

Entrevista realizada por **Yew Choong Cheong** a **Juan María Solare**
por correo electrónico en abril y julio de 2008

Interview by **Yew Choong Cheong** with **Juan María Solare**
by e-mail in April and July 2008

within the frame of a Dissertation at the West Virginia University, USA
about *Latin American piano music*. advisor: **Dr. David Taddie**

1) Previous dialog (answers: Bremen, 14th April 2008)

YCC: "My dissertation is initially focused on a Latin American composer Miguel del Aguila"

JMS: Oh, an interesting composer from whom I actually don't know much. I would love to read your results.

Tania León is a great composer, unfortunately I only have contact per email with her but she seems to be a very warm person.

YCC: "Basically, I want to research how these Latin American composers, regardless of where they stay (USA, Europe etc.) retain the soul of Latin America or Latin accent, so to speak."

JMS: The "identity" is an underlying theme... I am usually quite skeptic what concerns associating for instance Latin rhythms with Latin essence. I think one can sound Latin American without quoting folklore. One shouldn't disguise oneself as that, that one already is. Mozart says (more or less) in some letter: "My music sounds like Mozart exactly as my nose is as it is and I cannot influence it". So I cannot avoid sounding Latin American. I would be composing as the others expect me to do, and no how I want to. Besides: Latin America is a large continent (a large country I could say): Mexico and Argentina sound quite different.

I am sure this happens also to you. You are not (North)American born, aren't you? Your name sounds Asiatic to me. I don't know if you compose music but - could you really avoid that your music sound Asiatic? Besides: Asiatic is quite large... generalizing too much wouldn't help me to understand you.¹

1 Actually, the interviewer is Malaysian.

2) Answers: Berlin 21 JUL 2008

1) Do you have any press reviews about your music (the critical comments from newspapers/magazines)? Quotation from critics and the name of publication.

JMS: Yes, something, although unfortunately nothing so extensive. Some journalistic important but not academic reviews are:

* *Donata Holz*, newspaper *Wümme Zeitung* (Lilienthal, 5/JAN/2002, with Foto by Hans-Henning Hasselberg, "*Die Musik ist seine Muttersprache*" [Music is his mother tongue].

* <http://www.music.indiana.edu/som/lamc/publications/lamusica/vol5.10/Solare.html>

* <http://www.musicaclassicaargentina.com/2criticasjea3.htm>

Besides, there are some comments under

* <http://home.swipnet.se/sonoloco3/solare/tango.html>

* <http://home.swipnet.se/sonoloco11/solare/electro1.html>

There are also some letters by different musicians about my music, for instance by **Karlheinz Stockhausen**:

"Ihr Brief vom 21. August ist ein schönes Zeugnis für Treue: vielen Dank! [Ihre Komposition] 'häi ka' ist ein sprechendes Porträt von Ihnen und deshalb sehr wertvoll" (Karlheinz Stockhausen, Brief vom 27. August 2002)

Fax to Miroslav Spasov, May 17th, 2004:

"Mr. Juan María Solare has informed me that he is interested in teaching composition at the Mediterranean University in North Cyprus. Since ten years I know J.M.Solare. He has participated several times at my composition seminars. I think that he really deserves to hold such a position.

Solare knows the present situation of musical composition well. He is integer, tolerant, very friendly: a very rare spirit.

Friendly greetings sends

K. Stockhausen"

Also Ms. **Else Rudloff** (church musician in Worpswede, close to Bremen):

"[Seine Komposition '*Alles hat seine Zeit*'] kann neben einer Motette von Bach stehen."

And also by Gitarrist **Christoph Jäggin**:

"Ich möchte mich aber schnell und kurz bei Dir bedanken für Deine - ja genialen "Apuntes". Ich bewundere sie - jede Note - in ihrer Gedankenfülle, in ihrer Klangsensibilität, in ihren grossen und kleinen kunstvoll gearbeiteten Formen ... ein wahres Meisterstück, das nicht zuletzt auch das Publikum ganz für sich einnahm! Ich muss gestehen, dass ich schon etwas skeptisch war, ob denn die 12 kleinen Werklein auch als "Konzertmusik" "funktionieren" würden. Sie tun es, was sich mir bald bei intensivem Üben zeigte. Ja, ein intensives Üben war nötig, die Stücke verdienen die ganze Hingabe eines Interpreten. Sie sind auf ihre bescheidene Art so überzeugend und grossartig, dass sie eben auch ganz schön herausfordern. Das habe ich also alles erlebt und bin reich beschenkt worden. Herzlichsten Dank. (**Christoph Jäggin**, Brief 11. März 2003)"

And Argentine pianist **Alfredo Corral** (email from 24 October 2007):

"Creo que tu creatividad conjuga un espectro de sensaciones muy interesante. Por un lado está esta veta nostálgica (¿postromántica?), tanguera, con la que me siento profundamente identificado, y por el otro este juego (a veces con mucho humor) con un universo de cosas cotidianas y no tanto que se plasman en tus hojas de experimentación formando un juego intelectual contemporáneo que siempre al menos le incita al ejecutante (yo ...) a probar."

The journalist **Donata Holz** about my piece "Moormoos" for piano solo, Wümme-Zeitung 5/JUL/2003):

"Ein sehr zartes Stück, das klang wie ein morgendlicher Spaziergang im Moor, an dem die Tautropfen auf den Blättern perlen und die Natur langsam erwacht."

Also **Sylvia Hinz**, from the Musikschule Berlin-Kreuzberg (Germany):

"Dieses Stück [ENVOLVENTE] ist für alle Stufen der Musikschule geeignet... Am Anfang gab es Schwierigkeiten mit der Notation. Nachdem ich bestimmte Festlegungen bezüglich der Ereignis- und Pausendauer getroffen hatte, lief es wunderbar. Bitte mehr Stücke dieser Art!" (2005)

Journalist **Michael Pitz-Grewenig** wrote in "Bevor die Musik schweigt - Solare im Theatersaal der Universität", Weser Kurier [Bremen] 12. Juni 2006, Seite 11.

"Solare bewies mit diesem Konzert, dass er gestalterisch wie spieltechnisch ein kompetenter Pianist der Avantgarde ist. Sein Klang am Klavier ist durchsichtig, filigran und reich an Details (...) die 6 kleinen Stücke für Klavier, op. 19, von Arnold Schönberg habe ich selten so polyphon und gleichzeitig organisch kompakt gehört. (...) Diese zarten Kompositionen [von Morton Feldman] bedürfen eines gewissenhaften Spiels im Pianobereich, um in der Dynamik die Farbigekeit ihrer klanglichen Strukturen erlebbar zu machen. Solare vertiefte sich beispielhaft in diese Klangwelt (...) JMS stellte sich bei diesem

Konzertabend als vielseitiger Pianist und Komponist vor, dessen Konzerte Neugierde hervorrufen sollten."

And recently, "Of all the Argentinean composers we viewed, you were the favorite."
(Pianist & Researcher **Maria Heward**, email 31/MAR/2008)

2) Could you describe more about your ancestor background? Your parents are of Spanish ancestry? Do you have any sibling? Are you from a musical family? Any of your family member is musician?

JMS: My father, Juan Solare (1919-1993), was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, to a family of Italian immigrants. My father's father (Marco Solare, 1878-1946) came from Corigliano in Casenza, Calabria, although his own father came from North Italy (either Venezia or Genova). Actually, the first time I was in Italy I didn't have the impression of "going to" Italy, but of "going back" to Italy. Marco (my grandfather, whom I didn't get to know) had a hard childhood: his father -a lawyer- died quite soon. He (my grandfather, Marco) married Carmela Malagrino (1999-1957), my grandmother, and they came to Argentina about 1910. They had eight children, my father was the fifth.

My mother, Beatriz Elena Entenza (1936-2006), was born in Buenos Aires. Her father, Enrique Entenza Otero (1908-1983) was an immigrant from Galicia, Spain. Her mother, María Clara Blanco (1913-2001) was born in Argentina but her own father (Francisco Blanco Rodríguez, died 1976) was from Spain and her mother (María Elena Bannon-Henson) was born in Argentina (in 1885 in the city of *Salto*) to a family of Irish immigrants (her own grandmothers were called Elena Grennon and Elena Brown). The fathers of María Elena Bannon-Henson (my grandmother's mother) came from county Westmeath in Ireland.

