

Sound Anthology: Program Notes

Recent Perspectives on Latin American Computer Music

Notes by the Curators,
**Rodrigo F. Cádiz and
Federico Schumacher**

Electroacoustic music has a long and rich tradition in Latin America, despite the many instances of political and economic turbulence that the region has experienced throughout its existence. Without much public or private support, composers such as Mauricio Kagel, Reginaldo Carvalho, Jorge Antunes, José Vicente Asuar, Juan Amenabar, Juan Blanco, Carlos Jiménez Mabarak, and Franciso Kröpfl, among many others, established the foundations of what is now a vibrant and active Latin American computer music community. Ricardo Dal Farra's article in this special issue, which we encourage the reader to visit, provides a profound and important account of the development of this genre in the region.

One interesting fact to emphasize is that, in an era when communications were not as rapid and abundant as they are today, the time gap between the first European compositions of *musique concrète* and electronic music and their Latin American counterparts was not very long. The first Latin American works, created by Kagel, date from the early 1950s, and in 1956 the first Chilean and Brazilian pieces were composed. This, we believe, is evidence suggesting that the history and advances of this genre in the Latin American regions are as rich and important as the better-known European or North American equivalents.

Another important aspect of the computer music of Latin America

is that, even though there is some dispersion, there are some countries that concentrate the majority of the activities and creation around this genre. Computer music from Perú, Ecuador, Paraguay, Bolivia, or Central American countries is much less abundant than music from Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Cuba, Colombia, México, Venezuela, or Uruguay. And this unequal distribution is probably more pronounced in the case of computer music research and academic institutions that include this genre in their educational programs.

This anthology presents a selection of some of the most significant works that were submitted to and presented at the Electroacoustic Music Festival at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, an annual event that has been organized by the university since 2015. Rodrigo F. Cádiz was a founder of this festival and directed it until 2021, and Federico Schumacher was part of the juror and artistic panels on several occasions. The first edition of the festival, in 2015, was dedicated only to Chilean composers. In the subsequent editions, an open call for Latin and Hispanic American works has been the norm, and the selection of works, besides some exceptions and curated concerts, is based on a rigorous evaluation of a jury of established Chilean and guest composers.

The works included in this anthology were chosen based on their quality, in terms of the scores they obtained in the juror panels, and also considering the composers' countries of origin. The works' descriptions below were written by the composers themselves and have been only slightly edited, leaving them as long or short as the composers determined. All music is presented in a stereo format, even though the majority of the selection was initially composed for multichannel systems. This selection contains music from

Argentina, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Chile, and Venezuela.

Rocío Cano Valiño: "Pyxis"

"Pyxis" (2015) is a multichannel electroacoustic work composed for a quadrasonic system. The piece takes as its conceptual basis the idea of searching for the north and stability. In Latin, *pyxis* means "compass."

In the piece, each section begins with a development process that is based on a sine wave (or a bowl sound), which corresponds to the moment when the "north" stabilizes. Also, each time a new section starts, the elements are unstable following a stabilization process. At the beginning of the work, there is more reverberation. In contrast to that, in another part, nonreverberant sounds predominate until the climax, analogous to the needle when a compass is stabilized.

"Pyxis" was commissioned by Festival Bahía[in]sonora 2015 and received its premiere at the Teatro Municipal Bahía Blanca (Provincia de Buenos Aires, Argentina).

Track Duration: 07:08

Rocío Cano, born in Argentina in 1991, is a composer and interior designer. Cano's musical production is dedicated to instrumental, mixed, and electroacoustic pieces. She is a member of the artistic committee of the Ensemble Orbis, which is based in Lyon and which she co-founded. Cano's music has been performed by ensembles such as Proxima Centauri, HANATSUMirror, Paramirabo, Ensemble Ars Nova, and Duo PARCOURS. She collaborated as a scenographer and 3-D designer on the opera *Qu'est-ce que l'amour?* by composer Demian Rudel Rey.

She is currently pursuing her master's degree in contemporary

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Figure 1. Rocío Cano. (Photo by Jean-Baptiste García. Used with permission.)



composition at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse (CNSMD) in Lyon, where she studies with François Roux. She also takes classes with Martín Matalon and Luca Antignani. Cano obtained a DNSPM in composition at CNSMD in Lyon, a bachelor's degree in musicology at the Université Lumière Lyon 2, and a Diplôme d'Études Musicales (DEM) in electroacoustic composition with Stéphane Borrel at the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional (CRR) of Lyon. In Argentina, she studied composition with Demian Rudel Rey.

