



Islands of light
Piano quintets

Skempton
Vasconcelos
Zemek Novák

Da_sh ensemble
Albert Skuratov - violin
Leonardo Papa - viola
Mikolaj Konopelski - violoncello
Luis Fonseca - double bass
Duncan Gifford - piano





Islands of light is an album dedicated to new music written for piano quintet from contemporary composers. The title of this album is inspired by Pavel Zemek Novák's third movement from his quintet "Royal Funeral Procession to Iona", which is named "Islands of light". These recordings of Pavel Novák's Iona Quintet, Hommage to Bach Family and Howard Skempton's Spadesbourne Suite have been supported by The Schubert Ensemble Trust Commission Scheme.

Howard Skempton (England, 1947 -) / Spadesbourne Suite (1995)
for violin, viola, cello, double bass and piano

Spadesbourne Suite was composed in January 1995 for the Schubert Ensemble of London, and first performed by them on 24 March 1995 in Bromsgrove. It was the last of four pieces written for the 1994/5 season of Bromsgrove Concerts. One of these, Gemini Dances, was a formal commission (supported with funds from West Midlands Arts). The others were written in response to a request from Jennie-McGregor-Smith of Bromsgrove Concerts for short pieces for some of the other programmes. My gratitude at being thus elevated to the status of featured composer, even if I did no more than 'maintain a presence', persuaded me to name this brief suite after the Bromsgrove venue. Punning titles are generally to be avoided but this one was irresistible (the Spadesbourne Hall forms part of the Spadesbourne Suite of buildings).

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Pavel Zemek Novák (1957 -) / Hommage to Bach Family (2010)
for violin, viola, cello, double bass and piano

This work was written in response to a request by the Schubert Ensemble for a companion piece to an arrangement of five Bach Chorales that John Woolrich wrote for the Ensemble in 2000. It is the second quintet for violin, viola, cello, double bass and piano that Pavel Novák has written for the Schubert Ensemble. In contrast to the first (Royal Funeral Procession to Iona, written in 1995), the composer has in this work adopted a neoclassical style, taking melodic and harmonic material from pieces by members of the Bach family and transforming it, changing only the rhythm, texture and instrumentation. The composer states that he has written the work as a tribute to the unity, both artistic and personal, of the Schubert Ensemble itself. This unity is expressed in the cycle of pieces by two techniques that are characteristic of the composer and that he has explored in many other recent works. Firstly, Pavel Novák uses unison writing throughout, which removes all kinds of dissonance. Secondly, all five pieces employ only pizzicato playing by the strings, which brings a unity of colour to the cycle.

Unisono was commissioned by the Schubert Ensemble with the help of the Schubert Ensemble Trust and is dedicated to the Ensemble. It was first performed by the Schubert Ensemble at the Newbury Spring Festival on 11th May 2011.

Ney Vasconcelos (1964 -) / Quinteto Veridiana (1990)
for violin, viola, cello, double bass and piano

The first movement of the Veridiana Quintet was initially imagined for guitar and flute, or guitar and cello. It emerged spontaneously, during a vacation at the beginning of the year, in the early 1990s, in Fortaleza / Brazil. Only years later, at the request of a friend from the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra (OSESP), was it rewritten for piano quintet. This same friend, bassist Ana Valéria Poles, was also the one who suggested the name 'Veridiana' for the song – the name of the street where I lived, in the center of São Paulo. The first movement was played in several performances by the Quinteto D'Elas and in the meantime, I finished the other movements.

The theme of intermediate movement is from a time in which I was still a musical student, with a low musical theoretical knowledge. I decided to use it in this quintet and be faithful to that kind of original “musical naivety”.

The last movement ended up becoming a Baião (northern Brazilian dance) in a minor key, with the themes being generated naturally, from the previous ones. At the very end, thematic elements of the first and second movement also appear, in a cyclic thematic development.

- Ney Vasconcelos

Edited by Da_sh editions

Pavel Zemek Novák (1957 -) / Royal Funeral Procession to Iona (1995)
for violin, viola, cello, double bass and piano

The piece, a memory of a trip to a wonderful island off the northern coast of Scotland, contemplates some aspects of human wandering through life.

The first movement, Royal Funeral Procession, expresses humble acceptance for human destiny.

