

# Javier Torres Maldonado

## Idiomatic Translations

New works and alternative versions grow out of pre-existing works

Three new works for Javier Torres Maldonado. On **October 23, 2013**, the Auditorium of the Centro Culturale Ollin Yoliztli in Mexico City, during the concert season of the Sala Ollin Yoliztli, hosted the first performance of *Im Windesweben II* for horn and *Im Windesweben III* for wind quartet (flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon), jointly commissioned by the Mexico City Wind Quintet and the Perpignan Conservatory, played by the same group and the soloist Paul Miller. The composer tells us: «The two pieces can be played together in various ways with an alternation between their different respective movements or else independently. One of the materials forming the basis of *Im Windesweben II* and *Im Windesweben III* is the musical gesture from the last bar played by the clarinet in "Aria (*Im Windesweben*)", the fourth and final piece of *Segundo Libro del canto alado*, consisting of a simple figure played staccato-decelerando, performed using a repeated airy sound. The sequential numbering of the titles of both cycles refers to the structural relations resulting from the transformations carried out by the composer on the above mentioned musical gesture. The title *Im Windesweben* ("In the murmuring of the wind") is a quotation from a poem by Stefan George used by Anton Webern in the second *Lied* of his op. 3 (*Fünf Lieder aus "Der siebente Ring"*). Nevertheless, there is no actual reference to the music of Webern: the relation is instead to be found in the sonic imagery and in the quality of the timbres. Since I have recently been interested in the abstract translation of sonic objects coming from the real world or of fragments of them, the basic material for *Masih* for saxophone quartet and for these two cycles originates not only from the clarinet gesture but also from a fascinating moaning of the wind recorded inside a room. By means of different analyses and translations of this sound I obtained some musical elements which were then subjected to processes of transformation that gave rise to certain "chemical reactions". I'm currently working on a short piece for wind quintet that could perhaps be thought of as a conclusion: *Im Windesweben IV*». The new work will be played again by the Mexico City Wind Quintet during the masterclass given by the composer on **April 23 and 26** in the Perpignan Conservatory. A new version of the *Segundo Libro del canto alado* for clarinet and string quartet will be presented by the Ensemble Sillages on **February 20** at the Petit Théâtre Le Quartz, Scène Nationale de Brest and on **March 7** in Paris, in the Église de Saint-Merry. In the context of the project *Libros del canto alado*, which foresees an indefinite number of books written for different wind instruments in which virtuosity is an important characteristic, the second is dedicated to the clarinet and the string quartet. Just like the first, it is divided into four contrasting sections, each of which bears a title conjuring up a dreamlike or fantastic image (I. "Vuelo"; II. "Oiseaux siffants"; III. "Morgenlied"; IV. "Aria [*Im Windesweben I*]"). As happens in the first book, there are a series of references to other works of the composer: each one "recuperates", so to speak, materials remaining from the compositional processes of other works. The *Segundo Libro* uses in particular the materials unused in *Eserfal* for orchestra and electronics as well as some reminiscences from the *Primer Libro* itself. Torres Maldonado adds: «The first version of the *Segundo Libro del canto alado* was written in 2006, to mark the birth of my daughter, to whom the work is dedicated. Although a first, unpublished, version was played by the clarinetist Luis Humberto Ramos and the Cuarteto White in that year, a strong sense of self-criticism and self-censorship led me to write a second version. As happened with other pieces, for many years I avoided having it played. It was thanks to the insistence of Philippe Arri-Blachette and the Ensemble Sillages that this definitive version finally sees the light». On the same date, **February 20**, and again in Brest, in the Centre d'Art Passerelle during the Festival Electr(o)cutation, the premiere of *Huayra-Yana (Vento notturno)*, in the version for baritone saxophone and electronics, will be given by Stéphane Sordet, saxophone. The composer tells us: «It was after studying the different techniques present in *Masih*, for saxophone quartet, that I convinced myself that a version of *Huayra Yana*, originally written for bass flute and electronics, was not only feasible for baritone saxophone but would bring new and fresh

