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The Ear and the Eye: Converging Pillars in the South America of the 20th Century

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entwickelt sich etwas, ein Wesen, das sich aus dem Chemikaliengeruch der vielen neuen Hemden, Hosen, Shirts und Shorts materialisiert – aber die Neons gehen nacheinander wieder an, und es bleibt noch ein wenig ruhig, alles war zu kurz, um jetzt erleichtert sein zu dürfen, Enttäuschung kommt auch nicht in Frage. Man hat nur den Eindruck, es ist jetzt dunkler in dem Laden und die Musik schöner. Ein Stück, das ich vielleicht realisieren werde, vielleicht nicht, heißt vielleicht *Weißer Raum im Finstern*. Das ist ein wirklich schöner weißer, fensterloser Raum, gekalkt und sehr hell erleuchtet. Man kommt rein, die (weiße) Tür zu, dann geht das Licht aus. In dem Moment, oder kurz vor dem Moment, in dem man beginnt, Erwartungen zu hegen oder Wahrnehmungen zu haben, geht das Licht wieder an und man geht raus. Zu hören ist nichts, nichts besonderes. Man war zu kurz in dem strahlend weißen Raum, um ihn erfasst zu haben und zu erinnern, die Finsternis war zu kurz, um einen Eindruck zu hinterlassen, man war zu beschäftigt, damit zu beginnen sich zu sortieren – aus diesem Setting ließe sich eine Meditation oder eine Therapie entwickeln; so etwas wie der Orgonakkumulator, ein Kult, ein Bayreuth der finsternen Weiße.

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The Ear and the Eye: Converging Pillars in the South America of the Second Half of the 20th Century

“A great School of Art ought to arise here...” were the words written by the painter Joaquín Torres-García (Uruguay, 1874-1949) in the opening statement of his visionary essay, *The School of the South* (1935), which embarked him, as well as his students at the time, in a radical and yet embracing journey of shapes and colors, that would eventually change the way art is lived and experienced in Latin America. Later on, in 1943, Torres-García would draw an audacious and incisive up-side-down map of South America—where the south becomes the north—as a poignant way of portraying the cardinal principle of his *School of the South*: a complete change of perspective where the relationship of the artist and his/her surroundings would be exalted through the process of art making, while at the same time developing a culturally relevant connective trajectory with the autochthonous elements embedded in these surroundings.

Montevideo's *School of the South*, always at the north in its members' minds, became, in the nineteen-thirties and forties, a radical challenge within the mostly representational art of the region. Its art—“...a monumental art, planar and bi-dimensional, schematic and synthetic; an art of large rhythms and one that is closely tied to architecture.”²—comes to life as a necessary and introspectively clear fresh answer to the opposite forces that have shaped America ever since its discovery in 1492.

The entire continent is a vibrant polarity:

Huge English and French lands in the north; vast Spanish and Portuguese lands in the South; both connected by an isthmus that brings oceans together, and a Central America that embraces the Caribbean islands in an effort to bridge the opposing forces of North and South.

¹ Joaquín Torres-García, *The School of the South* [article on-line], reprinted from El Taller Torres-García: *The School of the South and its Legacy*, Mari Carmen Ramirez, ed. (Austin: University of Texas, 1992); available from www.coleccioncisneros.org/st_writ.asp; accessed 7 June 2007.

² Ibid.

South America, with Venezuela at the top and Argentina and Chile at the bottom, is a conglomeration of thirteen republics. Except for Brazil, where Portuguese is the official language, these republics share a common language, and the whole region shares a common historical platform of about 338 years of Spanish/Portuguese rule. South America is also a continent that is a poly-directional concatenation of mixtures, polarities, and contradictions in every aspect:

The Andes: the vertebral mountains that keep the puzzle together in the West.

The Amazon: the expansive forest that unites the pieces in the East.

These two constitute the great natural polarity of the region that guards the racial foundation of the land:

The *mestizo*—or the various combinations of the Amerindian—, the African, and the Spaniard.

