



THE SINS OF THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN
Chamber opera in three acts

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Niño de Elche

Jack Saul

Germán Alonso

Composer

Fabrizio Funari

Librettist

Gustavo A. Domínguez Ojalvo

Bass clarinet

Pedro Rojas-Ogáyar

Electric Guitar

Proyecto OCNOS

Musicians and producers

With the support of:

Fundación BBVA y el Banco de Proyectos del ICAS de Sevilla





The Sins of the Cities of the Plain

The Sins of the Cities of the Plain is a new opera based on the homonymous book which was first published in 1881 by William Lazenby and then republished by Leonard Smithers in 1902. The original manuscript (held at the British Library) was only recently republished in its entirety which makes this opera its first dramaturgical performance. Written by Fabrizio Funari and composed by Germán Alonso, The Sins of the Cities of the Plain is performed by the ensemble Proyecto OCNOS (Pedro Rojas-Ogáyar, electric guitars and Gustavo Domínguez Ojalvo, clarinets) and the experimental flamenco musician Niño de Elche. The electronics will be pre-recorded and played live by the composer himself. This monologue opera is accurately written in Polari, a crypto-language spoken by the homosexual community since the end of the XIX century in the great capitals of Britain (especially London) to avoid being overheard and persecuted by a society where homosexuality (sodomy) was still a punishable crime. This is the longest and first ever dramaturgical and/or operatic text to have been entirely written in this language. The idea to adapt this novel into a chamber opera stems from, according to its creator Fabrizio Funari, the need for XXI century society to rethink certain issues around morality, sex and diversity: *'Do we continue to frown upon these issues or do we feel comfortable enough when we explicitly discuss sex and lust with strangers? Are we as tolerant as we claim to be? Is sex still linked to the sordid, the hidden and the obscure? What do we think when someone completely yields to their desires?'* The Sins of the Cities of the Plain frequently confronts the viewer on his perception of a collective imagery around lust, homosexuality, history and relationships. This work shakes off one's moral beliefs and challenges one's conformism and the politically correct. This opera, which will premiere at Espacio Turina of Seville in May 25, 2019, has been commissioned by the ICAS (Institute of Culture and Art of Seville) and supported by the BBVA Foundation.

Jack Saul is picked up in the street by a Mr. Cambon. They have dinner and Mr. Cambon invites Saul to recount his sex life story. After being promised a weekly allowance, Saul narrates his past and present life. The opera is divided into three acts: *Peporneumenos*, *Hetairekos* and *Eromenos*; referring to Ancient Greece's understanding of male-to-male lust and love. The scene opens with a nonchalant Saul recollecting his first sexual experiences: from the orgies in the dormitory at boarding school to a zoophilic maid and incestuous relations amongst the upper-classes. Yet, it is not until he is initiated into London's gentlemen clubs and private sex parties that Jack Saul becomes the new sensation amongst the city's Mary Anns or male prostitutes. At one such party, he makes the acquaintance of the actual duo of Victorian transvestites Boulton and Park – in the book called Laura and Selina – and debut his female alter-ego Eveline. Later, when a wealthy gay patron invites them to his mansion, Saul, in the guise of Miss Eveline, will experience one of the most orgiastic and demanding sexual experiences of his life and career. As he recounts the episode, Saul smokes opium and hallucinates reaching pathos climax as he fantasizes over the act of sexual cannibalism as a means to lust fulfilment and contentment (mad aria). After coming back to his senses, Saul reflects on the quintessence of amour fou and the socio-historic perception and morality through metaphors, historical and philosophical allegories as well as literary references.