aspects to the extremely percussive sonority of the first version. However, to rewrite a piece for a means other than the one it was intended for requires an effort of rethinking that can only originate from the nature of the means itself; it is indispensable therefore to perform an idiomatic translation that not only considers the piece itself seen from a different perspective, but that also involves carrying out transformations true and proper, sometimes so radical as to transform the original structure of some passages or of entire sections. In this case one of the most interesting aspects derives from combining the instrumental techniques used (the previously mentioned percussive writing and the control of the inhaling and exhaling of the air by the player) with techniques that amplify the instrument. In addition to the two external microphones (one on the bell of the saxophone, the other near the mouth of the performer), two other microphones are placed within the instrument itself making it possible to capture all the percussive subtleties required, which are otherwise in many cases impossible to hear. The piece is dedicated to the saxophonist Stéphane Sordet». The music of Javier Torres Maldonado could be heard on **November 4, 2013** in the Grosser Saal of the Hochschule für Musik in Basel, where *Espira I, Espira II* for violin, cello, piano and guitar was played by Momoko Kawamoto, violin, Simon Thompson, cello, Sinforosa Petralia, piano, and Vittoria Pagani, guitar. On **December 7** in the Théâtre Dunois in Paris Dominique Clement, soloist of the Ensemble Aleph, performed *Desde el instante* for clarinet, while the same ensemble, directed by Michel Ponzmanter, played *Hemisferios artificiales* for two instrumental groups. On **December 12** the Guggenheim Foundation in Bilbao hosted a performance of *Masih* for saxophone quartet, in the version without electronics, with the Sigma Project Quartet. The violinist Ludwig Carrasco played *Invención* for violin, in its Portuguese premiere, on **December 19 and 20** in the Superior School of Music in Lisbon, at the Teatro Joaquim Benite in Setubal and at the Centro Cultural Artes do Sul in Faro. On **February 5** the Goethe Institut of Mexico City will host a performance of *Espira IV* for recorder, bass clarinet violin and cello, played by Umbratono. On **April 3** the composer himself will participate as sound engineer in a performance of *El suspiro del angel* for three instrumental groups and electro-acoustic interactive system, which will be conducted in its Spanish premiere by José Luis Estellés in the Taller de Música Contemporánea de Salamanca, during the Festival de Primavera de la Usal. *Iridiscente* for piano, percussion, interactive electro-acoustic system and video (video by Danio Catanuto) will be performed on **May 16** in the auditorium of CMMAS (Mexican Center for Music Sonic Arts) in Morelia, and on **May 18** in the Sala Manuel M. Ponce del Palacio Nacional de las Bellas Artes, in Mexico City, by Candida Felici (piano) and Yi-Ping Yang (percussion). The project, conceived by Javier Torres Maldonado and the team from GRAME, was awarded the "Rutas Escenicas" prize (Mexico/European Union). Born of a collaboration between GRAME in Lyon and the Dynamis Ensemble from Milan, it foresees a program that integrates the music of European and Mexican composers with interactive multimedia elements. On **May 17** Ivano Battiston will play *Lacrymosa I* for accordion in the Palazzo Tursi, in Genoa. The *Cuarteto de cuerdas n. 1* for strings will be played by the Quartetto Arditti on **May 21** in the Palacio de las Bellas Artes in Mexico City, during the Foro de Música Nueva Manuel Enriquez. *Eserfal* for orchestra and electronics will be performed this **spring** by the Orchestra Filarmonica of Mexico City. In **December 2013** Javier Torres Maldonado and the choreographer Jaciel Neri were awarded the prestigious Ibermusicas/Iberescena award, assigned by the intergovernmental organs of Spain, Portugal, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Uruguay and the Dominican Republic, for a new stage work for ensemble and dancers, in the context of the project *Rostros de humo*, which involves a composition for 16 instruments and a dancer. The world premiere is foreseen by the end of 2014. From **February 27** to **March 1st** Javier Torres Maldonado will hold a seminar on computer assisted composition and orchestration at the Superior Conservatory of Castilla and Leon in Salamanca.



Michele Tadini

*La terza luce* for percussion, cello, bassoon, live electronics, video and light performance was played on January 25 in Valence, with Thibaut Weber, percussion, Sophie Raynaud, bassoon, Marie Ythier, cello, Michele Tadini, live electronics, Françoise Henry, set design and lights, and Angelo Guiga, technological research. On February 20 in the Auditorium Rai in Turin, during the series Rai NuovaMusica, the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della Rai conducted by Fabio Maestri will play *Je vous en Prix* for orchestra. On March 22 in Dijon, during the ACTEM Musique de Chambre et Création, the first performance will be given of *Cielo, costruendo Babele* for voice, electric guitar, piano, percussion and doublebass. *Scenario* for electric guitar and magnetic tape will be played by Luca Nostro on March 28 in Studio 2 of the Auditorium Parco della Musica in Rome during the "In My Life" concerts of the series "Contemporanea". *Argot - gergo* for doublebass octet and electronics can be heard at the beginning of May in Bologna, played by the doublebass class of the CNSMD de Lyon, with the composer on live electronics.