

ERNESTO SNAJER

Ernesto Snajer was born in Paternal, in the city of Buenos Aires, on April 6, 1968.

A guitarist, composer and music producer, his style as a performer has proved difficult to label, since it reflects a broad range of musical influences (jazz, tango, South American folkore, rock).

This familiarity with playing different genres has enabled him to participate as a recording artist in over seventy albums, including most notably his contributions for León Gieco and Alejandro Lerner, Calle 13, Julieta Venegas, Soledad, Jairo, Kepa Junquera, Axel, Miranda, Ariel Ramírez and Patricia Sosa, Peteco Carabajal, Litto Nebbia, Liliana Herrero, La Bruja Salguero, etc.

He has combined his career as a performer with regular teaching activities, giving workshops and guitar courses throughout Argentina.

In addition to the electric and Spanish guitars he plays, from a young age he incorporated the ten-string guitar into his usual set of instruments, inspired by his role model Egberto Gismonti.

Ernesto's interests cover a wide range of sounds and he feels comfortable with acoustic projects as well as more experimental tones. He has been playing MIDI guitars for most of his career.

The Argentine guitar maker Esteban González recently asked him to endorse his products and designed a signature model especially for him, the Camarada nylon MIDI guitar.

Although there was no musical history in the family, Ernesto's parents encouraged him to take guitar and piano lessons from an early age.

His first teacher was a rock musician, Jorge Garacotche, and the music he was most interested in was the Beatles.

At the age of 15, he formed a guitar duo with Julián Hasse, with whom he performed songs by Gismonti, Piazzolla, Villalobos, Spinetta and Charly García. During the same period, he wrote his first compositions.

While attending secondary school, he studied music in parallel. His principal teachers were: Francisco Rivero (jazz and improvisation), Svetan Szavbev (classical guitar) and Martha Bongiorno (piano).

In 1985, he met the pianist Hernán Lugano. Together they formed the Argentine music group "Semblanza", initially with Quique Condomí on violin, and later with Gustavo Toker

on bandoneon. Always as a trio format (later with Abel Rogantini and Juan Pablo Dobal on piano), with Semblanza he recorded two discs in Europe, won the 1988 Pre-Cosquin Festival in the instrumental category, as well as the 1988 Buenos Aires Jazz Fusion Contest, and completed five European tours, performing in Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Holland, Germany, Poland, Finland, Denmark, Austria and Belgium.

Highlights: Copenhagen Jazz Festival, Helsinki Sea Jazz Festival (supporting Stan Getz), Vredenburg Theatre in Holland, La Cova del Drac (Barcelona), Nefertiti (Gothenburg), Fashing (Stockholm), Bimhuis (Amsterdam), Montmartre (Copenhagen).

In 1987 he had entered the Escuela de Música Popular de Avellaneda, where he took classes in tango with Aníbal Arias and in jazz with Armando Alonso, but he was not able to finish his studies, since touring with Semblanza meant that he was spending more of the year in Europe than in Argentina.

In spite of this, when he was not travelling he found time to study harmony and counterpoint with Laura Baade, and orchestration with Gabriel Senanes.

In 1991, he went to live in Copenhagen for a year, at the invitation of Palle Windfeldt, the Danish guitarist with whom he formed "Copen-Aires". They have been playing together as a duo for the last 20 years and have performed in Denmark, Sweden, France, Spain, Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil.

From 1993 to 1995, he accompanied Pedro Aznar (known for his work with the Pat Metheny Group) in the shows "Tributo a Gardel", "Juntos por Troilo" and "Homenaje a Piazzolla".

He collaborated on Jairo's CD "Cielos" (produced by Pedro), recording a duet with the Brazilian cellist Jaques Morelembaum.

In July 1994, following an audition, he joined Lito Vitale's group "Los Argentinos" (the most highly regarded Argentine instrumental music band at that time) along with Javier Malosetti, Marcelo Novati and Manuel Miranda. Between then and 1997, he recorded two CDs with the band and played in Spain, Germany, Panama, Uruguay, Chile and throughout Argentina. He participated in the recordings for the TV programme "Ese amigo del Alma", and the presentation tour of "El Grito Sagrado", which concluded at the Colon Theatre in Buenos Aires.