At the root of all the many social, economic, and political tendencies of the region, the *mestizo* is, in essence, three different ways of seeing, feeling, and thinking; partly united, at first, by the Catholic code, and then by the historical ramifications of a culturally devastating Colonial period whose aftershock is still being felt today.³ Within this fragile membrane of historical and geographical polarities, the influence of Torres-García's thought has been instrumental in the process of reassessment, reconstitution, and reaffirmation of these opposing forces through the arts, as a way to find the points of connection that these may yield, in order to have a more palpable understanding of the multi-level notion of identity in the southern continent.

But Torres-García was not alone in his efforts to instill a sense of change in the cultural consciousness of 1930s' South America. Juan Carlos Paz (1897-1972), the Argentinean composer, essayist, and devoted follower of the *Second Viennese School*, championed the cause of European composers of the avant-garde, as a way to urge South Americans that a direct interaction with the mother continent would inevitably bring about a change—of perspective as well as of compositional procedure—along with a powerful resurgence of the academic music of the region. Torres-García and Paz realized that the “north” was, indeed, in their south. And this South, this cultural space, also nurtured the early years of painter/sculptor Jesús Rafael Soto (Venezuela, 1923-2005) and composer/pianist Coriún Aharonián (Uruguay, b. 1940):

³ It is necessary to point out that although the *mestizaje* in Latin America has been taking place ever since the so-called discovery of the continent, it is, by all means, an incomplete process, since there are still groups, of different and varied origins and traditions, that are not an interactive part of the main social, political, and economic network of the region.

Two artists consciously or subconsciously stepping further into the Torres-García/Paz approach and legacy: one Venezuelan, from the north of the south; the other Uruguayan, from the south of the south; both looking for a way to transform elements from their native lands into cultural realities that could trigger a change of perspective. Their *métiers* are different—one moves with the eye, while the other does the same through the ear. But their cultural scrutiny and goals are quite similar: the establishment, through the trajectory of their works, of a sense of structure, both in the approach to, and in the results of, the different artistic endeavors of the region.

Soto

As Soto graduates from the *Escuela de Artes Plásticas y Aplicadas* in Caracas⁴, and prepares to travel to Paris in 1950, the visual arts in the continent of America are going through a fascinating state of affairs. In the North, and specifically in the United States, where political and economic mechanics were far more structured in both behavior and results than in Latin America, visual artists were thrilled by the freedom and infinite possibilities of the subject matter in *Abstract Expressionism*. In Latin America, on the other hand, visual artists were searching for a sense of structure within the unpredictable and unstable political and economic apparatus of the region.

Against this background, Soto arrives in the French capital armed with a profound connection to the work of George Braque and to the whole notion of direct and controlled geometry in the pictorial field, as well as with a need to find a workable structure that would allow him to go, on his own terms, beyond the work of Kazimir Malevitch and Piet Mondrian.⁵ For Soto, abstraction is the road on which to travel. This perspective and point of departure is immensely related to Torres-García's *Universal constructivism*, not only in that it is a deeply rational and self-imposed position, but also because, like the Uruguayan master, Soto limits his constructive tools in order to focus his energies on developing an embracing and yet personal way of experiencing abstraction.

⁴ For a more detailed year-by-year account of Soto's life, please visit: www.jr-soto.com

⁵ It is relevant to point out that Latin American's multi-leveled linkage to Europe is an irreversible and inescapable active part of the continent's basic condition. This connection not only nurtures Latin America, but it also enhances its overall interaction with the world at large. The goals of the artists in question was to achieve cultural autonomy for South America while leveling out a horizontal relationship, as opposed to a vertical one, with the mother continent and its traditions.

It is astonishing to retrospectively look at Soto's *oeuvre* and feel the presence of those elements that he took to Caracas in 1942, as he enrolled at the *Escuela de Artes Plásticas y Aplicadas* his blinding attraction to the natural light, the vibrating colors he learned to communicate with as he assembled signs for a local movie theater in his adolescence, and the overall rhythm of life and nature in his native Ciudad Bolívar.

A brief but detailed exploration of these three elements would disclose how Soto transforms and mixes them up into mathematically precise and yet expressive spaces.