She has received various commissions: Aide à l'écriture du Ministère de la Culture, France Musique "Création Mondiale," residency at the Groupe de Recherches Musicales (GRM) with a premiere at the Festival Présences 2020 at the Maison de la Radio, Studio Césaré (Centres Nationaux de Création Musicale, CNCM), Société des Auteurs, Compositeurs et Éditeurs de Musique (SACEM), Office Artistique de la Région Nouvelle-Aquitaine (OARA), Fondo Nacional de las Artes, Bahía[in]sonora Festival, and Ibermúsicas.

Cano's works have received distinctions from the Destellos Foun-

dation, Musicworks, and the Luigi Russolo Award, among others. Cano's compositions have been selected and performed in various festivals around the world such as Festival Mixtur, the Center for Experimental Music and Intermedia (CEMI) Circles, and the San Francisco Tape Music Festival.

In 2017, Resterecords released her first monographic album, "Tâches." Cano's music is published by Babel Scores, Taukay Edizioni Musicali, and Phas.e, among others. La Lettre du Musicien published her "Portrait double vie" written by Antoine Pecqueur in the "Architecture" edition in 2020.

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Iván Ferrer-Orozco: "Contrabass"

The work arises from the following quote from Lewis Carroll's *Alice through the Looking Glass*, chapter 3, "Looking-Glass Insects":

However, this was anything but a regular bee: in fact it was an elephant—as Alice soon found out, though the idea quite took her breath away at first. "And what enormous flowers they must be!" was her next idea. "Something like cottages with the roofs taken off, and stalks put to them—and what quantities of honey they must make!"

The work is built entirely with small fragments of other recordings of passages of pieces for solo double bass but reproduced and recorded in reverse. I was curious as to what small snippets of previous recordings would sound like if played back this way. To my surprise, I discovered that seemingly uninteresting elements took on much richer sonic value when played back like this. As in Alice's vision, things appear to be

something, but through the looking glass nothing is what it appears to be.

Track Duration: 04:56

Iván Ferrer-Orozco, born in Mexico City in 1976, is a composer, electronic media performer, and sideman. In his work, he makes extensive use of electronic media to create music that is a mix of dynamic and physical forces that flow and expand. Highly influenced by the use of electronic tools in turntablism, plunderphonics, clubbing, hip-hop, noise, and free improvisation, he incorporates resources from that music and others also important to him (death metal, punk, free jazz, early alternative, progressive rock, funk, etc.), plus analog studio techniques in the digital domain to design musical gardens or heterotopias.

In 2021, the International Computer Music Association (ICMA) presented Iván Ferrer-Orzoco with the ICMA Best Music Award. He has been an artist in residence in international institutions, such as the Akademie der Künste, the MacDowell Colony, and the Goethe-Institut, among others. His music has been extensively performed in festivals and concert series across the Americas, Europe, and Asia.

An active performer specializing in electronic media, he performs as a soloist and collaborates as a sideman with other artists and ensembles from Spain and abroad. In 2019, he was named a Member of the Sistema Nacional de Creadores de Arte, a national program of the Mexican government awarded to outstanding artists of all disciplines. He was a member of the Neopercussion ensemble for eight years and is currently a member of the electronic media band The Experimental Tooth, the Synergein Project, and the Vertixe Sonora Ensemble.

Figure 2. Ana María Romano G.
(Photo by Jean-Baptiste García.
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Ana María Romano G.: “posdomingo 02.10.2016”

The work was composed in my personal studio in Bogotá, Colombia, for the inaugural concert of the SPECTRA Festival in 2016, which consisted of works created for the German accordionist Eva Zöllner in a mixed format. I originally composed “posdomingo 02.10.2016” for accordion and eight-channel fixed media, but with the passing of time, I decided that the fixed media could be an independent work, too.

The piece was composed after the day that the peace deal made between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), was defeated in a referendum (October 2, 2016). It was my sad surprise to receive the news that, with very few votes and after a campaign full of deceptions and lies, the “No” option won.

The program notes for the premiere were a few words that I transcribe below:

Key words: Indolence. Abandonment. Doctrine. Manifestation. Fear.

Tags: Sadness. Pain. Arrogance. Unrest. Hopelessness. Limbo. Instability. Hope. Cynicism. Handling. Scam. Rage. God. Power. Exclusion. Ideology. Monster. Silence. Fear. Memory. Empty.

