JOAQUÍN ORELLANA: THE SPINE OF MUSIC
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Americas Society is pleased to present Joaquín Orellana: The Spine of Music, the first exhibition in the United States of the Guatemalan artist. At the age of ninety, he is receiving renewed recognition for his decades-long career as a composer and sculptor of instruments, as well as for his influence on contemporary art.

This exhibition of Orellana’s instruments is particularly special to Americas Society as it brings together music and the visual arts, two fields that intersect in his work and are core to our cultural mission. I am grateful to Americas Society’s co-curators, Diana Flatto, former Assistant Curator of Visual Arts, and Sebastián Zubieta, Director of Music. I want...
to especially thank Gabriela Rangel, former Director and Chief Curator of Visual Arts at Americas Society and currently Director of Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (MALBA), for bringing this project to our institution. I also want to thank Aimé Iglesias Lukin, Director and Chief Curator of Visual Arts, whose interdisciplinary and engaging programming is very exciting.

I am thankful to Karen Marta for her editorial support of Americas Society’s publications, Todd Bradway for his project management, and Garrick Gott for designing this series. Natalia Viera Salgado, Assistant Curator of Visual Arts, and Gina Portale, Assistant to the Music Director, also deserve special recognition for their work on this exhibition and its programs. The presentation of Joaquín Orellana: The Spine of Music is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts and by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council. It is also made possible, in part, by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. Additional support is provided by MetLife Foundation, Presenting Sponsor of the MetLife Foundation Music of the Americas Concert Series; the Smart Family Foundation of New York; Mex-Am Cultural Foundation; and the Japan Foundation, New York.

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SUSAN SEGAL
PRESIDENT AND CEO, AS/COA
THE MALLETS AS A BRUSH

Diana Flatto
The útiles sonoros (sound tools) gracefully undulate through space and playfully balance on stands or hang from armatures, inviting interaction; others function as wearable accessories and handheld tools. Their formal qualities command the eye as much as the ear. From their initial designs, which often read as unpretentious drawings, to their dignified presence on the stage of a concert hall or installed in a museum, these instruments exist as visual objects waiting to be activated by performers. Joaquín Orellana conceives of the structure of each instrument from the gesture associated with playing it.

The forms of the útiles sonoros are born of a mallet in the artist’s hand in place of a brush, and of a process that has more in common with painting than sculpting. The curve of the Imbaluna, one of the most elegant útiles, whose arabesque of marimba bars is widest in the middle and comes to a point at either end, was not designed as a reference to the crescent moon, but to the arc of the percussionist’s arm. The
waves of the Sinusoido, which has two sizes, each with its own tonal range, correspond to the peaks and valleys of the arm’s motion, resulting in its curvy, guitarlike figure. Each stretch of the Sinusoido differs slightly in size, resulting in a unique tonal register. The Circumar, a cylindrical instrument composed of suspended wooden marimba bars, emerges from the musician’s continuous stirring. Their circles, arcs, or amoeba shapes emerge like paint strokes from the head of the tool that activates them. Like the gestural lyrical abstraction prolific in the decades before Orellana invented his instruments, these objects mirror the movements of their creator.

Orellana’s first compositions as a child were experiments in language, tunes he made up for his mother’s ducklings, whom he named “Tú,” “Dí,” and “Colilla.” In a 2017 interview, he recalled:

It became a semantic problem; because “Tú” was the name, if I said, “Look, Tú,” or “Dí, Tú,” I was using a pronoun and not a noun. So then I started out with “Tú Dí” to the duck that was called “Dí,” from the verb “to say.” I would call out to him “Tú dí Dí,” and “Dí Colilla Tú” to the other, and then I began, [singing] “Tú Dí Dí Dí Tú Tú Dí Colilla Tú Tú Dí Dí.” [singing] “Dí Tú Tú Tú Dí Dí.”

The beginning of Orellana’s formal training in music was in the fourth grade, when his school started a marching band. They hired a music teacher who had played trombone in a marching band and he enlisted Orellana to play the trumpet. Orellana credits his experience in the marching band with “[giving] me my impetus, let’s say. And later on, I followed my own path.” In 1949 he entered the Conservatorio Nacional de Música de Guatemala, where he studied violin and composition and embraced the dodecaphony of Arnold Schoenberg. Orellana was just out of school in 1959 when he began to receive recognition in Guatemala as an emerging composer. He received a fellowship at the Centro
Latinoamericano de Altos Estudios Musicales del Instituto Torcuato Di Tella (CLAEM) in 1967 and went to live in Buenos Aires. Di Tella’s Centro de Artes Visuales (CAV) was at its apex, exhibiting such artists as León Ferrari, David Lamelas, and Marta Minujín, whose happenings and avant-garde installations defy classification by traditional media. This period in an experimental environment encouraged him to take a radical interdisciplinary approach back to Guatemala.