ARTISTS

Composer - Germán Alonso

Germán Alonso was born in Madrid (Spain) in 1984. He studied Guitar and Composition (specialising in Electroacoustic Composition) at the Real Conservatorio Superior de Música de Madrid, graduating with distinction. He also studied electroacoustic composition with Alberto Bernal before continuing his academic career at the Strasbourg Conservatoire with Mark André, completing a Master's degree in Mixed Composition at the HEM in Geneva under M. Jarrell, Luis Naon and Eric Daubresse, and another one in new technologies at IRCAM with Mauro Lanza. Furthermore, he also holds a Master's degree in Musicology from Paris 8 University, where he studied with Anne Sèdes and José Manuel López. Germán has attended workshops and courses held by composers Alberto Posadas, Hèctor Parra, José María Sánchez-Verdú, Aureliano Cattaneo, Brian Ferneyhough and Yan Maresz, amongst others. His work has also been selected for the Domaine Forget's "Musique Nouvelle" in Quebec, "Voix Nouvelles" of the Royaumont Foundation in Paris, the "International Composer Pyramid" in Canterbury, the "Contemporary Music Meeting INJUVE" (Spanish Youth Institute), Cátedra "Manuel de Falla" in Cadiz (Spain) and the European Musical

Creation Workshop in Madrid (Spain), to name a few. His works have been played in Europe and in the Americas by Le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, Xasax, CrossingLines, Vertixe Sonora, Contrechamps, Askol|Schönberg, Grup Instrumental de València, Sigma Project, Patrick Stadler, Carl-Emmanuel Fisbach, Ums'n Jip, Interensemble, Zahir Ensemble, Taller Sonoro, s'ensemble or SequenzaSUR. Moreover, he had the opportunity to work with conductors like Lorraine Vaillancourt, Baldur Brönnimann, Clark Rundell, Bernardino Beggio, J.M. Sánchez-Verdú, Andrés Salado and Joan Cerveró. His awards and prizes include the 9th Composition Competition "Città di Udine", Il Seminario Permanente de Composición de Valencia and Il Concurso de Composición "Carmelo Bernaola". He was also the finalist at the Gaudeamus Prize 2013. Germán has received commissions from the Ernst von Siemens Musikstiftung / Ensemble CrossingLines, Vertixe Sonora, Institut Valencià de la Música, Government of Andalusia, Encontre Internacional de Compositors of Mallorca, etc.; and scholarships from the Swiss Confederation, the "Leonardo Scholarship" from the BBVA Foundation, "la Caixa" Foundation, the Spanish Government-Ministry of Education and the Association des Amis de Royaumont. Currently, Germán is a professor of Orchestration at the Conservatorio Superior de Castilla- La Mancha (Spain). His scores are published by BabelScores.

(www.german-alonso.com)



Librettist - Fabrizio Funari



Fabrizio Funari was born in Rome, Italy, in 1991. His long-term passion for music and lyricism began at the age of thirteen with the songwriting and recording of two single EPs. He then dedicated himself to poetry and narratives and started to write short poems and stories. As Fabrizio began exploring art and culture in all its forms and facets he created video art and installations and participated with in different art competitions in Italy. During his time in university, Fabrizio gained precious insights from the Far East culture and artistic movements and identities which he carefully amalgamated with his education and creative process. He earned a bachelor's degree in Linguistic and Cultural Mediation (Oriental Studies Programme) at Roma Tre University where he also studied music history and musicology. He won a scholarship to study at University College of London (UCL) where he focused on English literature, creative writing and art history. Eventually, he went on to study a master's degree at the Institute of Creative and Cultural Entrepreneurship at Goldsmiths University of London. Fabrizio currently writes in English, Spanish and Italian and has collaborated with different LGBTQ+ magazines. For example, as editor-in-chief of Zineidest and other publications such as

