

Nexas Quartet Biography (2020)

‘Utterly startling ... adrenaline fueled. 4.5 stars.’ Limelight Magazine

‘The quartet played with great energy and smooth precision full of virtuosity and fine ensemble work’ Lynne Lancaster Sydney Arts Guide

‘The group demonstrated its tight ensemble work and took us on a romp of colourations, each as exciting as the next’ Samuel Cottell Cut Common

At the forefront of chamber music, Nexas Quartet are leaders in promoting existing and creating new repertoire for the saxophone quartet. The group’s success comes from a combination of personalities, virtuosic saxophone skills, and an ability to program concerts of a wide appeal that has seen the musicians perform in a multitude of settings.

2020 will see performances for the Australian Festival of Chamber Music in Townsville, Musica Viva, Bravo Performing Arts Cruise, Concerto performances with the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra, Orange Chamber Music Festival, Melbourne Recital Centre, the Chamber Music Project, new collaborations with Cheryl Barker and Peter Coleman-Wright, as well as the release of their CD "Tango de Saxos" featuring Daniel Rojas (piano) and Stephen Cuttriss (bandoneon).

Over the last couple of years the quartets has developed an ongoing collaboration with opera star Peter Coleman-Wright. This has been highlighted by the 2017 recording ‘Ballads of a Pleasant Life’ for ABC Classics. This collaboration also resulted in the show ‘Composers in Exile’ described thus by Bill Stephens for Arts Review: ‘the brilliance of the five performers, their easy charm and obvious affection and enthusiasm for the material, proved a seductive combination in a presentation which informed the mind while pleasuring the soul’. This collaboration has been presented at the Adelaide Cabaret Festival, The Concourse (Chatswood), Glenn Street Theatre (Canberra), Independent Theatre (North Sydney), Camelot Lounge (Marrickville), BMEC (Bathurst).

The Nexas Quartet has always held the creation of new music as one of their prerogatives. This was exemplified by the 2016 release of their debut album ‘Current’, a reflection of their collaboration with leading Australian composers. The recording described by Stephanie Eslake for Limelight as ‘a riveting release’ contains works by Kats-Chernin, Hindson, Skipworth, Rojas and Orlovich.

Nexas has continued to commission and perform new works as demonstrated by the 2017 premiere of Jodie Blackshaw’s concerto “Catango 5’ for saxophone quartet and wind band, and in 2018 Mark Oliveiro’s ‘Mega Vignettes’ (Extended Play - City Recital Hall). Other examples of collaborating with Australian composers include Drew Crawford on the Melbourne Theatre Company’s production of Jumpy as well as the 2015 world premiere of Matthew Hindson and Cyrus Meurant’s ‘Romeo and Juliet’ with the National College of Dance.

Collaborating with a wide range of artists has been at the forefront of Nexas’ endeavours. The quartet has performed with some of Australia’s finest musicians including Peter Coleman-Wright (opera singer), Piers Lane (pianist), Gerard Willems AM (pianist), Frank Celata (SSO clarinetist), Daniel Rojas (pianist), Stephen Cuttriss (bandoneon), Emily Granger (harp) Nicky Crayson (jazz vocalist) and David Theak (jazz saxophonist and bandleader).

Past performances have included the Australian Festival of Chamber Music in Townsville, Adelaide Cabaret Festival, Melbourne Recital Centre, Sydney Opera House, City Recital Hall (Sydney) and at World Saxophone Congresses (Scotland, France and Croatia).

The quartet has also given live to air broadcasts for ABC Classic FM (“Tango de Saxos” as part of Melbourne Recital Centre’s 10th Birthday celebrations) and Fine Music (Sunday Live and 40th Birthday Celebration).