Orellana’s studio is located in Guatemala City’s national theater. The Centro Cultural Miguel Ángel Asturias is a building that is itself a sculptural work, in the shape of a jaguar, by the architect Efraín Recinos. It is also the home of the Escuela Nacional de Artes Plásticas “Rafael Rodrigues Padilla” and the Escuela Nacional de Arte Dramático “Carlos Figueroa Juárez,” as well as the Instituto Nacional de la Marimba. The proximity to his working environment of these disciplines—visual arts, dramatic arts, and music—while not a direct influence, provided a backdrop against which Orellana could compose music and create his interdisciplinary sound tools. Not unlike self-portraiture, Orellana manipulates and reimagines the traditional marimba, a poignant symbol of national identity in Guatemala. In his studio, his team carefully crafts the metal forms, shaping and staining the wood, and repurposing the resonators from children’s marimbas, resulting in the graceful forms of the Imbalunas and Sinusoidos. The Onda-im maintains more of the marimba’s original form, its wooden bars placed in size order, but without resonators or legs. Unlike the marimba, the Onda-im is played by swaying the instrument back and forth. The mallets are built into it, their round heads hanging by string atop each bar, so that the musician’s swaying strikes several bars at once. The materiality of these objects—which are grouped by their base media: for the marimba, bamboo, metal, and plastic—utilizes the characteristics of each to produce the artist’s soundscape.
With witty plays on words combining their shape, origin, and function, Orellana lends a poetic voice to the lyrical names that echo the form of the instruments themselves. For instance, Sonarimba combines parts of the word sonaja (rattle) with the word marimba, Imbaluna includes part of the word medialuna (crescent moon) with the word marimba; Circumar merges the words círculo (circle) and marimba; Onda-im combines onda (wave) with the middle syllable of the word marimba; Sinusoido comes from sine or sinusoidal wave, a trigonometric curve that is a smooth repetitive oscillation; and Herroím comes from hierro (iron). Cantos a la marimba (2019), a series of odes to the marimba in the form of concrete poems, incorporates design elements such as figures and arrows into the deliberately spaced text. In 2019 Orellana published a collection of short stories, La muerte del General y otros relatos, and illustrated the cover with a drawing of an abstracted musical score. His sophisticated use of language came from his study of literature and philosophy,
These instruments are described in the introduction to the catalogue for *Sinfonía delirante* as a “bosque fantástico” (fantastical forest). ix This description focuses on the works’ decorative qualities and separates them from their musical function, which is inextricable from their role as artworks. Three of the instruments—the *Cirlum*, *Circumar*, and *Ululante*—demonstrate how each útil is not only based on the gesture of the musician, but also on materiality and form. All three have the same basic shape, a circle of vertically suspended bars, played by a musician bent over the instrument, striking the bars with a mallet from the inside in a circular motion. Despite the similarity of gesture by the performers, these útiles are differentiated by their materials. The *Cirlum*’s bars are round metal chimes, while the *Circumar* is made with traditional wooden marimba bars, and the bars of the *Ululante* are bamboo stalks. The *Cirlum* and *Ululante* are both made in *grande* and *pequeño* sizes, the larger with deeper sounds and the

including the works of Alexandre Dumas, Franz Kafka, Arthur Schopenhauer, and Stefan Zweig. vi

When shown in an institutional context, Orellana’s útiles have been discussed only in conventional terms as sculpture, although they are beyond this classification. His instruments and drawings marry the visual with the auditory, much like the abstractions of Wassily Kandinsky and Stuart Davis, famously tied to musical trends. Carlos Amorales likens the útiles to Jean Tinguely’s mechanized artworks dating from the 1950s. vii In the catalogue for *Sinfonía delirante*, the first exhibition of these works at Guatemala’s Museo Nacional de Arte Moderno in 1998, Rozzinca Cazali compares them with sculptures, mobiles, and penetrables by Julio González, Alexander Calder, and Jesús Soto, but their purpose is rooted in the choreographies of their musical function rather than in their relationship to space. viii They are less kinetic sculptures than three-dimensional paintings.
smaller with higher ones. These differences in material, color, and size not only lend different voices to Orellana’s soundscapes—the metallic sounds of the chimes, the light ringing of the bamboo, and the familiar toll of the marimba keys—but visually define them as individual artworks.

Orellana’s more monumental útiles defy categorization. One of his most substantial and innovative instruments, the Periomin, is made from several colorful arcs of beads and metal chimes hanging from a bar suspended over rockers. The útil is activated by the musician pushing the bar back and forth, swaying to a rhythm composed by Orellana and noted in the scores. The imposing Herroím is constructed out of iron that stands like a whale’s tail on its base. Its aggressive sound comes from vibrations created by sliding various oversize bows across its upper edges; each bow has a unique characteristic. The Prehimulinho is built vertically, a ladder of bamboo activated by components attached to its armature.

The handheld or wearable útiles are far more modest than the elegant marimba-based works. Orellana fashions the Pre-ar from bamboo and brightly colored tape to create a sort of flute where the musician can easily move from one note to the next, privileging the function of everyday material over sculptural beauty. The Resolam is another simple handheld instrument with a large metal jar as its base and a kettle-like spout and handle added for the musician to blow into. With a mindfulness about the look as well as its functionality, all but the white mouthpiece is painted black. Orellana’s resourcefulness comes clearly through in the Pultap, a small plastic cylinder that hooks onto the performer’s belt loops. This instrument, though smaller and less handsome than others, is one of the first played in the newly commissioned composition for The Spine of Music, Efluvios y puntos (Outpours and dots), setting the tempo for the rest of the piece despite its unassuming stature.
Orellana’s compositions transgress the strictures of the discipline of music. The percussionists double as dancers and singers, their movements dictated by the instruments they play as well as by the particularities of Orellana’s musical scores. Even his scores are aesthetic objects with idiosyncratic glyphic marks indicating both movement and rhythm. Small drawings representing each handheld instrument are illustrated with arrows to direct the performers’ motions, punctuated by more traditional music notes and symbols. In Efluvios y puntos, the four performers’ entrance is choreographed in time with their wearable Pultaps.x The performance extends to the audience, engaging them in vocalizations in time with the music, much like Tania Bruguera offering a podium to the public, Adrian Piper inviting museumgoers to whistle, or Tino Sehgal’s interventionist dialogues with exhibition visitors.