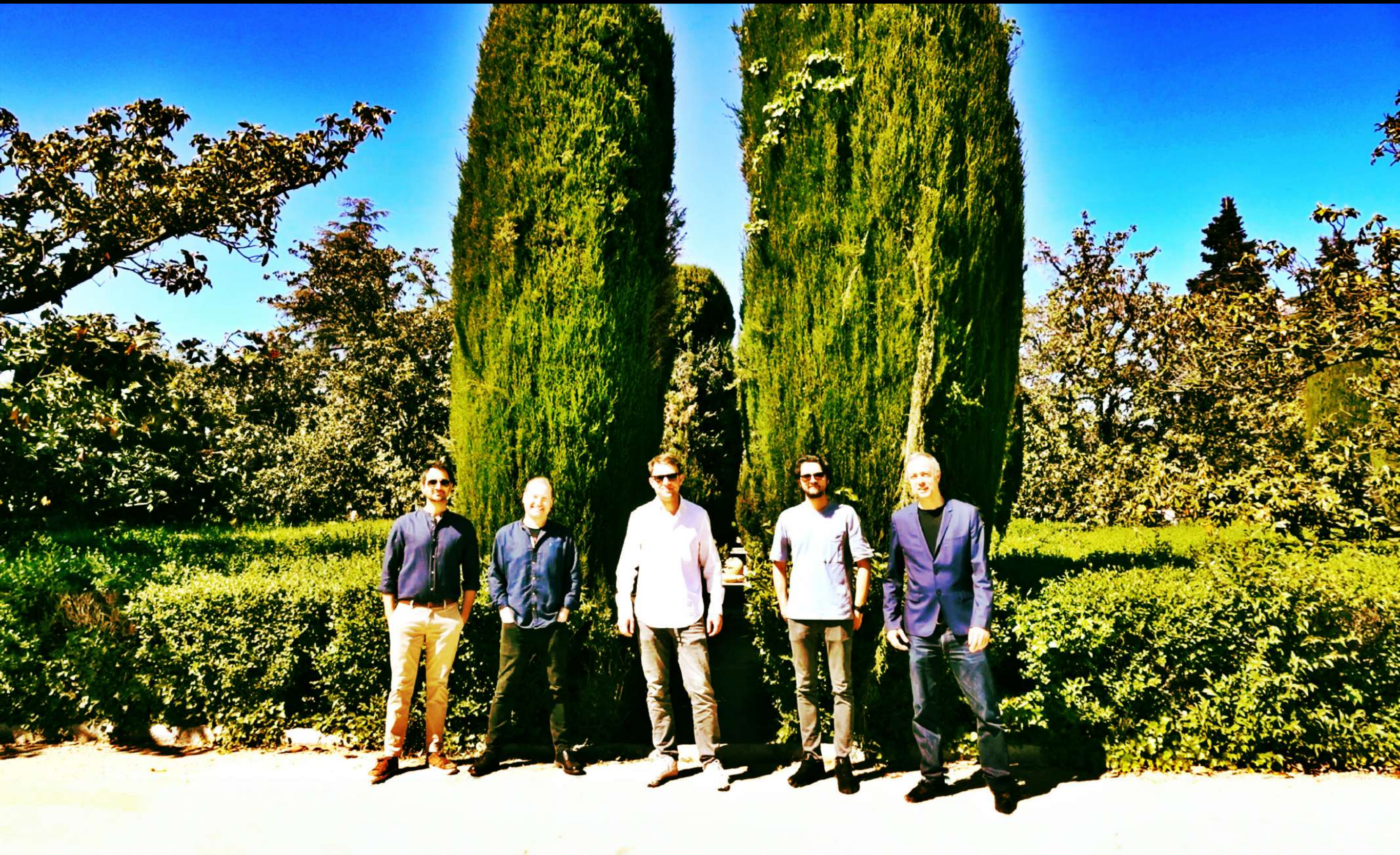
Play of waves, the second movement, depicts disinterested nature around us, and is a light counterpart to the opening movement and a reflection on the lightness of our burden.

The last movement Islands of light is an image of the light spreading over the end of our earthly wandering (the way of light thrown on everything that has passed, final understanding of everything through the light).

The piece is dedicated to The Schubert Ensemble.

Edited by Da_sh editions

Da_sh ensemble



The Da_sh ensemble is dedicated to all styles and expressions of contemporary music. It does not have a fixed instrumentation, so that it can adapt to all and any setup necessary for the execution of an increasingly wide repertoire. It is dedicated to bringing to light new composers, as well as consecrated names in the 20th and 21st centuries, thus spreading current music. It does not distinguish between tonal / atonal repertoire, with or without electronics or video, thus expanding all the performance possibilities that contemporary musical creation gives us.

Albert Skuratov



Violin

Albert began his musical studies at the age of 5 with his mother and within 3 years he entered the Special Music School for gifted children in Kazan (Russia) specializing in violin. At 9 years old, he performs as a soloist with the Tatarstan Symphony Orchestra.

