

Octavio Vázquez

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Galician-American composer Octavio Vázquez has been praised by *The New York Times* for the “melodicism and rhythmic buoyancy” of his music and by *Soundboard Magazine* for its “astonishing virtuosity.” *The New Music Connoisseur* hailed him as “a burning torch for the next century... stunning... superb.” His compositions have been performed throughout the Americas, Europe, Asia, and Australia, in venues including Carnegie Hall, the Auditorio Nacional de Música in Madrid, Cologne’s Philharmonie, Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, and the Great Hall of the St. Petersburg Conservatory. His music appears on labels including Naxos, Delos, Odradek, and Blue Griffin, and has been featured by WQXR, WFMT, PBS, PRX, and national radio and television networks in Spain, Russia, China, Canada, and the United States.

Vázquez’s compositions have been championed by leading conductors including Carlos Kalmar, Rossen Milanov, Paolo Bortolameolli, Dima Slobodeniouk, Paul Daniel, Andreas Delfs, Andrew Grams, Víctor Pablo Pérez, and Pablo González, and by acclaimed soloists including Hilary Hahn, Dmitri Berlinsky, Johnny Gandelsman, Eldar Nebolsin, Rosa Torres-Pardo, Adam Levin, Enrique Pérez Piquer, Julian Milkis, and Annie Jacobs-Perkins. He has collaborated extensively with ensembles including the American String Quartet, Poulenc Trio, Verdehr Trio, Akropolis Reed Quintet, and Galicia Symphony Orchestra. His work also encompasses film scoring and cross-genre projects as an arranger, orchestrator, pianist, conductor, and producer, notably through his long-standing collaboration with Galician bagpiper Cristina Pato.

His catalogue ranges from orchestral, chamber, vocal, and solo works to film music and opera. Among his major compositions are the piano trio *Guernica*, a large-scale musical response to the 1937 bombing of the Basque town; *Widows of the Living and of the Dead*, a concerto for Galician bagpipes and orchestra commissioned by Cristina Pato with support from New Music USA; *Migrant*, for violin and strings, commissioned by the Society for New Music with support from the National Endowment for the Arts; and *Māyā*, commissioned by the Royal Galician Philharmonic. His *Piano Quintet*, commissioned by the Aspen Music Festival and School, was premiered in 2021 by the American String Quartet with Vázquez at the piano. His subsequent works include *North Star*, written for the American String Quartet and inspired by the experience of Lewy body dementia, and the seven-movement Cello Sonata *The Fool*.

Vázquez has received commissions, awards, grants, and fellowships from institutions including the National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, New Music USA, Aspen Music Festival and School, Orquesta Sinfónica de RTVE, Royal Galician Philharmonic, Galicia Symphony Orchestra, Consello da Cultura Galega, Fulbright Commission, Chi-Mei Foundation, MacDowell, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and I-Park Foundation. Other

commissioners and collaborators have included the Verdehr Trio, Poulenc Trio, Guernica Project, Via Stellae Festival, Tribeca New Music, and numerous soloists and professional ensembles in the United States and Europe.

His film work includes the score for *Stari Grad*, directed by Jack Beck, which was selected for more than one hundred international film festivals. Vázquez's music has also been the subject of peer-reviewed scholarship and doctoral research, including studies devoted to his Clarinet Sonata and his broader compositional language. In 2024, he was among the composers portrayed in conductor Maurizio Colasanti's book *101 Contemporary Composers You Must Know*.

Vázquez holds degrees from Madrid's Conservatorio Adolfo Salazar and Real Conservatorio Superior de Música de Madrid. A Barrié de la Maza Foundation Scholar, he completed a master's degree in composition at the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University before earning his doctorate at the University of Maryland, College Park. He has taught at the Eastman School of Music and the University of Santiago de Compostela and has presented lectures and masterclasses at institutions and festivals internationally. He is Professor of Music and Director of the Composition Program at the Nazareth University School of Music.

In addition to composing, Vázquez remains active as a pianist and conductor, performing and recording his own music and the work of others.