The intersection of music, visual art, and literature is at the core of Guatemala’s cultural ethos. One of Guatemala’s most treasured visual artists, the modernist painter and printmaker Carlos Mérida, was trained in music in Quetzaltenango by the composer and marimbista Jesús Castillo. Mérida continued the thread of performance and music throughout his career with works on indigenous performance, as well as in his later theater designs. The marimba is such an integral part of Guatemalan culture that the home of the writer Luis de Lión, who was disappeared during the Guatemalan Civil War, is now not only a museum but also a marimba school for the local children in San Juan del Obispo, a small town outside Antigua Guatemala.xi

Performance has become a central medium for many contemporary artists, such as Regina José Galindo, whose pieces including El gran retorno (2019) and I Am Alive (2015) incorporate musical elements, and Naufus Ramírez-Figueroa, who works between performance, installation, and other media. Guatemala’s contemporary art scene has expanded with the proliferation of artist-run spaces,
including Proyectos Ultravioleta, Riña, and the museum NuMu (Nuevo Museo de Arte Contemporáneo), a 2-by-2.5-meter egg-shaped kunsthalle, where Orellana’s Sonarimbas and scores were exhibited in 2016.

The work of the other artists included in The Spine of Music amplifies and complicates the idea of Orellana’s útiles sonoros as visual art objects. All of the artists in the exhibition work similarly at the intersection of visual art and other disciplines. María Adela Díaz includes Orellana’s compositions in her videos; the winding Sinusoido and curve of the Imbaluna dialogue with found and invented objects in Akira Ikezoe’s paintings; his calligraphic musical scores are magnified in Alberto Rodríguez Collía’s prints, and the artist as composer is venerated in Carlos Amorales’s film and related artworks. Presenting Orellana’s útiles sonoros alongside these other artworks and activating them in the space of a gallery affirms them as art objects without removing them from their primary function: to make music.

ENDNOTES

i. Joaquín Orellana discussed this creative process in an unpublished interview conducted by the author and Sebastián Zubieta at the Teatro Nacional, Guatemala City, on February 19, 2020.


iii. Ibid.

iv. The traditional marimba is an official national symbol embraced by the country’s widely Mayan culture since its first written mention in 1680, when it was played in Antigua Guatemala. See Arturo Taracena Arriola, “Marimba,” in The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics, ed. Greg Grandin, Deborah T. Levenson, and Elizabeth Oglesby (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 150.


vi. Orellana, as quoted in “To Create the Sound of Hunger.”


x. The premiere of Efluvios y puntos at Americas Society may be modified to minimize audience interaction for public health and safety.

xi. A number of students from the Proyecto Luis de Lión have gone on to be part of the country’s leading marimba groups. Mayarí de León, conversation with author, February 17, 2020.

xii. A number of the artists included in the exhibition—Carlos Amorales, Akira Ikezoe, and Alberto Rodriguez Collía—each contributed works to raise funds to bring Orellana’s útiles sonoros to Athens for Documenta 14 in 2017, culminating in a performance of Sinfonía desde el Tercer Mundo (Symphony from the Third World).
Glosario útiles sonoros, 1980. Including the material-based categories: de caña (bamboo), de placa de Hormigo (Hormigo [Platymiscium dimorphandrum] wood keys), de aluminio (aluminum), de soplo (blowing), and caparazones (shells).
EFLUVIOS Y PUNTOS
(OUTPOURS AND DOTS)

Joaquín Orellana
One of only three works composed exclusively for the útiles sonoros, the pages of Efluvios y puntos (Outpours and dots), 2019, are works of art in their own right. This hand-drawn manuscript combining traditional musical notation with minute sketches of the instruments themselves and drawings that indicate how the útiles should be played—by prescribing the performers’ movements onstage—shows the relationship between visual art, music, and motion in Orellana’s work. This score comprises parts for four performers using thirty-four útiles—including Hormigo wood, bamboo, aluminum, and plastic instruments—as well as their voices and the participation of the audience.

Efluvios y puntos was commissioned from Orellana by Americas Society for this exhibition.
HUMANOPHONY:
ORELLANA’S
ÚTILES SONOROS

Sebastián Zubieta
To walk into Joaquín Orellana’s studio in the colorful entrails of the Teatro Nacional in Guatemala City is to walk into the workshop of a crazy scientist. The main room is big, low-ceilinged, and chock full of útiles sonoros; to the left, a smaller room is the workshop where his team builds these musical instruments using lathes, pliers, drills, and soldering machines. Before I visited him in his studio, I was so fascinated by his creativity—by his instruments, their stories and stubborn survival—that I wasn’t aware of what I now understand as Orellana’s powerful desire for community. When I asked him about it later, he agreed that being part of this community of curious and dedicated people is very important to him. This community of dedicated collaborators is, perhaps, for Orellana, as important as the instruments themselves.

Invented by Orellana in the 1970s, the útiles sonoros, based on the sounds of Guatemala, are a logical twentieth-century response to years of oppression, and yet, at the same time, they

Joaquín Orellana activating the Sinusoido Grande, 2020
are free from old European musical strictures. Janus-like, these low-tech, handmade instruments face the past and future at the same time, but, above all, they are communal and profoundly “humanophonic.”

Orellana was always a humanist (more precisely, a “humanophonist”) and I think that the greatest impetus for his musical development came from discussions with other students and faculty at the Centro Latinoamericano de Altos Estudios Musicales (CLAEM) at the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella (ITDT) in Buenos Aires. Even though he had already received a solid musical education and was recognized as a promising composer with a successful career in Guatemala, the story of the útiles sonoros begins in 1967 when Orellana arrived in Buenos Aires to start a fellowship at the CLAEM.

This experience, and the aesthetic upheaval he experienced upon his return to Guatemala two years later, was a crucial chapter in his life and, in light of what came later, in the history of Latin American avant-garde music.
Before he left Guatemala Orellana had already started to think outside of the narrow confines of the classical music establishment. *Contrastes* (1963), the piece with which he was accepted for the fellowship, is a successful orchestral ballet with a section for prerecorded tape featuring processed voices, which was very unusual at that time. At the CLAEM, he had a generous stipend that meant he could devote all of his time to learning about the latest developments in European concert music and to creating new works.iii He also had access to musical resources and information, which proved revelatory for him. Prior to the internet, access to avant-garde music was severely limited to what was available at specialized libraries and information centers. The library at Di Tella was full of cutting-edge music scores and recordings that would have been inaccessible to most students elsewhere.