Light. In South America, and especially in the regions close to the Equator, daylight is very intense and bright. It is never timid. On the contrary, it is overwhelmingly embracing, and it intoxicates one's eyes, changing the visual landscape from moment to moment, while altering the experience of seeing through the creation of unexpected vibrations. Soto employs a profusely limited color palette to create the sensation of light/vibration, which is achieved through the interplay of white against 1) black, 2) three primary colors, or 3) three secondary colors. Later on, however, he adds purple and a variation of green to his "chromatic scale."

Vibration. In Soto's case it is the one element that goes between light and rhythm since it is produced by the interaction of these two on the pictorial/sculptural space. It is achieved through the superimposition of rhythmic patterns and/or structures, all of which are subjected to the wonders of the light of the colors. Rhythmic patterns are, in essence, sequential repetitions of geometric elements, i.e. dots, lines, squares, rectangles, etc. Combinations or groups of rhythmic patterns constitute a rhythmic structure.

Rhythm. It is necessarily subjected to Time, and Time, in Latin America in general, is peculiar in the following sense: there is immense flexibility and elasticity in the psychological processing of physical Time in the mind of the Latin American individual, in part due to the to the cultural and intensely Catholic understanding that the Time spent on earth is only transitory, temporary, provisional. Physical Time, therefore, can be, and needs to be processed with varying degrees of flexibility and elasticity, because it is subordinate to the moment or event, due to the fact that the Supreme Time only comes after physical death. For the Latin American individual, psychological Time is, possibly, shorter and, consequently, more intense.

This way of experiencing Time directly affects how rhythm is felt in South America:

- Sameness interrupted by moments or events.⁶
- Repetition until one arrives at the moment or event.
- Static motion searching and/or waiting for the moment or event.

Soto's conception of rhythm intrinsically functions around these principles, which are managed by the sequential presentation of rhythmic entities and/or the superimposition of rhythmic structures within the pictorial/sculptural space. These create an effect of rhythm/vibration which is not to be confused with rhythmic vibration.⁷

Form. In Paris, during the early 1950s, Soto fuses these elements into a pictorial space that at first is controlled by the successive repetition of geometrical shapes. Later on, however, Soto discovers Arnold Schoenberg's *Twelve-Tone Method* by way of René Leibowitz's *Schoenberg et son École* (1947). This book is a decisive step in Soto's path. He immerses himself in the concept of serialization and translates it to his language of shapes and colors.⁸ It gives him a *method* through which exercise a high degree of control over the events taking place on the pictorial space, as well as the necessary freedom to interweave light, vibration, and rhythm.

In 1953, he introduces the idea of space within the pictorial space, transforming it into a quasi three-dimensional pictorial/sculptural space. He achieves this new dimension by juxtaposing two planes (plexiglass over plexiglass, plexiglass over painted wood, etc.) and separating them by a specific distance, so the viewer simultaneously sees the depth created by both planes at work. Moreover, form is delineated by the strict use of geometrical shapes whose juxtaposition distills rhythm/vibration and

6 Examples of this notion of "sameness" are the rainforest, the pampas, Afro-American rhythmic structures, etc., where change, no matter how minute, occurs through and by the addition of a "new" element to the pre-existing mass. There is a great deal of repetition and reiteration in, for example, the geographical landscape and in the folk traditions of the continent, all of which are punctuated, as stated above, by change in terms of addition.

7 Rhythmic vibration is the patterned oscillation of one or various elements within a given space, where rhythm produces vibration and vibration produces rhythm. In Soto's rhythm/vibration, the effect of movement is achieved through the superimposition of two or more rhythmic patterns which then produces a particular visual vibration, all depending on the position of the viewer. For example: Soto takes a sequence of several vertical lines, presented at exact distances from each other which he then superimposes over another sequence of several vertical lines also presented at exact distances from each other, creating, thus, a vibration "after the rhythm:" the vibration is attained by the interaction of the separate layers (which already contain their own rhythm and vibration in themselves) in space—a solely visual phenomenon.

