

*David Cantalejo*



*Dark*  
*Chamber works*

*Synthèse Quartet / Salomé Osca / Juan Carlos Cornelles / Da\_sh ensemble  
Luis Fonseca / Duncan Gifford / Ismael Arroyo / Eduardo Moreno*



*In 2020, while being commissioned to compose two chamber music pieces for “Juventudes Musicales España”, I became fascinated by the German television masterpiece "Dark". Its intelligent plot and rhythm, as well as its ingenious way of resolving narrative conflicts, really impressed me. The series served as inspiration to compose “SIC MVNDVS CREATVS EST” for saxophone quartet, and “ERIT LVX” for viola and piano. Later in 2023, and with the idea of recording this CD, I decided to write a third piece, for double bass and piano, and name it after the source of inspiration, "Dark", thus closing the cycle and my little tribute to it.*

*The virtuoso “Sonata for alto saxophone and piano” (2022), one of the first works that I decided to include on this album, was written in between. I thought it would provide a nice balance to the "Dark" trilogy, given its musical content.*

*It is an honor to have been able to count on such high-level musicians for the recording of these compositions. They played the works with great ability, enjoying the numerous technical and musical difficulties and meticulously respecting the indications of the scores, going beyond my imagination.*

## ***David Cantalejo (1985) - Composer***

*Born in Bilbao in 1985, David Cantalejo completed his intermediate piano studies at the “Juan Crisóstomo de Arriaga” Conservatory in Bilbao, in 2004, with the pianist Agustín Vergara.*

*After that he decided to continue the path of composition, graduating in 2008 in this specialty at the Conservatory of Music “Pablo Sarasate” in Navarra with professor Joseba Torre. At this time, he formed the flute and piano duo “Dúo Iceberg”, together with Antonio Íñigo Sánchez, guided by the flutist Begoña Agirre.*

*He took up piano studies again, concluding them in 2012 at the Escola Superior de Musica de Catalunya (ESMuC), with professor Eulàlia Solé.*

*During his studies, he obtained numerous awards, both in the field of composition and in the field of chamber music.*

*In 2019, he won the first prize “Xavier Montsalvatge” at the “XXX Young Composers Prize SGAE-CNDM Foundation”. He also obtained the first prize in the IV, VI and VIII editions of the International Chamber Music Composition Competition for txistu “Durango Hiria”.*

*Since 2011, he has been a member as composer and performer of the contemporary music group from Pamplona “Garaikideak”, for which he has composed and premiered numerous works.*

*His music has been interpreted throughout Spain, as well as in New York and Berlin, by the Navarra Symphony Orchestra, the ensembles KOAN 2, Garaikideak, Dúo Xistra, Silboberri, Synthèse Quartet, Kuarist, Sigma Project, and performers such as cellist David Johnstone, flutist Cristina Granero and Roberto Casado, and pianist Adrián Blanco among others, as well as directed by Joseba Torre and José Ramón Encinar.*

# ***SIC MVNDVS CREATVS EST for saxophone quartet SATB (2020)***

*Commissioned by “Juventudes Musicales España” and dedicated to the virtuoso “Synthèse Quartet”, it was premiered by the same quartet in 2021 in Ávila.*

*It is built within a strict compositional system derived from numerical dates, based on relevant elements and events in “Dark”, which generate modes, harmonies and rhythms.*

*Explosive in character and divided into four sections that merge with each other, the discourse is structured by an austere chromatic motif presented by the soprano saxophone, exploring the ensemble's range, with marked dynamic, register, rhythmic and timbral contrasts, as well as with the use of extended techniques.*

*- David Cantalejo*

*Recorded by Synthèse Quartet*

*World première recording*

*Edited by Da\_sh editions*



**Synthèse Quartet** is one of the most promising groups on the current chamber music scene. Formed by Javier, Ángela, Ismael and Raúl, they are inspired by all kinds of renowned musicians, such as violinists, cellists and pianists. These influences give the quartet a unique and very special sound and possibilities. Along with this idea of being steeped in musical tradition, another premise that defines them is their connection with the public. Thanks to the successful choice of repertoire and their striking staging, the bond established between performers and listeners makes them the recipients of the best reviews.

They currently reside in the cities of Berlin and Amsterdam, where they develop their musical career and their personality as performers.

