

Experimental Music in Catalonia from 50's to 90's

Alter Native Music

These writings, were published originally in the book *Alter Músiques Natives*, released by the Catalan Department for Research and Culture (KRTU) in 1995. Although it can not reflect the creative effervescence that the areas of the sound experimentation have lived from its publication until the present, it is however a very useful tool to know what the origins and the growth of the exploratory musics in Catalonia since the decade of the 50 have been.

Alter Native Music

Julià Guillamon, Victor Nubla, Pau Riba

Alter Native Music (read as other local music) aims to provide an overview of the musical experiments that have taken place in Catalonia quite independently of the fashions and dictates of the record industry. Music that could become, or could have become, a cultural alternative setting new direction, as well as little-known music, not generally assimilated because of the precarious nature of the local market.

The period covered by the exhibition goes from the beginning of the sixties until today. This is not so much a retrospective review as a reading of the past and present of musical experimentation at a moment when the new technologies presage an unprecedented change in cultural production and diffusion.

The exhibition is the result of an investigation that has revealed a number of collections of unreleased or little-known recordings, and thanks to which damaged or poorly preserved material has been transferred to digital format. This material complements the existing discography and forms the basis of the exhibition through a series of listening points. At the same time, there has been a search for graphic material and written accounts, which have provided the source for the texts and illustrations in this catalogue. A selection on double CD is intended as a global anthology of the recorded material.

The division between what has or has not been "alternative" at different times is difficult to establish. The selection has been made according to criteria of creativity and production. We have ignored the part played by some musical trends of the seventies as "political" alternatives. We have also left to one side the rise of pop music at the beginning of the eighties, which was accompanied by new forms of production but did not materialize in contributions of an original nature from the musical point of view.

We have tried to place ourselves at the ill-defined point where genres fade into

one another, where music provides something not originally foreseen, where creation becomes ambiguous, polysemic and plural. Sometimes the musicians' different contributions refer to one-off events, correspond to a particular moment of a production with several options, sometimes even opposed. In other cases they illustrate a development over time, almost making it possible to identify this music as a genre of its own. But as a genre that they themselves have created.

In a move to provide an overall view, we have used two interpretative models to describe two parallel and complementary realities. First of all we have tried to reconstruct an unbroken temporal sequence from the sixties until today, with historical accounts, forming a genealogy of groups and of historical and cultural events. In this way, the exhibition bears witness to the vitality of an "other" tradition, which until now had never been displayed from beginning to end.

At the same time, we have wanted to relativize the historical and genealogical (and therefore hierarchical) explanation and have opted for a holistic approach to the different issues, looking for coincidences and parallels where apparently there are only differences and exceptions of all sorts. We find ourselves before a nebulous series of highly complex branching phenomena. But all of these phenomena, or a great many, show various similarities. Not only do they coincide as regards the type of music, but also in reference to the use of technology, the social implications of the music, the way of thinking and the sort of imaginary world to which they resort.

The exhibition sets out to show that, over and above the survival of styles and musicians and of the professional links that explain their influence on one another, they have a common identity of their own. We have wanted to express this shared identity according to the parameters used in classifying the material we have collected and in suggesting working methods for those who have collaborated in the exhibition and the catalogue. We have arranged them under three headings: Technology, Revolt and Imagination.

We have wanted to illustrate the importance of technological innovations linked to musical creation, from the contributions by contemporary music and electro-acoustic musicians to the introduction of different musical technologies (the synthesizer, the sampler, computer assisted composing or the communications networks taking shape in the international circuits of alternative culture). But basically, we were keen to stress that the history of alternative music in Catalonia is the history of particular ways of using technology, "perversa" uses far removed from any utilitarian end. We have wanted to exemplify this idea with the Image of the "Machine for Speaking with God", which heads the corresponding section, a homemade device. There is a need to use the resources technology has to offer to express oneself contemporarily. But there is no need for new, increasingly sophisticated instruments to show us the way in each case. We can go from cutting-edge technology to home-made instruments, from the sound laboratory conceived and used as an instrument to dirty art, from multi media work to the search for new sounds with any means at our disposal.

Behind all this music there is an attitude of revolt which goes beyond the strictly

musical dimension. Greil Markus, in the book *Rastros de Carmín*, has spoken of a secret history of the twentieth century in relation with movements of total negation (Dada, situationism, punk). If we stick to the sense of total negation, only a small part of the music dealt with in the exhibition forms part of this "secret history". But the method Markus follows has served to stress certain not specifically musical elements underlying the phenomenon of "alter music". The search for utopia: progressive utopia, the utopia of associative creation, technological utopia and also the cry of negation inherent in free music and punk, when utopia showed itself to be unviable. We have wanted this second section to illustrate the pulse of revolt against the system, even when the system has been embodied in the music.

Finally we also look at some elements from the common imagination. The recourse to certain sources by musicians with very different musical backgrounds and conceptions: surrealism and psychedelia, free improvisation and automatic writing, science-fiction and the audiovisual connection, working methods and cultural referents that recur over thirty years.

In the following pages we shall come across more than one attempt to totally or partly reconstruct the temporal sequence of the "alter music", from the sixties until today. Here we shall just pay attention to certain specific questions to justify the attention they receive later. First of all, and almost out of a taste for paradox, I would point out the importance folk music had at the beginning of this sequence in time. In the sixties, folk music broke with the rigidity of written-song concerts, established greater audience participation and, more than anything, gave importance to music for its own sake. Folk music was what united and defined a large part of the young Catalan public, which later formed the basis of the public at festivals of progressive music.(1)

Progressive music was born out of folk festivals and developed as a phenomenon of great diversity. One of the basic principles in our work has been to avoid labels. We understand progressive music as a paradigmatic example of a type of music that washes its hands of genres, not as the materialization of specific models of the rock culture that were current at that moment on an international level. In this sense we turn to Albert Batiste's definition of progressive music as "an expression of cultural confusionism whose self-justification lies in a contempt for traditional culture" and as "subelectric music built up out of all forms of music marginated by established culture: a return to rural jazz, third world music, capitalization of the dynamics of pop music". The phenomenon therefore took place in a context defined by features very similar to the present context of the "other music", which, according to Llorenç Barber, is characterized by the fact that "it is no longer a monopoly of one way of thinking or one tradition, so much as a coexistence and stasis without hegemonies of very different and sometimes opposed conceptions". (2)

From the definition of progressive music we move on to its break-up in the closing years of the seventies. This is a central theme of our discourse, because this break-up had far-reaching consequences which marked the whole of the eighties and which reach down to the present day.

None of the expectations raised by progressive music and *Laietana* music in industry were realised. In an article published in *Vibraciones* in May 1977, Àngel Casas gives an idea of what these expectations were:

"The rock adventure (or *Laietana* or local music adventure) is about to present the option the record companies say they need. Now, with the run of consumer trash running out, falling sales, saturation of a market which, inevitably, and following the end of the mind-numbing Franco regime, must reflect deeper concerns, the new music, with all the different possibilities scattered over the country, seems to be polarizing the attention and the insomnia of the executives of the international labels."

The description of the phenomenon by Albert Batiste in *Cau* seems to anticipate the situation at the end of the seventies:

"Now that the dust has settled and things can be appraised, the situation is not so optimistic. For example, the record companies that were pioneers are in a very bad financial situation. Festivals have problems with the authorities and also with financing ... In general, there has been no stable economic professionalization and many musicians live in a state of precariousness or abject poverty. Recordings made during the period of euphoria have not been released. Alongside all this, the aims of the people who began have been cheapened by those who jumped on the bandwagon for their own enrichment." And he ends with some very hard words:

"The figures speak for themselves and it is evident that the failure of progressive music can only be attributed to the debasement of a totally sub industrial sub cultural industry and a market ruined by established bad taste. From the eloquence of the figures one immediately comprehends the amateurism".