So, as you see, I have ancestors from Italy (on father's side), Spain and Ireland (on mother's side), which is actually quite common in Argentina. As an example: at some point (in the early nineties) there was a major election in Italy, and all Italians living abroad could vote. In Argentina, one million Italians went to vote. Consider that Argentina had at that point some 35 millions inhabitants...

Currently I have both citizenships: Italian and Argentine (it is possible in some countries) so I can live in Germany (or in any other European country) without visa or further formalities. When I see some of my landsmen or other Latin American that suffer, say, "persecution" from the state, I consider it an injustice. Because I could be a criminal, but I can stay in Europe because my grandfather, whom I didn't know, happened to be born in Europe. Lots of non-criminals cannot stay in Europe because their grandfathers were born in Ecuador, Argentina or elsewhere. I cannot call this justice.

Anyway, as a recognition to my grandfather, I am since years planning a piece called "**MARCO**", an long electroacoustical work with songs and stories from immigrants from all of the world. I think I must compose this piece as a debt with all of them - and as a signal. One of my favorites testimonies by immigrants is this one:

"Well, I came to America because I heard the streets were paved with gold. When I got there I found out three things: first, the streets weren't paved with gold; second, they weren't paved at all; and third, I was expected to pave them." (An Italian immigrant's recollections, Ellis Island Museum)

I think this story is a good example of what happens to most immigrants. And nowadays, I am an immigrant in Germany, if you want. Actually, I think everybody except Adam, the first man, was an immigrant. Non immigrants are called those who have forgotten where their father came from.

I told you this story for two reasons: one to avoid a dry description with just names or numbers; another to make you notice that I am interested in "translating" creatively my autobiographical experiences - also those of my ancestors.

3) Do you have any sibling? Are you from a musical family? Any of your family member is musician?

JMS: My brother, **Carlos María Solare** (born 1960), he plays viola and viola d'amore and is currently doing his dissertation on musicology (about the music for a theater piece of the baroque Spanish author Calderón de la Barca). He tends to like music of previous centuries more than me, so that we often say as joke that we divide us the music world: since 1950 for me, and the rest for him. Anyway, he also plays some contemporary music like Morton Feldman and some Argentine composers as Gerardo Gandini and myself. My brother lives in Berlin since he in 1979 won a scholarship to study viola with Bruno Giuranna at the Karajan Academy.

My sister, **María Mercedes Solare** (born 1968) is a dancer, and she also teaches dance in Buenos Aires: Argentine native/folkloric dances and modern dance. She also learned piano and oboe.

My cousin (the first son of my mother's brother), **Enrique Martín Entenza** (born 1969) plays Bandoneon (also called "tango accordion" by some) and clarinet. He also performed saxophone for a while. This is the reason why you will find his name in my works catalog in the dedication of pieces for Clarinet, Sax and Bandoneon...

I performed with my brother, the violist, in two opportunities:

- *Aula Magna* of the *Universidad Nacional del Centro de la Provincia de Buenos Aires*, city of Tandil (Argentina), on 6/APR/1991.
- *Berliner Kabarett Anstalt* in Berlin (Germany), on 14/MAR/2006.

I performed with my cousin as clarinetist:

- *Aula Magna* of the *Universidad del Centro de la Provincia de Buenos Aires*, city of Tandil (Argentina), on 28/OCT/1988.

And I recorded three tango pieces with my cousin as bandoneonist on 11/OCT/1998 in Buenos Aires, as tango trio Arrabal, together with **Juan Elías** (double bass).

I don't think there have been several professional musicians in our family, anyway: one of my early recollections is of finding an old violin at my grandmother's house (María Clara Blanco). I think -but never asked- this was from somebody of the Irish part of the family, who played violin as non professional.

Sure is that my mother made a lot for our artistic education. She played piano until she got into the University at 17 or 18 (Philology) and was extremely well informed about the classical musical scene. She was less interested on rock or pop music and had only a tangential interest in contemporary, avant-garde music.

My father played some recorder for himself and liked the instrument. Both liked classical music, including opera, and over decades had an subscription at Buenos Aires main opera house, the Teatro Colón.

3) Answers: Berlin 23 JUL 2008

4) "Is it because of military regime or political injustice in Argentina that forced you to move to Germany?"

JMS: No. I cannot say that I suffered political injustice in Argentina. Fortunately I was too young for that. When the military regime in Argentina ended (DEC 1983) I was 17 years old. I came to Germany ten years later, and due to cultural reasons: it was much easier to develop a professional career as a composer in Germany than in Argentina. Because a composer needs a cultural context to grow, and Argentina didn't have at that time (in the 1990's) interest in composers, or didn't have to possibility of financing that "luxury". You couldn't live of composing in Argentina, and actually now you can't either. In Germany it become easier for me (a) to get my pieces performed and (b) to get money -royalties- for the performances of my pieces. Actually, nowadays my incomes through royalties are higher than the incomes from teaching, so you can assume that my compositions are performed quite often.

5) Your explanation is similar to the other Latin composer Miguel del Aguila who was forced to migrate to US because he was treated badly by the government and he was not allowed to perform.

JMS: No, it is not my case. Of course, it is or was the case of several composers living under dictatorships, because due to strange reasons dictatorial governments tend to assume that if you are a revolutionary musician you will also glad (and prepared) to lead a social revolution. This might happen, but not always.

6) Could you please describe more about your birthday Buenos Aires? How was the political scene? How was the musical development at that time?

JMS: In 1966, when I was born, was a politically and economically extremely difficult time, with military governments interspersed with democratic governments that were in fact not much better -or just- than the military ones. But all these things I discovered afterwards, when I came of age. As I didn't know a different situation, for me as a child was "normal" that you can either have an elected president or a military one, as more or less equivalent. Or it was "normal" to see heavily armed persons running in automobiles in the search of some "criminal".

The musical development at that time was, paradoxically, quite good. This is one of the many paradoxes in Latin America: you cannot stop the power, the creative strength of the persons. Even during the worse crisis you will find artists creating truth. And not just a sterile art as an escape, but art with power. This is something I sometimes miss in Europe, where art can become merely a mind game or a permutations matrix.

Unfortunately, creating this "powerful" art doesn't allow you to eat, so you must choose. Either you stay in Argentina and have a day job and compose some free week end or slowly at night, risking permanent depression and professional frustration, or you emigrate somewhere and condemn yourself to be life long a second class citizen - because of course the best positions are always for the natives, in any country.

Going back to your question, "at that time" (1966-76) there were the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella, the Asociación Nueva Música (Juan Carlos Paz, later Francisco Kröpfl) and the "*Cursos latinoamericanos de música contemporánea*" (organized by Coriún Aharonián from 1971 to 1989), persons like Xenakis, Nono, Cage etc. were invited to these institutions. This is documented history, please check the sources. But also: concerts of classical music in different places (not only avant-garde!) Speaking in general, there was in the air the general impression that at the conservatories "contemporary music" meant "music until Debussy". This might seem an exaggeration, but not too much. Unfortunately it has much of truth, and I would say that only now (since, say, 2000) the general taste is adopting contemporary music as a real possibility in the concerts of the main stream. With "main stream" I mean the concerts that *really* count, in the main performing venues, as opposite to the almost underground scene that is very romantic but that strives permanently to be heard and be taken seriously.

7) "When did you migrate to Germany? Did you migrate together to Germany with your brother and sister? Why did you choose Germany?"

JMS: I migrated in August 1993 with a scholarship of the DAAD (*Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst*, German Academic Exchange Service). After two months in Göttingen to learn more German, in October 1993 I began my "Aufbaustudium" (postgraduate course) in composition under the guidance of Johannes Fritsch at the *Musikhochschule* in Köln (Cologne).

My brother migrated much earlier, in 1979, and to Berlin (almost at the other side of Germany). My sister stayed in Argentina (well, she was some months in Italy in the late 80' or early 90' but she returned).

I choose Germany because of three reasons. First, the German culture was always a model for us in the family. Second, my brother was already living there. Third, I also applied for scholarships in London (London College of Music, City University, Royal Academy of Music, Goldsmith's College, King's College, Guildhall School of Music and Trinity College of Music) and *nothing* worked - but it worked in Germany.

8) Did you learn piano from your mother?