For this work, I started from the idea of working collaboratively with Eva Zöllner. We focused on sharing sound recordings made by us: soundscapes of Bogotá, CDMX, Berlin, and São Paulo. Her cat and my dogs. Her accordion. Historical



recordings of politicians murdered during the Colombian armed conflict.

The sounds that are “clean,” without obvious signal processing, went through meticulous, delicate, and subtle editions that were not guided by the macro timbral transformation but rather open multiple layers in which different spatialities and temporalities meet and link.

For a concert performance, Zöllner’s participation is improvisational, dialoguing with the fixed media.

Track Duration: 07:36

Ana María Romano G., born in Colombia in 1971, is a composer and interdisciplinary sound artist. Her creative interests center around acoustic and electroacoustic media and participation in interdisciplinary projects involving contemporary dance, video dance, performance, and live arts. Her creative interests stem from the intersection of gender, sound and technology, listening, soundscape, noise, experimentation, improvisation, cyberspace, body, and the political dimension of the creative. Her artistic works have been featured in festivals and published in physical form and by several Internet

labels in Latin America, Europe, North America, and Asia.

Her interest in documentation led her to produce several publications such as CDs and multimedia, magazines, and web platforms. She has been working on the legacy of the reference Colombian electroacoustic composer Jacqueline Nova since 1999, and she curated the 2017 sound installation “Jacqueline Nova. El mundo maravilloso de las máquinas” (Jacqueline Nova: The Wonderful World of Machines) for the Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellín (Medellin Modern Art Museum). She has also collaborated in the dissemination of Nova’s legacy inside and outside Colombia in creation, research, and publication projects. In a parallel way, she advances an investigation of the protagonist-referents of Latin American electronic music.

Romano G. has organized numerous events throughout her career devoted to the diffusion of current creations (concerts, seminars, workshops, etc.) characterized by the presence of artists from different countries, and she has been an artist in residence at the Centro Mexicano para la Música y las Artes (CMMAS).

Currently, she teaches at Universidad El Bosque and Universidad de Antioquia. She is the coordinator of the Plataforma Feminista En Tiempo Real (Feminist Platform in Real Time) dedicated to the encounter between sound and technology with a focus on women and LGBTQ+ individuals. She has been nominated for the Classical Next Innovation Award 2019 (Holland) for making visible the work of women in the field of experimental sound creation with technologies through the Festival En Tiempo Real.

She is cofounder and one of the coordinators of the Paisajistas Sonoras América Latina (Women Soundscape Artists of Latin America) with the Peruvian soundscaper and researcher

Figure 3. Levy Oliveira. (Photo by Levy Oliveyra. Used with permission.)



Vanessa Valencia Ramos and integrates the Red de Compositoras Latinoamericanas (Latinamerican Composers Network) and GexLat Género Experimentación Latinoamérica (GexLat Gender Experimentation). She develops her artistic and teaching work regularly at events inside and outside Colombia.

Website: soundcloud.com/anamariaromano

Levy Oliveira: “Reminiscences”

The piece is a reflection on life itself. The music acts as if the listener were inside the mind of someone close to death who is recalling important moments of life, such as childhood, sexual experiences, parties, work, and death. The piece uses recorded and synthesized sounds to suggest all these environments, sometimes clearly and sometimes blurred, illustrating passages of life that almost everyone can relate to.

“Reminiscences” was composed at the composer’s personal home studio and at the Research Center for Contemporary Music at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (Brazil).

Track Duration: 8:16

Levy Oliveira, born in Brazil in 1993, has been studying musical

Figure 4. Felipe Otondo. (Photo by Felipe Otondo. Used with permission.)



composition since 2010. His music is played frequently in Brazilian and international festivals, and it has also received awards in competitions in Brazil and abroad. In his creative work, Levy Oliveira aims to understand how listeners react to music and how their expectations are built to confirm or deny it a posteriori. Therefore, the study of psychological terms such as habituation and processing fluency has been a rich source of information to be explored in his music. Electronics are often applied as a way of breaking expectations, increasing the spatial and timbral possibilities available to surprise the listeners. Nonetheless, he has composed for instrumentations ranging from acousmatic pieces to solo instruments, chamber, and orchestral music.

Oliveira teaches at the Faculdade de Música do Espírito Santo (FAMES).