The collapse of the industry brought with it the break-up of Catalan record production and the move of the principal companies to Madrid. Public invitations took the place of the civil society's support for culture, but the truth is that they didn't lift a finger to help music. At the same time, a change in tastes took place, about which very little has been said. It would be interesting to see to what extent these two aspects are interrelated, and also how the political changes that took place during those years influenced events. If political resistance favoured the appearance of certain musical manifestations (amongst them, progressive music and *Laietana* music, with their fresh, provocative nature), the events to celebrate the recovery of democracy provided a large market for dance music and helped put an end to the movement.

In one of the songs on his record *Atalaya*, Gato Pérez remembered the days of *Secta Sónica*, said that the years of transcendental boredom were over, that it had been interesting but that now, finally, it was time people enjoyed themselves. Not everyone saw things in the same light. There are some very significant declarations by Joan Saura, a member of *Blay Tritono* and *Koniec*, that sum up fairly well the radical change that took place during the Spanish Transition:

"Afterwards, in 1976, I went to my military service and I don't know what happened after that. When I came back everything was different, everyone was playing rumbas and jotás and things for dancing to, and they justified their artistic about-turn on social grounds: "It's what the public wants". I think that first they retreated musically, when they saw they could play music that sold, and then they looked for an excuse. I felt so let down that it was no accident that I gave up music." (3)

We have wanted to look particularly closely at this moment of history, which on an international level coincides with the birth of punk that is with the loss of faith in rock culture as it had developed since the fifties and in its liberating nature. The manifesto "Zelesté Gangrena Palpable", the publications of the Free Diffusion collective, the performances at the libertarian gatherings at the Parc Güell, the appearance of Macromassa, represent, on a small scale, a reaction along the same lines as punk during the same years as punk.

Problems concerning the industry conditioned the whole situation throughout the eighties. In the issue of *Cau* on progressive music, Albert Batiste referred to the possibility of musicians producing their own records, risking the price of recording and then selling the tape to a record company, or forming associations of musicians to produce their own records (Om's record was produced in this way). The problem, all the same, was still to find a record company willing to buy the tape. Home electronics completely changed the outlook. It became easier and easier to push one's own musical creations, but the distribution circuits, which until then had been relatively plentiful, now became very restricted, in spite of repeated attempts to create new diffusion networks and the dreams of a global network. This change in scale is a lasting consequence of the crisis at the end of the seventies, and is one of the most important issues, still to be faced in the future. The international success of groups like *La Fura dels Baus*, the opportuneness and response to initiatives such as the festival *Art futura*, or *Sonar*, the approaching revolution in the field of information transmission, must not make us forget that many of the musical initiatives we are dealing with move in circuits of a very limited scale, with very small runs and practically without access to the media.

Another point in question from the eighties on is the establishment by the administration of policies aimed at young people, which have had an impact in the field of experimental creation. Associationism has been a constant throughout this period and in many cases has been based on a symbiosis between creators or groups of creators and the authorities. This symbiosis is the result of circumstances, because originally many of these policies were no more than youth policies. The role of *Transformadors*, la Biennal de Barcelona or the Young People's Centre for Initiatives and Experimentation (CIEJ) of the Caixa de Pensions Foundation have been decisive on many occasions. But another landmark is the disappearance of all these channels on the eve of the Barcelona Olympic Games. If nothing more, it goes to show that political interests were present behind these initiatives, both when they were more or less programmatically encouraged as ideological or institutional propaganda, and when they were discarded out of hand. In this sense also things have gone back to a zero point after which all possibilities remain open.

These and other subjects are dealt with in the texts that follow, which are fruit of a joint effort by contributors and curators alongside the search for recorded material. Amongst the various conclusions to be drawn from them, there is one that refers to the specificity of the subject in hand. Far from adapting foreign models, musicians have looked for a wide variety of ways to reinterpret their own culture and their own musical landscape. The results go from various types of fusion and crossbreeding to the creation of genuine imaginary folklores. Because of its particular idiosyncratic specificity too, this music deserves more opportunities and more means by which to get across to the public.

Notes

1. This theory is put forward by Albert Batiste in the famous number of the magazine *Cau* on progressive music, published in 1973.
2. Llorenç Barber: "La 'nueva' música española". *Arteleku*, San Sebastián, 1994.
3. Joan Saura. Quoted by Miquel Jurado in "Un punt de referència per a la música catalana". *El País*, 8 September 1994.

On the Instrumental Twin Track

Pau Riba

I insert the diskette ALTER.MUS. The file selector presents a varied menu. I click the mouse button on the icon corresponding to the file INSTR.MUS and a list of folders appear. INSTR-AC.MUS and INSTR-EL.MUS are the ones that interest me right now. I select the first. INSTR-AC contains three documents: CORDA.DOC, VENT.DOC, PERC.DOC. I open one, it doesn't matter which.

And so we enter the sanctuary of traditional, manufactured instruments. A time warp where acoustics comes through a triple natural sound box, which involves a chain of three vibratory structures: the instrument itself, which generates the sound waves, the hall or room in which they're heard, which expands them, and the body receiving them. The vibration of these three things combined (1: the wood -the brass, the skin ... -, 2: the air -the walls, the mountains ... -, 3: the eardrum -the bones, the viscera ... -) is what makes it possible for the brain to enjoy this pleasant end result we call music.

What we call acoustic instruments (somewhat absurdly, because they all are, though we have to differentiate them somehow - emit a single characteristic sound of invariable constants further than the performer's touch allows. This establishes a territory, an auditory space forced on us by the limits of the sound volume, and a ritual. It's suitable for chamber music, or music for small committees, or, at most, and with less feeling, music for dance orchestras or village bands.

The name *acoustic* refers to natural acoustics, a pure sound, with the same purity we attach to genuine cow's milk or pure bee's honey. In other words, not manipulated. The same nostalgia-steeped longing that has always made us want or even prefer our food just as it flows from Nature's breast is what until today has saved the acoustic instrument from disappearing, along with the ritual it involves: it's still used, though largely restricted to gatherings of friends or the strictest privacy. If nothing else, it's a sybaritic luxury.

Having overcome this frontier, the instrument can still be acoustic but the sound is no longer natural: it's amplified. And in the process of amplification it's transformed and becomes artificial -an unnatural version of itself, a surrogate. And while we're at it, in a laudable attempt at redress, it's manipulated. The second sound box is replaced by a virtual sound box, the frequencies are cut back, it's compressed, sculpted, made up.

All this, this ability to manipulate sound, thus fulfilling one of humanity's destinies, which is to act against nature, is the discovery of the century. This find, which began with the microphone, the loudspeaker and the magnetic tape, has worked a revolution in musical instruments and, at the same time, in music, its space and its rituals.

I close this window and, mouse in hand, go on to the next folder: INSTR-EL.MUS. An endless list of documents appears: MICRO.DOC, AMPLI.DOC,

CHORUS.DOC. SINTE.DOC, SAMPLE.DOC... I open one.

This takes us through a window into the manufacturing laboratory of the electronic instrument: a vast space full of little corners and subdivisions where sound is generated out of electricity thanks to compact apparatus (originally bulky, heavy and full of cables, valves, rudimentary oscillators, triode lamps and condensers, today miraculously lightened thanks to the integrated circuit, micro-electronics, the silicon chip and the computer digit) without sound boxes -or with a universal sound box separated from the instrument and suitable for all kinds of sounds-, is transmitted along cables or by radio -obviating the need for the second sound box, which, as I say, is virtual and travels in the form of sound characteristics, and is fed directly to the ear -the only one of the three sound boxes still standing- via the headphones or, indirectly, via the amplifier and loudspeaker.

Not depending on a sound box, and being able to invent out of nothing - synthesizing-, as well as imitating or reproducing, the electronic instrument has an infinitely wider range of characteristic sounds. It can even import sounds from other sources. Subsequently, it's capable of marking out a much larger territory and generating distinct and plural rituals, which involves new attitudes, new movements, a new role; a new concept of music.