Perhaps even more importantly, during those pre-internet years, Orellana had the opportunity to meet a group of like-minded emerging composers from throughout Latin America. In those politically agitated times, issues of social justice and regional identity were never far from the minds and discussions of Orellana and his peers. Although students were not allowed to talk politics, Luigi Nono’s visit in 1968—Orellana’s second year—had a profound effect. Nono was a very political composer (he visited Argentina just as Alberto Ginastera’s opera *Bomarzo* was banned at the Colón and withdrew his music from a series of planned concerts in solidarity with his Argentinean host) and he asked the fellows directly to tell him about the political situation in their countries during the composition seminar.iv As Graciela Paraskevaídís, another fellow, recalled in her interview in *Conversaciones en torno al CLAEM*:

The considerations and conversations we had with our fellow students from other countries of Latin America, of which we knew very little were very important. . . .
Let’s say that I discovered a different America, an underlying, deeper America.\textsuperscript{v}

During his two years in Buenos Aires, Orellana premiered two pieces in the fellows’ concerts. The first was his second String Quartet (1967) (subtitled “Frater ignotus,” “Unknown brother” in Latin, and dedicated to Ginastera), which integrated a lyrical sensibility within a “traditional” avant-garde sonic landscape. At the end of his second year, in November 1968, the premiere of Metéora, an electronic piece based on piano sounds created completely in the studio and presented in concert without the intervention of live musicians, using a reel-to-reel tape player, marked a milestone: it was Orellana’s first purely electronic piece and apparently the first created by a Central American composer.\textsuperscript{vi} He was very proud of having discovered a novel way to record and work with the sound of the piano, revealing an evocative “vocal” quality:

\begin{quote}
Metéora is also a piece of musique concrète\textsuperscript{viii} whose source material was the resonance of the strings of one of the school’s pianos. The sounds were recorded and subsequently processed at the CLAEM’s state-of-the-art studio, which was run by a dedicated and knowledgeable staff that included engineer Fernando von Reichenbach and composer Francisco Kröpfl, who Orellana still considers the most significant teacher he met during his fellowship. Orellana continued to write mostly electronic music for the next decade, until he invented the útiles sonoros.

Upon his return to Guatemala, Orellana had an intense feeling of not belonging, and felt stuck between the national music of his native country and the newly found European electronic style he discovered in Buenos
Aires. ix Guatemala in the 1970s was entering the second decade of a conflict that wouldn’t end until 1996, leaving hundreds of thousands dead, mostly among the country’s sizable rural Maya population. Orellana felt the need to recover these silenced voices. Recognizing that, although the genocide was raging at that moment, the oppression of indigenous people dated all the way back to the Spanish conquest, he set out to create in his music the “ancestral suffering” present in indigenous spoken language: the real voice of his people.

The initial manifestation of this desire was a series of electronic pieces, including Humanofonía I (1971), Malebolge (Humanofonía II) (1972), and Imposible a la X (1980). The source material is what Orellana calls the “sonic landscape”: sounds recorded in markets (in Humanofonía I), the songlike cries of the children whose job it is to loudly announce the destination of local buses (in Imposible a la X), Gregorian chants during religious services and the cries of beggars in church atriums,
during the sixteenth century (marimba-like instruments have been popular in Africa for centuries). The marimba was readily adopted by rural, mostly indigenous populations, from Ecuador to southern Mexico. It has become so enmeshed within the fabric of Guatemala’s culture and identity that it has enjoyed centuries of popularity and, in 1999, was officially declared one of the country’s national symbols, alongside the national anthem and flag. The marimba took a foundational place in Orellana’s music and in his concept of his own Guatemalan identity; naturally, he set out to break it apart.

To make the útiles, Orellana took the constituent elements of the marimba—wooden keys and resonators—and reorganized them with an amazing display of imagination. Some of the instruments’ unique shapes are a consequence of the gestures performed by the musicians that play them, while others are designed to add a dynamic spatial dimension to their sound. The Sinusoido, for example, is a
“marimba” built around a percussionist’s circular arm motion, allowing for the production of an uninterrupted stream of sounds by running a mallet around the instrument’s circular array of keys. The first útil, the Sonarimba, consists of two marimba keys attached to either end of a bamboo tube containing a plastic ball. When the performers move their arms, as if dancing, the ball hits the keys while the tube acts as a resonator; its purpose is to allow the sound of the marimba to surround the audience and move in the concert hall. Similar gestural intentions provide the creative impulses behind other útiles.

By creating these visually and sonically captivating musical instruments, Orellana also created a community of people who believe in their musical power as well as the composer’s ideals, which is to say, they believe in him. The útiles are made to be played in groups (Orellana mentions the use of up to forty Sonarimbas in a single work) and create constellations of sounds that guide the musical discourse. All of these instruments are designed by Orellana and built by a dedicated group of artisans and artists.

