A research in progress:

Electroacoustic and computer music in Latin America

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Abstract

This paper is a report of a work in progress searching to compile information about electroacoustic and computer music from Latin America. The motivations arise through the years trying to know myself about the musical activities of composers from countries on the area, and finding much easy to listen to compositions produced in Western Europe or North America than in neighbor places. Basic information about electroacoustic and computer music activities by composers from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay and Venezuela is included.

1. Latin America’s composers and the electroacoustic/computer music field

I think Latin America is a very big region to think about as it was an homogeneous and undifferentiated area, but share enough common elements as to be analyzed in conjunction on this paper.

There have been a significant activity around electroacoustic and computer music for 20-40 years or more on most countries of the region. Following I am listing the name of composers who have been working with electronic media to produce their music. Most of them born in Latin America and are living here at the moment. Some of them are living outside the area, and a few of them did not born in Latin America but are living here now. The names listed (and related information) were taken from bibliographical information, direct or indirect contact with composers and institutions, and program notes from concert and recordings.

This is a research in progress, and for that reason I am not mentioning everyone, as there are many composers that probably should be included and that I do not know or I forgot unintentionally.

1.1 Argentina: Mauricio Kugel, César Franchiessa and Francisco Köppf were experimenting with electroacoustic media since the 50s. The Universities of Córdoba and Buenos Aires were main centers of activities at the beginning. During the 60s, the Centro Latinoamericano de Altos Estudios Musicales (CLAEM) at the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella was a meeting point for students and composers from Latin America to learn and exchange ideas with the most interesting composers from Europe and the United States at that moment.

At present there are several studios in Buenos Aires, and also in Córdoba, Rosario, and Santa Fé.


1.2 Bolivia: Alberto Villalpando (born in La Paz, 1940) is considered one of the main driving forces on contemporary music in his country. He has been working with electroacoustic media for many years. Some of his pieces are: "Borvian..." (1973); "Desde el Jardín de Morador" (1990-91); and "De los Elementos" (1991).

Composers like Agustín Fernández (now living in Europe), Javier Patrón, Florencio Pozadas, Gregorio Prudencio ("Awana", 1986) and Nicolás Suárez ("Chica Arum", 1994) have been working with electroacoustic media on their music too. There had been also some collaborative works by Oscar García and Sergio Claros ("ES ZAS").

1.3 Brazil: Reginaldo Carvalho and Jorge Antunes were pioneers on the electroacoustic music field in Brazil. "Citada" and "Istros" are among the early works by Carvalho (born in 1932). Jorge Antunes composed "Pequena peça para MI bequedo e harmoníces" during 1961, and have been very active working with electronic media since then; some of his compositions are: "Cinta Cita", for tape, 1969; "Proudholnia", for mixed chorus and tape, 1972; "Agenda pou um petit futur", for tape, 1995.

Brazil have an interesting activity around electroacoustic and computer music. At present these are several studios and research groups working, some of them are based at University of Brazilia, University of Campinas, Federal University of Minas Gerais (at Belo Horizonte), University of São Paulo, Federal University of Bahia (at Salvador), Federal University of Espirito Santo (at Vitória), and Studio PANAcora at UNESP.

Among the composers who have been working on the field are: Celso Aguaria (born in Porto Alegre, U.S.A.; he grew up in Salvador, Bahia); Aluizia Arcelup ("Pinturas/69", 1955); Rodolfo Caeser ("Carme de pedra"), Rodrigo Cicchelli Velloso, Rodolfo Cuello de Souza, Paulo Chagas ("Epileps", for tape, 1986; he now lives in Germany), Vlaxia Dantas Leite ("Aju Ramô", for voice and tape), Rufo Hermet, Arthur Kampa, Victor Lazzarini, Igor Lima Maués ("Antes o mundo nao exista", for tape, 1989; he now lives in Austria), Maurício Aíves Loureiro, José Augusto Manso ("Cyclone", 1983; "Duregumarr II", 1989); João Manzolli, Gilberto Mendes, Flo Menezes ("Contexturas I", José Maria Neves ("UN-X-2", 1971), Janasy Oliveira, Joicy de Oliveira, Edurdo Reck Miranda ("Efervescência", 1989; he now lives in England), Tim Rescasa, Frédéric Richter ("Meteorofosse", Wilson Sukorski, Taro Tobárdia, Livio Tragesberg, Raul do Valle ("Encadeamento").