These are the two ends (INSTR-AC/INSTR-EL) of the path from classical music to modern music, including all forms of ethnicity and folklorism, by way of the instrument, which has undergone a revolution we can, generally speaking, consider complete. Music is no longer what it was. Its concept has been considerably enlarged and it has reached the end: now that music is taken as being any production of sound, whether generated by natural elements or by artificial elements, the limit can hardly be extended.

We could open yet another document, IN-EL-AC.DOC, which would take us into the intermediate zone of electrified acoustic instruments -or electric instruments that retain the acoustic sound box, so that they can produce sound without electricity. But I prefer to approach the field of electro-acoustics from the conceptual point of view. So let's get back to the main directory and stick the mouse's nose on the file CONCEPT.MUS. Various folders appear. I open the first one, IDEAL.MUS, and select PANORAMA.DOC from the list of documents.

We find ourselves at the start of the century, this twentieth century which will go down in history for two things: the triple technological revolution (1: the industrial revolution -straddling the two centuries-, 2: the electronic revolution, 3: the computer revolution) and the liberalization of all the arts.

The concept of liberty, in a profound and broad sense, is in full effervescence; it has become a central topic, presiding debates and round tables and underlying all the concerns and aspirations for progress. The nineteenth century has just closed the books with a considerable return: the abolition of slavery, the introduction of universal suffrage and the proclamation of human rights. It has therefore meant a certain strengthening of collective liberties. The next - contemporary- landmark, is individual liberty; a craving which, while in politics it

takes the form of freedom of expression, in the artistic terrain becomes an unstoppable urge for the liberalization of art: the undergrowth must be cut back, frontiers must be opened up. Clear the way.

This process of liberation took place in painting before music. Being dependent on the instrument (unlike painting, which even today -1995- still operates with the traditional brush), music had to wait until, thanks to technology, the instrument could start to take the path leading from natural acoustics to electronic synthesis. While in painting this liberalization affected colour and form, in music it affected the nature of the sound and the rhythm structures.

Now let's open the next document, AVANT.DOC, without closing the other one. (The computer lets you keep various windows open at once, so that you can let the fresh air in). We now board the train of the avant-gardes; a little train that, not without difficulty, follows the path mentioned above, and which we find crowded with idealists playing at "mus" -with the cards marked by existentialism, expressionism, surrealism, Dadaism, or abstractionism-, playing for an entranced futurism that dips its beard into the sweet dish of this technical and scientific progress that presages an important breakthrough in forms. They worship machines and mathematics, they dream of the new instrument's possibilities: they speculate, search, break. They travel. Starting from the traditional canon of classical instrumentation and composition, this breakthrough took place on two fronts almost simultaneously -one linked to the new instrumentation, the other to the new forms of composition-, and their followers travelled in the first two -consecutive and interrelated- carriages of the train: the experimental carriage, where an exhaustive search for new sounds took place on the basis of technological progress, and the conceptual carriage, where the struggle to open up frontiers and enlarge the fields of sound application were based on modern mathematics and the idea of interdisciplinarity.

New window -CULT.DOC-: this mixture of experimentation and conceptualism is the start of a line of essentially cold and rationalistic musicians who are more concerned with novelty and breakthrough than with sensuality or enjoyment. This is understandable if we bear in mind that the main thing is to conceive the fields of battle of the new instrumentation and clear unknown and sometimes-rugged terrain so as to make room for contemporary music. This line will stay with the train for the whole of the century. It's the cultured branch, a direct successor to the classical conception.

Struggling on through various wars, the train has managed to get over the first half of the century and progress towards the frontier of twenty-five years of peace. First, though, towards the end of the fifties (at which point we intercept it on our journey through time), it stops in Catalonia and J.M.Mestres Quadreny gets on. J.M.Mestres Quadreny is a genuine pioneer of the cultured branch who plays all the keys -chance, probability calculus, random numbers, serialism, improvisation, music/theatre/painting/poetry, concrete music, recording tape, computer...) until 1975, when, in partnership with Andrés Lewin and Lluís Callejo, he created Phonos, the backbone of the branch we still call electro-acoustic -because it was- but which today is also electro-electric.

Fourth window: POP. DOC: in the mid-sixties something unheard-of happened: the electro-acoustic musicians were having a cigarette in the corridor when another train travelling at high speed along a parallel line suddenly overtook them. What was it? The counter-culture train. With the ground made fertile by the Beat Generation, the young people of the sixties had decided that Western civilization deserved to be radically but peacefully contested and had just set in motion an attempted parallel culture. This attempt took the name of "Counter-culture". And this counter-culture, with its utopian, unconcerned, festive roots and its dream of a happy "global tribe", needed to be represented and at the same time propagated by music that was easy but engaging, something hypnotic (LSD, a new synthetic hallucinogenic drug would help) and suited to cathartic functions of an elementary nature.

What was to characterize this new music was the sound of an instrument that during this very same period shook off its electro-acoustic condition to become definitively compact: the electric guitar. In this way, following on the heels of the radical and vitalistic counter-cultural revolution, a parallel line of essentially warm and intuitive musicians emerged who came to officiate at the new rituals on the basis of an effective tribal and reductionist neo-primitivism (rock 'n' roll, its maximum expression, is built up on 2/4 and 4/4). This was the *popular* -or POP- branch, which, while not contributing much musically, was nevertheless important evidence of a change in attitudes. It changed the limited public for a real mass phenomenon (macro-concerts that brought together hundreds of thousands of people), it took the possibilities of sound to the limits, it blended distortion with psychedelia and, most important of all, it generated enormous profits, which was a decisive boost to electronic research applied to instruments. Leading this counter-cultural train, pulling all the "Música Dispersa" and the less disperse music behind it, was a group of pioneers that couldn't have been more aptly named: Máquina! (Machine).

We now close all the windows (we don't want to catch cold) and in the darkness of the directory we follow the mouse to CONCLUS.DOC in the last folder of the file ALTER.MUS.

On the basis of all this, and as the new possibilities were gradually assimilated, the rationalistic, or cultured branch became sweeter and more human, while the intuitive, or popular branch evolved towards more conceptual, elaborate formulas. Eventually, having got PUNK out of the way (the equivalent of Dada in art, a kind of suicide or self-denial of the revolutionary process itself making it absolutely clear that the arts must not be enslaved by any kind of imposition or mould) and coinciding with the appearance of the first "home studios" reduced to simple computer programs (the Panharmonium foreseen by Onofre Parés in 1927), the branches tend to converge and we can begin to consider this process of musical liberalization complete. Music, which has more and more sophisticated acoustic and electronic apparatus, is finally able to electronically create and model sound itself -that is, the raw material - and work it without any kind of structural or stylistic obstacles, in full and absolute freedom (as has been the case with painting for some time now).

ALTER NATIVE MUSIC intends quite simply to offer a structured and

meaningful sample of everything we feel has played an important part in this process. Rather than consolidated careers or artistic successes, our interest has centred on fragments and breakthroughs of a radical or revolutionary nature, which in some way have established a before and after ... and which precisely because of their speculative and experimental nature have remained in the dark for the general public and, especially, for the large recording companies.

The Unified Field Theory

Victor Nubla

Universe A: There is no such thing as Alter Native Music

Universe B: There is such a thing as Alter Native Music

Universe B: Report

"Man, represented by a primitive humanoid, is consumed by the environment he himself has created, eventually to be replaced by a new creature, even more primitive, imperfect, but vaguely capable of ruling the world." (The Residents)

The genre music circles tend to reject everything that doesn't pay immediate homage to stylistic orthodoxy. They often fall back on media language to express their rejection: "not commercial", "too noisy", "weird", "minority", "mad", etc.