JMS: Possibly yes. Because somehow I could play easy melodies before going to my first piano lesson. I am sure that I found out by myself some of those melodies, but I am also sure that some were dictated or indicated by my mother. As there was a piano at home and I played/improvised as a child, I learned more or less naturally the instrument, as a mother tongue.

9) Did you remember how you love music for the first time?

JMS: No, because it is as asking me how I loved water for the first time. At some point I realized that that activity I was doing was called "music" by others. But there is no "aha experience" that I can recall now.

10) Could you describe more about your childhood? How did you have first contact with music? Learning piano as the first instrument? Or listening to classical music for the first time?

JMS: My first contact with music was possibly the piano at home (at that time: street Billinghamurst, corner Soler, in Buenos Aires). I played easy melodies and improvised short pieces - what I would call nowadays "pieces based on the repetition of a pattern or motif" (I assume this is not unusual at that age: 4-5). I still recall one of those pieces. I called it "*La casa*" (The house) because it has a basement ("theme") and different floors (variations). The theme (and each "floor") was geometrical/symmetrical planned as for a keyboard: the main harmonic fields being: F/B - F#-Bb - G#. It would be funny to write down that piece... as a historical documentation. Interesting is also that I still recall that piece, albeit not in extreme details.

My first contact with music was, as I knew later, already in my mother's womb. She thought it could have a positive influence and so she listened (classical) music when being pregnant. Actually, she listened music mainly because she liked it - but she also thought about the possible good consequences for us kids.

11) When did you start your first lessons? Where?

JMS: About 1970 or 71, at the latest 1972 (I should check the documentation), I started studies on "*Iniciación Musical*" and (later) recorder at the *Collegium Musicum* in Buenos Aires. I think this were the first regular music lessons. This institution was extremely important in the musical life in Argentina. It was grounded in 1946 by German and center-European musicians that emigrated to Argentina, a main figure being Guillermo Graetzer. You can read more about this at www.collegiummusicum.org.ar . The *Collegium Musicum* is still relevant in the musical life of Buenos Aires, but at that time was even more important, because there were much less institutions devoted to musical education.

12) Who were your first teachers (piano and composition)?

JMS: My first teachers in piano: **Alicia Belleville** (ca. 1972-74), shortly **Lucrecia Massoni**, and mainly **María Teresa Criscuolo** (practically all my career, first privately and afterwards at the *Conservatorio Nacional*, 1976-1989), shortly **Perla Brúgola** in the middle (ca. 1983). In Germany also **Klaus Runze** and **Paulo Alvares**, with whom I mainly studied improvisation at the piano in a contemporary music language.

About my first piano teachers in detail, I can tell you some anecdotes.

a) When I arrived to Köln I studied mainly composition (with Johannes Fritsch) but also piano improvisation with **Klaus Runze** (1993-94). At some point I told my "old" piano teacher, **María Teresa Criscuolo**, about this, and she told me that she had also studied with Klaus Runze in Cologne. Even more: that she still uses his piano method for absolute beginners. She didn't applied with me because I was not an absolute beginner when began studying with her. Later (1999 or 2000?) she traveled from Argentina to Cologne and we *three* met by chance at the *Musikhochschule*. That I was there was not a real surprise, that Klaus Runze was there was already strange because he was already pensioned, and that precisely at that point María Teresa arrived was a real chance, and a nice one.

b) **Alicia Belleville** was my first piano teacher. I got to know her when she was still bachelor and lived with her mother. I began studying with her about 1972. I still even recall several things and objects of that house. She taught to read music with both clefs at the same time, therefore I was extremely surprised that some colleagues at the *Conservatorio* (who didn't study with her) had difficulties to read bass clef. For me it was as natural as the other one.

When I finished my studies with Alicia, her first daughter was just born, Verónica (with violist Osvaldo d'Amore). She was living at the Avenue Santa Fe (almost corner Riobamba), in Buenos Aires. Before I was traveling like one thousand months to her house in the suburb *Villa Adelina*, in the white bus of the line 140.

Much later -I was already living in Germany, but was visiting Buenos Aires- Alicia performed a concert with violinist Alberto Lysy at the *Salón Dorado* (Golden Hall) of the Teatro Colón. After the small recital (actually an homage to somebody) I came to greet her:

- "I studied with you 25 years ago"
- "Juan María!"
- "But how can you recognize me?"
- "Because of your glance" (*)

We didn't talk much longer because she had to solve some problem. We exchanged emails, but some time later her address didn't work any more. Nevertheless, her name comes across every now and then (for instance, in the curriculum/resume of colleagues or young performers of my music). I hope to meet her in some other 25 years.

(*) I narrated this episode to the Argentine guitarist Analía Rego, who also studied with Alicia Belleville, and she commented "*from this it can be deduced that you have an unforgettable glance*".

4) Answers: Berlin 24 JUL 2008

JMS: As for my composition teachers: above all I refer to my article "**Mis maestros de composición**", published in Spanish and French in *Doce Notas Preliminares* n° 7, (june 2001), Madrid, Spain; pages 82-110. It is also online at <http://www.musicaclasicaargentina.com/3articulossolare.htm>

It would be absolutely important that you try to read/translate this autobiographical article, on one part because you will understand more about my experiences, but also because I try to explain those experiences in a way that is also relevant for others. Actually, I received quite feedback about this article from the Spanish-reading community.

One of the ideas in that article is that "teacher" (in Spanish, "maestro" has mainly this connotation) is any person that influenced decisively in my musical thought or in my artistic idearium.

But I guess that your question is referred to teachers within an academic frame of studies, in an institution, through months or years. Anyway, please don't forget this idea

because it is central to my thought and to my "Weltanschauung" (world vision): if you are a composer, composition teacher is any person from which you get inspiration, even if his/her intention was not to teach. It includes eventually to non musicians and even to the dead.

Another central idea, now referred to the teachers *strictu sensu*, in an academic context, is that they teach through their own careers: they don't limit themselves to teach something and go, but you see that they apply those principles in their musical lives. So they win in credibility, to begin with. Is a liberating fact, because -if not- the pupil/student could even think that "this one devotes to teaching because he/she cannot do anything else". As a student, you win confidence when you know that your teacher has his "motor on", and so can he/she shows you how to turn on your own motor. Possibly this is the most important thing: that a person can teach: to take the career in our own hands.

Retrospectively, I discovered that **Horacio López de la Rosa** (1933-1986) had been my first composition teacher. Peculiar insight, because officially I studied with him *Teoría y Solfeo* (music theory) during four years (1977-1980, at the *Conservatorio Nacional de Música* in Buenos Aires). But as he was a composer himself, he pushed me to show him my extreme early pieces. (My first notated piece is dated on 25th May 1977, I was ten years old.) His comments were always orientated to broaden my musical conception; he always pushed me to *do*, he pointed out a concrete way, opening a palette of possibilities. For instance, if I showed him several pieces in 3/4 (at that tender time I supposed that I could write all my pieces in 3/4), he asked me why not doing the next one in 4/4. I don't recall whether he suggested using 5/4 (maybe he did), but for the case is the same. In another occasion (the reader should mercifully remember that I was twelve years old) he suggested more dynamic variety, "*not always forte*". This made me realized that I didn't notate *any* miserable dynamics.

These seem to be superficial comments, but why should I still clearly remember them after almost thirty years, if they didn't have a strong synthetic power? Actually, "*not always 3/4*" or "*not always forte*" mean that the one thing you are doing should become a particular case of something broader and *THIS* is a fundamental criterion of composition. This is the main thing I learned -that I distilled- from Horacio López de la Rosa.

Something else. Once I was sad because I had musical ideas in the bus or in the street and tried to memorize them, but when arriving home I had forgotten them. He said: "*well, it's better than having no ideas at all*". Somehow this thought functioned as a liberation for me. It released that pressure on myself.

After him, my official teachers in Argentina were **Fermina Casanova** (born 1936), **Juan Carlos Zorzi** (1936-1999), **Francisco Kröpfl** (born in 1928). later, already in Germany, **Johannes Fritsch** (born in 1941), **Hans Ulrich Humpert** (born 1940), **Mauricio Kagel** (born 1931), **Helmut Lachenmann** (born 1935).

A particular position occupies besides **Karlheinz Stockhausen** (1928-2007). He is possibly the person from whom I most learned to be a composer. I underline: "to be a composer" is more than "to compose". About his direct and indirect influence on me we can talk further if you want.

