

# Juan Sebastián Lach Lau

PhD graduation  
Concert 2  
Ensemble Music

Played by  
**Modelo62**

## **Chamba de um acorde**

2011

11'30"

For flute, bass clarinet and piano.

This piece pursues my interest in the analogies between pitch and duration. Each instrument deals with a field of pitches that are mixed and distributed at different rhythmic proportions with respect to each other. It is a set of variations on a (big) chord and the many ways it can be partitioned, patterned and deployed rhythmically. Once the premises were decided, most of the piece was written spontaneously, in the way of an improvisation over its materials, in about a week. In contrast, the piano solo and the transition to the end took almost a month.

*Chamba* is a polyphony of cycles and combinations of periodicities, producing an effect analogous to several bicycle wheels spinning at different speeds and interfering with each other, a sort of auditory *moiré* pattern, akin to Galileo's explanation of consonance as 'commensurability', the conjunction of different but related cycles. The writing of this piece broke a spell of almost a year in which I had lost many of my reasons to write music. The title alludes to Antonio Carlos Jobim's *Samba de uma nota*, but in Mexican Spanish 'chamba' means 'work' or 'labor' and its about a chord instead of a note.

## **rolita pa Modelo**

2007

7'50"

For flute, bass clarinet, trumpet, harp, guitar, violin, violoncello and contrabass. Written for *Modelo62*.

*rolita* is based on a pitch set derived from the dissonance curve of a mathematical spectrum (a sawtooth wave). This set was traversed algorithmically by filtering through continuously changing harmonicity windows. This created the soloist harp part which was then resounded with the other instruments. There are some interludes where the instruments emancipate from their assigned roles and the harmonies become transposed and more complex. The overall consistency I was striving for was to arrive at polyphony as a by-product of texture so that the density of voices and their vertical/horizontal relationships change constantly between independent, chordal and timbral roles. I like to listen to it as if it were an immersion into a single resonance from different sonic perspectives.

## **Blank Space**

2009

8'50"

For clarinet, piano and electronics.

The score of the piece was generated algorithmically, based on my research and implementation of 'dissonance curves' as well as on an algorithm developed with my friend Alberto Novello for 'rhythmification': accelerations/decelerations in several voices that produces moving canons (the same that was later used in our piece *Clinamen*). The electroacoustic part uses the dissonance software to synthesize various kinds of harmonizations based on sounds related to war.

The first part of the piece proceeds like regular contemporary music: abstract, 'interesting' gestures and rhythms over a wide ambitus in both instruments, accompanied by rhythmic layers of synthetic sounds. At a certain stage the music steps out of itself as the same time as the world and reality enter into it. This reality is related to events that happened at the time of composition, so they were not completely chosen (at first I wanted the sounds of war to relate to Mexico's president insane and brutal 'war on drugs', then I delved into the by then stereotypical Iraq war, which is why the piece begins with an

Iraqi Assyrian funeral chant, but then the bombing of civilians in Gaza in January 2009 overtook everything else). At this point the piece goes astray as the piano and soundtrack harmonize sound recordings of voices (the official justifications for the killings) and bombs. The clarinet takes a solo that accompanies recordings of a bombed school, made with the same process at the beginning of the piece but deployed melodically. Both instruments and the electronics finish with a chorale made out of notes derived from the bombs sprinkled with computer spoken quotes taken from architect Eyal Weizman that relate to the blanking out of populations.

It is a piece I like a lot, quite unlike anything else I've written and, at the same time, a piece I feel quite uncomfortable with, very exposed and touching delicate matters. It has an aura of prayer or some kind of supplication, something I didn't notice during its making, probably due of the solemn subject matter and also because chorales, be them of any speed and kind, tend towards this kind of music.

## Heptaktys

2012

24'

For flute, bass clarinet, trumpet, electric guitar, percussion, piano, violin, violoncello and contrabass. Written for *Modelo62*.

Instead of using a single harmonic strategy, in this piece I follow several. The ideas spring from the writing of my thesis and from the careful investigation of a septimal microtonal pitch set (thus the title). It consists in two types of music: one in which the materials are given in a raw form and open ended instructions for the musicians to develop (with no fixed tempo or meter, the conductor acting like a traffic controller), and the other type, written in measured notation. There is a lot of randomness involved, but also things like 'antitonicity', 'epimoric chorales' and 'number series canons'. The contrast between the two kinds of sections makes for inharmonic sections encircled by islands of 'low entropy' which are proportional in pitch and rhythm.

Collaborating with *Modelo62* has been a pleasure, both by long distance and in the rehearsals. This piece is dedicated to them and the way they make music.

## Modelo62

Gemma Tripiñana Muñoz | flutes

Enric Sans i Morera | clarinets

Inés Serrano Diogo | trumpet

Santiago Lascurain | guitars

Astrid Haring | harp

Teodora Stepancic | piano

Gustaf Holst | percussion

Erika Bordon | violin

Jan Willem Troost | cello

Vasilis Stefaonpoulos | contrabass

Ezequiel Menalled | conducting