Cordelio Silva (born in Uruguay, see that section for more references) is another composer pioneer who has helped the development of electroacoustic music in Brazil.

1.4 Chile: Some of the first electroacoustic music works in Latin America were "Nacimiento" (probably 1955) by León Schindelowsky (born in Santiago, 1931; later he adopted the Israeli nationality), "Los peces", composed in 1957 by Juan Amnabar (Santiago, 1922), and "Variaciones especiales" by José Vicente Assar (Santiago, 1933) produced during the next year. Assar built the first Electroacoustic Music Studio of Chile in 1958.

Since then, Chilean composers like Jorge Arregaglia, Gabriel Benoit ("Batucada amanecer para las que huyen", 1969; he now lives in Spain), Eduardo Cáceres ("Menimambo", 1994), Fernando Carrasco Pantoja, Rolando Cori Traverso, Ernesto Holman Grossi, Jorge Martinez; Ulloa, Mario Mora, Cristian Morales Ossano, Iván Pequeño, José Pérez de Arcu, Guillermo Rito, Juan Carlos Vergara Solar and Santiago Vera-Rivera have been working with electroacoustic media on their compositions.

1.5 Colombia: Blas Emilio Atherista ("Cantico delle creature", mixed piece from 1963), Jacqueline Nova ("Zosencianzas I", for piano and tape, 1969; "Costos de la creación de la tierra", 1972; she born in Belgium in 1937, and died in 1975), and Fabio Gonzalez Zuleta ("Ensayo electrónico", for tape, 1965) were some of the first composers to work with electroacoustic music in Colombia.

Andrew Posada ("Catacúrica", for tape, 1990) and Juan Reyes ("Diálogos por Paz", "El Espectador", "Las Meninas"; born in Bogotá, 1962) have been working during the last years with electroacoustic and computer media, and also directing electronic music studios, Posada at the University of Manizales (now his studio is closed) and Reyes at the University of los Andes. Ricardo Arias, Carlos Mauricio Bejarano ("Aparato", for tape, 1990; "Atagrams", composed with Juan Reyes), Guillermo Carbo ("Frecuencas moduladas", 1990), Fabio Fuente, Roberto García, Guillermo Gavia, Gustavo Lara, Catalina Perilla ("Episodios sin conexión de la vida de un artista", for tape, 1989), Andrés Prósito Urrea, and German Toro ("Vocal I", 1990), are some of the Colombian composers that have been working with electroacoustic and computer media on their own.

1.6 Cuba: Juan Blanco (born in 1919) have been the main force around the development of electroacoustic music in Cuba. Some of his pieces are: "Música para danza", for tape, 1961; "Texturas", for orchestra and tape, 1963-64; "Círculos-Tocacas", for tape, 1983; "Cincos Epitáfios", for tape, 1994. Many of his works asked for spatial distribution of sound sources and complex multimedia installations ("Poesía espacial No. 3").
Eldelo Alejandro, Sergio Barroso ("Yantra VI"), for piano and tape, 1976-1979; he is now living in Canada), Juan Marcos Blanco, Orlando Jacinto Garcia ("Metallic Images" for percussion and tape, 1991; he is now living in the U.S.A.), Jesus Ortiza ("Picassianas I", 1981), Tania León (she is now living in the U.S.A.), Jane Piñera, Armando Rodriguez (now living in the U.S.A.), Julio Roloff, and Aurilio de la Vega ("Tangeria", 1973; "Inflorescence", 1976; he is now living in the U.S.A.). There are some of the composers born in Cuba that are also working with electroacoustic media. Composer Carlos Farías ("Imprenta", for gasto, 4 percussion players and tape, 1985) have been very active around the electroacoustic and computer music field during the last years.

1.7 Dominican Republic: Alejandro José (born in 1955) have been crossing the sea to live on his natal land or Puerto Rico alternatively, promoting electroacoustic and computer music in both places. He has been working in psychoelectric research and composing ("Hagostes", 1988; "Todo es Uno", 1995) for several years.

1.8 Ecuador: Mesel Egausnas (born in 1938; he lives in Europe) have been working with electroacoustic media and composers for many years. He produced tape pieces ("Hole Za" in 1969; "Ayayayayaya" in 1971), mixed compositions ("Exercises", for violin and synthesizer, 1972-73; "EMelodies II", for cello, percussion and tape, 1981-1984), and works using live electronics too ("Segundo cuarteto de cuerdas", 1967).

Milton Espina ("Apuntes con refrán", for orchestra and electronic sounds; "Pach 13" for tape, keyboard and percussion), Diego Lurzartaga ("Ayapatahata", for tape; "Viento en el viento", for 2 flutes, percussion, electronic keyboard and computer; he is now living in the U.S.A.), and Pablo Freire ("Zelub 3", for tape) have also been working with electroacoustic and computer media on their compositions.

1.9 Guatemala: composer Joaquín Orellana (Guatemala, 1937) produced very interesting electroacoustic compositions like "Humanoformia" (1971) and "Primativa I" (1975). Times before, while he was at the Instituto Di Tella of Buenos Aires, produced "Meteor" (1968).

1.10 Mexico: A pioneer of electroacoustic music composition in his country, Hector Quintanar ("Sideral I", for tape, 1968; "Simbolos", for chamber group, tape, slides and lights, 1969) was director of the first electronic music studio there, organized during 1969-1970. Raúl Pavín ("Fantasia Cómica", 1983), an engineer interested both in electronics and music, started to promote the use of electronic musical instruments in Mexico many years before the first studio was built.


In spite of the Conlon Nancarrow (born in the U.S.A., he has been living in Mexico for more than 50 years) is not directly related to electroacoustic or computer music composition, some of his pieces were presented (or performed) in concerts through computer controlled electromechanical systems, many of his compositions were translated from the original piano rolls to MIDI files, and even produced computer generated versions from some of his works ("Study #21"; "Study #73") by composers like Rick Bidlack and Robert Willey.

1.11 Panama: David Soley (born in Ancon, 1962; he has been living in the U.S.A. for many years) composed several works using computers, as "Toro-toro", for tape in 1993, and "Líneas", for Zeta violin, Radio Baton, sampler, sample playback and tape, during 1994-1995.

1.12 Peru: César Bolado (born in 1931) and Edgar Valcarcel (born in 1932) are two of the main names related to the beginning of electronic music in Peru.

The first tape piece composed by Bolado was "Intensidad y Altura" in 1964, produced at the Instituto Torcato Di Tella of Buenos Aires. Among his compositions there are pieces for tape alone, compositions using live electronics, and multmedia works; some of them are: "Luterro, Yavi" (1965; "Dom en el Mundo" (1966), and "Fluxum" (1969). Among the pieces composed by Valcarcel are: "Cantaar" for chorus and tape (1965), "Flor de Sancayo", for piano and electronic sounds on tape (1976), "Zampona Sosea", for flute and tape (1968-976).

Enrique Pinilla composed "Prisma" at the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center in 1967.

Raimil Fischman ("Los días eternos", 1991; "Sin los cuatro", 1994; he is now living in England), Celso Garrido Lecca, Alejandro Nuñez Alluca ("Gravitación izumana", 1970), Olga Pozzé Eicto (she have been living in the U.S.A. for many years), Arturo Ruiz del Poyo ("Lago de Totora"), Pedro Sez Aasto ("Quasar III", 1973), and José Roberto Sonza Weckxman, are also composers who have been producing electroacoustic media.

