

Sciarrino wins the BBVA Foundation Frontiers of Knowledge Award in Contemporary Music for developing a new syntax that renews the possibilities of instrumental and vocal music

- The Italian composer is a pioneer in the realm of musical timbre and the opera, with writing that is innovative and technically perfect; its lightness, refinement and sound poetry marking him out as one of the major artists of our times
- His catalogue includes such notable works as *Lohengrin*, "azione invisibile" for voice and instruments (1982-84), *Perseo ed Andromeda* (1990-91), *Luci mie tradici* (1996-98), *Macbeth* (2001-02), *Da gelo a gelo* (2006), *12 Madrigali* (2007), *Quaderno di strada*, (2003) *Studi per l'Intonazione del mare* for voice, 4 flute soloists, 4 sax soloists, percussion, orchestra of 100 flutes and orchestra of 100 saxes (2000), *Infinito Nero* (1998), *Omaggio a Burri* (1995) *Esplorazione del bianco* (1986) or *Sei Capricci* for violin (1976)
- The BBVA Foundation Frontiers of Knowledge Awards recognize the role of science and cultural creation as levers of society's progress and wellbeing. Their eight categories span the main scientific, technological, social and economic areas and challenges of our times

Madrid, February 14, 2012.- The BBVA Foundation Frontiers of Knowledge Award in the Contemporary Music category goes in this fourth edition to Italian composer Salvatore Sciarrino (Palermo, 1947) for "renewing the possibilities of instrumental and vocal music and the differentiation of their sound materials," in the words of the jury's citation.

In his first declarations, the new laureate expressed his surprise and pleasure at receiving the award: "I am familiar with the BBVA Foundation Frontiers of Knowledge Awards and have always been positively impressed by the fact that

they place Contemporary Music in the same family as other categories devoted to science."

The jury remarked of Sciarrino that he "has developed a new and unique syntax" and that "at the heart of his creations is his way of combining extreme reduction with a richness of detail. He stands out for his use of microtonality and his conscious reworking of ideas and materials from past periods and cultures."

An illustrative example are what Sciarrino calls his "elaborations" of the music of earlier authors, like his *La terribile e spaventosa storia del Principe di Venosa e della bella Maria* based on music by Gesualdo, his reworking for solo flute of Bach's *Toccatina and Fugue in D minor* for organ, or his versions of works by Scarlatti, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Ravel and contemporary artists like the Beatles. In these elaborations, Sciarrino filters and reconstructs pieces created according to the canons of the past, at times lending them a sonic surrealism with an aesthetic significance at several removes from the source material.

The composer believes that "the distance between classical, traditional and contemporary music is not that great. I personally feel that it is essential to understand the roots of our identity that lie in tradition."

According to the jury chairman, Jürg Stenzl, "Sciarrino's originality lies not so much in the creation of new sounds as in the development of a syntax that pulls them coherently together." His work, he adds, "has enriched Contemporary Music by way of detail rather than grandiloquent sounds. His impact can be seen in the music being made today, but will also radiate out to the rest of the century."

His writing style is characterized by a lightness, refinement and sound poetry that mark him out as an original composer with a distinct personality. "In my work there is a dual connection between music and literature, since for me they are the same language. Literature is the air we artists breathe. I myself write plays and other kinds of text that serve me as inspiration in my compositional practice."

The language he uses in his works tests the limits of instrumental virtuosism through the use of non-conventional techniques, where the performer narrates each moment of the story. David Metzger, Professor of Musicology at Yale University refers to Sciarrino as "a master calligrapher of quiet," while the composer himself has written that "sound has an intimate relationship with silence, and the consciousness of that connection is new." In his work, Sciarrino has explored different ways to model this relation between sound and stillness, with passionate characters who fracture silence with cries and outbursts, not so much embracing silence as reacting to it.

A self-taught musician and a remarkably early starter, he composed his first work at the age of twelve and by age fifteen had seen the premiere of his first concert, inaugurating a wide and varied catalogue that embraces multiple musical genres.

For two years now he has been working on a vocal and instrumental cycle under the title *Carnival*, which will have its stage debut in August this year in Lucerne, Switzerland.

The name of the new laureate was announced this morning in the Marqués de Salamanca Palace, Madrid headquarters of the BBVA Foundation, at an event attended by jury chair **Jürg Stenzl** from the University of Salzburg (Austria), and **Rafael Pardo**, Director of the BBVA Foundation.

The BBVA Foundation Frontiers of Knowledge Awards

The BBVA Foundation established the Frontiers of Knowledge Awards in 2008 to recognize the authors of outstanding contributions and significant advances in a broad range of scientific and technological areas characteristic of our times. The quality of the nominations received, the stature of the international judges, appointed in consultation with the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), and the excellence of the laureates in their first three editions have earned them a place among the world's foremost award families.