Mauricio Kagel is the best composition teacher I ever had. His system is unique and I never saw something similar. It might be compared to a therapy session with a psychologist, orientated to music. Although I am quite sure that he wouldn't like this comparison and would prefer to talk about maieutics and Socratic methods.

Initially, his questions and comments are orientated to learn where are your problems, "*dónde te aprieta el zapato*" (was his expression -by the way we used our mother tongue Spanish for our lessons- literally: "where does your shoe press?"). More precisely, he leads you to reflect, to think about this subject until *you* realize where are your main problems. The obvious consequence is that you begin to work about this lack/shortcoming until you overcome it; but that is already your problem, not that of the teacher.

Further, all his indications are orientated essentially towards one point: that you learn things about yourself (at least, this is what I perceived...), that you realize what is what you want to do, and that you do it.

Besides, of course, he answered concrete technical questions.

And he obliged you to work a lot, pushing yourself beyond the limits you *SUPPOSED* that you had, but where no real limits at all. he pushed you to *DO*, and this is terribly important. Some other persons push you to *DON'T-DO* (*DON'T-WORK*, *NO-EFFORT*), invoking out of context the theory that "less is more." This axiom has a certain validity in the context of the compositional principles (and economy of means is a constant in every well-done work). But transported to the realm of musical education is out of place and even pernicious. To teach or do less (in the career or in life) is more result of laziness than an aesthetic decision; is more poorness than economy. Anyway: to do (or teach) less is at least *something*, and therefor better than absolutely nothing. Logical, if thinking about "doing a lot" paralyzes me or over-demands me, of course is preferable that my objective be "do less". It will always be better than sterility.

With Kagel we worked on some Scenic Studies (which at later became my **Diez Estudios Escénicos**). One of his first exercises was "invent some concrete dramatic situation, don't worry at the moment about the possible realization (execution) problems -you will be founding those solutions later- now allow yourself to invent anything that comes to your mind, although it may seem to you too daring, risky or ridiculous. And do, say, ten of these exercises."

So I had to write ten dramatic situations from one class to the next one. When you know that your days with one of the big ones are counted, you want to effort yourself at the maximum, so I did them. Of course it took me several hours a day, but I learned something transcendental: to know that I *CAN* compose infinitely more than what I thought. Until that moment, I thought, I could compose an average of three minutes a week. Or five, but not more. At that moment I clearly *saw* that I have done two or three times more. And that was an undeniable fact, an experience, not something theoretical that somebody wanted to persuade me about.

I deduced that this had to do with controlling the degree of self-critic. You can happily criticize your pieces later in the corrections phase, *after* composing, but not *during*. As Leo Brower puts in his Treatise on Harmony (Havana): "*Escriban primero, analicen después*" (Write first, analyze later).

After my "official" studies with Mauricio Kagel (1996) I could always phone him to ask concrete questions about how to lead my career: whom should I call, where could I offer a determinate project, how to deal with performers that want you to get them a concert as "exchange" for performing your pieces, etc. These are essential aspects in any career, but scarcely taught in any Conservatory - at least surely not in Argentina at that time. Not because the teaches are bad persons, but simply because they do not know them.

Even when asking such questions, even existential ones ("Should I apply to a five years scholarship in California?") Kagel's approach was similar: to make me think -through Socratic questions- how much am I really interested in the thing I am about to do, and if it plays a role in my future life, if it is a part of a strategy. Again, under another form, the question: "what do you *really* want to do?", together with elements to reflect an answer. Said like this, it could seem of a horrible superficiality, is key: most teachers never ask what are you interested in doing, but impose some task; the consequence is that you don't learn to think about your own needs and interests.

And it is naive to assume that we know, now and forever, what we want to do. This must be discovered and verbalized; further one must articulate a plan to carry it out, and mechanisms to recognize when we achieve partial objectives.

5) Answers: Worpswede 25 JUL 2008

13) Is "Superior Professor of Piano" equivalent to Bachelor degree in Music or Diploma?

Equivalents between titles and diplomas are extremely difficult to understand. This is actually one big problem in music education. After my diploma as "*Profesor Superior de composición*" I made an "update" in 2005; my oficial title is now "*Licenciado en Artes Musicales con Orientación en Composición*" which is something between and Master and Ph.D.

14) Based on your education history, you pursued several postgraduate diplomas. Among them are focused on electroacoustic. What is your musical philosophy about the electroacoustic? Do you compose electronic music as means of musical expression or experimentation with sounds?

JMS: No philosophy, just sounds. At some point I discovered that I wanted to compose the music that I would like to listen. And some of those sounds that I wanted to listen happened to be synthetic ones.

I know that a lot of people have "philosophical" problems with electronic music (because of the lack of live performers, for instance). I think that in the root of these problems there is no philosophical problem, but an hedonistic one: they just don't like electronic sounds -as they don't like, say, bananas- and they find some reason to justify their taste. I once submit a piece to a competition of electronic music; later I was told that one of the members of the jury didn't like the high frequencies of electronic music.

Implicit in the last part of your question is something interesting: "*Do you compose electronic music as means of musical expression or experimentation with sounds?*" I would say that I conceive my music as born in an energy field dominated by some forces. One of those forces is *expressing*. Another is *communicating* (and both are different things!). A third one is the *experiment-wish* as a way of knowing how thing works (as a child that even destroys a toy to see what is inside). And there might be several more energy focuses in this field. The more energy focuses your music has, the richer or deeper it will be.

15) You composed some atonal and electroacoustic music. Which composers of the past influenced your music? Schoenberg? Berio? Stockhausen?

JMS: My main influences are (in no particular order): Luciano Berio, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Mauricio Kagel, Clarence Barlow, Helmut Lachenmann, John Cage, Franz Liszt, Astor Piazzolla, The Beatles, Queen and some fluxus. You could add Charly García and Luis Alberto Spinetta, who are Argentine pop musicians. As it turns evident, I do not intend a clear cut division between academic and popular composers; I actually believe it is pernicious for the mind to draw such a division line.

16) You composed some conceptual works. What does 'conceptual' mean?

JMS: Speaking in general, conceptual musical is an act which aesthetic importance is more based upon the *frame* than from the *content* of the message.

More particularly, under "conceptual" I mean that those works are not necessarily destined to be actually "performed", but conceived as a mind game: the piece should mainly take place in your imagination. They might be performed or not. "Conceptual" music, or conceptual works of art in general, have some Dadaist or fluxus influence.

Conceptual music, in my conception, is an act of mental hygiene: like saying "imagine that this action would be possible..." The next step is, or would be, to "dare" actually executing that piece.

Conceptual music has usually prose scores (always in my conception of it, I cannot talk for others). Some examples, taken from my *Eleven fluxus compositions* (2007):

#4 Send the Pope a postcard. Write respectfully and draw some musical sign on it. Send it. Don't expect an answer.

#1 Get to a place where you think you could be happy. If getting there exceeds your budget, construct that place within yourself.

Or one of my favorites, from *Seis Composiciones Fluxus* (2003):

#6 Don't suicide.

Most people perform this piece continuously and unnoticed.

6) Answers: Köln 31 JUL 2008

17) You cited Stockhausen as the foremost influence on you as a composer. You mentioned that compositional process through recording and listening, program notes for the compositions, multiplicity of styles as Stockhausen's influence. Does he influence on your piano music? You composed 'Hai Ka' for him -- it's in 6 measures only. What does Hai Ka mean? I'm interested to know more about the program behind this piece. (My dissertation is focused on piano music, please be understood that it's not to ignore your other music)

JMS: About the compositional process as I learned from Stockhausen, I wouldn't say it is "through recording and listening", but through *rehearsing* and listening. What I admire in that compositional process is that, after the first set of ideas are written down, the composer is constantly in contact with the sound and input from instrumentalists, and in these rehearsals new ideas come that fecundate and polish the first set of ideas. A compositional process based on "recording and listening" is mainly adequate for electronic music, where there is no external performer with whom you rehearse, but a loudspeaker and your own soul, so to say.