Efluvios y puntos (Outpours and dots), commissioned by Americas Society and composed by Orellana in 2019, is his third piece to feature útiles sonoros exclusively. It is written for four performers who play thirty-four instruments and sing. It also includes an active part for the audience, which is instructed to scream, howl, and weep in an invented language at precisely indicated points. As is the case in many of Orellana’s pieces, Efluvios has a strong collective character in which the performers’ movements in the concert hall and the audience’s participation create the sense of an intricate—and undefined—ritual. The interplay of the materials from which the útiles are built (wood, metal, bamboo, plastic) and the particular modes in which they are played (dragging a mallet over a multitude of wood or bamboo segments, using a bow over metal tubes or sheets to create sustained tones, etc.) define the overall shape of the piece. For example, the metallic, sustained
sounds of the Herroín and Túbarc usher in a new section after an extended segment in which the multiple sounds of the wooden Imbalunas, Sinusoidos, and Ululantes take turns with discrete, pointillistic explosions of the plastic Pulaps. In each part, traditional Western musical techniques such as imitation or varied repetition organize the musical discourse. This instrumental organization is in constant dialogue with the quintessential “humanophony,” the voices of performers and audience. The performers use four Resolam, metal útiles based on garden watering cans, which modify their voices, giving them an otherworldly quality. The groups of voices challenge and imitate each other, finishing in a long, soft moment of shared commonality.

Orellana didn’t want to undertake his work alone, so he took the whole post-conquest history of his people, hung it on his shoulders as an old-time marimbero would carry his instrument, and invited everyone into his new world of strange sounds—sounds by humans, for humans.

ENDNOTES

ii. A lot has been written about the artistic experiment at the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella, but it remains hard to overstate the importance of the CLAEM experience for the field of music composition in Latin America. Di Tella was structured in three centers: Centro de Artes Visuales, Centro de Experimentación Audiovisual, and CLAEM, which was devoted to music composition and directed by Alberto Ginastera, the dean and brightest international star of the Argentinean classical music world. See Eduardo Herrera, Elite Art Worlds: Philanthropy, Latin Americanism, and Avant-Garde Music (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020); Laura Novoa, “Listening to Cultures in Conflict: the Politics of Sound in Buenos Aires in the 1960s,” Parallax 20, no. 4 (October 2014): 303–19; Hernán Gabriel Vázquez, Conversaciones en torno al CLAEM, Entrevistas a compositores becarios del Centro Latinoamericano de Altos Estudios Musicales del Instituto T. Di Tella (Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires: Instituto Nacional de Musicología “Carlos Vega,” 2014); and John King, El Di Tella y el desarrollo cultural argentino en la década del sesenta (Buenos Aires: Asunto Impreso Ediciones, 2007).
iii. Years later, Alberto Ginastera, the director of the CLAEM, told John King that the stipend (two hundred US dollars) was generous enough that the students didn’t have to spend their nights performing in bars and cabarets to make ends meet. See King, El Di Tella, 353.
v. Graciela Paraskevaidis, quoted in Vázquez, Conversaciones en torno al CLAEM, 212 (unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own).
vi. See Gerardo E. Meza Sandoval, Del paisaje sonoro a la marimba fantástica (San José, Costa Rica: Editorial Alma Máter, 2018), 85.
viii. Musique concrète is a type of electronic composition that was developed by Pierre Schaeffer immediately after World War II. It uses recorded sounds as its source material; these sounds are later modified in the studio.
ix. See Vázquez, Conversaciones en torno al CLAEM, 203.

x. See María Alejandra Privado Catalán, Lo social en las fbras de la música de Joaquín Orellana (Guatemala City: Editorial Cultura, 2010), 36.
xii. Joaquín Orellana discussed the útiles sonoros in an unpublished interview conducted by the author and Diana Flatto at the Teatro Nacional, Guatemala City, on February 19, 2020.
Sinusoido Grande, 1996. Hormigo wood and mixed media, 71 7/8 × 47 7/8 × 21 7/8 inches (182 × 121 × 55 cm)

Sinusoido Pequeño, 1996. Hormigo wood and mixed media, 55 1/4 × 31 1/2 × 23 7/8 inches (140 × 80 × 60 cm)
Imbaluna, 1984. Hormigo wood and mixed media, 68 1/4 × 51 1/4 × 15 3/4 inches (173 × 130 × 40 cm)
Pinzafer, 1989. Iron and mixed media, 47 ¾ × 57 ¾ × 13 ¾ inches (120 × 145.2 × 35 cm)
Herroím, 2001. Iron and mixed media, 32 × 45½ × 15¾ inches
(81.5 × 115.5 × 40 cm)
Cirlum Pequeño, 1985. Aluminum and mixed media, 24 3⁄4 × 26 3⁄4 × 26 3⁄4 inches (62 × 67 × 67 cm)

Cirlum Grande, 1985. Aluminum and mixed media, 30 × 34 × 34 inches (76.2 × 86.4 × 86.4 cm)
Ululante Pequeño, 1975. Bamboo and mixed media, 17 × 26 ⅜ × 26 ⅜ inches (43 × 67 × 67 cm)

Circumar, 1984. Hormigo wood and mixed media, 21 ½ × 27 ¼ × 27 ¼ inches (54.5 × 69 × 69 cm)
Periomin, 1996. Aluminum and mixed media, 57 × 76 × 59 inches (145 × 193 × 150 cm)
Ululante Grande, 1975. Bamboo and mixed media, 17 × 30 × 30 inches (43 × 76.2 × 76.2 cm)
Tubarc, 1990. Aluminum and mixed media, 36 3⁄8 × 35 × 5 1⁄2 inches (100 × 89 × 14 cm)
Resolam, 1985. Mixed media, $9\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{4} \times 17$ inches ($25 \times 21 \times 43$ cm)

Tamcîr, 1983. Mixed media, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{3}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$ inches ($14 \times 20 \times 20$ cm)
Pre-L, 1975. Mixed media, 2 ¾ × 15 × 2 ¾ inches (7 × 38 × 7 cm)

Pre-Ar, 1975. Bamboo and mixed media, 9 × 4 ¾ × 2 ¾ inches (23 × 11 × 7 cm)
Pultap, 2015. Mixed media, $2\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$ inches ($7 \times 7 \times 10$ cm)
Onda-im, 1976. Hormigo wood and mixed media, $10 \frac{1}{4} \times 21 \frac{3}{4} \times 1 \frac{1}{2}$ inches (26 × 55 × 4 cm)
Prehimalinho, 1989. Bamboo and mixed media, 19 7/8 × 11 3/4 × 19 7/8 inches (50 × 30 × 50 cm)
Sonarimba, 1971. Hormigo wood and mixed media, 9 ½ × 10 ½ × 1⅝ inches (24 × 27 × 3 cm)
Orellana’s Fantasia, based on the Disney classic, features Orellana with his music and útiles sonoros. In 2015, Amorales showed his güiro-based drawings, made with graphite replicas of the Latin American instrument, alongside Orellana’s útiles sonoros in the exhibition Antitropicalia at the Museo de Arte y Diseño Contemporáneo, San José, Costa Rica.