At the age of 11 he began to study conducting with his father and made his debut at the age of 15 with Kazan based chamber orchestra "La Primavera". Same year he makes his first international tour in Norway and the same year he performs as a soloist in several recitals in Tokyo. At the age of 16 he moves to Madrid, where he is admitted with a scholarship from the Albeniz Foundation as a student of Zakhar Bron at the Reina Sofia School of Music. During years of studying in Madrid Albert continues to develop as a conductor, working with his father Rashid Skuratov and Gilbert Varga, later on he attends masterclasses by Vladimir Jurowski and Neeme Jarvi.

In 2011 (aged 22) he makes his debut in Spain conducting the Chamber Orchestra of the Escuela Superior de Musica Reina Sofia with works by Bottesini, Mozart and Tchaikovsky.

The same year Albert is winning "International Violin Competition of Barcelona" and the "Ruperto Chapi" Competition in Villena (Valencia).

In the years 2013-2018 Albert works at the Excelentia Foundation as the orchestra's concertmaster and conductor.

He makes his debut as Conductor at the National Music Auditorium with the works of Brahms and Beethoven and Mayu Kishima as a soloist.

Years 2013 - 2020 he is the Artistic Director of the "Eduardo Ocon International Music Course" (Málaga, Mollina).

Years 2016 - 2020 he is the Director of the Provincial Youth Orchestra of Malaga (JOPMA).

Since 2018 he is the Director of the Madrid Festival Orchestra and Madrid Festival Masterclass.

Since 2018 he is the Director of the Madrid Festival Orchestra and Madrid Festival Masterclass. Since 2022 Albert starts working at Orquesta Filarmónica Musicarium (Joinville, Brasil) as a conductor and violin professor.

Since 2023 Albert is an Assistant Concertmaster of the Symphony Orchestra of Madrid (Orquesta Sinfónica de Madrid) of Teatro Real.

Later years have seen Albert makes his debut at the Berlin Philharmonic conducting the Sinfonie Orchestra Berlin, Amsterdam Concertebow and Koln Philharmonic (ZBCO - Interlaken), Auditorio Nacional de Música de Madrid (Orquesta Clásica Santa Cecilia), Palau de Música de Valencia (Royal Film Orchestra), Mozart Hall in Zaragoza, Manuel Delibes Auditorium in Valladolid (Santa Cecilia Classical Orchestra), Cervantes Theater in Málaga (Malaga Provincial Youth Orchestra), Sony Chamber Orchestra (Madrid), Saratov Philharmonic (Russia) , Kazan Chamber Orchestra “La Primavera” (Russia).

Albert has worked together with such a musicians as :

Zubin Mehta, Rafael Frubeck de Burgos, Rashid Skuratov, Semion Bychkov, Gustavo Gimeno, Maxim Vengerov, Vadim Repin, Jordi Savall, Kristian Zimmerman, Hansjorg Schellenberger, Natalia Gutman, Sabine Meyer, Sir Andras Schiff, Mayuko Kamio, Nobuko Imai and some others.

Highlights of 2024 were debut at Teatro Real with Schönberg’s “Ode to Napoleon” and Fonseca’s “Light & Sand” as well as Sao Paulo debut with Musicarium at “Teatro B32” with music of Tchaikovsky.

Leonardo Papa



Viola

Leonardo Papa began his music studies at the age of 7 at the Scuola di Musica di Fiesole (Firenze) and graduated with full marks and honours at the Conservatorio G.B.Martini of Bologna under the guidance of Antonello Farulli. Since then he has been student of Diemut Poppen, first at the prestigious Escuela Superior de Musica Reina Sofia in Madrid ,where he has been awarded by the Queen of Spain as “most outstanding student of the viola chair” in 2012 and as member of the “most outstanding quartet of the string quartet chair” in 2013, and secondly at the Hochschule für Musik of Detmold where he completed a Master degree with the highest marks. Important influences in his musical education have been masterclasses with Atar Arad, Nobuko Imai, Thomas Riebl, Kim Kashkashian and Hariolf Schlichtig. He won the First Prize at "Nuovi Orizzonti" Competition of Arezzo and the First Prize at "Rassegna Nazionale M.Benvenuti" Competition in Vittorio Veneto, which lead him to perform as a soloist in several italian festivals. He has been part of various chamber music festivals such as Europäische Akademie in Montepulciano, Encuentro y Academia de Musica de Santander, Accademia dei Cameristi di Bari, Pablo Casals Festival and Ravinia's Steans Music Institute playing with renowned musicians such as Ariadne Daskalakis, Viviane Hagner, Mario Brunello, Marco Rizzi, Claudio Martinez-Mehner, Xenia Jankovic, Leonid Gorokhov, Atar Arad. His orchestral experiences include among others the membership in Riccardo Muti's Orchestra Giovanile L.Cherubini and in Claudio Abbado's Orchestra Mozart. He has been academist at the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and co-principal viola at the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie. He's currently member of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Madrid, titular orchestra of the Teatro Real.