8 For more in-depth information about Soto's approach to serialization, please refer to: Patrick Frank, ed., *Readings in Latin American Modern Art* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2004), 170.

light/vibration. After 1955, Soto goes a step further and creates a rear-plane that consists of intercalated thin black and white vertical lines over which he attaches geometrical figures at a distance, and/or hangs pieces of wire neatly shaped into geometrical figures, also at a precise distance, so as to create rhythm/vibration. Later on, Soto then makes the viewer a more active part of his world of light, vibration, and rhythm, through his *Penetrables*—a series of large-scale works consisting of hung threads of nylon or thin pipes, outlining a geometrical figure, which are meant to be walked through.

Soto's work deals with universal polarities, with that tension formulated by the realities of body vs. shadow, light vs. obscurity, presence vs. absence, which all are definite components of the physical and metaphysical worlds of human beings. Although a universal concept, his notion of two realities at once—one in the front juxtaposed over another in the rear, as one approaches the work from the front—is nevertheless very relevant to the Latin American who, quite possibly, and most likely subconsciously, feels and lives that other polarity that is so decisively part of his/her historical, geographical, and therefore cultural heritage: the individual facing his/her own condition, his/her own *mestizaje*.

Each work, from the early experiments to the magnificent *Penetrables*, reveals a formidable array of philosophical, psychological, and metaphysical polarities, all of which are given to the viewer through a precise and dynamically concentrated presentation of light, vibration, rhythm, and color, as these are experienced in South America.⁹ Furthermore, each work also presents the psychological condition that accompanies the everyday life experience of the South American individual (or all Latin Americans for that matter): an irreversible and continuous poly-directional concatenation of mixtures, polarities, and contradictions—shapes, lines, colors, and shadows of the Latin American soul.

Additionally, his pieces also introduce to the visual arts a concept that is quintessential to the consciousness of the South American individual, and one that has been extensively dealt with in the 20th century literature of the region: *magic realism*. Soto's joyful maneuver of the physically palpable shadow as a compositional

9 Soto's "early experiments" are the works that initiate his adventure in abstraction. They are the first steps and yet the core of his personal journey. Some of these "experiments" are: *Rotación* (1952), *Pieza Serial* (1952-53), *Muro Blanco* (1953), *Dos Cuadrados en el Espacio* (1953), *Metamorfosis* (1954), *La Cajita Villanueva* (1955). For more details on this early phase in Soto's trajectory, please refer to: Ariel Jiménez and Jesús Soto, *Cuaderno 6: Conversaciones con Jesús Soto* (Caracas: Fundación Cisneros, 2001), 24-55.

element reflects an expansion of that "otherness" into the pictorial space. It is an investment into that other reality that is achieved through the manipulation of one's vision, and that is deeply rooted in that magical moment, that magical event, that magical idea that the Spanish colonizers courted: *El Dorado*.¹⁰

But Soto's works also emanate simplicity. On the inside, they might be saturated with disarming relationships that insist on emphasizing the contrasting nature of their constructive elements, but on the outside they display the confidence of a purposeful existence. They are simple events. They simply are moments that exhibit a fantastic structure which allows them to circumnavigate the visual world as objects of immense beauty.

Aharonián

In 1955, as Coriún Aharonián begins his formal training in composition, the academic music of the entire continent of America faces an interesting process where the South is in a sort of mild opposition to the North. This time around, be that as it may, the truly powerful polarity is between the Americas and Europe. Nevertheless, two different sub-processes do go on throughout the entire continent during the 1950s. In North America, specifically the United States, academic music is trying to cope with the ramifications of the Aaron Copland (*quasi* nationalistic) and Milton Babbitt (serial) schools of thought. In South America, on the other hand, a dynamic process of musical introspection is being set into motion—still, of course, taking the inescapable European tradition as its springboard—where the folk musical tradition of the region proceeds to function as the essential model.

