

Anexo3 Notes

Anexo3 (2017-18), for violin, flute, saxophone, MANO, assorted percussion, and live electronics, was commissioned by Ensemble KLEM based in Bilbao, Spain. It was composed over three residencies between March 2017 and March 2018, and performed in Chile, Peru, and Spain. This allowed us to experiment with new configurations and processing techniques as the compositional process took place. In this context, the composition process roughly followed the order of sound design and experimentation, musical improvisation and recording, and analysis of recorded versions and composition. This methodology forced us to explore musical composition as dependent and in fact emerging from the design of the relationships between instruments, software, and hardware that made the system.

Anexo3 processes instruments to the point of becoming unrecognizable. The work uses a large system of aluminum plates that are both struck as well as induced into resonance through feedback processes controlled by microphones, transducers, and computer software, which I designed in response to the metallurgic industrial past of the city of Bilbao, where ensemble KLEM invited me for a residence. The sonic character of the work is often a reflection of the metallic nature of the instruments and the city, while the instrumental processing allows the work to explore and generate imaginary contrasting soundscapes of nature.

Anexo3 is a 40 minute piece that could be considered a structured improvisation. It is partially notated through traditional music notation, graphic notation, text indications and inscriptions on the instruments themselves. For example, the opening section is scored for flute, electronics, and two performers on the feedback controlled metal plates, and requires performers to draw on the metal plates themselves the nodal points of resonance, as well as the distance at which the microphone must be held to excite them, thus complementing the score notation with notation markings on the instrument itself. The work is also heavily encoded in software which determines the ensemble's sound and the set of actions the musicians must make for the piece to work, as well as the temporal evolution of the piece.

Finally, *Anexo3* uses three güiros in the central section of the piece. It is unclear whether these instruments, which consist of a notched gourd and a striker, were first constructed in Latin America or if they were introduced in Latin America from Africa. Today, they are used extensively in Afro-Latin popular musics. In *Anexo3*, musicians are required to play on their instruments with one hand while playing the güiros with the other; in fact, the violinist is forced to place the instrument vertically against his body, like a viola da gamba, in order to bow with the right hand and sound the güiro with the left. Symbolically, this action embodies the duality between the Western practices that the violin or the flute materialize - and on which I was formally educated in - and the way in which the postcolonial condition has become encoded in the güiro itself and in the various musical practices around it. Using güiros in this context speaks to how percussion is appropriated as a symbol of modernity and experimentation in Western music and raises complex questions regarding our understanding of pre-colonial music in the Americas. This section produces a delicate, fragile, and even uncomfortable performance situation, rendering a musical result which I feel is representative of my own hybrid cultural identity as a musician and as a person: existing between Western and non-Western cultures, and not fully belonging to either of them.