

Madrid Artist Showcase: Local Composer and Violinist Santiago Vokram

Madrid's vibrant music scene is full of gems and untold stories. Despite winter taking hold, there are many upcoming gigs with emerging artists and performers. For each of these, there is an untold story waiting to be showcased. [Santiago Vokram](#) is a local performing artist who wields a violin to serenade his audiences. I have had the good fortune to witness him in action and interview him about his life and creative journey.

My first impression of him was that his attire and unique sense of style reflected that **he is a person who breathes in creative energy**. He can take the sound to areas I didn't think violins were capable.

So without further ado, here's his story and upcoming dates so you, too, can experience his music.

Santiago Vokram's musical story and style

Hailing from Mexico City, Santiago began his career as a musician there in Rock-Celtic fusion band *La Agonia de Leonara* at 13. He devoted himself fully to practicing the violin, and growing as a performer, citing it as an escape from the empty spaces of life. He would go on to study music at Mexico's elite *Escuela Nacional de Musica*.

Santi reminisced on how in his youth he was inspired by the Spanish band *Mago de Oz* and when he learned that the group had split, he relocated to Madrid to join José Andrëa & *Uróoboros*, the next project of original *Mago de Oz* members.

Santi remained modest when describing his ascension to **dreaming of meeting his heroes and then having the opportunity to create alongside them** in his newly adopted country. He became deeply embedded in Madrid's thriving creative scene and began performing alongside other revered local artists such as [Ataca Paca](#), and on the international circuit with renowned Gypsy musician [Robby Lakatos](#).

Where he is now



Santi's current band, which reflects his personal expression, is *La Sonrisa de Cibeles*. This trio seeks to create something unprecedented as a cross-over fusion of world-classical and pop music. Its members are **Santi on Violin, Benja Bravo on Double Bass and Germán Nuñez on Guitar**. Their goal is to help a younger audience expand their perception of "classical" music and to disrupt the local music scene by introducing sounds with less precedent.

Santi's style as a performer ranges from classical to

unconventional. The violin is an essential part of traditional mariachi groups and can be weaved into classical jazz, rock, folk and other improvisational contexts. In addition to his solo-acts and collaboration with other artists, Santi performs at upscale events and in luxury hotels seeking to provide a stylized ambiance. Notably, **Netflix has utilized Santiago as a creative asset** in the mariachi ensemble featured in *Narcos Mexico*.

Our connection

What Santiago and I share is that both of us have collaborated on creative projects with the versatile public relations strategist, programmer, event planner, and art instructor Vesta Rounsaville. Vesta manages Santi's social media presence and coordinates his routine concerts in Madrid's venues. With her help, he has managed to expand his circle of collaborators to Madrid's international community of musicians, comedians, and actors. Additionally, his concerts have raised funds for [Madrid for Refugees](#), a prominent volunteer group.

Santi confided in me that as his visibility increased, he became exposed to uglier elements of the music scene noting that "adoration can become insanity or envy." He went on to say that **"If you have a vision, you need to improve it little by little."**

Despite a lack of a conventional road map to follow, coupled with at times a lack of financial security, **Santi never wavered in his pursuits** despite sometimes deeply missing his parents in Mexico, or his loved ones whenever he'd tour for prolonged periods.

Upcoming shows

You can be captivated by Santiago's stage personality and violin prowess at Teatro-Bar Hipócritas (La Latina) this

Saturday the 23rd at 22:00 where La Sonrisa de Cibeles will enchant their audience.

You can also catch them at [Microteatro Por Dinero](#)'s mini-concert festival Microsound in December (Malasaña/Gran Vía). Tickets for the concert in Teatro-Bar Hipócritas can be purchased via [Entradium](#).

Santiago Vokram y La Sorrisa de Cibeles

POP jazz fusión Latina clásica

3 + 10 + 17 diciembre



microteatro

Contact

If you would like for Santiago Vokram to perform at an event, or to utilize his work for branded content, contact [Vesta Rounsaville](#).

If you know of any other Madrid-based artists that you'd like to showcase on Naked Madrid, don't hesitate to [get in touch with us to submit a post](#).

Tapapiés: a guide to everyone's favorite food and culture festival in Lavapiés

It's that time of year again. The air is turning chilly, the leaves are starting to change, and the millennial obsession with all things autumn is taking over social media. But here in Madrid, there's a whole different reason to be excited. With October comes [Tapapiés](#), the annual festival that inundates the streets of the [Lavapiés neighborhood](#) with delicious food, cheap drinks, and live music.

For 11 days at the end of October (this year's 7th edition lasts from October 19–29), dozens of restaurants and bars in Lavapiés offer a very special deal. Each one develops their own **signature tapa**, and offers it to the public for just **€1.50**. For an extra euro, you can also get a *botellín* (a 250 ml bottle of beer) to wash it down. The [event](#) is sponsored by Barcelona's Estrella Damm, and at most places you can choose

between a regular beer or Damm Lemon (beer and lemon soda).



A bar advertises its participation in Tapapiés with the festival's official poster.