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Felipe Otondo: “Irama”

In Javanese gamelan music, “Irama” has the general meaning of a time interval between two successive sounds or actions. The term can also be used

to refer to temporal relationships between any of the subdividing parts in gamelan performance as well as tempo in general. The work explores notions of pulse and microrhythmic structures using a set of recordings of various types of Javanese gamelan orchestra as a timbral framework. The purpose of the piece was to investigate distinctive rhythmic features of traditional gamelan music using the unique timbral explorations of electronic music and spatial design tools to create a sense of distance and perspective in the mix. The work is inspired by various rhythmic and timbral relationships between subdividing parts of the gamelan orchestra and structured as a surreal journey across distant lands where the gamelan plays an important religious role.

“Irama” was composed in the electronic music studios at Lancaster University in the UK using gamelan samples collected at the University of York.

Track Duration: 9:33

Felipe Otondo, born in 1975 in Chile, is a composer and researcher based in Valdivia, Chile. He studied acoustics in Chile, and later composition at the University of York in England with Ambrose Field and Roger Marsh, focusing on electroacoustic music, sound installations, and music theater. His music has been played in festivals across Asia, Europe, and North and South America. He has received various international awards and prizes at composition competitions such as the Città di Udine International Composition Competition (2008 and 2013), the Quartz Radio France Award (2012), and the Chilean National Innovation Award (2019). He is currently an associate professor and director of the Arts and Technology Lab (LATE) at

Figure 5. Mirtru Escalona-Mijares.
(Photo by Aude Paget. Used with permission.)

Universidad Austral de Chile. His music is published by Sargasso Records.

Website: otondo.net

Mirtru Escalona-Mijares: “L’ermitage au toit de chaume”

This piece is a modest tribute to the Buddhist monk Ryōkan (1758–1831) and to the impression left by some of his poems. “L’ermitage au toit de chaume” takes as a starting point the poetic image of five *tankas* (rhymeless Japanese poems consisting of 31 syllables spread over 5 lines) written by Ryōkan during various periods of his life.

vous me demandez
où se trouve
ma demeure?
à l’est du pont
au-dessus du fleuve d’étoiles
- - - - -
si on me demande comment
j’ai pu renoncer au désir
sous le ciel
quand la pluie tombe, elle tombe
quand le vent souffle, il souffle
- - - - -
un long moment
sous le ciel parfumé
d’ivresse affalé
un rêve merveilleux
au pied du cerisier en fleurs
- - - - -
la rosée s’est déposé
le sentier de la montagne doit
être froid
une dernière coup de saké
avant de rentrer
peut-être?
- - - - -
comme un mince filet d’eau
se frayant un passage entre des
rochers



couverts de mousse
aussi allègrement
j’ai traversé cette vie

—Ryōkan
“Recueil de l’ermitage au toit de
chaume” © Éditions Moundar-
ren, Hervé Collet, 2004/2010.

This work was commissioned by the Institut National de l’Audiovisuel and the Groupe de Recherches Musicales (INA-GRM) and received its premiere on 25 January 2015 at Multiphonies 2014-15: Akousma, Auditorium Saint-Germain—Maison des Pratiques Artistiques Amateurs (MPAA), Paris (France). It has received two awards: first prize at the ninth biennial acousmatic composition competition Métamorphoses (Brussels, Belgium, 2016) and second prize *ex æquo* at Semaine Internationale de Musique Electroacoustique (Lille, France, 2019).

Track Duration: 15:24

Mirtru Escalona-Mijares, born in Venezuela in 1976, had his first contact with music in Duaca, within “El Sistema,” a national system of youth orchestras. He completed his

first musical training with Rafael Saavedra and Gerardo Gerulewicz, before returning to France at the invitation of José Manuel López-López and Paul Méfano. In 2000, he continued his training with Philippe Leroux, Ivan Fedele, and Christine Groult, then completed his studies with a master’s degree in composition (option for electroacoustic and computer music) at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et Danse de Lyon, in the class of Robert Pascal, Michele Tadini, and Denis Lorrain.

For Escalona-Mijares, the craft of composition has become a continuous self-discovery and a tool to react to the contemporary world. His works reflect in an authentic, poetic, and spiritual way this particular relationship to music and its environment.

As an artist, he invites the audience to dream and to broaden their musical listening limits to bring them closer to the “nontangible” that connects us all. Strongly attracted by electronics, he incorporates them as a logical extension of acoustic instruments, and his work is imbued with digital art and non-Western music as a source of reflection and awareness of diverse perceptions of the world.

He has received multiple internationally recognized awards, including the Simon Bolivar University Award, the first prize in the Kuhmo International Composition Competition, and the Earplay Donald Aird Composers Competition.

He works regularly with highly recognized ensembles, musicians, and festivals.

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