Cuarteto Bretón

Anne-Marie North violin
Antonio Cárdenas violin
Rocío Gómez PLaza viola
John Stokes violoncello

The Cuarteto Bretón began in 2003, when four musicians, each with extensive experience in their own diverse chamber music ensembles, recognized a shared need to promote string quartets by Spanish composers, spanning from the origins of the genre to the present day, alongside the consecrated repertoire for this ensemble. Towards this goal, they drew inspiration from illustrious predecessors, such as the Francés, Vela, and Rafael quartets, who had pioneered this important work in Spain a century earlier. Guided by these principles, the Cuarteto Bretón has placed a special emphasis on the music of composers such as Ernesto and Rodolfo Halffter, Jesús Guridi, Julián Bautista, Jesús García Leóz, Tomás Bretón, Julián Orbón, Joaquín Turina, Julio Gómez, and Conrado del Campo, as well as Spanish contemporary composers, while also embracing the great repertoire from all eras, ranging from Mozart and Haydn to Shostakovich, Crumb, Gubaidulina, and Philip Glass.

Among their notable performances have been the Madrid premiere of *La Cuzzoni*, a chamber opera by Agustín Charles for three voices and string quartet, their participation in the Ibero-American Festival, where they performed Julián Orbón's *Concerto Grosso* for quartet and orchestra alongside the Tenerife Symphony Orchestra at the Nacional Auditorium in Madrid, and recitals at the Royal Palace featuring the string quartet collection of Stradivarius instruments from the Royal Collection.

The Cuarteto Bretón gave the world premieres of string quartets dedicated to them by José Luis Greco, Alfredo Aracil, Juanjo Colomer, Agustín Charles, Mario Carro, Zulema de la Cruz, Víctor Padilla, Mario Diz, Hermes Luaces and Gabriel Loidi, and were invited again to play with the Stradivarius Collection of the Palacio Real for the world premiere of Cristóbal Halffter's String Quartet No. 10. They have recorded the complete string quartets of Rodolfo Halffter (Naxos), Alfredo Aracil (VERSO), Jesús Guridi (NAXOS) and the Six Quintets with *obbligato* keyboard instrument by Padre Soler with Rosa Torres-Pardo (COLUMNA), *Chamber Music* by Juanjo Colomer (*Instituto Cervantes*), the complete works for Voice and String Quartet of Antón García Abril with soprano Lucía Castelló, winning the *Melómano de Oro* Award, the piano quintets by Schuman, Dvořák, Shostakovich and Franck, with winners of the International Piano Competition in Jaén (NAXOS), or the quartets and piano quintet by Hermes Luaces with Rubén Yesayan. Their latest CD, AETERNAE, dedicated to the string quartets in G major and No. 2 *Dramatic* by Tomás Bretón was released in 2025 by Cezanne Producciones and concludes the recording of the complete set of Bretón's quartets, together with Quartets Nos. 1 and 3 released in 2020 by NAXOS.

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The Cuarteto Bretón has performed at the *Auditorio Reina Sofía*, *Fundación Canal*, *Residencia de Estudiantes*, El Escorial Summer Series, the *Teatros del Canal*, *Teatro de la Zarzuela*, Spanish College of the *Université Paris Cité*, *Música Antigua de Aranjuez*, *Sendesaal* in Bremen, *Fundación March*, Bilbao *Musika-Música*, *Ciclo de Música Contemporánea de Córdob*a, El Escorial Easter Series, *Semana de Música Religiosa de Cuenca*, *Auditorio Nacional*, *Fundación BBVA* in Madrid, *Auditorio del Conde Duque*, *Festival de Música Española de León*, *Festival de Música y Danza Granada*, *Festival Internacional de Santander*, *Quincena Musical de San Sebastián*, *Xornadas de Música Contemporánea de Compostela*, *Festival de Úbeda*, *Alicante Actual*, Real Academia de Bellas Artes, *Cordes en Ballade* Festival and Luberon International String Quartet Festival in France, *Centro Nacional de Difusión Musical*, *Fundación BBVA* in Bilbao, *Ciclo de Música Contemporánea de Badajoz* and *Instituto Cervantes* in Vienna, Sofia, Bremen, Bucarest and Cracow. The Cuarteto Bretón collaborated as Resident Quartet at the Jaén International Piano Competition between 2017 and 2024.

Awarded with the National Prize for Live Culture in the category of chamber groups in 2019, the Cuarteto Bretón is one of the few ensembles that regularly performs with the Stradivari Collection of the Royal Palace in Madrid. They have given master classes at the *Conservatorio Superior de Música* de Madrid and *Musikene* (San Sebastián), among others.