

The international sound art festival in Mexico City

(Sound, its relationship to the art disciplines and to the new technologies)

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Abstract

Sound Art festivals have proliferated in developed countries over the last two decades. However, interest in sound and its relationship to art and to the new technologies has also emerged in some Latin American countries like Mexico. In 1999 a new sound art festival was born in Mexico City and this year it had its third edition with grate success. Prominent computer music composers and sound artists from all over the world have presented their work in this festival, and many Mexican composers and artists are getting presently involved with the computer music and sound art fields. We are hoping that this event will push the evolution of the electronic arts involved with sound that have fallen behind the more traditional and conservative art disciplines in this country.

1 Introduction

In the last decade a big number of sound art festivals have proliferated over Europe, North America (Canada and the USA) and some other countries like Japan and Australia. Most of the international artists participating in this kind of festivals belong mostly to northern or economically developed countries. But what has happened with the countries in economical development processes? (Like Latin American and South Asian countries?). It seems that sound art, as well as computer music, are equivalent both to technologic development. Whoever doesn't have enough technology, money to invest in computers, etc, ends up out of the ball game. Nonetheless, this does not mean that there isn't a profound interest in the interaction between the visual and the sound arts in our countries, and that we have many

artists that are presently working and developing art pieces with a particular interest in sound.

2 The sound art festival in Mexico.

In 1999 we held in Mexico City the first edition of the international sound art festival which theme was *Ruido... (Noise...)*. This festival became an encounter place very much needed in our country and which the author of this report conceived along with Guillermo Santamarina (the current director of *the Ex-Teresa Arte Actual* Museum in Mexico City). One of our main goals was to create a space where the visual arts would interact with music created with new technologies, by means of using sound as the central element of all the art works presented. In this way, the festival offered to the public a multidisciplinary experience of contemporary art unique and unprecedented in Mexico. We also gave particular importance to the diffusion of computer music. This music has not been much played in Mexico, and it has only been systematically presented in another festival in the city of Guanajuato (directed by Roberto Morales Manzanares), and by my self in different venues all around the country.

In the 1999 international sound art festival we organized a series of computer music concerts from different nations of the world (Brazil, Spain and Italy). We have also been interested in presenting live electronic music concerts, where improvisation by means of new technology has been essential to the development of computer music. We invited composers like Alvin Curran and Carl Stone from the United States, and Roberto Morales and Antonio Fernandez Ros from Mexico. On the other hand, we have

considered that it is very important to give space to any kind of alternative electronic music if it retains the experimental spirit, because we think that computer music technology has broken through and has influenced in a positive way the POP music world.

In the year 2000 the *Ex-Teresa Arte Actual* museum organized the second international sound art festival which theme was *Humor y Aliento (Humor and breath)*. We invited renowned international artists from different countries like the Italian Maurizio Nannucci, the Japanese Minoru Sato and Jio Shimizu, the Americans Paul de Marinis, Krystina Bobrowsky and Kelly Davis, the Argentineans Jorge Macchi and Mario Marcelo Mary, and the sound artist and composer Slavek Kwi from the Check Republic. We had also Mexican artists and composers whose interest in the past festival motivated them to make new and interesting sound works.

This year we presented the third edition of the festival which theme was *Eso... (That...)*. The festival grew and had more official support from the government. Ten thousand people attended and the interest in all the national media became stronger. Many inter-media works (audio and video) by artists like Carsten Nicolai (Germany) Phill Niblock (USA) and Ricardo Nicolayevsk (Mexico) characterized this last festival. We had more live electronics concerts that were presented with live interactive computer visuals controlled by the performers. We invited for the first time curators and directors from other music and sound art festivals, like the British David Toop and the Spanish Oscar Abril. We had also very interesting interactive installations like "The Fire Inside" whose author is the Swedish Ake Parmerud, and we had a wonderful workshop realized by Pauline Oliveros. Finally, we presented two CD's that are compilations of computer music and sound art works presented in the first two festivals.

2 Conclusion

We think that the existence of this festival has pushed young Mexican composers to get involved in the computer music field, as well as visual Mexican artists to explore the sound installation and sound sculpture fields by means of using all kinds of new technologies. We hope that our festival will

help to give way to new possibilities of careers in the academic centers, because up to now there are no graduate or postgraduate programs in the computer music and the electronic art fields in Mexico.

3 Participants

Some relevant Mexican Computer Music Composers that have participated in the festival are: Javier Alvarez, Julio Estrada, Guillermo Galindo, Alejandra Hernandez, Manuel Rocha Iturbide, Salvador Rodriguez, Vicente Rojo, Victor Romero, Antonio Russek and Rodrigo Sigal. Some relevant Mexican artists that have produced sound art works for the festival are: Francys Alys, Arcangel Conastantini, Galia Eibenschutz, Hector Falcon, Gabriel Kuri, Machintosco, Gabriel Orozco, Fernando Ortega, Miguel Angel Ríos, Francisco Xavier Rodriguez, Luz María Sanchez and Laureana Toledo.

Some relevant international composers that have participated are: Jorge Antunes, Christian Clozier, Joel Chadabe, Francis Dhomont, Agostino Di Scipio, Gregorio Jimenez, Erik Michael Karlsson, Eric La Casa, Paul Lansky, Phill Niblock, KK. Null, Adolfo Nuñez, Eduardo Polonio, David Rosenboom, Jacob Ter Veldhuis, Horacio Vaggione and Edson Zampronha. Some relevant international sound artists that have participated are: Rilo Chmielorz, Alonso Gil, Rolf Julius, Oswaldo Macía, Paul Panhuysen, Juan Carlos Robles and Rirkrit Tiravanija.

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