New and different music, pioneer music, experimental music, avant-garde music, progressive music, stylistic short cuts, imaginary folklore ... These are some ways of defining what is indefinable. Some of them are very inaccurate and others are imaginative enough to instil more mystery into it. Some of them are the industry's reply: for which a possible market is falsely weird (snobbery?). Some are poetic approximations to the unknown: this is non-genre music; other invented or imagined soundtracks of the present future. Sensitive models which men and women generate for their own use and which the media macro-society incorporates with greater or lesser fortune.

We are therefore discussing sound ideas that share what lies outside the borders of today's music, whether jazz, contemporary music, pop, rock, flamenco, folk or new age, that have a place of their own characterized by innovation and stylistic risk, off the leisure/industrial circuits we call genre circuits. Music that makes some kind of conscious stylistic transgression and proposes a personal world, one radicalized as regards the pigeon-hole worlds of the stylistic map of the music of the last five decades.

Obviously what is produced isn't the future, it's the present. So it's wrong to speak of "new" music in relation to other music, perhaps we should speak of "traditional" music in relation to the music we're dealing with.

Very often this music starts from a genre or an instrument and tries to develop the expressive language; but very often an expression of sound is reached through personal, extra musical, literary, artistic or other experiences.

As soon as we speak of "personality", everything gets far more complicated than when we speak of "genres", "schools" or "trends", "Who can find a word strange when hardly anyone knows the names of the flowers that can be found in an ordinary garden?" (Boris Vian)

That's why labels in this case are generally vague, ambiguous and narrow and only add to the tendency for mediators to warn exaggeratedly about the supposed "difficulty" of certain musical expressions.

In quantum mechanics, the experiment with Schroedinger's cat places us before an uncertainty: inside the box, the cat may be alive or it may be dead. There is a 50% chance of either option. But the cat can't be 50% alive or 50% dead. If we don't open the box, the cat is as much alive as it is dead. There are two parallel universes, in each of which the cat is in a different situation. We have chosen the option in which it is alive, and that's why there is such a thing as "alter native music". Perhaps in other universes it doesn't exist, but that no longer concerns us, although by taking this decision we submit to Heisenberg's uncertainty principle: it's impossible to know both the position and the movement of this phenomenon. Either we see where it is or we find out where it's going. We're not futurists, so here we'll just look at the other music that has existed healthily in Catalonia for the last half century (and probably longer and not only in Catalonia), at what it is, what it does or what it isn't and what it doesn't do.

"My instruments belong to a number of traditions, in particular today's." (Harry Partch)

For rather complex reasons, this particular part of the Mediterranean experiences unusual cultural processes. An apparently manic area *par excellence*, it turns out, in short, that it enjoys a very high level of tolerance that nevertheless clashes head-on with the rigid, superficial, mercantile and profitable administration of memory practised by those who in theory should simply be administering boredom. Fortunately, the implacable sinusoid that hides and reveals itself in cycles through history is common to us as it is to many others: and the musical movement known as "Canterbury" in England existed alongside "German experimental rock" and Catalan progressive music. In the same way, there are many Perpignan Stations (like the Bar Casajuana in Barcelona, mystical centre of the universe, because, as Jorge Luis Borges said, "A system is no more than the subordination of all the aspects of the universe to a single one of these"). The "system" includes evolution by many, as well as fractures on a planetary level (hip, punk, techno). Cultural guerrillas and large multinationals share the establishment of new concepts. Perhaps when people said we weren't "on the same level as Europe" no one imagined that Europe today would be on the same level as Europe. Gentlemen, this is the fourth world, if it exists, and here we have the perfect culture medium for eclecticism, artistic contamination, joyous experimentation and the evacuation of orthodox models (discharged via the ship's refuse hatch) and perhaps for the most important generation of non-musicians, whose international influence we shall see later (innovation in the fields of creativity manifests itself intermittently, alternately in the areas of social progress, crossing them submerged).

"And afterwards, rock and roll, destroyed by the powers that be, went on to make a profound break that was its last great fundamental legacy: it changed the philosophical direction of popular music." (Peter Rubin) There's no doubt as to the importance and the universal consequences of the hippie movement.

Without the hippies, we might never have been able to talk about freedom of expression, Greenpeace or 0.7%. Or we wouldn't be able to understand that this was the first (and not the only) planetary action organised by young people as a new social class, something totally new that had its second birth - revolution- in the punk movement of the end of the seventies. Without which, once more, we wouldn't be able to talk about lots of things: organised world networks, the squatter movement, productive self-management ...

"It wasn't a question of making an exhaustive list of all the new music groups to be found in Spain; that would have made this fanzine as thick as the telephone yearbook!" (Bruno Haumont, publisher of the Paris fanzine *Orquídea Femenina*, in the prologue to the 1988 number)

At the time this French publisher was considering the difficulties of compiling all the information on music from (just!) the Iberian Peninsula, the world was seething. C.L.E.M. (Contact List of Electronic Music, published in Canada) contained thousands of contacts. Global networks proliferated, interconnecting without Internet (the true forerunner of internet is mail art, just as Schwitters, Duchamp, the surrealists and the situationists are the true forerunners of psychedelia, minimalism and punk) and the technological data storage media came to be controlled by the musicians themselves. Alternative media appeared and everything was filled with fanzines, free radios (I often wonder what the alternative scene would have been like in Barcelona and, by extension, Catalonia without Ràdio P.I.C.A., still going today) and distributors of artist's tapes, cassettes; in the global network code, k7, subsequently k7. And in Catalonia, as though the holographic matrix of the universe wanted to collaborate, as k7 advanced in its secret consumption and *Laietana* music committed suicide, the record industry moved to Madrid and dismantled its factories in el Prat as fast as it could, heading for the Madrid scene, which had a pale reflection in local pop.(1)

The reason stable specialized circuits weren't set up in the Spanish state like the ones that have existed all over the Western world for some time is a complete mystery -or not. Consider that when "different" creators organise collectively they tend to become more committed to the continuity and development of the music scene than other supposedly indispensable sectors such as promoters, managers, cultural planners or the record producers, distributors and retailers, who are guilty at any rate of this endemic lack of specialized circuits in the Spanish state. The musical press, unlike in other countries, hasn't specialized in other kinds of music either. This isn't a problem. The problem perhaps arises when the musical press specializes in nothing, or in ignorance, or becomes autarchic. (Information, please!)

"Live in your century, but don't be its toy; and don't offer your contemporaries what they applaud, but what they lack." (Johan Christoph Friedrich Schiller)

The so-called independent labels founded by musicians at the end of the seventies were no more than small structures for production and creation, sustained by the personal efforts of the creators. Around their production, an ever growing public gave financial support to their survival (the cassette died as

an alternative medium with the arrival of the cheaper digital storage methods, just as the global networks abandoned mail art with the arrival of the digital networks). Alternative or private production has a powerful vehicle for diffusion in compilations, editions of recordings, in which a number of musicians take part, and often with suggestive leitmotifs or simply as catalogues of different ideas. There have been historical compilations, and out of the collections of innovatory work in Catalonia, from the birth of progressive music down to today, the following are worth mentioning: *Música Progressiva a Catalunya vol. 1*, *Música Progressiva España vol. 1* (extraordinary landscapes of other music at the beginning of the seventies), *Domestic Sampler Umyu* (a fairly dizzying leap to 1983), *4 grupos de Barcelona* (following the disappearance of Catalan record production, the Madrid producers started to take on responsibility for releasing new Catalan music, as in the following example), *La Zona* (like the previous example, produced by Esplendor Geométrico Discos; it's the end of the eighties), *Barcelona Ficción Romance* (1991, 92, 93 ... the cassette version, which has different material, was produced in Paris; afterwards, Olympic euphoria produced a vinyl disc version financed by the Barcelona City Council, once again with new material; subsequently, the la Caixa Foundation produced a video version for the Peninsula, still with the same title), *Noise Club 1*, (the Olympic hangover takes us once again to Madrid, where the record company *Por Caridad Producciones* brought out this fascinating testimony in 1994). Perhaps the double compact that accompanies this catalogue is the honourable heir to this line of more or less exhaustive compilations, which are indispensable for the knowledge of the full extent of this Universe B.