It is in the Buenos Aires of 1929 that Juan Carlos Paz begins his visionary crusade, when he becomes one of the founding members of *Grupo Renovación*. In 1934, he introduces Schoenberg's *Twelve Tone Method* in Latin America and goes on to found the *Conciertos de la Nueva Música* which later on are expanded into the *Agrupación Nueva Música*.¹¹ Thus, by the late 1950s, there not only is a high degree of awareness

10 El Dorado is that "other world" that the Amerindians (mostly in South America) thought and believed to exist, and which they used to their advantage in order to confuse the Spanish colonizers who, in their obsession with gold and riches, would literally throw themselves into the depths of an unknown land. But El Dorado is also at the root of the imaginary world of the region. It is part of that "other reality" that is a quintessential to the system of beliefs of the Latin American individual: during the colonization period, Amerindians were only able to keep their Dorado world; everything else, including some of their beliefs, was taken away from them by the colonization machine.

11 For more information on Juan Carlos Paz, and Latin American music in general, please refer to: www.latinamerica-musica.net

about the new musical tendencies in Europe, but the fundamental components for a revolutionary renovation of the compositional means and procedures in the academic music of the southern continent are also slowly taking shape. As the ideals of Paz, along with those of Torres-García, transform themselves into small and yet influential realities in the form of artistic initiatives scattered throughout the southern continent, Aharonián emerges as a composer.¹²

Unlike Soto, however, Aharonián begins his musical training at an early age and grows up in a family where there is an active and purposeful consciousness about social and political issues. Aharonián's fundamental training concentrates around three personalities that profusely encourage the basic principle of his thought—that of the need to develop counter-models that can bring about a contrasting set of behavioral procedures:

The composer Héctor Tosar (Uruguay, 1923-2002) trains Aharonián in the technical aspects of composition, as well as with the ethical foundation of what it entails to be a Latin American composer.

The composer Luigi Nono (Italy, 1924-1990) confirms to Aharonián, through his very own example, that the composition of musical works is as much an artistic endeavor as it is a social and political force. Nono also inculcates in his student the essential notion that a composer must therefore put to use the tools and advances relevant to his/her own time and place, in order to be able to create meaningful counter-models.

The musicologist and ethnomusicologist Lauro Ayestarán (Uruguay, 1913-1966) instills in Aharonián the need to continue the process of expansion of the study of the autochthonous musical elements of the region, as one more device in the ever-evolving process of analyzing and understanding the social and political behavior of the region.

Aharonián's music is extracted from the need to connect and reconnect to the vibrant essence of his continent, all within his passionately embracing political and ethical approach to his own humanity. Since the composition of his *Música para Tres* (for flute, violin, and piano; 1968) Aharonián presents a very clear, precise, and unyieldingly personal idea about the nature of the compositional space: a field, where polari-

12 Other important and influential artistic movements in the continent were: *Noígrandes* (Brazil, 1952, concrete poetry), *Grupo Madi* (Uruguay/Argentina, 1946, constructive art), *Música Viva* (Brazil, 1939). For more information on these and other artistic movements, please refer to: Jacqueline Barnitz, *Twentieth-Century Art of Latin America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), Part II.

ties unite in order to find various ways in which to cooperate amongst themselves.¹³ Cooperation, for Aharonián, is a broad concept which also entails inter-reaction and interplay. It is, in a few words, the development of an array of relationships among different entities, moments, or events, without necessarily subjecting these to processes of change within themselves. Accordingly, the compositional space is felt, thought, understood, and lived as being a non-discursive accumulation of moments or events; the presentations of which are subjected to the flexibility and elasticity of the Latin American sense of psychological Time.

There are three main constructive elements that Aharonián puts to effective use in the delineation of his fierce, yet immensely evocative musical spaces.

The moment or the event. The moments or events are essentially expressive blocks or areas of activity with no contextual direction, most of which undergo varying degrees of non-progressive transformation. A particular work may include any number of blocks—with the understanding that there is immense care for the cohesive nature of the musical space on Aharonián's part—and these may be presented horizontally (linear presentation) with varying degrees of juxtaposition at either end of the blocks; or they can be presented vertically (simultaneous presentation), also with varying degrees of juxtaposition.¹⁴

The moments or events carry their own particularly precise harmonic and melodic frames, as well as their own specific sets of dynamics, *tempo* fluctuations, articulations, etc. Continuity, within the compositional space, is achieved 1) through the sensitive reiteration of blocks, or other hierarchically less important constructive elements; 2) through the exact repetition of blocks or hierarchically less important constructive elements; and 3) through the use of mechanical and/or non-mechanical *ostinati*. The moments or events are, in essence, individuals in the free society of Aharonián's musical space, all under the politically vigilant code of his particular sense of Time. There always is a *mestizaje*, of sorts, in and on the musical space.

