

SIGNUM saxophone quartet: Australia Tour 2022

Sydney City Hall 21/11/2022



MUSICA VIVA PRESENT SIGNUM SAXOPHONE QUARTET AT CITY RECITAL HALL

25 NOVEMBER 2022 PAUL NOLAN [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)



Above: Signum Saxophone Quartet performed the Kurt Weill violin concerto with Kristian Winther. Featured image: Signum Saxophone Quartet members (l to r) – Guerino Bellarosa, Alan Lužar, Jacopo Taddei and Blaž Kemperle.

This is **Signum Saxophone Quartet's** first trip Down Under. The saxophone virtuosi have a strong international reputation and a growing discography of diverse arrangements and successful collaborations.

Signum's concert tour with **Musica Viva** featured a collaboration with violinist **Kristian Winther**. The freshness and flexibility of the Signum Quartet plus their amazing ability to bring well known orchestral and keyboard works to us in impressive arrangement contributed to an engaging performance with Winther of Kurt Weill's *Concerto for Violin and Wind Orchestra Op 12*.

This arrangement by Australian composer **Jessica Wells** showcased her fine skill as an arranger. Percussion parts, various wind timbres and the essence of Kurt Weill's inimitable accent were well preserved here. The variegated blend as well as breath and keying special effects from the Signum players boldly introduced this twentieth century work to the audience in successful new guise.

Talented chamber musician and violinist Kristian Winther has a special passion for modern and new music. He was a great choice to spearhead the playing of this exciting new arrangement and to champion the merits of Weill's foray into the world of the concert hall concerto genre. Winther's tracing of the unique violin lines was very sympathetically accompanied on saxophones. His exploration of Weill's writing for wind, percussion and soloist was morphed into a vibrant ensemble in this collaboration with the Signum team.

Great arrangements and controlled playing with a wide range of articulation were the order of this special night. Consistent with the recordings available to Australians prior to this live contact, there seemed like no genre or piece for any ensemble or instrument was out of the expressive reach of this quartet when playing on their own.

The bar was set very high with a breathtaking version of Bach's *Italian Concerto*. The spirit and mood of each of the well-known movements were delivered each time in an exciting, focussed swoop. The chance to hear the much loved gestures and virtuosic counterpoint in every movement translated to saxophone timbres was a beautiful celebration of Bach and of wind playing.

The moody beauty of Gershwin preludes was delivered after interval with a nice shift to svelte, cool playing. As with other arrangements, the division between instruments was clear and effective in recreating the articulation and registers of the keyboard or orchestra. The accompaniment for Gershwin's clever classical crossover voice shifted between sustained chords and sharper effects across all registers as we revisited these Preludes far from a keyboard.

A highlight of this concert's consistently impressive showcase was Bernstein's *Symphonic Dances* arranged by Sylvain Dedenon. This concluding segment had swagger, virtuosity, capable shifts in character and some stunning moments of cantabile expression as Signum Saxophone Quartet once more demonstrated their timbral resources, musicianship and versatility as an ensemble.

Bernstein's music danced with intimate joy and was celebrated as comprehensively as any orchestra has done before. The crowd went wild for this work as they had for all other familiar music in ingenious arrangement played by the Signum wind geniuses. Their wealth of flexible wind sounds and effective programming are welcome Down Under any day.

[MUSICA VIVA PRESENT SIGNUM SAXOPHONE QUARTET AT CITY RECITAL HALL | Sydney Arts Guide](#)