



Research

The Performer as a Multi-Expressive Artist in Current Flute Experimentation in Argentina.

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Abstract:

The proposed theme of the discussion is the actual musical experimentations in Argentinian flute scene. Specifically, the approach to music pieces where the performer plays the flute, recites in different languages, uses the voice while playing the instrument and realizes various movements on the stage.

Keywords: Flute, Experimentation, Expressiveness, Performer, New virtuosity, Creativity.

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1. Introduction

Artistic practices have changed under the influence of new technologies and the expressive use of the body of the musical performer and the instruments in works that can include stage movement, use of one or several musical instruments and the human voice with recitations of fragments of poetic texts, and guttural, onomatopoeic, phoneme, etc., sound emissions. In this way, in the last centuries in the Western academic music scene, artistic productions have begun to ask the performer to appropriate a role of creative centrality, most of the time, sharing with the composer the “formative intention” (Eco, 1970). In this position, great flexibility is required, greater participation in the creation of the work and a complex use of the body and its expressiveness, to create a kind of new instrumental virtuosity typical of these epochal experimentations characterized by the emergence of the performer as a multi expressive actor.

We investigated two pieces by Argentine composers that ask the performer for an energetic reading of a highly complex sound material in which sound aspects of the instrument are interwoven: recitation or vocalization and the use of new technologies. The pieces selected for analysis are two pieces for flute dedicated to the Argentine flutist Ana Ligia Mastruzzo: “ubicua” by Juan Carlos Tolosa and “Coyolyantototl” by Federico Núñez.

2. “ubicua” by Juan Carlos Tolosa

The piece “ubicua” by Juan Carlos Tolosa (**Figure 1**) is presented as a paradigm of the use of new technologies in art. It is a piece for four flutes (performed by one performer) and bluetooth devices. Tolosa thought of the idea of ubiquity, of being in different places at the same time, as a projection of what happens with the live flute and the ghostly flutes (pre-recorded flute sounds) that emerge from Bluetooth. Regarding the idea of ubiquitous, he also thought about what this meant: at the right place, at the right moment. Everywhere: For this, he devised a stage arrangement in which the flutist was moving through four stations. In four spaces: Each of these spaces was going to be attributed to a particular flute: Station I (flute in G): located approximately in the center and slightly to the left of the stage (always from the audience's perspective); then it moved to the right and to the back, Station II (piccolo): the movement occurred forward and a little more to the left, Station III (flute in C): finally it moved to the extreme left, quite far forward but less than the C flute, Station IV (bass flute): where the work concludes.

The performers of Bluetooth devices are in the audience, as far away from each other as possible and, if there are seats, they should avoid sitting in the same row. As for lighting, if there are lighting devices in the room, only the station in which the flutist is playing should be illuminated. The rest of the stage must be in darkness. In Figure 2 we can see Ana Ligia Mastruzzo playing on the stage. The flute player's movements from one lectern/Station to another will occur in total darkness. Phosphorescent adhesive tapes are planned for the stage floor. To turn the different lights on or off it is necessary to follow the score. In the event that the illuminator does not know how to read music, an assistant will be required with the score to indicate which station to illuminate. At the end of Station IV, where indicated in the score, the general stage lights and those in the stalls must be turned on abruptly and simultaneously. If there are no lighting devices in the room, lectern lights will be used at each lectern/station, with the entire performance of the work remaining on.

The performers of the Bluetooth devices must have a cell phone or a Tablet or iPad – devices that have Bluetooth – with the 10 tracks that the work needs. They must also be provided with a small Bluetooth speaker to amplify the device.



Empezar a tocar sobre el final
del track 02
(CONEX PICC02),
sobre los trinos sobreagudos,
alrededor de 00':24"

ubicua - Estación II

Juan Carlos Tolosa
(2018)

(Piccolo)

Ansioso
♩ = 60

Piccolo

mf sfz f pp

TRACK 03
PICCSAMPLER (COMPAS4)

ff mf ff mp fff

cantando
y tocando

6 pizz (aire solo) f mf fff ppp subito pp

8 Jet T.R. T.R. sfz sfz sfz sfz

11 ppp p ppp p ppp ppp

14 ff p subito fff

TRACK 04
IMPRO PICC A FL

(aire solo) Jet Whistle Tone

mf sffz pp

* FADE OUT LUZ PICCOLO

Se desplaza a atril
de flauta en do.
Toma flauta en do.