13 Recommended recordings of Coriún Aharonián's music: Coriún Aharonián, *Gran Tiempo: Composiciones Electroacústicas* (Montevideo: Tacuabé/Serie Música Nueva T/E 25, 1995), CD. *Música para Tres* (1968) is included in the following recording (track no.6): Coriún Aharonián, *Los Cadadías* (Montevideo: Tacuabé/Serie Música Nueva T/E 35, 2001), CD.

14 The composition *¿Y Ahora?* (1984) for piano (released in *Los Cadadías*, please refer to note no.13) is an excellent compendium of Aharonián's approach to the architecture of the musical space. It is also available in: *Neue Klaviermusik für Studium und Unterricht*, EB 8536 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel).

Austerity. Austerity in language and materials, as a compositional principle, is one of Aharonián's signature characteristics. His blocks, or events, display that "saturated simplicity" that can also be found in Soto's work: limited set of constructive tools (pitch groups, chord structures, rhythmic sets, etc.), charged with immense amounts of expressive possibilities. This approach is consonant with Aharonián's politically conscious persona, as it is also very related to the mechanisms of the folk music of the region; one which is not only a quintessential influence on Aharonián's thought and *métier*, but one that also exploits a quite limited palette of materials in order to express the infinite character of the moments or events of the everyday life of the continent's quotidian existence.

Silence. In Aharonián's compositional spaces, silence carries structural weight. It is also that contrasting element that brings about that "otherness" that is so important for the South American soul. It is the color of palpating absence which functions as the polarity that taps into the *magic realism* that lives inside, as well as outside, of the compositions themselves.

Aharonián may have had a personal predilection for silence before he went to Venice (ca. 1970) to study with Luigi Nono, master of the Venetian silence. He grew up exposed to the particularly heavy and rhythmic silence of the Andes, to the sonorous silent presence of the Amazon, and to the keen silence on some streets of the metropolitan areas of the southern continent. Silence lives in the *ranchos* and *favelas*.¹⁵ It is, most certainly, a way of life for some people or groups in the region.

Like Soto's, Aharonián's work deals with universal polarities, with that tension formulated by the realities of sound vs. silence, light vs. obscurity, presence vs. absence, which all are definite components of the physical and metaphysical worlds of human beings. More often than not, his compositional spaces can be perceived as the delineation in time of two simultaneous horizontal platform-like surfaces, one on top of the other: sound over silence, and/or vice versa. And, indeed, his musical spaces strive to present two realities at once—the one above and the one below; all depending on which way one decides to approach the matter.

Aharonián's political and social militancy is palpable, if not also understood, in the interplay of sound vs. silence which he purposefully embraces in his compositional

¹⁵ *Ranchos* are the shacks found in the surrounding *Barrios* of cities in Venezuela. *Favelas*, on the other hand, are "shanty towns" around cities in Brazil.

spaces and one that he struggles to come to terms with, like Soto, on his own terms, with the unrelenting reality of presence vs. absence. Presence and absence are, in simple terms, the *magic* of the *reality* of life in South America. And Aharonián's silences are Soto's shadows: the constant interaction with that "otherness" as one sees and hears; that "otherness" that is ever present in the open or closed eyes or ears of the South American individual: the *magic realism* of the condition of being South American.

Furthermore, Aharonián's musical spaces force one to come to terms with the reality that South American composers do hear differently than their North American, European, or Asian counterparts. As expected, their sound world and sense of rhythm of time is the direct result of the combination of all historical, political, social, economic, and geographical opposing forces as they are lived throughout the continent. In South America, and in Latin America for that matter, composers have always tried, in one way or another, to come to terms with the polarity that is at the core of their approach: the powerful and all-embracing folk tradition of the region vs. the irresistible and penetrating European tradition. Their own *mestizaje* emphasizes this polarity: they are one, they are the other, they are both, and they are none. This difficult and delicate position inevitably influences the actual act of hearing in the composers of the region, resulting in the production of musical spaces that are *mestizos* in many aspects, and whose most valuable strength is the conscious realization of their own *mestizaje*.

