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| **Orellana, Joaquín (1937--)** |
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| Joaquín Orellana was the creator of a new *lutheria* called *útiles* *sonoros* [sound tools], which were used in combination with other traditional instruments in his pieces ‘Cantata dialéctica’ (1974), ‘Primitiva grande’ (1975), and ‘Híbrido a presión’ (1982), among others. Taking up the marimba as a symbol of the Guatemalan sonorous landscape, he has sought to expand the traditional timbric universe and, at the same time, to connect it to the social, political, and material realities of his country.  Orellana’s work, which comprises traditional compositions for orchestra as well as electroacoustic ones, is permeated by the preoccupation of attempting to integrate and give expression to the latent social tensions of the Latin American scene. One of the principles on which his ‘ideological music’ is based, according to Graciela Paraskevaídis, is the use of crude recordings taken directly from the Guatemalan sonorous reality, to which he then applies composing procedures associated with concrete music. In this, ‘Humanofonía I’(1971) and ‘Humanofonía II**‘** (1972) are emblematic.  Orellana was born in Guatemala and pursued musical studies at the National Conservatory with Augusto Ardenois, José Castañeda, and Franz Ippisch in composition, and with Carlos Ciudad Real in violin. In an initial stage which — according to Dieter Lehnhoff — stretched from 1957 to 1967, Orellana composed fifteen works, two of which received prizes: ‘El Jardín Encantado’[‘The Enchanted Garden’] (1958) and ‘Un extraño personaje’[A Bizarre Character] (1964).    With his piece ‘Contrastes. Tema y Variaciones para orquesta y cinta magnética,’ he obtained a grant to study in Buenos Aires between 1967 and 1969 at the Centro Latinoamericano de Altos Estudios Musicales, dependant on the Instituto Di Tella, a stint which would prove definitive for the growth of his musical aesthetics and thought. There he came into contact with avant-garde languages and aesthetics — especially electronic music — under the guidance of Francisco Kröpfl. In this period, he composed his first electronic piece, ‘Metéora’ (1968), and the ‘Quartette No. 2 ‘Frater Ignotus’’ for two violins, viola, and violoncello.  Once he returned to Guatemala, where the material and technical means afforded by an electroacoustic music laboratory were not available, Orellana produced his first ‘Humanofonía’(1971) in a small studio in the city using microphonic sources of the urban sounds in his daily sonorous landscape (such as turbulent crowd sounds, protests, meetings, phonemes of indigenous languages, etc.) with thepurpose of projecting a certain social circumstance. In this context he created the *utilería sonora* [*sound tools*] derived from the marimba, an indigenous instrument constantly present in Guatemalan soundscape.  Orellana’s ‘Sonarimba’ became the first of a series of ‘tools,’ including the Tecoclac (1977), Circumar (1984), and Frobui (1997); its name derived from the fusion of the names of two instruments: the *sonaja* [rattle] and the *marimba*. Later on, Orellana incorporated the sounds of other materials into his tools, such as wood, metal, and plastic. His declared purpose was to take the marimba to another sonorous dimension, creating a kind of *marimba fantástica*. His work with the marimba inspired him to compose ‘Evocación profunda de una marimba’(1984) for marimba, mixed choir, five dolce flutes, reciter, and magnetic tape, and ‘Ramajes de una marimba imaginaria’[Branches of an imaginary marimba] (1990).    During the 1970s, Orellana continued to defend his aesthetic in such works as ‘Cantata dialectica’(1974) for symphonic orchestra, mixed choir, and sonorous tools, as he did with his electroacoustic works ‘Primitiva I’ (1973), **‘**Asediado asediante’[‘Pursued Pursuer’] (1975), ‘Rupestre en el futuro’[‘Rupestral in the future’] (1979), although in a more indirect way, nearing scenic works with ‘Tzulumanachí’(1979) and ‘Santanadasatán’(1981). His activities combined composition with teaching and divulgation, which formed the foundation of the Grupo de Experimentación Musical in 1974 and, between 199 and 1982, the organisation of experimental music workshops.  His international projection took off when he taught courses in Contemporary Latin American Music in Uruguay and Brazil. It was here that Orellana’s music and ideas became, for a whole generation of young composers, a possible configuration with which to articulate an avant-garde language with a Latin-American-aimed content ‘sensitized with its acoustic environment’.  During the 1980s, Orellana made an even greater effort to give expression to Guatemalan reality through his music. Ideological content manifests itself even more strongly in Orellana’s electroacoustic composition, ‘Imposible a la X (imágenes de una historia en redondo)’[‘Impossible to the Nth Degree (Images of a Tale in the Round)’] (1980). In this piece, he returns to the crude images depicting the conditions of repression and misery that he had previously engaged in 'Homofonías' as well as Émulo Lipolidón in 'La Tumba de Gran Leguna' (2001) (which was based on the work of Miguel Angel de Asturias), and 'Socratávica' (1998-99) for mixed choir, sonorous tools, and marimba; 'Socratávica' was dedicated to the memory of the victims of Rio Negro 1982.Similarly, in the ‘Canto de Justina’ [‘Song of Justina’] in ‘Los Cerros de Ilóm’(1992) — which was censored during the government of Jorge Serrano Elías — the protagonist is a revolutionary romantic, a young native Indian girl and a mythological character who is abused by the authority of a ‘mystical police officer’: a colonel, and his henchmen. In this work, the composer attempted to integrate, as he did in others, the reality of the natives’ world by working with phonemes, intending to emulate Indian tongue. ‘El violin valsante de Huisderio Armadel’(1984), autobiographical in character, attempts to show the tension between the sonorous expression of the social conflict and its rejection by the so-called ‘cultured’ sectors by using traditional instruments: a violin and a piano. In Orellana’s catalogue, atonal language melds with tonal, as well as with the incursion of aleatory systems.  Orellana’s contribution to the modernisation of the Guatemalan artistic scene has been amply acknowledged, as have been his endeavours to integrate the silenced voices associated with many of the social realities that exist in his country into his music. He has detailed his reflections in essays: ‘Hacia un lenguaje propio de Latinoamérica en la música actual’[‘Towards a Language of its Own in Present Day Music in Latin America’] (1977), ‘Recuento de una Labor’[‘Diary of a Labour’] (1982), ‘Algunos aspectos sobre la noción de paisaje sonoro. Sensibilización al entorno acústico’[‘Some Aspects on the Idea of a Sonorous Landscape: Sensitivity to the Acoustic Environment’] (1983).  Orellana presently lives in Guatemala where he continues to compose and teach. Multimedia: <http://joaquinorellana.org/> Discography: Orellana*,* Joaquín. *Hojas de Álbum*. Obras par violín y piano. Fondo regional de pequeños proyectos.  ---. *Humanofonía*. Incluida en el disco No. 2 de la Colección ‘Música Nueva Latinoamericana,’ Uruguay, 1976.  *---. Ramajes de una marimba imaginaria*, incluida en ‘Hacia una música contemporánea latinoamericana,’ Costa Rica, 2003. |
| Further reading:  (Berganza)  (De Gandarias)  (Lehnhoff)  (Orellana, Amor a la marimba de Guatemala)  (Orellana, El violín valsante de Huis Armadle)  (Orellana, Hacia un lenguaje propio de Latinoamérica en música actual)  (Orellana, Recuento de una labor)  (Orellana and Cofiño, Sinfonía delirante)  (Paraskevaídis)  (Privado Catalán)  (Roldan) |