Figure 1: Score of “ubicua” by Juan Carlos Tolosa. Detail of piccolo score that belongs to the Station II. Movements of flute player on the stage, correspondence between flute and the devices, musical and time instructions are indicated in the score.

2.1 Reflexion about "ubicua" piece

The cell phone, tablet or iPad, any device chosen to use in the performance of the piece, serves to project what happens with the live flute and the ghostly flutes that emerge from the Bluetooth, operating as a "ritual object" (Ulm, 2021) that transmits from different points of the auditorium sounds that were pre-recorded, created and manipulated by the composer based on the sounds of the flute instrument and those created electronically. Thus, Tolosa captures, retains and makes available for any performer and for the user the fugitive in Edison's way, retains the sound created in the device and with this material experiments and breaks perceptual thresholds. The work is a sound experience (Ulm, 2021) in which the viewer does not listen to a finished piece, but rather it is an open musical experience as conceptualized by the semiologist (Eco, 1984) in which there is no a certain place for perfect listening, all spaces in the auditorium are possible places for effective listening. In the case of "ubiquitous", the composer does not create a finished art object to be observed or enjoyed as a whole, but rather uses technology and everyday devices such as the cell phone to make them act in a way illicit, by users who adjust them to new functions. It is a highly human operation as the Italian composer Luciano Berio conceives (Berio, 2023): "However, music remains a human activity: it does not exist in nature. Therefore, it is not possible to conceive a musical discourse without referring to those means that man has invented or adapted for musical purposes." ("Sin embargo, la música sigue siendo una actividad humana: no existe en la naturaleza. Por lo tanto, no es posible concebir un discurso musical sin hacer referencia a aquellos medios que el hombre ha inventado o adaptado con fines musicales". (The tradition of the author).

Each Bluetooth device performer produces a performance that will be distributed in the sound space. The cell phone or technical device used allows the sensitive to be transmitted through small speakers from different points of the auditorium in which the musical experience takes place, making the miniaturization of the devices and the digitalization of sound essential for the realization of the experience. The random arrangement of the technique means that there is no ideal place to perceive, in this way, the listener (Saavedra, 2013) will be able to create his or her particular and unique sound space. In the score, in the text, the performance is written, the way of acting, the map of more or less arranged, regulated actions, and the map of the energy flow. What is written is an energetic text that the artist translates into ritual, the interpreter performs and puts into action a form that sounds. (In **Figure 2** we can see Ana Ligia Mastruzzo performing in a dark stage at the Brazilian premiere of the piece at the UNESP, Universidade Estadual Paulista). The cell phone is outside its context of use and becomes a device of sensitivity. The technical object is outside the norm, it emerges as a new artifact, creating unprecedented spaces of legitimacy, a new space of ritual.

2. Coyolyantototl by Federico Núñez

2.1. About the aesthetics and performance

The piece Coyolyantototl (**Figure 3**) (in the Nahuatl language which means place of action of the rattle bird) is written for pre-Columbian ceramic double flute, flute and recitation in Nahuatl (by an interpreter).

This is a piece composed of three parts: 1 – "Teotl (God of movement); 2 – "Oncuicatinemi" (Go sing); 3 – "Totol" (Bird) and invites listeners to immerse themselves in an imaginary Mesoamerican past through the combination of the timbres of the original language, the replica of a Mesoamerican clay flute and a modern Western instrument such as the transverse flute. In this way, the aesthetic idea consists fundamentally in exploring timbral combinations in the scenic play that develops during the piece.

We can notice an alternation of onomatopoeia and Nahuatl language. These onomatopoeias serve as a link to acquire the continuity of the piece and allow the performer to move from one instrument to another. It is recommended to use amplification that allows you to balance the sound planes of the voice and the instruments. The texts were provided by the Mexican poet Cuauhtémoc Vite.

It is highly recommended that performers have experience and knowledge in recitation and theater to better address this work and any other that requires the use of the voice by the performer.