In the midst of a severe economic crisis which has pushed science, culture and the environment lower down the list of public priorities, the BBVA Foundation Frontiers of Knowledge Awards enter this fourth edition firm in their commitment to the individuals and teams working for a better future for people through the advancement of knowledge and its dissemination to society.

The eight categories of the BBVA Foundation Frontiers of Knowledge Awards, each carrying prize money of 400,000 euros, reflect both the knowledge map of the early 21st century and the great global challenges of the day. Hence their inclusion of two dedicated environmental categories in the form of "Climate Change" and "Ecology and Conservation Biology".

The BBVA Foundation primarily engages in the generation and diffusion of scientific knowledge and culture. This effort materializes in research projects, advanced training, lectures and publications, and a series of award families aimed at recognizing and drawing public attention to the work of scientists and creative practitioners.

Among the BBVA Foundation's areas of activity are basic sciences, biomedicine, ecology and conservation biology, the social sciences and literary and musical creation. Its initiatives mesh with the BBVA Group's strategy of fostering innovation and knowledge as development drivers and an effective means to expand our individual and collective choices.

International jury

The jury in this category was chaired by **Jürg Stenzl**, professor at the University of Salzburg (Austria), with **Siegfried Mauser**, President of the University of Music and Performing Arts in Munich (Germany) acting as secretary. Remaining members were composer and conductor **Gilbert Amy** (France), **Hugues Dufourt**, composer

and Emeritus Research Director at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (France), **Rudolf Frisius**, composer and Emeritus Professor of Musicology at the University of Karlsruhe (Germany), composer and conductor **Cristóbal Halffter**, winner of the same award in the 2009 edition, **Ranko Markovic**, Artistic Director of Konservatorium Wien University (Austria) and **Dieter Torkewitz**, composer and Professor of Music Theory at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna (Austria).

Last year's award in this category went to **Helmut Lachenmann** for a creative output that has "enlarged the world of sounds" in the words of the prize jury. The winner in the second edition was Spaniard **Cristóbal Halffter**, of whose work the jury emphasized its "coherence and continuity of commitment."

Biography

Born in Palermo (Italy) in 1947, Salvatore Sciarrino will celebrate his 65th birthday on April 4 this year. As a child he felt drawn towards the visual arts, but soon began to experiment with music. At the age of twelve he wrote his first composition and by age fifteen had premiered his first concert. Despite some brief studies with Antonio Titone and Turi Belfiore, and his time in Rome attending Franco Evangelisti's electronic music course at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia, Sciarrino is very much a self-taught artist.

From 1974 to 1996, he combined his teaching work at the conservatories of Milan, Florence and Perugia with numerous master classes and international courses. In 1982, he decided to concentrate on his art and settled in Città di Castello, in the Umbria region, where he spends most of his time composing. He has nevertheless continued to teach sporadically, including specialization courses in Città di Castello attended by rising composers like Francesco Filidei, Lucia Roncheti, Fabrizio de Rossi Rei and Maurizio Pisati.

His prolific output has resulted in more than 180 compositions that can be heard on some 70 discs. His exceptionally broad and varied catalogue ranges from works for solo instrument though to symphonies and theater music. He has a particular fondness for reconstructing the music of the past – Gesualdo, Domenico Scarlatti, Bach, Mozart, Mendelssohn or Ravel – and for employing musical quotations in a way that places him within yet side-on to musical tradition.

He has composed for the London Symphony Orchestra, the Frankfurt Opera Theater, the Fenice in Venice and Tokyo's Suntory Hall, and his works have been played at leading contemporary music festivals: Salzburg, New York, Vienna, Berliner Festspiele Musik, Festival d'Automne (Paris) and Ultima (Oslo), to name but a few.

Director of the Teatro Comunale di Bologna between 1978 and 1980, he is a member of the Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome), the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts and the Berlin Academy of Fine Arts.

UPCOMING AWARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

CATEGORY	DATE
Economics, Finance and Management	Tuesday, February 21
Development Cooperation	Tuesday, February 28

LAUREATE'S FIRST DECLARATIONS AND IMAGES

A video recording of the new laureate's first impressions on receiving news of the award is available from the Atlas FTP with the following name and coordinates, along with photographic images and an audio MP3 recording of the announcement event, featuring more declarations:

Server: **213.0.38.61**
Username: **agenciaatlas1**
Password: **amapola**

The name of the video is:
"FBBVA PREMIO MUSICA"

For more information, contact the BBVA Foundation Communication Department (+34 91 374 5210 or +34 94 487 4627/comunicacion@bbva.es) or visit the Foundation website www.fbbva.es