These four young musicians have performed in renowned venues such as the Berliner Philharmonie (Germany), the Auditorium of Zaragoza (Spain), the Musikteatret in Holstebro (Denmark) and the Croatian National Theatre (Croatia). They have received more than 25 awards in various chamber music competitions, including first prize at the “Concurso Juventudes Musicales” in Spain, first prize at the “Concours International de Musique Léopold Bellan” in Paris and first prize at the “Kammermusikwettbewerb der Alice-Samter-Stiftung” in Berlin. During their career, they have collaborated with prestigious musicians such as Vineta Sareika (concertmaster of the Berliner Philharmoniker), Gregor Sigl (Artemis Quartett), Eckart Runge (Artemis Quartett), Avri Levitan (international violist), Tim Vogler (Vogler Quartett), Angelika Merkle (international pianist) and Brenno Ambrosini (international pianist).

## ***ERIT LVX for viola and piano (2020)***

*Commissioned by “Juventudes Musicales España”, it is dedicated to the talented violist Salomé Osca, who premiered it in 2023 in Mallorca together with the equally talented pianist Juan Carlos Cornelles.*

*On this occasion, I immersed myself in the “Dark” universe in a more intimate way. Divided into two parts, the first is an introduction that sets out the two main motifs that will be elaborated throughout the piece. The second, the bulk of the work, is made up of successive episodes, which, having a mysterious and calm common starting point, evolve towards disparate places between them, with the idea of the collapse of the different elements presented, to return to the origin, modified on each occasion by the musical development, and which gradually fades away from its last appearance.*

*- David Cantalejo*

*Recorded by Salomé Osca (viola) and Juan Carlos Cornelles (piano)*

*World première recording*

*Edited by Da\_sh editions*



**Salomé Osca** is a violist born in Madrid in 1997, a member of the Orchestra of the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona since November 2021 and a viola teacher at the Conservatori Superior del Liceu in Barcelona. She is currently also a collaborator of orchestras such as the Budapest Festival Orchestra and the National Orchestra and Choir of Spain. She completed her Higher Studies at the Conservatori del Liceu in Barcelona with Professor Ashan Pillai and with an Academic Excellence Scholarship from the Fundació de Música Ferrer-Salat. At the end of her studies she received the Extraordinary Chamber Music Award as a member of the Amika Kwartet string quartet. In 2019 she moved to Berlin where she studied a master's degree at the Universität der Künste with Prof. H. Jochen Greiner and was also guided by Prof. Hartmut Rohde. She has also worked with international artists such as Danusha Waskiewicz, Thomas Selditz, Pauline Sachse, Hartmut Rohde, Joaquín Riquelme, Alejandro Regueira, Veronika Hagen, Quartet Casals, Thomas Ribl and Artemis Quartet among others. In recent years, in her role as a pedagogue, she has been invited as a teacher to the Barcelona Youth Symphony Orchestra and to the Manuel de Falla Music School in Alcorcón, a school where she carried out her first musical studies under the tutelage of Remei Silvestre. During her career she has been awarded First Prize at the Hazen Young Performers Competition (2007); Barenreiter Prize as a finalist in the Permanent Competition for Young Musicians (2016); First Prize at the XII Higiní Anglès Chamber Competition and Second Prize at the Barcelona City Chamber Competition, as a member of Amika Kwartet. She was a finalist in the Intercentros Melómano Competition (2017) and received the 2nd Prize at the Vigo City String Competition (2018) and the 2nd Prize at the XXI Llanes International Viola Competition (2019). Thanks to these distinctions she has had the opportunity to perform in different venues nationwide, especially in the Community of Madrid and Catalonia. He has been a member of youth orchestras such as the FONDE and the EUYO, which together with her professional career have given her the opportunity to perform in auditoriums around the world, such as Elbphilarmonie Hamburg, Konzerthaus Berlin, Konzerhaus Vienna, Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Opera-Bastille in Paris, Royal Opera House in Muscat, NCPA in Beijing to name just a few. She plays a viola by the Austrian luthier Peter Mörth built in 2020.