In collaboration with Julian Lede, Orellana’s Fantasia, 2013. Black-and-white video with sound, music by Joaquín Orellana (stills), 25:00, variable dimensions.
Antitropicalia, 2015. Exhibition views (left, clockwise: Notations for the Use of Typographies, Fax Mantra, and Antitropicalia; right, clockwise: Habana Suite, Notations for the Use of Typographies, Antitropicalia), MADC, Costa Rica, 2015, variable dimensions.
Orellana’s *Humanofonía* (1971) is the soundtrack for *Caída libre* (Free fall, 2006). Díaz hired day laborers to jump off a ledge, a reflection of the uncertainty of immigrants’ lives. There is also a conceptual relationship with Orellana’s *Elegía a una migrante muerta en camino* (Ballad of the migrant who died on the road, 2007), which is about a Guatemalan woman who died of thirst on her way to the United States.

*Caída libre* (Free fall), 2006. Video performance, variable dimensions.
The organic forms in the ongoing *Future Primitive* series are visually informed by found and invented objects as well as by Orellana's *útiles sonoros*. Ikezoe visited Orellana's studio while he was living in Guatemala in 2015 and he traveled to Athens in 2017 to see the performance of *Sinfonía desde el Tercer Mundo* (Symphony from the Third World) at Documenta 14.
Future Primitive XV, 2019. Oil on canvas, 48 × 48 inches (121.9 × 121.9 cm).

Future Primitive III, 2016. Oil on canvas, 46 × 40 inches (116.8 × 101.6 cm). Private collection
Rodríguez Collía’s prints draw from Orellana’s idiosyncratic scores, amplifying the notations that dictate how the performers sway with the *Periomín* (1996), the staccato of a mallet striking the wooden bars of the *Cirlum* (1985), and the motion of playing the handheld *Sonarimba* (1971).

*Untitled Suite*, 2017. Drypoints printed with metallic ink, each 16 × 24 inches (40.6 × 61 cm).
ORELLANA'S COMPOSITIONS

Music for voices and instruments

*Balada trágica* (Tragic ballade), 1952 (6 min), 2.2.2.2-2.0.0.0-S-strings

Two lieder: *Un cuento misterioso* (A mysterious story) and *Yo también cual tú* (Me too, just like you), c. 1956–57 (8 min)

Note: On texts by Leonor Paz y Paz

*Canción esotérica* (Esoteric song), 1957 (8 min)

Note: First Prize in the Concurso Nacional de la Canción TGW, 1957

*Perdanzas*, 1965

*Responso negro* (Black responsory), 1969 (8 min), 2.2.2.2-2.0.2.0-S-strings

*Responso negro* (Black responsory), 1969 (8 min), chorus a cappella

*Cantata dialéctica* (Dios está con nosotros . . . y el Diablo también) (Dialectical cantata [god is with us . . . and so is the devil]), 1974 (30 min), 1.0.0.2-2.0.0.0-timp-perc-S-2 choruses-útiles sonoros-strings

*Primitiva grande* (Large primitive), 1975 (10 min), chorus-útiles sonoros

*Tzulumanachí*, c. 1976–79 (25 min), 12 actors-útiles sonoros

Note: Musical action for a theater group

*Música incidental para la obra “Bodas de Sangre” de García Lorca* (Incidental music for the play *Blood Wedding* by García Lorca), 1977 (20 min), chorus-útiles sonoros

*Ante-Par III*, 1980 (20 min), 2.2.2.2-2.0.0.0-timp-perc-S-strings

*Santanadasatán*, c. 1980–81 (30 min), singing actress-male chorus-útiles sonoros

“*La libertad de un mundo*” (ecos de un teatro inaudito) (The liberty of a world [echoes of an unheard-of theater]),
1982 (25 min), chorus—children’s chorus—3 reciters
Note: Declaratory choral poem. Selected for a collection of works in honor of Simón Bolívar, Venezuela, 1982

Canción de Imbervalt (Imbervalt’s song), 1984 (7 min)
Sacratávica (in memoriam por las víctimas de Río Negro de 1982)
(Sacratávica [in memoriam the victims of Río Negro, 1982]), 1998–99 (26 min), 3 recorders—large chorus—marimba—útiles sonoros

Cancioncillas nostalogimientes bufonantes, 1995–2007
Note: Issued on CD in 2008

Villancicos: A la Ro-Ro niño y Divino Infante (Carols: “Lullaby” and “Divine Child”), 1998

Elegía in memoriam Laura Mejía Ruiz (1913–2005), c. 2005–6, S—chorus

Balada de la migrante muerta en camino (Ballad of the migrant who died on the road), 2007 (3 min), fl—pft—chorus

Canciones sobre el mito de El violín valsante de Huis. Armadel (Songs on the myth of Huis. Armadel’s waltzing violin), 2009