Concretely about my piano music, the good thing about it is that, being a pianist myself, I can "rehearse with myself". Often, when composing a piano piece, the pianist in myself says to the composer in myself "what do you mean with this indication?" or "should I play this forte legato or piano staccato?" or such questions. So the composer in myself answers those questions by writing them on the score. That's why you can either

like my piano music or not, but you can always be absolutely sure that everything has been tested at the instrument and it works.

Sometimes (for my piano music but also for other instruments) I have a circle of so-called "beta testers", musicians that know and appreciate my music and can point out where they see whether there is something unclear in the notation, for instance. One of my "beta testers" for my piano music (possibly the most attentive) is the Argentine pianist and piano teacher Diego Prigollini. Also Alfredo Corral gives me usually very good pieces of advice.

Back to Stockhausen, it is absolutely true that I see in his extensive program notes and in the plurality of styles (within a certain frame) two important aspects of his influence on me. You might think that pointing out his program notes as an influence is quite superficial. Actually meant is that a composer should be able to verbalize with the greatest simplicity and precision at least certain aspects of his music. Not only for others, but mainly for himself/herself. I would add in this sense that a great influence of Stockhausen on me has been his ability to render the whole plan (or map) of a long composition on a single sheet of paper. It helps to achieve clarity and get an overview of the whole. This is not the only way of composing, but I think that a composer should be able to do this kind of plan, even if he/she doesn't use this in every piece. Actually each piece will tell the composer if it needs a general plan or not.

As whether Stockhausen influenced my piano music. Of course he did, but these influences are general and I couldn't trace a direct line between influence and result, because these influences are related to the way I think about music and conceive the composer's activity. The good thing is that they are style-independent. If you copy a concrete technique from somebody -say, from Messiaen- your music will sound like Messiaen at the best. But if you integrate a way of looking at things, you still see the world through your own eyes. Or at least you see different things...

A great lesson about how to deal with influences was given to me by Johannes Fritsch (about 1993-94). He was the main pupil of Stockhausen and violist in his ensemble of intuitive music. And Fritsch said me that all influences are like a pile of compost. You receive an influence from here or there, they get "decomposed" and become organic matter, and out of this pile of compost grows a rose.

An important factor about influences (as that of Stockhausen, but also from others) is that you only integrate those influences that make something resonate in yourself. Every day we are submitted to hundredths of influences, why do we only incorporate two or three? We discard the rest because they don't "ring a bell" in us. And we open the door to the influences that have something to do with our own styles.

About my piano piece "**hāi ka**", dedicated to Stockhausen. The title is actually baby talk. His little grandson couldn't pronounce "Karlheinz" and said "hāi ka", what sounds more

or less "hei ka". I call this kind of piece "sounding moment" (in allusion to Schubert's "musical moments"). What Stockhausen appreciated in this miniature is precisely that it does *not* sound as Stockhausen, because I don't use any of his compositional techniques, but mine. He always said that composer shouldn't take from others composers of the past, but invent themselves. The worst homage I could do to Stockhausen is to imitate his style.

hài ka is a "signature piece" in the sense that I use techniques that represent my taste at most. For instance, the resonances produced by the harmonics (pressing certain keys without sound before actually producing sound with other keys). It is also a signature piece because my surname (Solare) is included three times. As you know, the notes in Spanish (and Italian, Russian, etc.) are called do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-si. So my surname could be written Sol-La-Re (G-A-D). You find this signature in **hài ka** in bars 1, 3 and 5 (the second time, A is presented as A flat - for the sake of variety). Each of the three motifs is presented with a different articulation structure, giving in general a symmetrical articulation structure. This symmetry is broken by the dynamics: first time **mp**, second time **f**, and third time a synthesis of both dynamics plus an extension: the first note (in bar 5) is **mp**, the second note (thanks to the crescendo) is **f** and the third one is **fff**. A detail: the metronome indication is 74 because Stockhausen was about to be 74 years old.

Currently -precisely in this days- I am writing a piece *in memoriam* Stockhausen for violin, cello and piano. As for the piano, I use flageoletts - harmonics performed directly on the strings. I don't think that Stockhausen ever used this technique, and surely he never wrote for this instrumental combination. These are two important reasons to use precisely this elements. The piece will be called "**Der Geist ist transparent**" (Spirit is transparent), something that he wrote me in a postcard after I mentioned him the peculiar fact that I have learned from him, indirectly, long before getting to know him personally. There you have also some idea about the concept of influence.

18) I read that Berio also influenced your compositional process -- how to write down your musical ideas and then form a piece. In what way does his music influence your piano music? You composed *Atherklavier - Berceuse non canonique pour Luciano Berio* -- does it somehow relate to Berio's musical language? More program notes about *Athe Klavier*?

JMS: An important thing I learned from Berio -I met him three times, unfortunately only three times- was that solutions to compositional problems doesn't need to be complicated to be efficient. One doesn't need to be Berio to discover this, but when a Berio, instead of saying other things, focuses precisely this fact, it gains in strength.

I can relate **Ätherklavier** to Berio in at least three things. One is the allusion in the title. Berio wrote four pieces: *Wasserklavier*, *Erdenklavier*, *Luftklavier* and *Feuerklavier* (they are four of the 6 Encores). The titles in German allude to the four elements water, earth,

wind and fire. So it becomes clear - *Aether* as the fifth element. Also: when Stravinsky died, Berio wrote a piece called "*Berceuse canonique pour Igor Stravinsky*". This explains the subtitle. In both cases (title and subtitle) I related the piece to Berio, taking a position - not very humbly- within a tradition.

Musically speaking: I performed Berio's *Wasserklavier* in several occasions, a piece in F minor (an allusion itself to Schubert's *Phantasie* for piano four hands). So one of the elements in **Ätherklavier** (the last that appears, and the last that sound at the end). is the tonality of f minor. Is not a direct quotation of a musical motif, but a quotation of a language. Or actually a meta-quotation, because Berio uses f minor quoting Schubert's work.

A third way in which **Ätherklavier** might be related to Berio is in the mere fact that it mixes languages, or systems: tonal (f minor) and atonal. And this "eclecticism" is something I admire in Berio: how can he mix disparate elements without losing unity. Somehow he achieves a multiplicity, a richness, without reference to a "central system of control", but referring the elements to one another. Unity was nevertheless important to him: I recall him saying that "a work without unity doesn't resist to time" (in Stuttgart 1995).

There is something else about Berio, absolutely relevant to your subject. One of his advices was that I should get inspiration in the music of my country (or countries) to compose my own music. (Something similar did he in his *Folk Songs*.) This advice led me to the concept of *deconstructed tango*, important in my output and in my musical thought.

As for the construction of the piece, you will be maybe surprised to know that **Ätherklavier** has something to do with John Cage, mainly with his "square-root-method", also called "micro-macro structure". Concretely, the motivic structure is:

abcb

acdc

adbd

bcec

cafa

cgag

bfgf

19) Milonga and tango are assimilated in your piano music such as Milonga Fria, Milonga Nunca Mas, and Sonatango. Do you agree that some of your piano music

are tinged with a Latin American accent, something traced back to your ethnic background?

JMS: Not only in these pieces but also -for instance- in *Mate amargo*, *Talismán*, *Retrato en sepia* or *Reencuentro*, just to name a few. And maybe more relevant: several Argentine trained musicians told me that they listen clearly influences of -say- milonga in pieces as my songs called *Ajedrez* (Chess) with texts by Borges. And it's true, but not intentional, so I would say it is even more authentic. Yes, I can say that my music in general -and of course including much of my piano music- has a Latin American accent. Actually it would be very difficult to hide that accent, and I don't try to hide it. But on the other side I don't try to *stress* my Latin American accent. I would be as if I would try to disguise myself of that person that I already am. Nevertheless, I wouldn't say that this Latin American accent can be easily traced back to my ethnic background. On the one hand, I am quite skeptical when ethnic considerations take too much space. On the other side, my ethnic background -as I wrote before- is quite mixed and has strong European roots: Italy, Spain and Ireland, and possibly other countries. Yes, Vicente Piazzolla (the father of Astor) used to say that the best tango musicians come from south Italy, as himself (and as myself, by the way). nevertheless, I prefer to talk about the *cultural* rather than ethnic background of my music.