**Juan Carlos Cornelles** is an intense chamber pianist, which has led him to perform alongside distinguished instrumentalists and singers in concert halls in Spain, the United Kingdom, the United States, Austria, Italy, Holland, Portugal, Brazil, Sri Lanka, Bulgaria and Slovenia. His most notable appearances include Wigmore Hall, Barbican Hall, St. John Smith Square and St. Martin in the Fields in London, Americas Society in New York, Altes Rathaus Barocksaal in Vienna, Sala Cecilia Meirelles in Rio de Janeiro, Bernhard Haitink Saal in Amsterdam, Auditorio Nacional in Madrid, Fundación Juan March in Madrid, Auditori in Barcelona and Palau de la Música in Valencia, etc. In these concerts he has performed alongside distinguished performers such as Shlomo Mintz, Mikhail Khomitzer, Claude Delangle, Arno Bornkamp, Shigenori Kudo, Tianwa Yang, Ana María Sánchez, Manuel Cid, Maite Alberola, Silvia Vázquez, among many others. He regularly collaborates with the cellist José Enrique Bouché (with whom he has performed monographic concerts with the complete Beethoven and Bach sonatas), with the British violist Ashan Pillai and with the Brazilian mezzo-soprano Joana Thomé. He has made recordings for RTVE, RNE, BBC3 and RTVSLO. He has also recorded, together with Ashan Pillai, 7 CDs under the Verso and Nibius labels. He has also starred in world premieres of composers Antonio Gómez Schneekloth, Javier Costa, Vicente Roncero, Jordi Cervelló, Francisco Fleta-Polo and David Cantalejo. Juan Carlos received his higher education at the Royal Conservatory of Madrid and at the Guildhall School in London. His most influential teachers have been Almudena Cano, Miguel Zanetti, Graham Johnson and Caroline Palmer. He has completed a “Master in Performance” at the G.S.M.D. (London) and another Master's Degree in Musical Creation and Interpretation from the Rey Juan Carlos University in Madrid. He combines his concert activity with teaching, which he has carried out at the Guildhall School in London and at Conservatories in Madrid, Zaragoza, Palma de Mallorca, Barcelona and Castellón, where he currently works as a professor of piano and teacher of Lied Repertoire and instrumental accompaniment. Since 2014 he has also been a pianist in the viola department of the “Música en Compostela” course and festival in Santiago de Compostela. He has been the creator and artistic director of the “Alcossebre encant” Lyric and Chamber Music Festival in Alcossebre (Castellón).



## ***Dark for double bass and piano (2024)***

*The work that culminates the “Dark” trilogy was written specifically for this album. I wanted to compose a work with piano, and when I mentioned it to Luis Fonseca – to whom the piece is dedicated – he suggested a piece with double bass that he would perform with the pianist Duncan Gifford. The score requires two virtuosos like them for its interpretation.*

*Taking up the idea of the saxophone quartet, I used numerical dates to obtain the compositional system. It is divided into four sections/movements, linked by attacca, with each section representing a character referred to by name: “Adam und Eva”, in a melodic style, confronts two disparate motifs, which evolve until they merge; “Der Tag der Apokalypse”, where a sober double bass cell dissects the movement that transforms until it collapses; “Einstein-Rosen-Brücke”, which has a lyrical character contrasted with fast piano figurations; and “Die Apokalypse,” which presents elements already heard in different episodes and culminates in an explosive coda. The musical material complements itself in the different sections, revolving around the same motifs and sounds, worked technically in different ways.*

*- David Cantalejo*

*Recorded by Luis Fonseca (double bass) and Duncan Gifford (piano)*

*World première recording*

*Edited by Da\_sh editions*



*Da\_sh ensemble - Luis Fonseca / Duncan Gifford*

**Luis Fonseca** is a polyvalent artist, musician, composer, professor and entrepreneur based in Madrid, Spain. He has studied Architecture in São Paulo, Brazil, where he is originally from; he has studied Double Bass in Frankfurt am Main, Germany; period music in Basel, Switzerland; he has a Master's degree in electroacoustic composition and a Doctor's degree in algorithmic composition, both in Madrid. He has played in many orchestras around the world, as well as being a chamber musician and Double Bass soloist. He has taught Double Bass in different Conservatories in Spain and given masterclasses in many other schools and festivals around the world. As a composer he has won several international prizes and his music has been played in more than 15 countries.

He has been co-principal double bassist in the Royal Opera Theater in Madrid as a Double Bass player and he is currently Professor in the Royal Conservatory of Music in Madrid. He is a co-founder, partner and artistic manager of Da\_sh music in Madrid, besides his intense work as a composer. Luis Fonseca plays in this recording with a Double Bass made by Sigmund Hitzelberger in Pfronten (Tirol, 1853) and with a bow made specially for him by Santiago Pardo / Madrid.

Australian pianist **Duncan Gifford** firmly established himself as a major artist of his generation with international successes of 1st Prize in the Maria Callas Grand Prix de Piano in Athens, Greece (2000), 1st Prize in the Concours Prix Mozart in Lausanne, Switzerland (1999) and 1st Prize in the prestigious Jose Iturbi International Piano Competition in Spain (1998). Other competition successes included 3rd Prize in the Sydney International Piano Competition (1992), 3rd Prize in the Montreal International Piano Competition (1996), and 4th Prize in the Dublin International Piano Competition (1994).

Duncan Gifford was a student of Margaret Hair at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. In 1991 he commenced study at the Moscow State Conservatory in the class of Professor Lev Vlassenko, graduating with a Master's Degree in Piano Performance. Gifford later completed his postgraduate studies with Professor Joaquin Soriano in Madrid, where he currently resides.