Historia del niño que se llamaba Espejito con Ojos (Story of the child called Little Mirror with Eyes), 2010, orchestra—chorus—children’s chorus
Note: inspired by the story “The Man Who Had Everything, Everything, Everything,” by Miguel Ángel Asturias. Issued on CD

Gritos en la memoria (Screams in memory), 2011
Note: Includes Antepar III and Imposible a la X

Elegía desgarrada a María Tiú (Torn elegy for María Tiú), 2016, chorus a cappella

Deveritas ¡Ay! (Really, ah!), chorus

Instrumental music

Dos poemas para violín y piano (Two poems for violin and piano), 1953 (10 min)

Exorcismo (Exorcism), c. 1954 (8 min)
Note: Scherzante for piano

La vanidosa (The vainglorious one), c. 1955–58 (6 min)
Note: Rondeau for violin and piano

Cuarteto de cuerdas no. 1 (andante—allegro, introducción—fugue) (String quartet #1 [andante—allegro, introduction—fugue]), 1957 (15 min)

Preludio temperamental para violoncello y piano (Temperamental prelude for cello and piano), 1958 (8 min)

Preludio—abstracción para viola y orquesta de cámara (Prelude—abstraction for viola and chamber orchestra), 1963 (6 min)

Trío para violín, viola y violoncello (adagio, miniatura pastoril, scherzo, danza frenética) (String trio [adagio, pastoral miniature, scherzo, frantic dance]), c. 1964–65 (15 min)
Note: Commissioned by the Pan—American Union. Premiered in Washington, DC, in 1965

Cuarteto de cuerdas no. 2 “Frater Ignotus” (String quartet #2 “Frater ignotus”), 1967 (12 min)
Note: In one movement, based on Gregorian themes. Written and premiered at the Centro Latinoamericano de Altos Estudios Musicales of the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella in Buenos Aires

Violín sideral (Sidereal violin), 1972, vln—pft

Dos poemas para violín y grupos orquestales (canto y textura, inductor) (Two poems for violin and orchestral groups [song and texture, inductor]), 1972 (18 min)
Note: Second Prize in the Certamen Centroamericano “15 de septiembre,” 1972

Divert—intento, 1975 (5 min), fl—gtr—db
Note: Performed during the 5th Curso Latinoamericano de Música Contemporánea, Uruguay, 1976
Híbrido a presión (Hybrid under pressure), 1982 (25 min), 2 fl-tape-útiles sonoros
Note: Published by US Embassy, Guatemala

Piezas características para cuarteto de cuerdas (Oxidorganillo, Mandolina en el recuerdo) (Character pieces for string quartet [oxidorganillo, mandoline in memory]), 1983 (9 min)
Note: Homage to the Guatemalan creole waltzes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Recorded by Quinteto de Cuerdas Pentaforum in 1995

Híbrido a presión II (Hybrid under pressure II), c. 1986–87 (12 min), 2 fl-magnetic tape-útiles sonoros
Note: Published by US Embassy, Guatemala

Ramajes de una marimba imaginaria (Foliage of an imaginary marimba), c. 1990–95 (15 min), marimba-reciter-útiles sonoros
Note: Recorded by Quinteto Pentaforum in 1995 and issued on CD

El paso secreto (The secret step), 1998, (9 min)
Note: String quartet version

Émulo Lipolidón, 2007, (5 min), voices-string quartet
Note: Originally the second movement of La tumba del Gran Lengua

Violinada violhonda (in memoriam Marcel Duval), 2010–11, 6 vln-5 va-“ghost” vln
Note: Issued on CD

In memoriam Arturo Santa María, 2012, db-orchestra
Melancolía (Melancholy), 2014
Note: Slow waltz

Orchestral music
El jardín encantado (superstición, romance infantil, figuras grotescas del pueblo) (The enchanted garden [superstition, childhood romance, grotesque popular images]), 1958 (18 min), 2.2.2.2-4.3.3.1-timp-perc-strings

Violante en el claustro (Violante in the cloister), 1960 (20 min), 2.2.2.2-4.3.3.1-reciter-timp-perc-strings

Adagio and Scherzo, 1962 (12 min), 2.2.2.2-4.3.3.1-timp-perc-strings

Poenimio sinfónico, concerto for cello and orchestra, c. 1962, 2.2.2.2-2.0.0.0-vlc-strings

Contrastes (tema y variantes) (Contrasts [theme and variations]), 1963 (8 min), 2.2.2.2-4.3.3.1-tape-timp-perc-strings
Note: Music for ballet. First time composer uses magnetic tape

Un extraño personaje (A strange character), 1964 (15 min), for orchestra
Note: Symphonic poem. First Prize in the Certamen Centroamericano “15 de septiembre,” 1964

Multífonos, 1967 (10 min), 2.2.2.2-4.3.3.1-timp-perc-strings
Note: Pointillistic, nontonal

Estampas de un cuento de hadas (fantoches, danza de Loreto, llegada del bando) (Images from a fairy tale [puppets, dance from Loreto, the band’s arrival]), 1968, 2.2.2.2-4.0.0.0-timp-perc-strings

Metéora, 1970 (10 min), 2.2.2.2-4.3.3.1-tape-vibr-harp-pft-timp-perc-strings
Note: Published by Laboratorio del Instituto “Torcuato Di Tela,” Buenos Aires

Música incidental para la obra de teatro “La última profecía” de Manuel José Arce (Incidental music for the play “The last prophecy” by Manuel José Arce), 1972
Note: Tanajunarin, for mixed chorus a cappella, is derived from this piece