"Music is noise that thinks" (Victor Hugo)

The technological element has been very important in experimentation and in the constant play of mind with matter, but we're used to not seeing what there is under our noses and to naively expecting anything new to be unknown. In fact, new sounds merely create new attitudes to life, but our human emotions are the same and we have to handle them the same whatever age we're born into (a Stradivarius was high technology when it appeared, but some of us were already producing sound poems with no semantic content ...). Hence the creative use of technology perhaps has no connection with the production of technology for supposed social leisure use.

"To me, experimental music is quite simply music that offers, both for the musician and for the listener, a turning-point or black hole. Something that isn't explicit in the previous offer. There is, or can be in this music, a crack; one can lose oneself in a way that is presumably enriching and, by analogy, similar to the way mystics describe the ascent to Mount Carmel: "To reach what you don't know, you have to go the way you don't know." (Llorenç Barber, Zehar, bulletin of Arteleku, 1994) All this confirms that years ago, for the centenary of Luigi Russolo, Japanese firms manufactured *intonarrumori* in open competition ... machines don't play alone. Everything is a machine. And reality is made of the stuff of dreams. Imagination: Dada, surrealism, psychedelia, conceptualism, minimalism, science fiction, cyber-punk, holistics ... The personal discourse. Imaginary worlds. Mental folklore. Autodidacticism. Only absolute freedom of the individual as regards art can produce the premonitory desire prior to

scientific progress.

"This music puts all the emphasis on accident, gesture, atmosphere, ceremonial elements, etc. as well as on the catastrophic use of the most neutral technologies ... " (LLorenç Barber, Zehar, bulletin of Arteleku, 1993)

It is an obvious contradiction to talk about the academicism of what is innovatory (so we won't talk about it). It's more interesting to talk about creative promiscuity over and above eclecticism. About collaboration, exchange and intersections up to intoxication and contamination. About personal isolation and isolation up to total immersion ... Or dirty art. These agents of international conspiracies of which probably only they form part, as well as the global networks, have other connections, which are often surprising. For example, the artistic connection. The visual work of many musicians involved in high-risk music during the last five decades is almost as important as their work with sound. Jordi Batiste of Màquina! and Guillem Paris of Pan & Regaliz produced the impeccable covers for their records, Pau Riba made his own posters or designed *aviolances*, while Panotxa planned the entire graphic universe of El Grito Acusador and El Hombre de Pekin. Toni Barjau and Aiboo/Ebú (Disipados, Bootunoo) have been doing first-rate work with graphics, silk-screens and computers to this day, like Manufactures Marte, created by Macromassa, who control the whole of their visual projection. Sergio Caballero works simultaneously on his intimist/spectacular pictorial work and technological musical creation with Jumo. Leo Marino also alternates the music of Matavacas with the work of the Joan Tabique Foundation. Zush and Tres combine their artistic work with periodic sound events in the form of concerts or records. Marcel·li Antúnez, from Error Genético or La Fura dels Baus to his later individual work, creates a universe of sound as well as a visual one ... musicians take part in the visual message of his music: Gringos, Mohochemie, Alien Mar, Anton Ignorant, Pascal Comelade, Vagina Dentata .. with total mastery of the language. New formats are included: installation, performance art, interactive informatics. Perhaps the two exhibitions of Painter-Musicians (Cafè del Sol, 1985 - Transformadors, 1991) are a symbol of this audiovisual contamination. And we mustn't forget all the opportunities that music for dance, theatre, cinema and video have provided for non-genre musicians to investigate and experiment with the possibilities of art and sound.

" ... There is no discussion when the spectator feels pleasure. Even the least knowledgeable music-lover will happily grasp the fringes of a work; it pleases him for reasons that are often totally alien to the essence of the music. This pleasure is enough for him; he has no need for justification. But if he happens to dislike the music, our music-lover will demand retribution for his disappointment. He will insist on an explanation of what is by nature ineffable." Igor Stravinsky, "Musical Poetry", 1945.

The poetical connection means that the literary work of many of these non-musicians also plays an important part in their development. The ineffability of their music has no textual explanation; they bring the ineffability of their writing to the totality of their creative work. Many non-writers and non-poets work closely with them or belong to the same circuit of concert halls, festivals and

record productions. This is why for some time there have been a series of projects combining poetry and sound, which, under a variety of names such as *Poesia Erètica Sorpresa* or *Dispositiu de Latitud Extensiva Mòbil*, attracts surprisingly large audiences at successive urban cabarets combining the work of Accidents Polipoètics, Enric Casassas, Jordi Pope, Ben Crawshaw and Anton Ignorant with other non-verbal sound universes from the local scene. You might say that poetry has found its place amongst the other forms of music and that they share part of their public, a fortunate (and promising) circumstance as regards what might happen on this level in other urban nuclei of the planet's geography.

"Daavid Allen gave his first concert in Catalonia at the Monastery of Montserrat. And he also wanted to be present at that of the Virgin of Canet. On that first occasion (1972), four tourists, two nuns and a child were the only public at the Planet Gong concert." (Carles Carrero, *Vibraciones*, October 1978)

There's another connection. It's the international connection. A lot of musicians have come this way on their tours and have never gone back. Others have been in enforced exile here, some have stayed a while but have left unforgettable work and all of them have collaborated with local musicians in unique productions of different music. From the brothers Tim and Peter Hodgkinson with OM and Pau Riba, Nico with Pau Riba and on Neuròmium's record *Vuelo Químico*; Daavid Allen, also with Riba and Bibiloni (Licors and the brilliant Good Morning); Krishna Goineaux, in the legendary Xerox before their techno-European career, with Jordi Guber; Lol Coxhill improvising at the Piano Bar; Robert Wyatt recording with Claustrofobia; Cathy Claret forgetting the Bel Canto Orchestra to get fully involved in Barcelona's most musical nucleus (Gràcia-Plaça de Raspall); John Greaves, another member of Henry Cow (like Tim Hodgkinson before and now) recording the excellent Billy's Back with Klamm; Daniel Schell producing the Murphy Federation's van at Suck Electrònic, stopping exhausted right outside the Orquidea, loaded with instruments and British musicians and delivering three pop-art groups onto the Barcelona scene for the "domèstic" period: Amos & Superslicks, Milk from Cheltenham and the Hostiapaths. Or Gabriel Brncic's crucial work with the Phonos Foundation, which has already attracted more than three generations of restless young musicians. And the arrival of Jakob Draminsky at the Sitges festival and his subsequent idyll in Barcelona; or Mark Cunningham, the legend of "no-wave", who settled for good in the Llefia district of Badalona; Claudio Zulian's systematic collaboration with the dissident experimentalists of all genres; the periods of fruitful creation which the Franco-Germans Das Syntetische Mishgewebe and the Canadians Fat have spent with us; the Ukrainian lury Lech and his musical-literary work and the most recent, compatriots of lury, the delicate impossible music of Fizika. All this collaboration with local musicians has produced an enormous number of recordings, a host of concerts, as well as connection, exchange, contamination, experimentation, investigation, internationalism ... (a lot have been left out of this round-up) so that it could all make Barcelona -as the agglutinating urban centre- a global territory of innovatory music, because as well as the constant movement of (some) Catalan musicians on the international circuits of festivals, concert halls and record companies, it meant that things could happen in the space-time