Aharonián's works and writings are a cornerstone in this process of awareness that has been evolving in the academic music of the region, since Paz's 1929 first directional change. Ultimately, Aharonián's musical spaces, which have a surface similarity with the Inca stonewalls in Cuzco (Perú), are, in essence, a very human search for structure. But, like Soto's pictorial/sculptural spaces, they are also objects that maintain a distance between their interactive partners in their outside world and themselves.

* * *

Through their compelling approaches, Jesús Soto and Coriún Aharonián have been purporters of Torres-García's notion of *Universalism*, as an effort to break away from cultural colonialism, while maintaining a sense of locality, through the thoughtful and delicate use of the constructive elements found in their surroundings. In their

eyes and ears, the artistic endeavors of the continent take a step forward in the sense that the exotic disappears in their works. But, then and again, their works skillfully and successfully attempt to embrace the powerful force of the natural landscape of the region, without mimesis, while, at the same time presenting a direct but delicate melancholy of sorts, distilled from past and present political, economic, social, and historical conditions of the region. Their work, although very similar in some aspects and quite different in others, forces South Americans to face their kaleidoscopic selves in a vibrant and progressive way.

But there is one relevant point that precedes their work—an essential one for that matter. A point that is deeply rooted in their own humanity, and that defines the polarity that simultaneously unites and separates them: Aharonian's visual thinking vs. Soto's musical thinking. Their search for structure, with their eyes and ears in their hands, is perhaps their most influential contribution to the line ignited by Torres-García and Paz.

Structure is, quite possibly, the only idea that could bring together the poly-directional concatenation of mixtures, polarities, and contradictions that embrace the intoxicating *mestizaje* that is South America.¹⁷

DÁNIEL PÉTER BIRÓ

Geboren 1969 in Madison (USA). Seine Kompositionen untersuchen das Verh. von Musik und Sprache. Biró studierte in Budapest, Frankfurt und Princeton. Zu lehr er als Assistant Professor für Komposition und Musiktheorie an der Unive von Victoria in Kanada. 2006 war er Dozent der Darmstädter Ferienkurse, wo sein von der Stadt Darmstadt in Auftrag gegebenes Werk *Mishpatim* vom ensercheur uraufgeführt wurde. Momentan arbeitet Biró an einem Stück für Stimmen, Ensemble und Elektronik, einem Auftrag für Vancouver New Musi

NIKOLAUS BRASS

Geboren 1949 in Lindau am Bodensee. 1968 begann Brass ein Medizinstudi München, gleichzeitig erfolgten private Kompositionsstudien bei Peter Kiese an der Musikhochschule München, dann bei Frank Michael Beyer und schließ bei Helmut Lachenmann in Hannover. Brass war mehrere Jahre als Arzt tätig 1982 ist er Redakteur einer medizinischen Fachzeitschrift. Zwischen 1980 und besuchte er mehrmals die Darmstädter Ferienkurse; dort traf er auch auf M Feldman, der ihn entscheidend prägte. Seine Arbeit als Instrumental- und komponist gewinnt in der letzten Zeit zunehmend an Bedeutung. Seit meh Jahren arbeitet er an dem Musiktheater-Komplex *Die Abdankung*.

MORITZ EGGERT

Geboren 1965 in Heidelberg. Heute lebt Eggert in München. Als Komponist er sich gern zwischen alle Stühle, was sowohl das avantgardistische als auc klassische Konzertpublikum zuweilen verstört und spaltet. Durch medial v achtete Projekte wie *Die Tiefe des Raumes* (ein Fußballatorium) oder *Freax* (zusammen mit Christoph Schlingensief) versucht er regelmäßig, das gängig der Neuen Musik als Angelegenheit allein für ein Expertenpublikum zu unt nieren. Von letzterem oft unbemerkt, pflegt er aber genauso gerne die leiserer experimentelleren Zwischentöne.

www.moritzeggert.de