Música para la película Los Ángeles de Chichuautla (Music for the film “The angels from Chinautla”), 1976–78 (18 min)
Música incidental para la obra Historias del Popol Vuh contadas para niños del año 2000 (Incidental music for the play
“Stories from the Popol Vuh” for children of the year 2000), 1979 (30 min), 2.2.2.2-2.0.0.0-tape-útiles sonoros
El violín valsante de Huis. Armadel (Huis. Armadel’s waltzing violin), 1984 (10 min), vln-strings
Note: Based on a story by the composer
Evocaciones de una ignota heroína (Evocation of an unknown heroine), 2013, voice-strings
Note: Written for the Orquesta Sinfónica Juvenil Femenina Alaíde Foppa
Sinfonía desde el Tercer Mundo (Symphony from the Third World), 2017, orchestra-chorus-children’s chorus-Guatemalan marimba ensemble-útiles sonoros
Note: Written for Documenta 14, premiered in Athens in 2017, conducted by Julio Santos

Electroacoustic works
Metéora, 1968 (10 min)
Note: Published by Laboratorio del Instituto “Torcuato Di Tela,” Buenos Aires. First electroacoustic piece written by a Central American composer
Humanofonía, 1971 (12 min)
Note: Published by US Embassy, Guatemala
Humanofonía II (Malebolge), 1972
Note: Based on a passage in Dante’s Divine Comedy. Version 1: 25 min; Version 2: 18 min. Published by Ediciones Tacuabé, Montevideo
Entropé, 1972 (6 min)
Primitiva I (Primitive I), 1972 (5 min)
Note: Published by US Embassy, Guatemala
Asediado-asediante (Besieged-besieger), 1972 (4 min)
Note: Published by US Embassy, Guatemala
Itero-tzul, 1972 (4 min)
Note: Published by Hei Hel, Guatemala
Sortilegio, 1978
Rupestre en el futuro (Primitive in the future), 1979 (25 min)
Note: Published by Hei Hel, Guatemala. Winner of the Prize at the 7th Bourges Electroacoustic Music Competition

Imposible a la X (Imágenes de una historia en redondo) (Impossible to the X [images of a circular history]), 1980 (20 min)
Note: Published by Hei Hel, Guatemala
Música para La rueda sin fin de los Katunes (Music for “The endless wheel of the Katunes”), 1984 (8 min)
Note: Based on a play by Carlos Mencos Deka

Works with marimba
Evocación profunda y traslaciones de una marimba (Deep evocation and movement of a marimba), 1984 (25 min), marimba-5 recorders-útiles sonoros-chorus-tape-reciter
Note: Published by Estudios Sinco, Guatemala
Ramajes de una marimba imaginaria (Foliage of an imaginary marimba), 1990 (15 min), marimba-útiles sonoros-reciter
En los cerros de Ilóm (In the mountains of Ilóm), 1992
Note: Opera based on Men of Maize by Miguel Ángel Asturias. The song “Fiesta de mi campo” is part of this work
La tumba del Gran Lengua (The tomb of Great Tongue), 2001
Note: Scenic cantata

Works for útiles sonoros
Bosquejo de “Alucuart” (Draft for “Alucuart”), 2012
Fantoidea, 2012 (6 min)
Efluvios y puntos (Outpours and dots), 2019 (20 min)
Note: Four performers. Commissioned by Americas Society
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Joaquín Orellana (b. 1930, Guatemala City) studied violin and composition at the National Conservatory of Music in Guatemala and was a fellow at the Centro Latinoamericano de Estudios Musicales at the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella in Buenos Aires. In 1968 he returned to Guatemala to work on a series of instruments that were to provide an analog means of achieving electronic musical sound, a sound that established a cultural identity for Guatemala.

Carlos Amorales (b. 1970, Mexico City) studied in Amsterdam at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie and Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten. Amorales experiments at the limits between image and sign using an array of platforms: animation, video, film, drawing, installation, performance, and sound. His practice is based on different forms of translation: instruments that become characters in his films, letters that become shapes, and narratives that unfold as nonverbal actions.

María Adela Díaz (b. 1973, Guatemala City) uses her body and various media to explore patriarchal values, political deception, and discriminatory ideology, employing video and installation to seduce and provoke the observer within unexpected everyday contexts. Her work has been presented in venues including the Centre Pompidou in Paris, Ex Teresa Arte Actual in Mexico City, and Museo de Arte Contemporáneo in San José, Costa Rica. Diaz resides in Los Angeles, where she works as an art director.

Akira Ikezoe (b. 1979, Kochi, Japan) explores the experience of navigating cultural differences between what is perceived as “East” and “West.” Through various disciplines, he creates works in relation to the forces we think of as outside or before ourselves. Often the human figure is presented as an alter ego and woven into a metaphysical and mythological context that depicts a timeless melting point between human and natural boundaries.

Alberto Rodríguez-Collía (b. 1985, Guatemala City) studied printmaking at Escuela de Arte 10 in Madrid. He works with mass media images and archives to produce videos, graphic art, installations, and paintings. He has been awarded residencies from CASA in Oaxaca, AIT in Japan, FAAP in São Paulo, and Despacio in Costa Rica. He has also worked on films by Julio Hernández Cordón, and César Díaz’s Nuestras madres, a 2019 award winner at the Cannes Film Festival.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Diana Flatto is a PhD student in the Department of History of Art & Architecture at the University of Pittsburgh and the former Assistant Curator of Visual Arts at Americas Society. She holds an MA in art history with an advanced certificate in curatorial studies from Hunter College. She has co-curated and assisted on several exhibitions, including Alice Miceli: Projeto Chernobyl at Americas Society (2019) and Framing Community: Magnum Photos 1947–Present at Hunter College Art Galleries (2017).

Sebastián Zubieta has been Music Director at Americas Society since 2005. He has taught music history, and composition, and is also a composer and the conductor of the vocal ensemble Meridionalis, with which he has performed contemporary and early music in the United States and Latin America. He holds a doctorate in composition from Yale and a licentiate in musicology from Universidad Católica Argentina in Buenos Aires.
CREDITS

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