fabric that still have no clear explanation. Otherwise, how is it possible that in the very centre and origin of the most recent living folklore to emerge in Catalonia (the plaça de Raspall, the heart of the "ventilator"), other electro-domestics have shaken stylistic frontiers during the eighties, bringing electro-acoustic and concrete sound closer to popular music of non-Latin origin (let's say rock) or why and how European industrial music originated and/or grew up in the Gràcia district of Barcelona, in an ultralocalist gambol that eventually connected everything with Dalí, with Calanda and Buñuel, with the videos of Derek Jarman and the disciplines of Psychic Television ... down to today: otherwise, tell me what Jordi Valls was doing (between London, Travessera de Gràcia and Cadaqués) in Industrial Records (Throbbing Gristle), or World Satanic Network Systems, until he created Vagina Dentata Organ and its sound productions, collaborating with Whitehouse (while William Bennet moved in to carrer Milà i Fontanals) and all of them, with Ràdio PICA, presented their invention at La Orquidea. Xavi Cots, at that time, was no longer with Cuc Sonat, but co-featuring in the accident of the blue *deux cheveux* and Jarman's video *Catalan*. Eliseu Huertas (from Castellfollit de la Roca) was playing Whitehouse records that day at La Orquídea, just where Macromassa recorded their second record. And visiting the L.M.D. studio in the plaça Raspall were Vivenza, from Grenoble, and Etant Données, or Laurence Desarzens, the director of *Play it Again Sam*, when industrial music began to be superseded by tecno-beat. But it was also easy to bump into David Tibet around the neighbourhood, or Lydia Lunch taking a walk with Jim Thirwell and Guillem Castaño. And the post-industrial sounds echoed in the lower part of Gràcia, just as the drums of Calanda echo once more in the music of Raèo, as they had in that of Vagina Dentata Organ. Now, all this has materialized in something called La Línia, an orthotenic series of sites for creative technological production occupying a territorial strip of downtown Gràcia and generating most of Barcelona's experimental production. Take a good look at the records that bear this printed message:

"The purpose of this nameless music is to be positively unalienating, truly revolutionary, in that, riding on its back, it leaves us free to sense a far more enriching reality than that of our society ... " (José Manuel Costa, "Ideología de la nueva música", *Disco Exprés*, 1975).

This is the maximum generalization we can allow ourselves. (There are some subterfuges that the public, the "alter" citizens, don't deserve.) The human being's attitude to music is not very different from his attitude to other areas of culture such as the cinema, or, probably, to anything else. Circuits that could present an alternative to the cultural and social scene don't exist in this city or in other towns or cities in this country or in the entire state. This situation condemns musicians to extreme working conditions: unfair working hours, symbolic fees, very long wavelengths. In the rest of Europe, records by these Catalan musicians do get distributed and their concerts are enjoyed in anonymous clubs in towns a tenth the size of Barcelona.

Provincial labels don't invalidate this proposal, which is, in spite of everything, a reply to a projected media situation, which has never been the underlying reality of the daily workshop of "local" creation. In other words, what is universal, in the

best sense, begins at home and this fear of anything new doesn't offer a habitable world. That's why the reality we invent here is far more interesting: it doesn't kill, it doesn't create categorical or categorized human beings. It isn't biologically dangerous like other forms of instrumentalized music.

Obviously there's a pseudo-industrial interest, but a lot of attempts to recover or discover certain material is no more than the opportunism of Universe A, and the results are very badly documented editions, full of mistakes, signs of the apathy that seems to be gradually taking over in those companies who only seemed to have any purpose during a supposed boom of pop music sung in Catalan. Fortunately, the small cooperative or collective companies set up by musicians during the eighties and encouraged with real interest on the part of their creators (musicians and fans) maintain the level of seriousness, novelty, interesting design and originality that this sort of music needs.

"Canet Rock was possibly the most unusual festival of Spanish pop, and not because of the massive public response that made it the most important ever held, but because it was the first rock festival I've ever seen without rock." (Jordi Sierra i Fabre, *Popular 1*, September 1975). And after the naivety came the ritual of semi-clandestinity (like Residents, Faust o der Plan, Esplendor Geométrico, Macromassa, Avant Dernières Pensées, Doénado, el Ur, etc.), and later we thought that, as in all facets of life (social, individual), breaking with custom (recognising alien customs) had been the great problem. Whether alien but amply collective (xenophobia), or alien and corresponding to imaginary states or mental states (Evrugo, Subworld Pérez, etc.) or to imaginary folklore or far more ambitious historical questions on the part of critical creation sectors.

"I'm convinced that for the time being sympathies lie with those sounds that help to tear down the wall of labels." (Jaume Cuadreny, interview in *Disco Exprés*, 30/6/1978).

Jaume Cuadreny was speaking about a concert of his at La Orquídea, an emblematic venue that experienced some sublime moments and a lot of police raids. And it would be necessary to make a short list of the venues that were like real extraterrestrial bases in Barcelona used by sound activists: San Carlos Club, Trocadero, Bocaccio, La Enagua, El Mercadillo de Balmes, Zeleste, Magic, Karma, Saló Diana, Apòstrof, La Orquídea, Piano bar, KGB, Klaffer, Communiqué, the shops of Gay & Company, Star Records and Informe, the C.I.E.J. of la Caixa, Transformadors and all the other non-permanent places, conveniently symbiotized when circumstances allowed or advised.

"We're musicians and we want to make our music; if we work for some kind of set-up they always tell us what we have to do, and we're not prepared to go along with that." (Interview with Perucho's by Pep Gorgas, *Disco Exprés*, 30/5/1978).

Let's not forget that, although we're in Universe B, some things are exactly the same as in Universe A. For example, most of the technological means we use for producing and listening to music have a military origin, the same as the inoffensive tin can (the Napoleonic Wars) or the tin opener (World War I). So, in

coherent language, we can say that Jaume Cuadreny was a sniper from this para-universe who sent a message to Universe A saying that music is indispensable, especially when you're an alien. Do we come from Mars? Does Mars come from us? Have we created other worlds? Other music? We're only trying to transform everyday reality using our imagination, showing our nonconformism with tradition and progress and making a progressive and unorthodox use of technology. (2)

(This text is dedicated to Salvador Francesch, agent of chaos and quantum philosopher).

Notes

1. Take note: perhaps another parallel universe will reveal another cat, the trajectory of whose existence is not a sinusoid but another, different line that leads from Sirex and Salvajes, via Distrito V and Cacao pal Mono, to Umpapah and Sau, and that's someone else's job.

2. The three sections of *Alter Native Music*: Imagination - Revolt - Technology.

Counting to Eight

Julià Guillamon

One

Lelgoulach's Tibia

In one of the first episodes of *Impressions d'Afrique*, Raymond Roussel speaks of a young Breton, Lelgoulach, a prodigious bagpipe player. One day Lelgoulach falls of the greased pole and breaks a leg. He goes back home pretending that nothing has happened so as not to make more of a fool of himself in front of his neighbours. When he goes to get the doctor, the wound has got much worse, gangrene has set in, and they have to cut off his leg. Thinking only of how to get the most out of the situation, Lelgoulach asks the surgeon to keep the tibia for him. A month later, a guitar-maker brings his leg bone to him now in the form of a strange-sounding flute. Twenty years after the amputation, the sound of the flute has never stopped improving, like that of a violin that improves with age.(1)

The subject of the musician's skill, his technical ability, is excellently illustrated. The musician, the artist, is a virtuoso, he has a special gift. But he doesn't attain his destiny until, after a confrontation with his neighbours and a ridiculous fall in a silly game in front of everyone, he is dramatically crippled. He then starts a second career, based on values totally opposed to the values of his virtuoso days. He is his own instrument, from his disability is born a new art. Progress starts with a step backwards. One of the titles in the selection: "Arte de cojear con la guitarra". (The Art of Umping with the Guitar).