Duncan Gifford has performed in recital throughout Europe, Asia, Russia, and Australia. As soloist he has appeared with all the major Australian symphony orchestras, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre de la Camerata Mozart of Rome, Czech National Orchestra, National Orchestra of Ireland, Metropolitan Orchestra of Montreal, Radio Orchestra of Rumania, Russian State Chamber Orchestra, the Orchestra of Valencia, the Malaga Philharmonic Orchestra and the Madrid Community Orchestra.

In 1999 he made his US debut, performing in Carnegie Hall in New York and the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts in Los Angeles.

In February 2003 he made his Viennese debut, performing with the Vienna Chamber Orchestra in the Vienna Konzerthaus. In October 2003 he appeared for the first time in China, playing with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra. In 1993 Duncan Gifford released his first CD featuring the music of Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov. His 1995 CD recording of the complete Debussy Preludes received great critical acclaim in Australia and the United States and was nominated for 'Australian Classical Record of the Year'. In 2004 he released his third CD of works for piano and orchestra by Saint-Saens, Franck and D'Indy, together with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. Gifford's latest recordings are of the complete Schumann Piano Trios (ABC classics) with the Kingfisher Trio, and a world premiere recording of Jose Luis Greco's piano concerto "Geographies of Silence" with the Czech National Symphony Orchestra, released in 2017 on the Naxos label.

Duncan Gifford has been based in Madrid, Spain since 1997 where he maintains a busy performing and teaching schedule.

## ***Sonata for alto saxophone and piano (2022)***

*Ismael Arroyo, a member of the "Synthèse Quartet", proposed to me to collaborate in the composition of a saxophone and piano work, giving me complete freedom to create in terms of duration, form and style. Knowing his exceptional technical skills and capacity for interpretation, as well as the ability of his regular pianist Eduardo Moreno, I was able to compose without limits. The Sonata for alto saxophone and piano was finally premiered in Madrid in 2022.*

*Written in three movements, and dedicated to Ismael Arroyo, I used his name and surname to generate the compositional system. Although it has some characteristics common to the classic-romantic sonata, I adapted the form to my own language, conceiving three parts of a whole, in which the material of the primary and secondary themes of the first part inspired me to compose the rest. The "Nocturne" is the next section of the composition, and the third movement has an internal Rondo form, where the main theme is a repeated note - the trill element taken to its minimum expression- which alternates the modifications of the motifs already heard, culminating in an episode where the main and secondary themes are re-exposed in superposed form, turning this into the real recapitulation; preceded by a virtuoso cadenza for the saxophone, and finishing in a breathtaking coda*

*- David Cantalejo*

*Recorded by Ismael Arroyo (alto saxophone) and Eduardo Moreno (piano)*

*World première recording*

*Edited by Da\_sh editions*



*Ismael Arroyo & Eduardo Moreno*

**Ismael Arroyo**, saxophonist from Extremadura, born in Madrid, redefines what it means to be a classical musician in the 21st century. With the epicentre of his academic training at the Conservatorio Superior de Música de Castilla y León, the University of the Arts in Berlin and the ESMUC in Barcelona, he completes and expands his studies as a soloist and chamber musician.

From an early age he has performed as a soloist on several occasions with large ensembles such as the Banda Federal de Extremadura, the String Orchestra of COSCyL or several symphonic bands in the provinces of Cáceres and Badajoz. He has collaborated with great orchestras such as the OBC of Barcelona or the Freixenet Orchestra of the Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía, as well as participating in great festivals such as 'Ensems' in Valencia, 'Mixtur' in Barcelona or 'Encuentro de Música y Academia' in Santander. Internationally, he has given concerts in important venues such as the Berliner Philharmonie (Germany), the Croatian National Theatre (Croatia), the Musikteatret Holstebro (Denmark) and the Academy of Music in Gdańsk (Poland). He has also performed in major Spanish venues such as CentroCentro del Palacio de Cibeles and Fundación Juan March in Madrid, L'Auditori in Barcelona, Sala Luis Galve del Auditorio in Zaragoza, Palacio de Festivales in Cantabria and Teatro de la Maestranza in Seville.

All through his career he has trained with saxophonists Ángel Soria and Pablo Sánchez- Escariche, as well as receiving lessons from great international soloists such as Vincent David, Mariano García, Marie-Bernadette Charrier, Antonio García Jorge, Alexandre Doisy and Marcus Weiss. In the field of chamber music, he has been a member of the saxophone quartet Synthèse Quartet for seven years and has trained with members of Artemis Quartett, Armida Quartett, Brenno Ambrosini and Marc Oliú.

