

LEÓN, TANIA (1943–)

“We are the fruit of the environment where we grow up. I’m disappointed that we are constantly in competition about whose culture is better. Human culture is what’s prevalent on this planet . . . and can be displayed in many ways.”

World class composer, conductor and music director, Leon was born and raised in Cuba in the bosom of a nurturing family that supported her fantasies and encouraged her musical talents. She studied dance and music, and was fortunate to count among her role models a long line of strong working women. At nineteen Leon came to live in New York City on her own without knowing the English language. Her first job was as a pianist with the Arthur Mitchell Dance Company where she rose to director of music and founded its music department, school, and orchestra. She directed the music for *The Wiz*, and conducted her original compositions by invitation in Italy, and Mexico City. Leon has conducted numerous prestigious symphonies, among them, the Phoenix Symphony, and the John F. Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra.