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Villanueva, María Cecilia (1964--)
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<p>María Cecilia Villanueva was born in 1964 in La Plata, Argentina. She studied composition at the Universidad Nacional de La Plata, with Mariano Etkin, where she currently works as teacher in composition and researcher in musical analysis focused on 20th century music. She is considered one of the most notable figures of her generation, successfully mixing research and composition.</p> <p>Villanueva's music is a testimony to her aesthetic independence. She distinguishes herself from her colleagues by the originality of her technical approaches and her rendering of very personal ideas. The expressive density of Villanueva's music develops around a complex elaboration of materials, which, in some cases, coexist with elements of extreme simplicity. Her music has been performed in many of the main festivals and new music cycles of Europe, the United States, and Latin America. She has also received recognition for her work on numerous occasions. She was awarded the German <i>Forum Junger Komponisten</i> 1989 (WDR) prize in Köln, and won the <i>Elizabeth Schneider</i> prize in 2001 in Freiburg, as well as the Premio de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2003. She has been the recipient of several prestigious German composer residences at the <i>Akademie Schloss Solitude</i>, Stuttgart (1994-95), the <i>Künstlerhof Schreyahn</i> (1996) and the <i>Künstlerdorf Schöppingen</i> (2003).</p> <p>María Cecilia Villanueva was born in 1964 in La Plata, Argentina. She studied composition at the Universidad Nacional de La Plata, with Mariano Etkin, where she currently works as teacher in composition and researcher in musical analysis focused on 20th century music. She is considered one of the most notable figures of her generation, successfully mixing research and composition.</p> <p>Villanueva's music is a testimony to her aesthetic independence. She distinguishes herself from her colleagues by the originality of her technical approaches and her rendering of very personal ideas. The expressive density of Villanueva's music develops around a complex elaboration of materials, which, in some cases, coexist with elements of extreme simplicity. Her music has been performed in many of the main festivals and new music cycles of Europe, the United States, and Latin America. She has also received recognition for her work on numerous occasions. She was awarded the German <i>Forum Junger Komponisten</i> 1989 (WDR) prize in Köln, and won the <i>Elizabeth Schneider</i> prize in 2001 in Freiburg, as well as the Premio de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2003. She has been the recipient of several prestigious German composer residences at the <i>Akademie Schloss Solitude</i>, Stuttgart (1994-95), the <i>Künstlerhof Schreyahn</i> (1996) and the <i>Künstlerdorf Schöppingen</i> (2003).</p> <p>In her body of work, each individual composition seems to be closed off in its own world, and is</p>

laden with tension. In general, her instrumental writing is decisive in terms of the determination of its constructive characteristics, the selection of the sonic material being used, and its relation to the overall form. These characteristics are evident, even in her early works, such as *Biribiriloque* (1988) for chamber ensemble, where the viola occupies a protagonist role, not due to any virtuosic exhibition, but on the contrary, because of its profound lack of expressivity. The piece has a continuo, in the way of a *moto perpetuo*, that produces a particular anxiety given its incessant **quality by step motion** (fig.1 and 2). The end of most of Villanueva's pieces present an unexpected twist. In *Biribiriloque*, the constant and invariable presence of the viola is suddenly abandoned as the double bass joins it in unison (fig. 3). In a similar fashion, the last **sonority** of the work *Escenario* (2007) for piano and orchestra, is a sustained drumroll, the only one in the entire score. Here, the usual meaning implied by a drumroll, as anticipatory sign of an ominous or important event, is inverted as it becomes a concluding gesture for the piece (fig. 4). In *Escenario*, Villanueva implicitly questions the conventional relation between soloist and orchestra by introducing an orchestral piano, giving it a function that is not simply accessory, but intimately related to the actions of the soloist. Both the solo instrument and the orchestra **share the same chord patterns**, just like the orchestral piano and the soloist piano; that is to say, the basic material for the work is shared in equal manner by both sound sources. This eliminates one of the characteristics of traditional texture: that of the singular opposed to the plural, and demonstrates a type of self-restraint in terms of material and form (fig.5).

In the string quartet *Retrato del pasado* (2002), Villanueva uses fragments from Beethoven's op.127 quartet as a starting point. Using a principle that can be defined as a 'magnifying glass' or 'zooming in' effect, the fragments — of varying importance in Beethoven — are recast in such a way that they lose their constructive weight outside of their original context. They become part of a different style, which, nonetheless, preserves in a distant, but effective way, an unmistakable romantic aura. Beethoven, as presented by Villanueva, is modified in a 'natural' manner by the passing of time; in Villanueva's piece, the historic macroscopic memory, has a direct relation to the memory of the listener who, at the end of any listening experience, remembers only fragments of the original work that are subsequently recalled in a sequential order different than that of the original work (fig.6 and fig.7). In *Partida* (1996) for a unique chamber orchestra commissioned by the *Donaueschinger Musiktage* festival, Villanueva uses different sonic objects that are modified throughout the work. These modifications, however, do not prevent the listener from recognizing the objects in relation to themselves. Villanueva applies the magnifying glass effect mentioned in relation to *Retrato del pasado* here as well, in this instance, to very specific materials (*glissandi*, specific chords, *ostinati*, etc.), which undergo microvariations with each reprise.

List of Works:

(*Editorial: Thürmchen Verlag, Köln)

- Erosiones* (1987/88) for orchestra. *
- Biribiriloque* (1988) for fl, cl, tp, trbn, pno, 2 vn, va, vc and cb. *
- Música descalsa* (1989) for fl, ob, cl, perc, pno, vn, va, vc. *
- Escenario* (1989 - rev. 2007) piano and orchestra. *
- A cada brisa* (1989) for voz, fl en sol, cl bajo, vibr, va (o 2. vibr.). *
- Tulipanes negros* (1990), for bass clarinet and double bass. *
- En el gris* (1992) for 2 perc. *
- Travesía* (1994) for cl, vc, piano. *
- Espera* (1995) theatrical work for mezzosoprano, vc, 4 perc and tape. *
- Partida* (1996) for fl, cl, cr, tp, trb, perc, pf, harp, vn, va, vc, cb. *
- Lazos* (1996) for string ensemble. *

Laura Dosky 2014-10-8 1:39 PM

Comment [1]: Is this a phrase particular to the domain of music? I don't understand what you mean.

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Comment [2]: Sound?

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Comment [3]: Did I alter your meaning here?

Noche de ronda (1997) sound installation for tp, alto sx and 4 fl.
En línea (1999) for fl sol/bass fl, 2 bass cl (1. cl), cr, 2 perc, cb. *
Intonso (11 páginas) (2001) for fl in sol/bass fl, cl, fg, cb. *
Retrato del pasado (2002) for string quartet. *
Tango errante (2002) for piano. *
Lebende Steine (2004) for violoncello trio. *
Cuatro esquinas (2006) for piano four-hands. *
Gaudeamus (2006) for fl, cl, fg and vibr.
FA (2011) for violin and violoncello.

Selected Discography:

En el gris (1992, rev. 1995): In 'Panorama de la música argentina 1959-1964'. Fondo Nacional de las Artes. CD Cosentino IRCO 317, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1995. CD. Thomas Meixner, Thomas Oesterdickhoff, percussion.

Perpetual tango (John Cage / version María Cecilia Villanueva), 1989. In 'New Piano Works from Europe and the Americas'. Mode 31, Mode records, New York, USA, 1992. CD. Haydée Schwartz, Piano.

Partida (1996): In 'Donauessinger Musiktage 1996'. Col Legno, WWE 3CD 20008. Col Legno, Muenchen, Alemania. 1997. CD. Ensemble Modern, dir: Juerg Wyttenbach.

Lazos (1996): In 'Frau Musica (nova)'. JHM-Vetrieb, Frau Musica 001, Koeln, Alemania, 1999. CD. Ensemble Resonanz, dir: Dominique My.

María Cecilia Villanueva / Barfüßige Musik (2004) Monographic CD. Various Works: *En línea*, *Travesía*, *Intonso*, *Tulipanes negros*, *A cada brisa*, *En el gris*. JHM-Vetrieb, Frau Musica 005, Koeln, Alemania, 2004. CD. Thuermchen Ensemble.

Further reading:

(Aharonián)

(Corrado)

(Fürst-Heidtmann)

(Fürst-Heidtmann, María Cecilia Villanueva)

(Fürst-Heidtmann, María Cecilia Villanueva: *Spiralform der Zeit*)

(Gronemeyer)

(Hillberg and Vogt)

(von der Weid)