Sigmaproject

Biography

SIGMA PROJECT · SAXOPHONE QUARTET · EXTENDED BIOGRAPHY

Summam indicabimus signo Σ. With this statement, Leonhard Euler, one of the most important mathematicians in history, introduced in 1755 the use of the capital letter sigma (the eighteenth letter of the Greek alphabet) as the symbol of summation. Since then, Sigma has represented the sum of a finite or infinite series of elements.

> "Is it necessary to introduce SIGMA Project in 2020? The enormous number of concerts they have given—mainly in Europe and Latin America—during their decade-long career, the volume of works commissioned in that period, and their participation in thirteen recording projects attest to their notable role as one of the most active Spanish ensembles, as ambassadors of recent creative music."
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> JOSÉ LUIS BESADA, IRCAM / UNIVERSITY OF STRASBOURG

During its international 10th anniversary tour (2018), the BBVA Foundation recognised the excellence of SIGMA Project by awarding it the prestigious Leonardo Grant for Researchers and Cultural Creators.

SIGMA Project (that is, the sum of the talents of Andrés Gomis, Ángel Soria, Alberto Chaves and Josetxo Silguero) is more than a saxophone quartet: it is an essential vehicle for the instrumental music of the 21st century. If the string quartet was the instrument par excellence in past centuries, SIGMA Project, in the 21st century, claims that role for the saxophone quartet.

Based in Madrid since its foundation, SIGMA Project—true 'Arditti's' of the saxophone, as dubbed by the magazine Scherzo—has given more than 225 concerts in auditoriums and festivals around the world: the United States, Jamaica, Buenos Aires (Teatro Colón), Bogotá (Teatro Mayor), Mexico (Palacio de Bellas Artes), Chile (Auditorio GAM), Germany, France, Scotland, England, Italy, Poland, Romania, Croatia and Tunisia, as well as its own circuit in Spain.

Its members see themselves as imaginative explorers, able to stimulate the composers who approach their sound and to generate new grammars in a true sound laboratory. Examples are the projects developed with the National Music Prize winners Alberto Posadas (the cycle Poética del Laberinto) and José María Sánchez-Verdú (the cycle KHÔRA)—published by the prestigious labels Wergo and Kairos respectively—and the exciting collaborations with Luis de Pablo and Félix Ibarrondo in their respective concertos for saxophones and symphony orchestra.

> "... a truly magnificent, precise, inventive and admirable performance by the Spanish SIGMA Project. I thought this kind of precision could only come from a string quartet."
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> IRVINE ARDITTI (JUNE 2017)

This spirit of search and research has crystallised over the years in the close relationship between SIGMA Project and the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation (Germany), which has led to the premieres of works by the composers Mauricio Sotelo (Spain), Simone Movio (Italy), Roberto Sierra (Puerto Rico), Raphaël Cendo (France), Hilda Paredes (Mexico) and Liza Lim (Australia). More than 85 world premieres have been given to date, among them works by composers of the stature of Luis de Pablo, José Manuel López López, Raquel García-Tomás, Jesús Torres, Joan Magrané, Helga Arias, Ramon Lazkano, Héctor Parra, Sergio Blardony,

José Luis Torá, Alberto Bernal, Voro García, Alberto Carretero (Spain), Wieland Hoban (Germany), Georgina Derbez, Ana Lara, Erika Vega, Mario Lavista, Víctor Ibarra, Arturo Fuentes, Iván Naranjo, Hebert Vázquez, Sergio Luque, José Luis Hurtado (Mexico), Carolina Noguera, Luis Miguel Delgado (Colombia), Miguel Farías (Chile), María Eugenia Luc, Fabian Panisello (Argentina) and Yair Klartag (Israel), as well as the first performances in Spain of works by Sofia Gubaidulina, Salvatore Sciarrino, Peter Eötvös, Georg Friedrich Haas and Hugues Dufourt.

SIGMA Project's pronounced modularity ranges from the homogeneity of a formation of four identical instruments to its maximum instrumental diversity, a quality highly valued in current compositional trends. The world premieres of Chaman, for four bass saxophones and electronics, by Thierry Alla, and LaLibela, a concerto for four bass saxophones and symphony orchestra by Xavier Carbonell, are examples of the innovative restlessness inherent to the group.

The quartet works passionately in a multidisciplinary way with other arts: video, dance, literature, theatre and painting blend naturally into its concerts, which also rescue music from the past with which it has a utopian relationship. This trajectory is borne out by the premieres of the chamber operas 0.997 for long-distance runner, saxophone quartet, electronics and real-time video by Alberto Bernal and Songs of Innocence and Experience for four saxophonists and electronics by José Vicente Fuentes Castilla; by the SIGMACIRCULO Festival, promoted by SIGMA Project and held at the Círculo de Bellas Artes in Madrid; and by the programme devoted to the music of the Ars Subtilior and Ars Nova, developed with the National Music Prize winner Jesús Torres.

> "Attending a concert by the SIGMA Project group is to undertake a musical journey in which joy and wonder are a constant... Listening to SIGMA Project is, without a doubt, one of the most enriching experiences one can have."
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> MARIO LAVISTA (TOMÁS LUIS DE VICTORIA PRIZE FOR IBERO-AMERICAN MUSIC)

The prestigious German label WERGO published the cycle Poética del Laberinto by Alberto Posadas in 2020, and the Austrian label KAIROS released the cycle KHÔRA by José María Sánchez-Verdú in 2023. On the recording front, SIGMA Project also has its own label, Sigma Records, which has released the CD UTOPÍAS: New Music for Saxophone Quartet (2013), the DVD La Música para Saxofón de Félix Ibarrondo (2014) and the recent CD Nueva Música de Compositores Vascos para cuarteto de saxofones (2023). The quartet has also recorded for the BBVA Foundation (monographs on José Manuel López López and Gerardo Gombau), Ediciones Maguelone (a Thierry Alla monograph), Orpheus Classical (monographs on María Eugenia Luc and Félix Ibarrondo), Casa Velázquez–Académie de France in Madrid (a Víctor Ibarra monograph) and, at the invitation of the German Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation, for the Col Legno label (a Simone Movio monograph).

SIGMA Project carries out its international activity with the support of the National Institute of Performing Arts and Music (INAEM) of the Spanish Ministry of Culture, the Etxepare Institute of the Culture Department of the Basque Government and the German Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation.

SIGMA Project plays SELMER instruments and D'Addario accessories, with technical support from PUNTO REP and lutherie by Wind-Tec.

> "If I had to sum up the personality of the SIGMA Project quartet in two words, I would not hesitate: originality and perfection. It is a pleasure, a joy, to share music with them: they communicate it, they bring it to life."
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> LUIS DE PABLO (NATIONAL MUSIC PRIZE, 1991)