

Javier Torres Maldonado

Suggestive Ambiguities

Two world premieres for Javier Torres Maldonado this Autumn. On **October 6** in the Grande Sala of the Teatro Nacional de Bellas Artes in Mexico City, during the Foro Internacional de Música Nueva "Manuel Enriquez", Jake Arditti, countertenor, and the Arditti Quartet will perform ...*Un lume per lo mar...* for countertenor and string quartet, commissioned by the Centro Nacional de las Artes (Cenart) in Mexico City with the support of Ibermúsicas. Torres Maldonado, in 2016 "composer in residence" at the Cenart, explains: «Three fragments from different texts form the basis of the score of ...*Un lume per lo mar...*: the first is from the second canto, *Purgatorio*, of Dante's *Divina Commedia*, the second is a short poem by Shakespeare (*The Phoenix and the Turtle*) and the third is a poem by Francisco de Quevedo (*Salamandra frondosa y bien poblada*). The link between these comes from the poetic object that characterizes them, namely the impression of iridescence that a bird in flight can give to the observer, due to the reflection of the light or because it really is a phoenix; this produces a very suggestive ambiguity given that it can be associated with processes of transformation of the musical material. The idea of iridescence is not new in my music and in the past it was translated into different techniques I used for the first time in *Iridiscente* for piano, percussion and electronics, but in the case of ...*Un lume per lo mar...*, it adds the different resources of the human voice, starting from the timbre of the countertenor. However, the score does not use just the timbre and register typical of this voice, but there are also some "digressions" into the lowest register, which serve to create timbral links of a different nature with the lower registers of the instruments of the quartet, or also ambiguities deriving from the particular amalgams of timbre that involve strict microtonal zones, as well as transitions between different vowels associated with techniques of transforming the timbre of the string instruments that are used to blend the whole into complex luminosities. In addition to these resources, there are ways in which the voice transcends the precise meaning of the text, making it more abstract, thanks to the extrapolations or emphases of the phonetic components. The opposition and complementarity of the texts depends not only on the poetic images they contain and on the sound of the languages in which they are written (Italian, English and Spanish), but also on their musical manipulation deriving from their superimposition; at certain moments this translates into a sort of almost liquid fluidity, while in others madrigalistic figures arise, often fragmented in correspondence with segments that filter from different structural levels towards the music». Commissioned by the Mozarteum in Salzburg to mark the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the Electronic Music Studio of the institution, *High Over the Distant Horizon* for piano, electric organ, cello, four players in movement (flute, bass



clarinet, violin and percussion) and electronics will be the closing work on **December 8** of the Festival Crossroads 2018 organized by the Institute for Contemporary Music of the Mozarteum, and will be performed by NAMES New Art and Music Ensemble Salzburg. On the same day the composer will hold a conference in which he will present the new work in the Conference room of the Electronic Music Studio of the Mozarteum. *High Over the Distant Horizon* was written during the first year that Javier Torres Maldonado belonged to the Sistema Nacional de Creadores de Arte in Mexico. The composer tells us: «*High Over the Distant Horizon* is based on the idea of creating music where the acoustic instruments are not amplified or treated electronically, but despite this their integration with the electronic part seems "natural". To obtain this result it was necessary to carry out various experiments

that gave rise to two basic principles: the decomposition of the sound objects through a principle of spectral complementarity, and the association of the spatial position of the players with the physical location of the loudspeakers. The conception of the spatialization depends mainly on these principles, that is to say, the function of the musicians of the ensemble is not traditional but depend on their movements in the space, carefully specified in the score. For the static instruments like the piano, the spatial integration is made more simple thanks to two loudspeakers placed in front of the opening of the lid. The integration of electronic sounds within the trajectories of the players who move does not exclude the use of electronic sounds when they are close to a loudspeaker. With regards the sound materials, the starting point of the piece is the spectral decomposition of two multiphonics of the saxophone, an instrument not included in the ensemble of the work. In fact, this basic material is never heard throughout the piece, but nevertheless provides the basis for the rhythms and verticalities (whose ambiguity oscillates between timbre and harmonic field), while the form (divided into two blocks of 8 and 7 modules, respectively) reflects the various "states" of the basic material, its transformations and the use of acoustic illusions in which the interruption of apparently continuous sequences is not perceived». In **July** the third cycle of the Internacional Laberintos Sonoros of the Centro Nacional de las Artes in Mexico City included several works by Javier Torres Maldonado. On **July 26**, in the Auditorio "Blas Galindo" of the Centro Nacional de las Artes, *Invenición* for violin was performed by Fabián Rivas de Santiago in a concert featuring young soloists of the University of Zacatecas; on **July 27**, again in the Auditorio "Blas Galindo", *Imágenes de la Caída de Altazor* was played by Candida Felici and the Ensemble Sillages; still on **July 27**, in the Auditorio 222 of the National School of Music, Centro Nacional de las Artes, *Desde el instante* for clarinet was played by Camilo Irizo, soloist of the Ensemble Taller Sonoro.

Two new works commissioned by prestigious institutions in Mexico City and Salzburg

Andrea Mannucci

Caterina Chiozzi will play *Ninna nanna* for harp on October 30 at the Auditorio Montemezzi in Verona. Andrea Monarda will play *Auguri per il proprio compleanno* for guitar on November 6 at the Museo del '900 in Milan. Paolo Ghidoni and Claudio Bonfiglio will perform *A piena voce*, Sonata for violin and piano, on November 17 at the Fondazione Diocesana Santa Cecilia in Brescia.

Michele dall'Ongaro

Demanding Intelligence

A world premiere for Michele dall'Ongaro this Autumn. On **November 17** in the Sale Apollinee of the Teatro La Fenice in Venice, during the Ex Novo Musica season, *Un goto (Canzone da battello)* for piccolo, clarinet, violin and cello, dedicated to Claudio Ambrosini on his 70th birthday, will be premiered by the Ex Novo Ensemble. The composer explains: «I remember very well when I met Claudio in 1985 at Villa Medici,



fresh from the Prix de Rome. I believe he hasn't changed an ounce: smiling, direct, ironic, happily attached body and soul to his Venice. With that demanding intelligence, never aggressive and even contagious in his overflowing generosity. Pleasant to drink a glass together with some notes poured inside, like this: without pretense. Music and friendship in a canal of fantasy».

New work at La Fenice for the 70th birthday of Claudio Ambrosini