This saxophonist has been awarded more than 30 prizes in the fields of solo and chamber music, including recent awards in the Juventudes Musicales de España competition (in the Wind and Chamber Music categories), the first prize in the 95th edition of the International Leopold Bellan Competition in Paris and the first prize in the 21st Chamber Music Competition of the Alice Samter Foundation in Berlin. He has also been awarded prestigious grants from the YEHUDI MENUHIN Live music now, Ad Infinitum, Hindemith and AIE foundations.

His abundant artistic activity has led him to perform live and to participate on several occasions for Radio Televisión Española (RTVE) in programmes such as 'Andante con moto'. He has also participated in major musical cycles such as 'Música actual' and 'Hojas de álbum' of the Sociedad Filarmónica de Badajoz, 'Alternativas de cámara' of the Teatro de la Maestranza, 'Siempre jóvenes' of the Fundación SGAE, 'Creando futuros' of the Fundación Botín or 'Jóvenes intérpretes' of the Fundación Juan March.

**Eduardo Moreno** finished his superior studies at Conservatorio Superior de Badajoz (Spain) with Professor A. Kandelaki, a very important figure of his musical and personal development. Afterwards, he completed his musical formation with V. Suchanov at Richard Strauss Konservatorium in Munich (Germany).

Awarded in several national and international competitions such as “Ciutat de Carlet” (First Prize), “Marisa Montiel” (First Prize and Audience Prize), “Ciudad de la Línea” (Second Prize), o “Infanta Cristina” (Second Prize), thanks to which he participated at the Festival Steinway & Sons in Hamburg.

A very dynamic chamber music performer, he has played with renowned musicians such as violist Yuval Gotlibovich, flutist Mario Ancillotti or saxophonist Marcus Weiss in some of the most important halls in Spain (Sala “María Cristina” in Málaga or “Juan March” in Madrid).

His collaboration with soprano Carmen Solís took him to record an album for Brilliant Classics Label, making him appear at important music halls and festivals such as “Noches en los jardines del Real Alcázar” (Sevilla).

During the years 16/17 he completed with the highest qualifications a Master's Degree in Soloist Performance at the Katarina Gurska Center in Madrid under the tutelage of Professor Nino Kereselidze.

He is chamber music teacher and saxophone repertorist at the Conservatorio Superior de Badajoz where he carries out very important pedagogical work, collaborating at the same time in masterclasses with professors Jean-Marie Londeix (Bordeaux), Marie-Bernadette Charrier (Bordeaux), Ralph Mano (Köln) or Harri Mäki (Sibelius Academy), among others.

He combines teaching work with concerts, highlighting the last performance of the Beethoven “Emperor” concerto and the Triple Concerto under the baton of Andrés Salado.



*Da\_sh recordings is the musical label of Da\_sh music, strongly interested in bringing contemporary music from any style or precedence to the spotlight, where the general public is able to appreciate and get to know new music and extraordinary composers and works that are not often played or as recognized as they deserve.*

*Da\_sh music nevertheless realizes all of this work as a private enterprise, using funds raised by the generation of its own work.*

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*This album was recorded between May 2023 and July 2024 in Madrid /Spain (SIC MVNDVS CREATVS EST in Espacio Ronda; all other pieces were recorded in the Royal Conservatory of Music).*

*We would like to send a special thanks to all the musicians who worked on this album, whose effort and excellence in interpretation was essential to making this album a reality. A very special thanks also to the composer David Cantalejo, for his great music, inspiration and creativeness, as well as for his unsparing work, which made this album a distinguished piece of art.*

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|---|--|---------|
| 1 | <i>SIC MVNDVS CREATVS EST - for saxophone quartet</i><br><i>Synthèse Quartet</i>   | (06:30) |
| 2 | <i>ERIT LVX - for viola and piano</i><br><i>Salomé Osca (viola) &amp; Juan Carlos Cornelles (piano)</i>  | (09:28) |
| 3 | <i>Dark - for double bass and piano</i><br><i>Da_sh ensemble / Luis Fonseca (double bass) &amp; Duncan Gifford (piano)</i><br><i>Sonata for alto saxophone and piano</i><br><i>Ismael Arroyo (alto saxophone) &amp; Eduardo Moreno (piano)</i> | (16:28) |
| 4 | <i>I. Vigoroso</i>   | (08:13) |
| 5 | <i>II. Nocturno</i>  | (04:38) |
| 6 | <i>III. Anodino</i>  | (09:35) |
|   | <i>Total time:</i>   | (54:52) |