An afterthought about *Latin American accent*: how would you define it? If you say that the decisive factor is rhythm, or concrete rhythms, you might be closing the door to alternative ways of expression. For instance, I find that electronic music is absolutely typical to Latin American music, because it is cheaper than engaging an ensemble - so my argument would be rooted in socio-economical considerations. After *any* definition of Latin American music, you would find yourself before a big problem: if a great musician comes who expresses himself using another resources than those "typical" for most composers in his cultural area, should we exclude this composer from our catalog, because he doesn't follow the "rules" that we discovered? I personally tend to be extremely cautious and actually prefer to avoid completely to define what is typical for Latin American. The reason is that soon I would find myself "prohibiting" the use certain composition techniques in favor of others. It was actually a discussion in our countries, with persons seriously stating that in order to be Latin American you must use determinate techniques (often folklore rooted) and avoid others, that were considered techniques typical of the imperialistic oppressor. Speaking in general, I would avoid being normative in this aspect, and only descriptive.

20) Is Rapsodia Portena somewhat related to Latin dance rhythms? Which dance rhythm did you employ? Tango? Malambo? It is the ninth piece of the Mois de pelerinage. Could you provide program note about Mois de pelerinage?

Yes, the **Rapsodia Porteña** uses rhythms that are either usual in the tango music (Porteña means "of Buenos Aires", because the city is a *puerto*, a harbor) or derived from it. Clear is the 8/8 bar, divided in 3+3+2 eight-notes. From this pattern other patterns

are derived: some in 5/8 by eliminating one pulse and others in 7/8 by eliminating one eight-note.

It is absolutely interesting that you mention the *malambo*. It is a rhythm that alternates 3/4 and 6/8 and in this sense has no direct use in the **Rapsodia Porteña**. Nevertheless, a dance rhythm is more than just a rhythm, is also a character, a spirit so to say or a smell. And I could say -I discover this only now that you mention it- that the **Rapsodia Porteña** has a fragrance of the *malambo*, even if the concrete *malambo* rhythms are not employed. Alone the fact that the piece is most of the time **ff** helps to establish a *malambo* character. Also its minimalistic, reiterative construction with slight variants in each step.

Something funny: at the end of the **Rapsodia Porteña** a repeated fourth-chord appears 21 times in diminuendo *al niente*. This is a quotation of the beginning of *Klavierstück IX* by Stockhausen. The point is that the particular musical language of the **Rapsodia Porteña** accepts without any problems this quotation - nobody would consider it as a "strange body", as something having nothing to do with the rest of the piece. You will find *integrated quotations* like this one in nearly all my piano music. I love it.

About **Mois de pèlerinage** in general I can mention that the title is an allusion to Franz Liszt (*Années de pèlerinage*). I obliged myself to compose a piano prelude each month, so that at the end of the year I could have a piece of a certain importance which parts are anyway executable individually. "Pèlerinage" alludes to the fact that in that year, 2002, was the end of my program as composer in residence in Worpswede and I actually began to travel between Cologne and Bremen weekly.

In **Mois de pèlerinage** you will find some symmetries at the macro level (first and last prelude as frame, second and eleventh, etc.), but there was no precise general plan before writing the first note. When composing each prelude I was mainly concerned that each piece is coherent in itself and that there is mainly a contrast with the previous one (to avoid boredom) And only a few large scale concerns. There is no tonal plan (in fifths or in halftones, as Chopin or Bach) because there is no tonality in the classical sense. Of course, the fact that they were composed within months is a guarantee that they present some stylistic similitude. And last but not least: all preludes are for piano, so the general sound is quite particular (I don't say monochrome). My direct models have been Scriabin and Debussy. I would speak of a collection of pieces rather than of a single, large-scale work divided in parts. The stress is in the search of diversity rather than of unity - at least, not unity in the sense of uniformity or of a general set of rules that are valid for every prelude.

21) Lucubrations of a sleepless magician shows experimentation with the inside-piano techniques. What is the inspiration source or impetus behind the music? It seems to me that it's element of graphic-music. Would you explain the stylistic element of this piece, if possible?

The inspiration source for "**Lucubrations of a sleepless magician**" was actually my own pleasure of performing inside piano and the search of a form crystallizing this pleasure. The graphic notation was actually a by-product of this search: it should be open enough not to be extremely difficult (to find concrete notes in the inside piano could be quite hard) but also precise enough to have some personality (as work). This work was born improvising, repeating the "best" results, notating and making corrections, and actually "composing" fragments based on previous phrases in order to achieve a more or less coherent form.

Composing can have -at least- two aspects. One is like planning very precisely a trip to a city that you do not know. You buy maps and every kind of travel helps and you plan to visit first this museum, then that monument, later that place, etc. So is a composition with lots of pre-compositional work including a general plan. In another way of composing everything is unclear until the end. Is like doing the trip to another city but without concrete plan, just the logic of one thing leading to the next one and the chance of finding in one place references to another one. And the pleasure of making happy chance findings. My "Lucubrations" belong to this second category. The funny thing about this is that it is not only you as composer who decide which method you will apply to compose the next piece. Some pieces are better composed when planning, some others are better constructed when based on guided improvisation. Back to the example of the travels: if you go to Venice, you can plan everything you want, but after 15 minutes you will anyway get lost and forced to improvise.

There is something else that you must know about **Lucubrations**. First, that there is the conscious idea of intermediating between keyboard and inside piano in degrees, as a scale. So in this scale you have "keyboard, lute, tap, pizzicato, flageoletts". Second, that quite early (1994) I composed a short piece (**In the middle of Nowhere**) that used inside piano, with the same idea of "getting into the piano". The piece begins at the keyboard and as it develops gets deeper and deeper into the instrument. Incidentally, the Argentine composer José Luis Campana listened this piece at the Festival in Darmstadt (Germany, 1994) and suggested me that I should study with Helmut Lachenmann.

Between this first piece (**In the middle of Nowhere**) and **Lucubrations** (2008) there is only one piece ("**Naturgeträumt, erste Flageoletüde**", 2003) that uses inside piano.

22) Do you compose piano music in atonal harmony? Besides *Milonga Nunca Mas*. How did you start atonal writing?

The **Milonga Nunca Más** is not atonal, it is in E flat minor. I started atonal writing about 1987 to 1990. At the latest 1990 with my piece **Delta** for clarinet. I started in the atonal world because I found it absolutely great for some of my aesthetic needs. As for my atonal writing for piano: with good will you can consider that my **Variaciones 1987** for piano are atonal (actually they are in a kind of late Scriabin language, which *tends to be*

atonal). If not, "**Kabstraktion**" (1994) is atonal in the sense that it has no traditional tonality: its pitch structure (and by the way also the rhythms) reflects the overtone structure of a single note.

Anyway, I love to move in that unclear zone between tonality and non-tonality, of *alluded tonality* and of *almost atonal*. Speaking in general, to divide the music in tonal and atonal is like dividing the universe in bananas and no-bananas.

23) Do you compose any piano music in aleatoric technique?

JMS: Aleatoric music (or art) is a complex world in itself, with several degrees of virulence. Actually I tend to think that there is no deterministic or aleatoric music, but degrees of indeterminacy. Even in classical traditional-notated music there is a degree of aleatoric.

Having said that, now concretely about my piano music. There are mainly two kinds of aleatory: **(a)** when composing, **(b)** when performing. In the first case, one use any random method or chance algorithm to generate the notes, but once it is notated it doesn't change much from one performance to the other. In the second case, certain decisions are intentionally left open so that the performer *must* decide.

Among my pieces I sometimes used aleatoric elements in both categories, but not a lot:

(a): "**... de bueyes perdidos ...**"

(b): "**e**", "**Fragmentango**", "**Mozartango**", "**Lucubrations of a sleepless magician**"

24) How about piano music with electronic source, say, magnetic tape?

JMS: Nice question. And an important one. As a pianist myself, when I compose for piano I actually compose for myself. The same as, when I compose for viola, I think on my brother the violist. So since long I wanted to write something for piano and electronic sounds. I could achieve this last year (December 2007) with my **Turbulencias** (piano and tape). In this work, the tape "sings" several "interferences" with for instance the voice of John Cage, Marcel Duchamp or Juan Domingo Perón, besides other *concrete* noises.

Another important example is the **Milonga Fría**. Two months after the premiere of **Turbulencias** I composed three electronic "insertions" for the **Milonga Fría**. So it is one of the first tangos in history -maybe even the first- with actual electroacoustical music (I don't mean the rhythmical background referred to as electrotango, but real electroacoustical sounds in the sense of Stockhausen and Co.)

