



JOSU DE SOLAUN – Piano

Josu De Solaun has been recognized by critics like Nikolaus Frey (Fuldaer Zeitung) for his *"poetic sense of sound, bold artistic vision, and brilliant virtuoso skills, always and completely in service of the works he performs."*

He has twice been awarded the prestigious International Classical Music Awards (ICMA): in 2021 in the chamber music category and in 2023 as best soloist. In the 2023 edition, the ICMA jury, made up by 21 directors of the most important and prestigious classical music media (magazines and radio stations) *in Europe, expressed the following about him in a public written statement on the Awards webpage in 2023: "Josu de Solaun is one of the most impressive discoveries of the past decade. He is not only a technically impressive pianist, but his interpretive imagination also knows no bounds. His performances ideally reflect De Solaun's ability to engage with the works symbiotically and at the highest energy levels. Free from aesthetic dogma, the pianist creates universes of a solitary nature."*

He is also the only Spanish pianist to have won first prizes at both the José Iturbi (2006) and George Enescu (2014) international piano competitions, since their respective foundations in the 1980s and 1958. The Enescu Competition was previously won by pianists such as Elisabeth Leonskaja (in 1964) and Radu Lupu (in 1967).

In 2019, Klaus Iohannis, President of Romania, named him an *Officer of the Order of Cultural Merit of the Republic of Romania* for his artistic work and international promotion of the music of George Enescu—whose complete piano works he has recorded for the NAXOS label—and Romanian musical culture in general.

Trained from a young age by musician Salvador Chuliá (in harmony, counterpoint, fugue, and composition) and by pianists María Teresa Naranjo and Ana Guijarro in Spain, and later in New York by pianists Nina Svetlanova (a student of the legendary Heinrich Neuhaus) and Horacio Gutiérrez, he has been able to showcase his musical artistry not only as a recital pianist but also as a composer, conductor, improviser (performing entirely improvised piano recitals), chamber musician, and orchestral soloist. In New York, he also studied composition with Giampaolo Bracali and conducting with Robert Isaacs and David Gilbert, as well as chamber music with Robert Mann (of the Juilliard Quartet) and Isidore Cohen (of the Beaux Arts Trio).

Josu has also been praised by critics like Jessica Duchon, who wrote in BBC Music Magazine: *"De Solaun allows expression to lead at all times, no matter how intense the virtuosity. There is always a flexible vitality in his interpretations, a warm and intimate approach to phrasing, and a beautiful, sweet tone."* And by critics like Justo Romero, dean of Spanish music critics, in Scherzo Magazine, who wrote: *"It is difficult to imagine a more powerful and creative pianism. De Solaun is one of the most interesting*

contemporary keyboard virtuosos. Spanish and not Spanish. A vigorous, wise pianism, refined and with grandiose musicality. We are in the presence of a true colossus of the piano, a real virtuoso in the old-fashioned sense, whose radiant technique and extroverted dramatic depth of his firm artistic nature combine to produce performances that unite brilliance and effusion, fire and delicacy, always with an intense pianistic foundation, all with naturalness, strength, power, sonorous opulence, and intense expressive sense."

He has performed as a soloist with the Spanish National Orchestra, Radio and Television Orchestra of Spain, Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra, Rudolf Barshai Moscow Chamber Orchestra, RTÉ Orchestra of Dublin, National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia, Mexico City Philharmonic, National Symphony of Mexico, La Fenice Orchestra of Venice, George Enescu Philharmonic Orchestra of Bucharest, Radio Orchestras of Bucharest and Prague, and with almost all Spanish orchestras, collaborating with conductors such as Giancarlo Guerrero, Justus Frantz, Rumon Gamba, JoAnn Falletta, Constantine Orbelian, Christian Badea, Paul Daniel, Enrique García Asensio, Jean-Claude Casadesus, Laurence Equilbey, Rossen Milanov, Yaron Traub, Alexis Soriano, Jonathan Pasternack, Miguel Ángel Gómez Martínez, and Ramón Tebar.

Josu, who lived in Manhattan, New York from 1999 to 2019, graduated from the Manhattan School of Music (1999 - 2011) and later became a Professor of Piano at Houston State University (2014 - 2018). Since February 2020, he has resided in Madrid with his wife and two children.

As a composer, he recently premiered his Concertino *Breve* (2023) for piano and string orchestra in Klaipeda, Lithuania, with the Klaipeda Chamber Orchestra conducted by Alexis Soriano-Monstavicius, and his String Quartet titled *Tombeau* in the Málaga Clásica Festival in Spain.

In November of 2024 he releases a new orchestral album, Prokofiev's *Piano Concerto No. 2* and Rachmaninov's *Piano Concerto No. 3* with the Castilla y León Symphony Orchestra (OSCYL) for the IBS Classical label, and in the Spring of 2025 he will release a double-CD of the Complete Mazurkas of Chopin for the same label, as well as Bernstein's *The Age of Anxiety* with ADDA Simfònica Orchestra of Alicante, Spain for the Aria Classics label.

His discography also includes the complete concerti of F. Liszt for piano and orchestra plus his *Totentanz*, Strauss' *Burleske* for piano and orchestra, the complete works for piano of George Enescu, a Haydn Sonatas double-CD (which won the 2023 ICMA as best soloist), a Brahms and Schumann album, and several albums of improvised recitals.

Highlights of the 2024/2025 season include recitals at the Miami International Piano Festival (both in their winter and summer series), concerts as both conductor and soloist with Orquesta Ciudad de Elche in Spain, concerts as a soloist with Spain's National TV and Radio Orchestra, concerts as a soloist with the Port Angeles Symphony Orchestra in the USA, and worldwide recitals in Europe and the USA.

He is a piano professor at the Escuela Superior Musical Arts Madrid (MAM), a private conservatory in Madrid where he trains a small group of selected students and develops his intense pedagogical vocation.

Josu is also a poet, and in 2021, his poetry collection *Las Grietas* was published by Edictorialia, with a foreword by Spanish Poet Laureate Álvaro Valverde.

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