Mikolaj Konopelski



Violoncello

Mikolaj Konopelski was born in Katowice (Poland) in 1985. Polish cellist, soloist and chamber musician. Since 2019-2020, he is associate cello professor at the Reina Sofia School of Music at the class of professor Ivan Monighetti.

In 2009 he graduated with highest distinction receiving “Magna cum laude” at F. Chopin Music University in Warsaw at the class of professor A. Bauer. He continued his studies at the Reina Sofia School of Music in Madrid at the class of professor Natalia Shakhovskaya where Her Majesty Queen Sofia handed him the Diploma to the most outstanding student.

Since 2009 he has been a cellist for the Madrid Symphony Orchestra - Teatro Real de Madrid, position which he combines with an active concert career. His repertoire ranges from renaissance to contemporary music.

He recorded for Spanish Television, RNE Classical Radio, Bayerischer Rundfunk, Catalunya Radio and Polish Radio. He has received numerous awards in national and international competitions such as VII Lutoslawski International Cello Competition in Warsaw (Poland), Penderecki Competition in Cracow (Poland), Jeunesses Musicales in Belgrade (Serbia), Chamber Music Competition in Bilbao, Chamber Music Competition in Manresa, International Chamber Music Competition in Thessaloniki (Greece), National Cello Competition in Elblag (Poland), Dotzauer Competition in Dresden (Germany), Popper Competition in Varpalota (Hungary), Wilkomirski Cello Competition in Poznan (Poland). Performed as soloist with European orchestras. He debuted in Auditorio Nacional in Madrid with Peter Eötvös, playing G. Ligeti Cello Concerto.

Recipient of scholarships from Ministry of Culture and Art, Polish Children's Fund, Mayor city of Katowice, 'Agrafka', “Mloda Polska” (Young Poland).

Soloist of “Cellonet” (2007-2012), Soloist of “Octeto Ibérico” (2009-2010). For three seasons leader of the cello section in IŃOA in Bayreuth. Since 2014 soloist of Plural Ensemble.

He is usually invited to give masterclasses in Spain and abroad. His students are prize winners of national and international competitions.

Luis Fonseca



Double Bass

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 and he has played for many years in the Royal Theater in Madrid as co-principal double bassist.

As a composer he has won several international prizes and his music has been played in more than 15 countries.

He is currently professor of double bass in the Royal Conservatory of Music in Madrid / Spain.

http://double_bass.luisfonseca.es

<http://composer.luisfonseca.es>

Duncan Gifford



Piano

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.

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.

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*This album was recorded in
Espacio Ronda - Madrid
between the 19th and 22nd February 2024*

We would like to send a special thanks to the Schubert Ensemble Trust for their kind support to this recording which made this album possible.

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Howard Skempton

Spadesbourne Suite for piano quintet

- | | | |
|---|---------------------|---------|
| 1 | <i>I. Grazioso</i> | (01:10) |
| 2 | <i>II. Leggiero</i> | (01:04) |
| 3 | <i>III. Dolce</i> | (01:26) |

Pavel Zemek Novák

Hommage to Bach Family for piano quintet

- | | | |
|---|---|---------|
| 4 | <i>I. Unisono 1</i> | (00:52) |
| 5 | <i>II. Unisono 2</i> | (01:02) |
| 6 | <i>III. Unisono 3 (after C.Ch. Bach)</i> | (00:46) |
| 7 | <i>IV. Unisono 4 (after C.Ch. Fr. Bach)</i> | (00:32) |
| 8 | <i>V. Unisono 5 (after C.Ph. E. Bach & J.S. Bach)</i> | (01:41) |

Ney Vasconcelos

Quinteto Veridiana

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|---------|
| 9 | <i>I. Allegro</i> | (09:05) |
| 10 | <i>II. Largo</i> | (05:58) |
| 11 | <i>III. Allegro non Molto</i> | (07:17) |

Pavel Zemek Novák

Royal Funeral Procession to Iona for piano quintet

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|---------|
| 12 | <i>I. Royal funeral procession</i> | (04:32) |
| 13 | <i>II. Play of waves</i> | (02:33) |
| 14 | <i>III. Islands of light</i> | (05:39) |

Total time: (54:22)