

## Continuity, Condensation

These months see four world premieres for Javier Torres Maldonado. On **December 20** in the Sala Vanni in Piazza del Carmine in Florence, the closing concert of the Gamo International Festival presented *Lacrymosa I-a* for accordion and electronics, with Francesco Gesualdi and the sound engineers of Experimentalstudio des SWR. The composer explains: «*Lacrymosa I-a*, for accordion and electro-acoustic device, a piece dedicated to the accordion player Francesco Gesualdi, was taken from the original version of 2001 (without electronics). It starts from a melodic structure in which in some madrigalistic Monteverdian figures have been made more abstract, condensed or expanded in their expressive character as well as in their length; the whole composition is in fact the fruit of specific attention towards a radical simplicity and economy of elements». Javier Torres Maldonado contributed to the Divertimento Ensemble's project around Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations* with *Natura interiore* for flute, English horn, percussion, violin, viola and cello, which was given its first performance on **January 18** at the Teatro Litta in Milan during the "Rondò" series, by the commissioning ensemble directed by Sandro Gorli. Commissioned to mark the Ensemble's 40 years of activity, this very brief variation on Beethoven's Diabelli Variation nr. 27 shows how Javier Torres Maldonado carries out an extreme condensation and fragmentation of the original thematic materials, employing a pointillist technique; in this way the original motives are distributed within the instrumental group note per note, often with extreme changes of register. This all takes place very rapidly and resolves in a superimposition which maintains only the essential figural lines. The Divertimento Ensemble directed by Sandro Gorli also commissioned and premiered on **February 1**, again at the Teatro Litta in Milan during the "Rondò" season, *Oltre* for 10 instrumentalists. The composer introduces his new work: «Commissioned by Sandro Gorli for the Divertimento Ensemble, *Oltre* for ten instruments is dedicated to Maria Isabella De Carli. The piece stems from the idea to extend and transform the resonance of the last chord of Franco Donatoni's *Spiri*. *Oltre* was written for the same instrumentation as *Spiri*: violin and oboe (also the English horn) as soloists, wind trio (flute, clarinet and bass clarinet), string trio (violin, viola and cello), celeste and vibraphone. There is no break between the start of *Oltre* and the end of *Spiri*, given that the opening prolongs the resonance of the previously mentioned chord. From the succession of "states" and initial transformations of the chord, which are immediately contrasted by a microtonal sequence encompassing a maximum interval of a major second augmented by a quarter of a tone, first presented by the solo violin, a structure in modules becomes apparent, whose durations are regulated by "golden" ratios; their succession gives rise to an irregular, non random structure. The transformations

of the basic sound objects involve complementarity, negation and rupture, and the states of the material that have been generated by them are strictly linked to the idea of considering them as possible constellations which could in turn give rise, in the last measure, to new music». Finally, on **March 30** in the Cultural Centre "Passarelle" in Brest, during the International Festival "Electr()cution", the pianist Vincent Leterme will play *Inoltre* for piano and electronics. Torres Maldonado explains: «*Inoltre* for piano and 4-channel electronics was written partly in 2010 and then completed in 2017. Conceived as a study of the condensation of sonic objects derived from different automatic orchestrations, the starting material is a fragment of a sample of a tam tam rubbed with a super-ball; this is the same sonic object that formed the basis of two of my previous compositions: the radio drama *Un posible día* for soprano, narrator, ten instruments and electronics, and *Sidereus Nuncius*, for three percussionists, dancers and interactive electro-acoustic system. The definition of this sonic object (that lasts just 0.144 seconds) was a long but fruitful operation: from this starting point I was able to derive a series of automatic orchestration solutions through Orchidée (computer-assisted orchestration programme developed at Ircam) which immediately revealed the possibilities, but also the limits, of this tool. Although these materials were in themselves fascinating, being derived from a genuine microcosm, they couldn't be used in their raw state in a work for piano and electronics or solo piano; and thanks to a multidimensional consideration of these possibilities I looked for compositional solutions that would allow them to be condensed, contracted or expanded so that they could enter or become integrated in both the piano as well as the electronics part, while keeping their affinity with the original sonic object». On **October 11** of last year, Francesco Gesualdi and Nicola Tommasini performed *Hacia el umbral del aire* for accordion and interactive acoustic system at the "L. Refice" Conservatory in Frosinone; on **October 15** *Alborada* for soprano saxophone was played at the Auditori Rafelbunyol in Valencia by S3 Spectral Sax Style (Jesus Nuñez and Juan D. Garcia) as part of the Projecte Rafel Festival; on **October 30** the Ensemble Taller Sonoro performed *Interstizi* for violin and cello in the Sala Verde of the Teatros del Canal in Madrid; on **November 24** the first performance in Germany was given of *Desde el instante* for clarinet by Antonio Rosales in the Hilmar-Hoffmann-Saal del Goethe-Institut in Munich; on **February 14** at the Fundación BBVA in Bilbao the Ensemble Kuraia directed by Andrea Cazzaniga will play *Hemisferios artificiales* for two instrumental groups. Finally, Torres Maldonado will hold a composition seminar on his own work on **February 6** and **7** at the Real Conservatorio Superior in Zaragoza, with the participation of the flutist Alessandra Rombolà.

Four works for ensemble, solo instruments and electronics renew the composer's research