Both are nice pieces and well received by the audiences, but is not enough: I think I must still compose a major piece for piano and electronics.

25) I would like to analyze these pieces: Hai Ka, Atherklavier, Milonga Fria, Milonga Nunca Mas, Lucubrations, Sonatango, Mois de pelerinage. I would appreciate if you could provide me program note, some background information about these pieces. Are these compositions enough to summarize your musical language and personality? Let me know if you'd like me to analyze more piano music.

Well, if you actually analyze all that pieces you will get a pretty good idea of my writing for piano, ranging from the traditional tonality of **Sonatango** to the delicate abstraction of **Atherklavier** or the unique world of **Lucubrations**.

About some of those pieces we talked today already. I would add that **Sonatango** is a classical sonata form with tango rhythms: Sonata, Lied (ABA), Minuet and Rondo. There is also interconnection between movements: one of the themes of the first movements appear in the last one, and the main theme of the second movement appears, inverted, in the last movement. Strangely, under both aspects (normal and inverted) it has a powerful pathos.

Anecdotally, the second movement of **Sonatango** (*Nómade*) is performed very much and I did until today 23 versions of the piece for different instrumental groups ranging from viola quartet to symphonic orchestra.

When analyzing **Lucubrations**, you should look for passages/fragments that have a similar structure to others. for instance the form "abba" appears several times, even if the concrete sounds change (so to say, "transposed"). Also compare the first part with the "Reprise" to find similitudes.

I would love to see your analysis. If I already wrote program notes, they are in each score. In case you cannot advance with a concrete piece write me and I will try to give you some additional hint. Most of these pieces are quite transparent - to me at least.

26) One final question: how do you compose? Writing down musical ideas in a book? Repeated listening to the recording of a composition and revision?

My favorite anecdote of *The Beatles* is this one. They were asked what do they do when they sit down to compose a song. They answered (Paul McCartney, I think): "Well, first we sit down and then we write it."

I actually have a note book (a useful gift from a friend pianist, Elena Esteban) but just since a few months. Before that, I wrote down ideas in any paper at hand. Any idea, without thinking whether it is good or bad. Good or bad are not useful categories. But I don't consider this is composing, is just picking flowers. The actual compositional work - the Ikebana- comes later.

About to possible ways of composing (to have a plan or not) I wrote something before. I could add:

- Important is not to loose contact with sound, because sound is inspiring. When I can, I compose at the piano. Or singing or reciting in loud voice (depending of he kind of piece).

- There are two main stages in composing. One is deciding what to do (or better: getting to know and understand what you want). The second is to give it form, to structure it and later to write it down in order to communicate your musical thought to the performers. In the first stage (incubation) I need absolute concentration, in the second I could even write in a supermarket (I developed a high concentration ability). In the first stage there are thousand possibilities and you must find one, in the second stage I already know what I want and the only problem is to give it form (and this is peanuts but requires time). In the first stage I am sometimes quite irascible and tense, in the second I am usually relaxed and happy of having discovered something.

7) Answers: Berlin & Geneva, 13 AUG 2008

27) You cited *Turbulencias* and *Milonga Fria* as the music for piano and magnetic tape. I have a copy of your *Milonga Fria* (but it is for piano solo). Could you send me the version for piano and tape? Could you describe the compositional process for *Milonga Fria*? What motivates you to add electronic 'insertions' to the *Milonga Fria*? How do you compose the electronic insertions? With computer software? Electroacoustical genre is something new to me.

JMS: As for *Milonga Fría*, the piano part is identical in both versions: piano solo and piano with electronic sounds. The three 'insertions', each one minute long, should be triggered at certain moments: either at A (bar 17), C (bar 49) and E (bar 81); or at the beginning, B (bar 33) and D (bar 65). There is no need of synchronize these electronic insertions with the piano part (they had been composed with this idea in mind). Yes, I can send you the insertions as mp3 file.

About the compositional process of the *Milonga Fría*: the first ideas came out of improvising on a milonga rhythm ($\frac{1}{8}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{8}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{4}$), after that I put order in the ideas, including a tonal plan pendulating between e minor and g minor. This is the kind of piece that grew from a small idea that begins develop. Other pieces begin with a formal schema *a priori*, some others start with a set of rules put in motion that lead to results that the composer (in this case, me) either accept (because he believes 'blindly' in the system he created) or filter (because he wants to keep some control after the 'machines' had produced some results). In practice, these three methods (and possibly more) work parallel: first a single idea later the desire of developing a system where this single idea receives a 'home' and can develop.

In short, *Milonga Fría* was born out of 'captured improvisations'. The fingers of the performer can have excellent ideas as 'rough material', and the composer is able to put order in these ideas (if he wants); to 'cook' these 'raw material', so to speak. This is one of the great things in being a composer-performer as 'centaur', as a whole.

Something about the title. A good friend of mine, Gustavo Lanzón (composer and pianist) has a piece called *Milonga Caliente* (Hot Milonga). My *Milonga Fría* (Cold Milonga) is a sort of answer to that piece. As we play recitals of tango music for two pianos (as Piano Duo *Dinamitango*), at some point we want to compose together a piece called *Milonga Tibia*.

As for my motivation to add electronic 'insertions' to the *Milonga Fría*. In a word: to gather worlds. I play tango music but I also love avant-garde composition and electroacoustical music, so why keeping those worlds separate? isn't it a sort of artistic schizophrenia?

A further anecdote is extremely relevant here. I will tell you how I approached tango music as active practice. All my life I have listen to tango music and only performed it privately. At some point I began to study electroacoustical composition at the *Hochschule für Musik* in Cologne. Some day, the computer refused to cooperate: it kept hanging every five minutes and I had to restart it very often. What do while it was rebooting? Well, there was a piano at the studio and I learned a tango. That first tango I learned was *Chiquilín de Bachín* by Astor Piazzolla (actually a tango waltz). Since then, both music styles are indissolubly joined in my brain. There is no real separation between electroacoustical music and tango, like there is no real separation between the black and the white keys on my piano.

One additional note: what I do in the electroacoustical insertions for the *Milonga Fría*, and what I goal when using electronic means in the tango music, is absolutely different to what is called "electronic tango" (by groups as "*Gotán Project*" or "*Otros Aires*"). What these groups do is great, but is more the addition of an electronic beat -in the sense of techno music- to a traditional (or new) tango piece. What I do is comibing tango with electroacoustical music in the sense of, say, Karlheinz Stockhausen or Luigi Nono.

A technical note: I composed these three short electronic insertions with computer software for sound synthesis. That's why I could compose them on a train... Not in vain I happily belong to the so called 'lap-top generation'. Actually I was in a hurry: the concert was one day after and I really wanted to test in public the combination of tango with electroacoustic.

28) I am not sure if I should analyze *Andromeda by night* -- it's somewhat similar to the musical style of *Estalactitas* and *Estalagmitas* of the *Months of Pilgrimage*. It seems to me that you are interested in astrology and speleology (cave studies). If

so, how does those interests associate with music -- maybe the use of silently depressed chords (harmonics), long pedal-points, wide range of registers from low to high range of piano -- doesn't it very similar to Messiaen's concept of timeless eternity -- something to do with his religion? Just a thought.

JMS: It is absolutely revealing for me that you consider *Andromeda by Night* as being similar to *Estalactitas*. It is in fact possible that in the acoustic surface the result is similar - at least in a first or second listening- although the compositional methods employed were quite different. And the 'inspiration sources' are also different: you can trace the ancestors of *Estalactitas* in Arvo Pärt's *Für Alina*; and you can find the 'relatives' of *Andromeda by Night* in Stockhausen's Klavierstück III.

In *Andromeda by Night* I use the concept of 'machine' defined as 'a set of rules within constraints' in order to produce different musical phrases. There are five of such 'machines' in this piano piece, they alternate horizontally (they are not combined or mixed vertically). With this 'machines' I tried to radically expand the concept of motivic variation. In a motif, something already existing is developed. In a 'machine', a set of rules produce musical results, and the composer will choose among those results. A 'machine' in this sense might be compared to a Platonic archetype that is abstract, and produce concrete beings on Earth (i.e. in the piece) which are not mere variations of the original archetype but its reflections or consequences.