Two

Non-music

Asger Jorn invites Jean Dubuffet, at the end of 1960, to improvise music. During the first months of 1961 they engage in improvisation sessions, which they record on a tape recorder. Asger Jorn had some experience with the violin and the trumpet. Dubuffet had once played at great length on the piano. For the type of music they wanted to make there was no need to be a virtuoso. It was simply a question of using the instruments to produce unusual effects. As well as a pretty bad piano, they had a violin, a cello, a trumpet, a recorder, a Saharan flute, a guitar and a tambourine. As the days went by, they gradually added ancient, exotic or traditional instruments at random from their finds in the flea market.

Dubuffet had never used a tape recorder before. When he hears recording by professionals he's startled. One tends to speak of a good recording when the sounds are very clear and seem to come from nearby. But the ear's everyday world is not made up only of these sounds. It includes an equal, or possibly even greater measure of vague, impure, far-off sounds that can't be clearly heard. "If I'm going to choose and use sounds of all types that turn up," writes

Dubuffet, "those my tape recorder gives me may be different from what I recorded, but they mean just as much to me and sometimes I prefer them."

Dubuffet realises all his limitations as regards the instruments he has used and the advantages of his methodical knowledge of how to use them. How useful it could be if at the same time he could learn music! "But like this there's also the danger of losing an important element: that offered by the improvised use of an instrument one doesn't know how to use properly and with the unexpected discoveries that result from it." (2)

Since the sixties, the non-musician has become the real protagonist of the musical renewal. But the more essential his discoveries are, the more tempted he feels to perfect the technique. How many talents abandon savage values at the door of the music school!

Three

Alienating Music

Alberto Savinio writes in "Musica estranea cosa" in *Scatola sonora*,⁽³⁾ "How can one give oneself up to an art that stifles ideas and prevents thought? A musician, in 1915 I left music out of 'fear'. So as not to submit to the charm of music. So as not to give in entirely to its wishes. Because I had felt the depressing effects of music in myself. Because each musical crisis seemed to arise out of a dreamless sleep. Because music causes stupor and stupidity. Because music makes man a slave: that's chiefly why it's such an enormous success. And probably also because contrary to what the encyclopaedists believed, with their dreams of human freedom, man wants to feel enslaved: subjected to physical slavery, and also to metaphysical slavery, something music bestows excellently." (4)

In 1915, Savinio, a musician, abandoned music. In 1916, Luigi Russolo published *L'Art des Bruits*, which seems to contest the idea of alienating music with the exaltation of musical noise: "our ears demand ever greater acoustic sensations, we must at any price break the closed circle of pure sounds and conquer the infinite variety of noise-sounds." Not only our ears demand new sensations, the new sensations that machines can offer, it's our spirit that wants to break the spell of music, "with these large, attractive sounds that are a more familiar basis to our life than the rays of the sun" (Michaux).

Four

Two Monuments

Like a scene from *Impressions d'Afrique*. At the top of the *passeig de Sant Joan*, the avenue widens out to form a sort of esplanade with a garden. On this esplanade stands the monument to Clavé, a little out of proportion and heavy, with its great stone plinth and the figure not to scale. Behind the monument, separated by a garden and by the gardener's hut, is the monument to Frai Pedro Ponce de León, the inventor of oral teaching for the deaf and dumb, in

white marble. This enclave has been considered a metaphysical axis for musicians in the "La linea" experimental production network.

After Russolo all that was left for music to annex was silence. This was to be, some decades later, John Cage's discovery.

Five

Insults by the Public

According to Greil Marcus, the campaign to launch Michael Jackson's record *Thriller*, in 1984, was an absolute novelty by the side of previous mass-culture phenomena. *Thriller* is the first pop explosion that was not judged by the subjective quality of the response it provoked, but by the number of objective commercial exchanges achieved. And not only for its economic returns but also its political returns. Each one of Michael Jackson's concerts was presented like a version of the official social reality, generated from Washington as ideology, and from Madison Square Garden as language.

Michael Jackson's triumph was that he allowed people not to choose. He imposed his own sense of reality. All you had to do was recognize this reality, although when you recognized it, you had to accept that you liked the record. People no longer buy goods in the conventional sense (records, videos, posters, books or magazines), they consume their own consumer gestures. Through them they ratify a particular social order. One example of the Jackson cultural phenomenon (that is, the pop explosion that has to be judged by the number of objective commercial exchanges and that at the same time represents an official social order): Catalan rock.(5)

The real purpose of the alternative networks is to oppose this telemarket quantifying mechanism thanks to which leisure is no longer simply leisure but becomes productive work and generates value. By any means: creating fictitious realities through the multiplying effect of secrecy (this, according to Markus, was one of the reasons for Punk's success). Deliberately provoking failure and scandal, the anger of the public, as an extreme way of showing up the right to free choice.

Six

Sabotage!

"The music of tomorrow," says Iannis Xenakis, "will go through an unusual, particular structuring of space and time, and it might become a tool for transforming man, influencing his mental structure." In face of musical utopia as understood by Xenakis and as understood by modernity,(6) the idea of sabotage preventing the structuring of the human mind to the dictates of music, whatever the novelty and the objective benefits of this structuring. We have already seen this with reference to Savinio and futurist music. Noises, genuine "natural music", always varied, always unexpected, represent the chaotic factor.

But not only noises oppose the dictates of music.

"In some opportunities it is sensible to introduce a true random factor into your actions against the existing order. The problem is that chance, by definition, cannot be planned. Nevertheless, human emotion is a chance factor and one might say that serving the interests of one's own endocrine system is the same as serving chaos." The words of Gregor Markowitz in *La teoria de l'entropia social*. (7)

Emotion before technique, chaos before order. "Everything leads to the achievement of a new musical expressionism. " (8)

Seven

A Real Reason

"There was once a cargo of new ideas (9), which on sensationally turning into new perceptions almost immediately became new clichés, but launched with such force that day by day the whole enlarged its equations. For each false novelty, there was one that was true. For each third-hand pose, there was one fourth-hand pose that became a real reason."

Nothing has changed. This is still the reason for research. Amongst the second-hand poses -and those of so many contemporary and experimental musicians, those of unclassifiable and unforgivable musicians, one of the prophets of the new era-, behind all the false novelties, we look for the real reason, the genuine novelty. Not because we believe, like Adorno, that it will bring salvation, but because it is a mission. Both for the musician and for the public.

Eight

Relics and Artefacts: another tibia!

"The hands of the craftsman," Paul continued, "have *wu*, and have allowed the *wu* to pass into the object. Perhaps all he knows is that the object transmits satisfaction. It's complete, Robert. Looking at the needle we have more *wu* in ourselves. We then achieve the calm that is associated not with art but with the sacred. I remember a sanctuary at Hiroshima where the tibia of some medieval saint was on show. But this is an artefact and that was a relic. This is alive now, while the relic belongs to another age.

This proclaims a whole new world. We can't call it art, because it has no shape, or religion. I've meditated on this needle time and again, and I haven't managed to solve the enigma. Obviously there are no words for an object of this sort. Anyway, Robert, you're right. The novelty is genuine." (10)

Our selection is made up of relics and artefacts. There are no words to describe them. We don't know what they're for. Or if knowing would in any way change their meaning for us. If they're art, what sort of art it is. If it's a religion -or magic-, to who or what they refer. We don't even know if the craftsmen's hands (those

skillful hands, hands that unlearn so as to learn anew) transmit the object's value to it. Or if it is just the testimonies of the operation and the creators themselves, now as the public, that bestow something inherent to their condition as spectators on so much maligned, forgotten music, like the stones the builder refused when he was trying to raise his great work.