Lavapiés is known for its incredible cultural diversity, with large immigrant populations from all over Africa, South America, the Middle East, and Central Asia. As a result, it's full of [international eateries](#) offering everything from [Senegalese thieboudienne](#) to Syrian sweets. A good number of these establishments participate in [Tapapiés](#), which means that in one night you can practically eat your way around the world, just by exploring the neighborhood's sloping streets.



The delicious “Crepioca” tapa from Saboor Tapioca

In other words, **this [festival](#) is every adventurous foodie’s dream come true.** There are various strategies for tackling the overwhelming amount of options (**122 tapas in total**) and chaotic crowds. You can simply wander around, dropping into whatever bars you come across and trying your luck. Each one usually advertises a photograph of their tapa with a huge poster out front, so you’ll know more or less what to expect. Don’t forget to stop by [Mercado de San Fernando](#) and Mercado Antón Martín, where several vendors also participate.



A tray of tapas at Toscanaccio Italian bakery: marinated eggplant, walnuts, goat cheese, and sun-dried tomato pesto on spelt bread

If you're (A) a picky/allergy-prone eater or (B) determined to try as many different tapas as possible, you might want to consider a more organized strategy. Ask for a brochure at any of the participating places—you'll get **a pocket-sized booklet that contains a list of every single tapa being offered**, as well as a color photograph and a detailed ingredients list for each. They're all plotted on a numbered map, so you can plan out your ideal route. Be warned, though: it's hard to stick to a set plan when there are so many tempting options around every corner.



Dishing out the special tapa at Maloka Bar Brasileiro: yuca in a coconut milk sauce with peanut pesto

My advice? Grab a group of friends who aren't afraid to elbow their way through some crowds and try as many new things as possible. This is not an activity for those who would rather settle in at a cozy restaurant for a relaxed dinner.

Expect to eat standing up while balancing a beer in one hand a a tapa in the other, and shouting at each other just to be heard. **It's messy, it's crazy, it's loud—and it's totally worth it.** The frenetic and colorful spirit of the neighborhood is never more alive than on a night of [Tapapiés](#).



“Carrillada melosa” from Maldito Querer: braised beef cheeks in a sauce of caramelized onion, garlic, herbs, and Pedro Ximénez reduction

To complete the experience, it's essential to attend one of the [various outdoor performances](#) by local musicians, dancers, and entertainers that take place throughout the event. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday afternoons and evenings, you can catch live music and shows at nine different designated spots (a full schedule is included in the brochure). There's also the simultaneous **Chollopiés** festival, which **spotlights the neighborhood's local businesses** by offering [special discounts](#) on certain products.



Maybe you live in Lavapiés and want to get to know your *barrio* better. Maybe you've never been and want to see what all the hype is about. Or maybe you're just hungry, thirsty, and low on cash. Whatever the case, [Tapapiés](#) is bound to become one of your favorite events in Madrid. If you go into it with **the right mindset, a healthy appetite, and a handful of coins**, I guarantee that come next October, there'll only be one thing on your mind. Who needs pumpkin spice lattes, anyway?

Info

- [Facebook](#)
- [Website](#)
- [Instagram](#)

Check out our roundup of [Tapapiés' offerings last year!](#)

Where to Dance Bachata and Salsa in Madrid

Always wanted to learn how to dance bachata but didn't want to pay high costs for private lessons? Well, look no further!

It is *muy de moda*, or very popular to dance bachata right now in Spain. Each year there seems to be more meet-up groups and more bars offering *noches de bachata* or *noches latinas*. Located right by Templo de Debod, [The Host](#) offers three bachata classes followed by social dancing every Wednesday night.

For 8 euros you'll have entrance to the bar, access to three classes over the course of two hours and a drink (alcoholic or not) of your choice. You can choose to take all three classes or just one. If you're more of a "people watcher" there are plenty of seats at the bar and around the perimeter of the dance floor. Don't show up too early though because the first class starts when the bar opens at 9PM.



For new dancers, the first question often asked is “Do I need to bring a partner?” **You do not need to bring a partner but you can if you’d like!** The classes tend to begin with the basics, which everyone dances individually. Then, when you do partner up, the pairs rotate so often that by the end of the class you’ll have danced with nearly everyone, you might even remember a few names or have made a new friend by the end of the lesson. On this particular Wednesday, the classes were: modern bachata, Dominican bachata and lastly, sensual bachata.



After the classes end and the students watch or record as the dance instructors model all the steps learned, the social dancing starts! You get the chance to practice what you learned with friends from the class or meet others who are just arriving for the social dancing. The fun doesn't end until 3AM! **If you're more interested in salsa, you should join The Host on Thursdays for class (see below).** You'll also hear a little bit of salsa and kizomba throughout the night but Wednesdays are specifically for bachata at The Host!