Yes, I am marginally interested in astrology but mostly in astronomy. Actually, at some point (late 1980's) I considered (under social pressure) the possibility of studying a "serious profession" and astronomy came into question, more concretely astrophysics. Speleology is also fascinating - but everything inside things fascinates me. In direct relation with music: to feel that I can put my hand in the interior of sound is like 'music speleology', and I feel this very strongly mainly through electroacoustical music. I get to know about sound as matter. Astronomy, the nature and movements of stars, moons, comets or black holes, radiations of all kinds including light: all these can be a fascinating source of inspiration. Also: we agree almost spontaneously that there must be some implicit order out there, but we cannot explain how. Perhaps scholars can - at some extent. For me and for most mortals it is enough to admire that implicit order and its exceptions.

About the "silently depressed chords (harmonics)": yes, I think they are really a characteristic of my style, I love that sounds. Of course one could associate this harmonics with the aether or cosmic space between stars, but actually I think of harmonics as the 'aureole' of a sound (as a saint has an aureole in certain iconography). When I think in the resonances or harmonics I think on the *soul* of the piano, in the implicit meanings and connotations of what the piano has just said/played.

As for the "long pedal-points": In principle they can stand for 'stability' and -as you point out- metaphorically for a "timeless eternity". Nevertheless, they tend to be a

background for something else that is in foreground. For me, first of all, they have a structural function as something reliable, credible, dependable. As the columns of a bridge, which support and make it stable. And on other level of analysis, depending on aesthetic considerations, I would begin to think whether these long pedal-points could have a proto-semantic meaning or association.

Very concretely, in *Estalactitas* and *Estalagmitas* these pedal-points have two functions (from my point of view):

- (a) to support a slow pace of the piece, a certain evolution (in *Estalactitas* from D to A, a sort of macro plagal cadence).
- (b) to open the acoustic room simulating a large cave through resonance

In this sense it was wonderfully beautiful the comment of a member of the audience after a performance of *Estalactitas*: "I didn't know that music could be three-dimensional"

As for the religious aspects of my music, as you could imagine, the subject could be extremely long. In a nutshell: everything I compose reflects inevitably my Weltanschauung (world view), therefore also my religious beliefs, in a *general* way, but not by relating this particular Leitmotiv -or technical resource- to God and that other one to the devil or to mankind or to sin/redemption or reincarnation or whatever.

Speaking in general, and going back to what I wrote about resonances/harmonics as the 'soul of the piano': a good point of departure to research the religious ideas behind my music is looking for the soul of the sounds and techniques employed in my pieces. A kind of Musical Animism. When one get used to the idea that a minor third is not only a proportion of 5 to 6, but a living entity, a being, one begins to treat her different - as to a sister.

8) Answers: Geneva 23 AUG 2008

29) "I've troubles in understanding the specification of the following articulations, please correct me if I'm wrong (...):"

2) "Lute": Play the key as usual while placing the hand close to the bridge

JMS: Not the hand, but just one finger. You have to really apply some strength with this finger: it must sound as "muted"

3) "Tap": Hit the string with a fingernail (strumming?) -- more resonant than pizzicato?

Yes, hit the string with the fingernail. It is not more resonant than pizzicato, actually is less (not louder than *mezzopiano*).

5) "Flageolets" or harmonics: Hit (strumming?) with fingernail while holding down the key (silently?) with the other hand

No! One finger touches the string at the node (typically: the fifth overtone), the other hand plays the key as usual. It sounds a note which is a major third (plus 2 octaves) higher than the key played.

* How is it possible to play (2) and (4) at the same time? Because you need two hands to play (2) -- one hand play the key and the other hand to be placed on the bridge; and then immediately pluck the string (4)?

As for "lute" (2) you need one FINGER (not hand), you have another fingers free for "pizzicato" (4). I am not saying that it is easy, but it works. Of course, both pitches should be quite close, say, up to a fifth or sixth.

* What is the difference between the black and white notations? Does the black one indicate quarter note, white as whole note?

Just longer (white noteheads) and shorter (black noteheads)

What does the number in bracket [e.g. (3), (4)] mean?

Just the number of notes you should play, as a (redundant) help. For instance in bar 22 you have a (7) because you have to play seven notes.

* It seems to me that a pianist needs to practice many times to play the right intervals (e.g. perfect 4th lower, Major 7th etc.) since the notes are not indicated. Is it possible for a pianist to compose certain pitches before he performs? If so, is it still considered indeterminacy? It seems to me that it's difficult to perform according to your directions.

Yes, one must practice this piece. But after some practice, the hand gets used to know how many centimeters equal a fifth and you do not need to check very much. The same happens at the keyboard: an experienced pianist knows with eyes closed how many centimeters equal an octave, for instance.

Yes, the pianist may choose in advance some pitches, no problem, as far the corresponding intervals sound. In fact, the pianist can choose in advance whether he (or she) wants a more "tonal" world or an atonal. It is -in principle- absolutely possible to make this piece sound tonal!

Your question about "indeterminacy" is of another nature, more philosophical. My position is that indeterminacy is not the same than aleatoric, and is not (necessarily)

improvisation. There is no such a thing as either composition (decisions in advance) or absolute improvisation (no previous decision), but degrees of indeterminacy. One degree of indeterminacy is to choose in advance some pitches. Indeterminacy means in this context that the composer leaves the decision open to the performer; but not that the performer leaves the decision open to chance. An example from the repertory: in Klavierstück XI by Stockhausen the pianist "may" (and later in life Stockhausen suggested that he "should") choose the form of the piece: which fragment will follow which other fragment.

As for your question if this piece is difficult: I think that to perform it is NOT very difficult, BUT the notation and the kind of sounds/timbres to be made are not the everyday piano for 99% of pianists. So the piece requires -first of all- getting used to these "strange" notation. I perform it without having practice it too much, but of course I know perfectly what the notation stands for. If I find a better, more accessible notation, I would re-write it, but I don't actually think there is a MUCH better notation, unfortunately. I can understand that most pianists get scared just by looking at the score.

* The structure of this piece is a loosely-structured ABA form. It's hard to label the motives or fragments (say, motive A -- measure 1, 8; motive B measure 5, 7, 9-10 and something like that) -- I don't know if there's a way to analyze this piece; I can only provide the performance practices of this piece. Please let me know if you'd like to add some analytical notes.

Yes, it is quite close to ABA. The easiest is to compare exposition (bar 1) and reexposition (from bar 35). For instance: bar 3 and bar 37 are related, because their inner structure is "Flag, pizz tap, (pause) tap". The only difference is that in bar 3 you have only one tap at a time, and in bar 37 you have two taps simultaneously (as dyad, as mini-chord). Another example: bar 36 is an expansion of bar 35 because both respond to the same structure: "Flag, Keyb, Pizz"; difference: the quantity of "Flag" in bar 36 is different (three instead of one) and the number of PIZZ is also different.

A third example: Compare bars 15, 16 and 17. They have the same structure: "xyyx", only with different kinds of "noises". It is like (compared with traditional music) as a "sequence", i.e. when you play the same melodic turn but with other notes.

Also: bars 6, 14, 18, 24 (and some others) have the same structure: "repetition of a same noise". In some cases (more complex), this motif gets mixed with other motives, as in bar 25

Also: bars 9, 10, 39, 40 are all related ("long note with two short notes encrusted"). The stem actually from bar 2. Variants are bar 11, 31, 33 (with repetition of the short group of 2 sounds, or with a third nose as "guest"). In bar 26 the "group of 2" gets independent, so to say (without the "long note").

I recall having developed some 7 or 8 "Ur-motives" or forms like these. I am not at home now, but I could scan the drafts if you really want, but not before 15th September. In any case, there are not more than 7 or 8 of these basic motives, some quite simple ("xyyx") and some more complex.

Speaking in general: these "ur-motiven" (I called them "machines") are conceived in such a way that they can be defined (as a set is defined in mathematics) in a simple way that allows both identity (recognizability) and elasticity (possibility of variations).

I hope that these comments open a door to the analysis of this piece.

By the way, now I am in touch with Miguel del Aguila (mainly in myspace.com), thanks to your research - an unexpected but potentially important result of your research. We discuss now about identity, influence of the environment, style ... Thanks for the mediation!

Warmly,

Juan María Solare

Warmly

Juan María Solare (DonSolare@gmail.com)