, searching for its gravity. Pulsing harmonics shine over rich double stops as the music moves towards a destination that is perpetually out of reach. As it lurches forward, resonance accumulates, producing complex sonorities that engage the instrument's vibrant sonic spectrum.

In ***Desiertos verdes***, the listener travels through an expansive terrain populated by harmonic flutters, lush double stops, and mesmeric swells. Peripatetic musical lines emerge along the way. After passing through a deep layer of double stops, a haunting melody takes form, punctuated by isolated pizzicati and bending glissandi.

Interludio II draws tension from two oppositional forces. While double stop swells propel the music forward, they are restrained by the ricochet's necessary mechanics. The repeated articulation sonifies the bow's collisions with the string, emphasizing the gravitational pull of this environment.

The album's most kinetic work, ***From Pink to Orange***, explores "form through transformation." The cello's arpeggiations are transformed by gradual alterations of pitch and bow placement, as well as the isolation of individual notes within the bariolage. The overall downwards trajectory of the piece eventually brings us into a deep register that has the capacity for both power and tenderness.

Interludio III further mines the richness of cello's lowest register in a short interlude that feels subaquatic. Melodic lines push continuously towards the surface through expanding trills and double stops as moving gestures appear refracted by the water's surface.

In ***Grand Oasis***, Díaz imagines an infinite field where vast melodies spread beyond the horizon. Slow-moving phrases are interrupted by sharp attacks and expanded pauses while the music moves in circular waves. Towards the end of the work, a lilting rhythmic loop appears out of this environment, an animated ecosystem within this broad expanse.

A Warm Place without Memory returns to the sentimental lyricism of the album's opening and highlights Díaz's juxtaposition of melodic fragments

with abstract textures. From the opening bars, we hear a melody beginning to crystallize among isolated trills and harmonics. After a dramatic build, the work concludes with a moment of moving stillness.

The postlude, ***Espacio tiempo***, is Díaz and Popham's most otherworldly landscape. A slow procession of multiphonics envelops the listener in sounds that are complex and magnetic. The listener floats in an extraterrestrial environment in which movement and direction are in a permanent state of suspension.

Bios

Colombian-born composer **James Díaz** creates music that blends instrumental, electronic, and multimedia practices. His work explores distinctive sonic textures, resonant sound masses, and immersive listening environments through amplified solo works, chamber music, orchestral compositions, and electroacoustic creations. Through collaboration and technology, Díaz expands the expressive possibilities of acoustic instruments while cultivating unique musical worlds.

John Popham is cello faculty at the University of Washington School of Music, a founding member of the piano trio Longleash, and co-director of The Loretto Project, a creative residency in central Kentucky. As a performing artist, researcher, and teacher, he draws on classical, historical, and experimental practices to explore and expand string performance and pedagogy.