Also with Lito Vitale, he performed at the opening ceremony of the 1995 Pan American Games (accompanying world class dancer Julio Bocca and Pedro Aznar at the Mar del Plata Stadium), and the 2001 Under-20 World Cup held in Argentina (Vélez Sarsfield Stadium), as well as in the worldwide broadcast of "Millennium Day", a performance recorded at the Perito Moreno Glacier.

He participated as a guitarist on the re-release of "Mujeres Argentinas", one of the emblematic albums of Argentine music, by Ariel Ramírez and Patricia Sosa.

In 1998, a childhood dream became reality when, after handing him a disc at a concert, the maestro Egberto Gismonti produced a CD by Copen-Aires for his label Carmo/ECM.

Since 1999, he has led his own formations. So far he has released five discs as a leader. His group members have included: Pipi Piazzolla, Guillermo Romero, Nicolás Gurschberg, Oscar Giunta, Guillermo Delgado and Víctor Carrión.

Between 2001 and 2005 he was part of a trio with Verónica Condomí and the percussionist Facundo Guevara, with whom he recorded two CDs (“Cielo arriba”, short listed for the Premio Gardel and “De los tres”). They made two tours of Italy and performed at the ND Ateneo, La Trastienda and Alvear Theatre in Buenos Aires, the Festival de Músicos de San Martín de los Andes, the Festival de Músicos de Rosario.

In 2003 he directed the teaching project “Argentine Music Week” for the Copenhagen Rhythmical Conservatory. The teaching staff, who travelled over, was made up of: Aníbal Arias and Osvaldo Montes, Negro Aguirre, Fernando Suárez Paz, Ricardo Lew, Nicolás Ledesma, Omar Moreno Palacios.

In 2004, for the purpose of presenting the CD Toque Argentino, he undertook a 15-concert tour of Argentina.

In 2006, he was invited along with the Catalan Raúl Fernández to direct the bi-national project “Immigrasons”, commissioned by the Mercat de Música Viva de Vic (Catalunya) and the Secretaría de Música de Buenos Aires. The commemorative disc of this encounter features the voice of the great Silvia Pérez Cruz.

Since 2005, Ernesto has headed his own trio alongside two of the most sought-after musicians on the Buenos Aires scene, bass player Guido Martínez and drummer Diego Alejandro. The trio has toured in Argentina and played concerts in Spain, Denmark and Holland.

With this line-up he has given a series of concerts in Buenos Aires, entitled “Snajer trio con Invitados Especiales”, playing with guest musicians that have included Javier Malosetti, Franco Luciani, Negro Aguirre, Juan Quintero, Horacio Fontova, Mariana Baraj, Lisandro Aristimuño, Juan Carlos Baglietto, Edgardo Cardozo and Daniel Maza. These shows were recorded on the DVD, “Doble y falta”.

The highlights of his work as a producer include the records “Igual a mi corazón” and “Este tiempo” by the great singer Liliana Herrero, both of which won the premio Gardel, the highest award for recording artists in Argentina.

In 2011, as part of the prestigious cycle entitled “Raras partituras”, the Argentine National Library invited Ernesto and his trio, along with guest singer Luvi Torres and saxophonist Ramiro Flores, to produce a live recording of “Lecturas Argentinas”, an album of cover versions of tunes by the country’s great musical composers.

He has worked extensively as a composer of original soundtracks for theater, cinema and TV. His most recent offering was the score of “Desierto verde”, a documentary film about the problems of the world food supply.

Between 2010 and 2012 Ernesto presented two duos. One alongside the pianist Diego Schissi, performing covers of Argentine composers. The other, with the writer Pablo Ramos, in a show combining music and literature.

Since 2012, he has been presenting the music program “Notas de paso”, transmitted by Canal Á, a dedicated cultural TV channel that broadcasts in Argentina and Latin America. The long list of guests that have participated in the program includes Ralph Towner, Hermeto Pascoal, Naná Vasconcelos, the Ron Carter trio and Sylvain Luc.

As a performer, Ernesto currently divides his time between concerts with his trio and two duos: DE DOS ARGENTINOS alongside the guitarist Matías Arriazu and ZABECA DÚO, with Mariano Cantero, a percussionist and singer known for his work as a member of the Aca Seca Trio.