The work contains a series of issues to take into account when studying and interpreting it. As for the recitation, this is always clarified in the score with a rhythm that serves as a guide for the cadence of the words and syllables, without having to be strict or too rhythmic. It should flow naturally. In the first piece, the voice is recited in a whisper, respecting the indicated rhythm and using onomatopoeia "nu" that are interspersed between the sounds of the flute and the double flute. Here the performer must achieve a sound environment of lightness and fluidity, thinking about the God of movement that gives its name to the piece. There is a non-linear timbral transfer between the flutes where finally the double flute together with the onomatopoeia closes the number. In this way, a kind of timbral modulation from the transverse flute to the double flute is generated, carried out gradually, where the Nahuatl language functions as a link or as a distracting element.

In the second part the recitation is spoken and functions as an introduction that begins the section playing exclusively with the double ceramic flute. The spirit here is that of joy, it is an ode to beauty, to birds, to song, to love. It is very important to feel confident with the fingerings and explore the sounds of this new instrument to convey the spirit of the piece. It is recommended to memorize the double flute section to become comfortable with this flute. The last part has an interpretation indication: «mechanical», here the performer must be very rhythmic and forget about the lyrical issues of the previous part. It is a fast piece that requires a lot of skill to move quickly from one flute to another and from the flute to the whispered sections with onomatopoeia or the mouth closed. The text, like the previous piece, is inserted during the course of the work.



Figure 2: Ana Ligia Mastruzzo playing



Coyolyantototl
para Ana Ligia

Federico Núñez

"Teotl"
→ Dos movimientos.
Revenir, momentáneo, caudal

$\text{♩} = 60 \text{ ca.}$
Recitado y susurrado.

Voz

pp 3

Non — cui — ca yeh — yan — no — teuh zan ye — huan

Voz

sfz *pp* 3 *tomar Flauta*

I — pal ne — mo — hua Ah — no — te — cu

$\text{Rítmico } \text{♩} = 152 \text{ ca.}$

flauta

pp *sfz*

fl.

pp *sfz* *Full*

fl.

EA. V *Full* *EA V*

sfz *sfz* *pp* *sfz*

fl.

Full

Figure 3. Coyolyantototl manuscript.

2.2. *Reflection on Coyolyantototl*

Given the characteristics of the piece, we find ourselves facing a *new virtuosity* (Lavista 2010) that is not the traditional one of romantic pieces of European academic origin, but rather is typical of the world of contemporary music that shows new musical expressions that seek to break with tradition without denying its existence. Local features are mixed with the vestiges of European tradition and compositional techniques.

Here the prominence is given by the replica of the ceramic instrument that provides the piece with its organological characteristics and with it its own interpretative complexity. The double flute is in no way intended to resemble and imitate the transverse flute, but, on the contrary, the piece is structured around it in such a way that the transverse flute and the voice modulate and transform to create a sound unity, amalgamated.

The musical piece Coyolyantototl represents a paradigmatic creation of the rapprochement between Mesoamerican and European cultures that challenges the performer with endless questions to address, from interpretative-performative to cultural aspects. It is also true in regarding the treatment of stylistic and instrumental resources, since it marks an unprecedented way of connecting different musical cultures through its own new musical grammar that is manifested throughout musical discourse. Language, in this way, is freed from all rigidity and acquires formal relationships that are legitimized in creation itself. The interpreter opens up a huge and rich panorama of topics to know.

3. Conclusion

As we mentioned at the beginning, it has been more than a century since Artists (authors, performers) have worked in search of the extreme limit of the instruments' potential, building their own aesthetics on those frontiers. New timbral searches have repudiated all positivist principles of homogeneity and equality, the parameter of timbre became increasingly predominant and the instruments became true laboratories for these explorations.

With the digital era, new technologies began to occupy more space in artistic productions, causing the need to amplify the flute, transforming it into an "electric flute." Effect pedals were used to alter the source sound, devices such as Bluetooth were used and electronic and mixed music was composed, in works in which various disciplines also dialogue and the limits between them were blurred and fluidized. More and more musical creators have needed to use materials that were not exclusively sound, at the same time that they required expanding the possibilities of traditional instruments towards unknown frontiers. It remains for future research to investigate the deep causes of these current sound searches and aesthetic experimentations, the musical reasons why we find this predominance of works destined for multi-expressive flutists.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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