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Alejandro José (born in República Dominicana; see his references on that section) is another composer mainly dedicated to the work with electronic media. Eduardo Kurnar (born in Argentina) is now living in Caracas, Venezuela, but he was teaching electronic music on Puerto Rico for sometime during the 70s and now again.

Fáncis Schwartz (born in the U.S.A., 1946) has an important catalog of compositions including mixed music ("Triangular Study", for trumpet, harp and ope, 1971); tape pieces ("Caligula", 1975), and multimedia works too ("Auschwitz", for tape, words, lights, dancers, temperature manipulation and slides, 1968).

Carlos Vásquez is a very active and prolific composer that produced many works using electroacoustic and computers. Some of his pieces are: "Sobre la insinuación"; for tape, 1975; "Alborada y selva"; for tape and computer (1982), "Juracán", for live electronics (1993); "Los Ciclos de Luisa", for tape, dancer and slides (1994).

1.14 Uruguay: The first electroacoustic works by Sergio Cervetti (born in 1941), Cortin Ahorain (born in Montevideo, 1940), and Conrado Silva (born in Montevideo, 1940; now living in Brazil), were produced during the 60's. Some of their pieces are: "Studies in Silence" (1968), "Bits & pieces and Moving Parts" (1977) and "Something Borrowed, Something Blue" (1979-1980) by Cervetti; "Que" (1969) and "Secas las pilas de todos los timbres" (1995) by Ahorain; "Crónica" (1972), "Ullses" (1973), and "Pericó" (1989-1990) by Conrado Silva.

Ariel Martinez (then living in Argentina) composed several electroacoustic works during the 70's. Among them: "El gorrito de Pepperland" for tape (1970), produced at the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella of Buenos Aires (CLAEM). Antonio Magroviciousi (born in 1956), composed "Sequencial II" (1970) also at the same center in Buenos Aires. León Birciti (born in 1929), composer, conductor and oboist, composed "En la morada de la morte" on the early 70's; he also produced several mixed pieces and works using live electronics too.

Composers like Alejandro Barbot, Jorge Caminagas, Fernando Cédron, Carlos da Silveira, Ulisses Ferretti, Luis Jure, Diego Legrand, Beatriz Lockhart ("Ejercicios I", 1970), Alberto Macdar, Daniel Maggiolo, Leo Masliah ("Llanto", 1980), Carlos Pellegirnio, René Piretscas, Marino Rivero, Pablo Sotoyoy, and Héctor Tosar (one of the big names among the Uruguayan composers/temporary instrumental music; born in 1923), have been working with electroacoustic media or computers too.

1.15 Venezuela: During 1966-1967 was organized in Caracas the Estudio de Fonología Musical of Instituto Nacional de Cultura y Bellas Artes (INCINBA) by José Vicente Asuar (from Chile; see his references on that section) and Alfredo del Monaco (born in Caracas, 1938), who composed on that studio "Cromosferitas I" in 1967, being the first electroacoustic piece produced on that country. Later del Monaco moved to New York where he produced several tape and mixed works at the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center ("Synagoga A") for trombone and electronic sounds on tape, 1972). Del Monaco is living now in Venezuela.

That first studio was closed but after some time another laboratory was organized being composer Ananeto Estévez the director ("Cromosferitas II"); "Cromovibraciones multiples". Later, Eduardo Kurnar (born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1939; see also sections on Argentina and Pueblo Rico) started more sustained activities.


2. Final comments

This was not done pretending to be the final list of electroacoustic composers in Latin America. On the contrary, any intention is to present a beginning, a start for further communications among latameicans composers themselves, and between the world community of composers interested in electroacoustic and computer music.

I would appreciate very much to receive comments, suggestions, critics, and information that can help to improve this research and future papers on the same topic. I would like to remark that this work is a simple way to compile information about Latin America's electroacoustic and computer music composers. I have no intention at all to discriminate nobody, or to split nothing, or to divide groups. Nothing far away from my point of view and my wishes, the only idea here is to contribute to be integrated, to know more, to be communicated, and in contact with each other.

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