Info

- Address: Calle Ferraz 38
- Metro: Argüelles / Ventura Rodriguez / Plaza España
- [Facebook](#)

Other classes at The Host:

Tuesday: Kizomba (classes 21:00-23:00 and social dancing until 3)

Wednesday: Bachata (classes 21:00- 23:00 and social dancing until 3)

Thursday: Salsa (classes 21:00-23:00 and social dancing until 3)

Friday: Bachata (classes 22:00-@24:00 and social dancing

until 5:30)

Facebook pages and groups on Madrid's salsa and bachata scene:

1. [Salsa Madrid](#) (page)
2. [Salsa Madrid](#) (group)

Here are some more salsa places to check out:

[Azucar:](#)

For 8 euro you can enjoy classes and a drink at Azucar near Metro Atocha. It is a smaller nightclub but brings in dancers of many levels.

[Tropical House:](#)

Near Metro Plaza de España is the best place to start dancing salsa or bachata as a beginner. Tropical also offers kizomba lessons on Fridays and Saturdays.

[Cats:](#)

On Sundays at Cats (now called Sala Mitty) you can dance salsa and bachata. The crowd is great and there's plenty of room to dance as it doesn't get completely packed.

[El Son:](#)

A close walk from Puerta del Sol, El Son offers classes from Monday through Thursday at 6 euro a class.

[La Negra Tomasa:](#)

In Sol but doesn't feel like it. Live Cuban music every night and although there isn't a lot of space to dance, if you love salsa music, La Negra Tomasa is a must.

You may also like: [Where to get fit in Madrid](#)

Mercado de la buena vida, the Hub's monthly ecological and local market!

To help us all deal with this crazy heat wave, [Impact Hub Madrid](#), an innovation center near Atocha, is holding its last [Mercado de la buena vida](#) (the good life market) of the season, on Saturday and Sunday from 12pm-10pm, with free entrance. For this "refreshing" edition, the market will be holding a water fight for the little ones, beer tastings for the older ones, and much more. [Here's more info on the event.](#)

J&J Books and Coffee, 1€ Pub

Quiz by Noviciado

Check out [J&J's](#) Friday night pub quiz where you can play in teams of 4 and win a cash prize. J&J is a [bookstore/coffee shop](#) where you can find thousands of English-language books downstairs. Up at the bar, you can get craft beer, wine, coffee, bagels and other things to munch on.

You can also enjoy their other events such as the Intercambio Night on Wednesdays, Thursdays & Saturdays where you can improve your favorite language while having a good time meeting new people.

Also check out our series on [Madrid's Best Cafe-bookshops](#)

El Plaza Jazz Club, Free Latin Jazz & Swing Jam

[El Plaza Jazz Club](#) is a cozy bar located in the center of Madrid (near metro Plaza de España) where you can have a drink as you listen to live jazz, latin and swing music. So check out their free jam session this Sunday night!

Photo from their [Facebook page](#)

Of Moths and Stars plays an Acoustic Gig in Tribunal

Come enjoy rock'n'roll music Thursday evening at [Club Maravillas](#) and check out [Of Moths and Stars](#)' acoustic gig. Expect it to be raw and uncut – this time with a full support of a rock'n'roll band, so this is sure to be electric.

5€ or 9€ entry with 2 drinks.

Listen to their latest demos [here](#).

Ajo Fernandez Photography Exhibit in Malasaña

Check out [Ajo Fernández' photography exhibit](#) while having dinner at [Nanai Restaurante](#) (in Malasaña) during the whole month of March. Let yourself be enchanted by these amazing pictures of incredible landscapes.

When:

Mondays – 07:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.

Tuesdays to Fridays – 06:00 p.m. – 02:00 a.m.

Saturdays and holidays – 02:00 p.m. – 02:00 a.m.

Sundays – 05:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.

International Gastronomy Summit – 13th edition!

Attention all foodies!! [Madrid Fusión](#) is bringing us the 13th International Gastronomy Summit! (In Spanish, [XIII Cumbre de la Gastronomía](#)). This entails three days of workshops, activities, contests, conferences, tastings and so much more. It is not a cheap event, but totally worth it if you are a food profesional or simply adore the world of gastronomy.

Here's the [program](#). You'll see that you have **different options**: [Madrid Fusión](#) is holding events in the morning and [Saborea España](#) in the afternoon. The price depends on which program you choose and if you want to go for 2 or 3 days.

For tickets go [here](#)

Where: Palacio Municipal de Congresos

Address: Avenida Capital de España, 7

Metro: Campo de las Naciones

Comedy Super Team, Go! at Ancora by Ace Comedy Factory

[Ace Comedy Factory](#) is an English-language comedy group that holds monthly open-mic comedy showdowns at [Triskel Tavern](#). On top of that, the group holds an event called **Comedy Super**

Team, Go! – a *best of* showcase with guest artists, held every two months or so. You'll be able to see this super team at its best on October 30th at [Ancora Madrid](#).

Who'll be on stage?

Members **Archie Bezos** (*Funniest Festival Internacional de la Comedia* winner), **Rusty Birdwell** and **Joshua Saxon** will be joined by special guest **Kirk Bonacci** (Florida comedy circuit regular).

Event Details

When: October 30th at 10 p.m.

Tickets: 5€ each (cash only) at the door. Reserve yours at www.acecomedyfactory.com

More info: Join the [event page](#), invite your friends and get ready for an awesome evening of comedy.

Also check out our article: "Madrid's Action-packed English-language Comedy Scene in Madrid!"