Togayther. In addition, he is the founder and artistic director of contemporary art gallery Artidest Ltd. He is currently collaborating as an author with production company Kama Productions to create and develop a mini-series of six episodes on opera for RAI (Radio Televisione Italiana). Despite being born and bred in Rome is unquestionably something that ignited his passion for opera and shaped his ideas on its aesthetics, narratives and consumption, it was when he moved to London at the end of 2012 and then again in 2015 that he began to be properly in contact with the opera-going world and study its components. Fabrizio is captivated by the synthesis of the arts in opera and eventually, due to his lingering passion for literature, directed all his interest towards the art of librettos-writing. He has lived and worked in London, Beijing, Madrid, Seville and Rome where he is currently based. He has written for and collaborated with established and up-and-coming composers such as Germán Alonso, Martin Gaughan, Kieron Smith, Arham Aryadi and Marco Benetti. His writing is heavily influenced by the music of György Ligeti, Luciano Berio and Francis Poulenc as well as the work of Michel de Ghelderode, Allen Ginsberg, Arrigo Boito, W. H. Auden, Kostantinos Kavafis, Lorenzo da Ponte, Reinaldo Arenas, Eugène Ionesco, Jean Genet, W. B. Yeats, Tristan Tzara, Jean Cocteau, the Chinese Misty Poets and Federico García Lorca. (www.fabriziofunari.com)

Cantaor - Francisco Contreras «Niño de Elche»

Niño de Elche was born in 1985 and began his career as a flamenco singer at a very early age participating in different competitions, although he soon began to take an interest in other artistic fields such as rap, performance and social activism. It has been widely considered by critics as one of the greatest current innovators of flamenco, although it has also been stated that its work is difficult to classify within a single genre. In addition to mixing musical genres such as rock or electronica, his work is also linked to other artistic disciplines, such as performance, and stands out for collaborations with the audio-visual, poetry or dance, having created joint works with artists such as Isaki Lacuesta, Israel Galván and Refree, among others.



Founded in 2014, they performed in numerous festivals in Spain and recorded two CDs. They also premiered around a dozen pieces since its foundation. In the last year they start working mostly in stage music, premiering a chamber opera in Rome written by Nuria Núñez Hierro. Proyecto OCNOS was formed by guitarist Pedro Rojas Ogáyar and clarinetist Gustavo A. Domínguez Ojalvo.

Pedro Rojas Ogáyar - electric guitar

Born in Torres, Jaén (Spain), Pedro started his musical education during high school before completing his Bachelor's degree in Seville with professor Antonio Duro. He continued his studies in Málaga with Marco Socías, in Madrid with Pablo Sáinz-Villegas and in Berlin with Nora Buschmann. He has attended several masterclasses including Pepe Romero, Gerardo Arriaga, Margarita Escarpa, Àlex Garrobé, Frederik Munk, Petri Kumela y Juergen Ruck. His activity as a soloist took him all over Europe (Spain, Italy, Portugal, United Kingdom and Germany). In 2015 Pedro recorded a CD – EXCEPCIONES – playing the music of some of the most important Spanish Composers of the XX and XXI centuries like Benet Casablanques, Jose María Sánchez-Verdú and Mauricio Sotelo with the label La Mà de Guido, and earning the gold mention in the Melómano Magazine. He has performed for the world premieres of Spanish composers like Alberto Carretero, Sergio Blardony and Nuria Núñez Hierro. Recently, he recorded his second soloist CD with Joaquín Rodrigo music for the label IBS Classical.

Gustavo A. Domínguez Ojalvo - bass clarinet

Born in Jerez de la Frontera (Cádiz, Spain), Gustavo completed his Bachelor's degree in Seville and later completed a Master's degree at the Guildhall School of Music in London. Currently, he studies a PhD in contemporary free improvisation at the University of Seville. Gustavo participated in several workshops and masterclasses such as the one at the International Summer Course in Darmstadt and – thanks to a scholarship – in the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, where he focused on contemporary improvisation. He has been a member of the Andalusian Youth Orchestra, the Britten-Pears Orchestra and the Lucerne Festival Academy. He has been awarded prizes in several chamber music competitions (Aracena, Albox, St. Martin in the Fields) and for two consecutive years he was prizewinner at the National Clarinet Competition "Ciudad de Villanueva". Gustavo collaborates with different orchestras in Spain such as the Madrid Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Symphony Orchestra of Seville and the Euskadi Symphony Orchestra. He is also a very dedicated teacher and has been teaching for the last five years as part of a social project in one of the deprived areas in Seville.





More information:

www.proyectoocnos.com

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