Notes

1. Raymond Roussel. *Edicions 62*. Barcelona 1991. pp. 64-65.
2. Jean Dubuffet. *Escritos sobre arte*. Barral Editores. Barcelona 1975. p. 90.
3. Alberto Savinio: *Scatolo sonora*. Quoted by Ugo Piscopo. Alberta Savinio. Mursia. Milan 1973. p. 74.
4. Luigi Roussolo. *L'art des bruits*. Editions l'Age de l'Homme. Lausanne 1975. p. 36.
5. Greil Markus. *Rastros de Carmín*. Editorial Anagrama. Barcelona 1993. p. B2.
6. The quotation from Xenakis is from the book by Julio López, *La Música de la Modernidad*. Anthropos. Barcelona 1984. p. 270. López also refers to various considerations in the same portrait of Adorno and Boulez.
7. Markowitz, a philosopher invented by the science-fiction writer Norman Spinrad. The quotation is from *Agente del Caos*. Intersea. Buenos Aires 1975.
8. With these words Eduardo Chamorro ended his article on progressive music published in the magazine *Cau* (1973). Broadly speaking, we could say that progressive music is characterized -was characterized?- by the dear predominance of beat over harmony and melody. The melodic line usually runs underground, suddenly surfacing with its back bristling and throwing off rays of steam ... The rhythm beats vigorously and surprisingly. The glassy-coloured sounds automatically fall into musical planes which make up a space in which connections can be made in the most random, or subjective, manner, either by the performer or by the listener (normal or psychedelic situation). Finally, the maximization of instrumental resources works to the point of "catch the marginal utility and return". Everything leads to the achievement of a new musical expressionism.
9. Grell Markus was referring to *punk!*
10. Philip K. Dick. *El hombre en el castillo*. Minotauro. Barcelona 1974. p. 185.

Ready-Made Sounds

Oscar Abril Ascaso

Introduction

Marcel Duchamp with his ready-mades, everyday objects removed from their conventional setting and essence and relocated as artistic objects, marks a point of no return in contemporary creative awareness. The notions of decontextualization and gesture raise reality as a whole to the category of a sign, deterritorialize the space of the pictorial canvas to the world of life, in a process which has gradually filtered through to the terrain of musical expression. The initial strategy of the *objet trouvé* (including the indifferent, unmodified ready-made, as in the case of the bottle rack, or the intentionally modified ready-made, as in the case of the Mona Lisa with moustache) has travelled the margins of the century including the discovery of ready-made sounds. The osmosis between liberated sound and pure gesture as music itself was to lead to the concept of "action music", where the creator comes into immediate contact with things and events, where -regardless of any returns- he lives his untransferable experience.

Process

Theodor Adorno remarked back in 1955 on the aging of the new contemporary music -from Schönberg's dodecaphonic music to serial music- and its rapid incorporation into what was becoming a lazy, administrative culture. The courses at Darmstadt (Germany), sanctum sanctorum of the latest trends, demonstrated the new contributions by Pierre Shaefer's concrete music (recordings of sound material from the outside world put through editing processes on magnetic tape) and Karlheinz Stockhausen's electronic music (synthetic reproduction of sounds in a laboratory). Onto this scene burst the American composer John Cage with his revolutionary conceptions of music inspired in Zen and directed at the search for a new spirituality for the West. Cage advocated the liberation of the pure materiality of sound, the inclusion of noise within the domain of music, the search for non-expressiveness and the use of chance. With his "prepared piano" (objects such as pieces of rubber or screws were placed on the strings so as to alter the timbre), Cage created a pseudo-world reflecting the world's entropic rhythms. We find his forerunners in the sound experiments carried out by the historical avant-garde and, in particular, those by the futurist musician Luigi Russolo, who in his manifesto "Art of Noise" (1913) proposes opening music to all the world's sounds, something he elaborated with his *intonarumori* (mechanical devices designed and built by him to generate sound). Cage defends the idea that for music to exist it is enough to open oneself to exterior facts (not a rationalization of their sounds), proclaims audibility to be the minimum indispensable requirement for music and urges science to concentrate on finding mechanisms to amplify the vibrations of matter. Silence, which for Cage is always non-existent, is a sign of intentionality, as he points out in his famous piece "4'33'", in which the performer merely opens and closes the lid of the piano, silencing the performance of the musical piece in favour of the sounds of an auditorium and a waiting public which is

getting increasingly restless.

It was in this context that Cage in Milan met a young composer from the Canary Islands, Juan Hidalgo, who was studying with Bruno Maderna. Cage introduced him to the field of art and instilled in him an "awareness of the subtle usefulness of the useless". Hidalgo admitted that "Cage is my father, although my name is Hidalgo, and Duchamp is my grandfather, although his name isn't Cage". Living in Barcelona, Hidalgo and Walter Marchetti -as though inspired by the anarchist spirit of Sacco and Vanzetti- gave a concert at the Capella de Santa Àgata, at which they played the piano with gloves and hammers (to the despair of the critics). In partnership with the composer Mestres Quadreny they also organised festivals at the clandestine Club 49, bastion of the local avantgarde, as a way of promoting the new music, which they baptised with the significant name of "Open Music". In operation until 1968, the programme included music and talks by Stockhausen, Tudor, Cunningham and others. Two years later, we find Hidalgo and Marchetti taking part in the first Fluxus festival in Wiesbaden (Germany). In 1964 they founded ZAJ and the following year they performed in the streets, bars and theatres of Barcelona. ZAJ was to be the most devastating and corrosive experiment ever to take place before the eyes of this country, a genuine pioneer in action music, performance, mail art, object-books and body art, true heroes besieged by the rancid sterility of the regime. Their performances included the sight of Marchetti emptying a bottle of Pernod ("Música per a un vas no gaire gran") or Hidalgo stripping a cigarette ("Camel strip tease"), winking or moving a chair.

Fluxus was the first experiment of an artistic type in which the performers came mainly from the field of music (La Monte Young and Nam June Paik had studied with Stockhausen and, like Benjamin Patterson, with Cage, at the Black Mountain College. George Brecht, Dick Higgins and Jackson Mac Low had attended Cage's own classes at the New School for Social Research. Emmet Williams never missed Darmstadt). Along with the rediscovery of Duchamp and Dada during those years, Cage became the pillar for the group's thinking. In this way, music took on more than ever a legislating role in the artistic concerns of a youth that felt let down by the rapid institutionalization of the latest avant-garde movements like abstract expressionism (although there seems to be no denying the link between action painting and the Fluxus actions). Fluxus developed research into the properties of sound and its relations, and, radicalizing its mentor's thesis, not only came to the conclusion, like Cage, that all sound is music, but also sustained, in a neo-Pythagorean globalization, that all human activity is too, regardless of whether or not it produces sound, propounding a metaphysic of the instant as all. One result of this approach was the fact that the Fluxus festivals were referred to as concerts, regardless of the content. The Fluxus scores were mere textual guides to the execution, simple and open, waiting to be performed by anyone without musical training (Mieko Shiomi's "Make the Softest Noise You Can", Takehisa Kosugi's "Walk Without Stopping", Alison Knowles's "Rub Cream Into Your Hands" and Paik's "Piss into a Tub as You Sing the National Anthem", to give just a few examples).

La Monte Young, on the other hand, was to diverge from Cage on the point that the physical limitations to man's hearing and his technology cannot mark the

limits of music. For a sound to be music one need only conceive of its existence, however imperceptible it proves to be ("Composition 1960" proposed releasing a butterfly as the only act of interpretation). This fetishistic fascination for quiet and lowly sounds raised the question of how to hold on to sound, how to turn the ephemeral into something profound. Both Young and Kosugi tried to resolve the problem with techniques of repetition and sustainment. One had to try to perceive the interiority of the sound and its interrelations. These concerns came together in the North-American minimalist and repetitive music of the sixties, of whom Young was one of the chief representatives, alongside Terry Ryle and Steve Reich. It was they who took the substantially non-significant nature of music to its highest level, with Satie's "Vexations" (in which the same musical phrase is repeated eight hundred and forty times) as one of their most obvious forerunners. The Valencian pianist Carles Santos introduced minimalism into our country at the beginning of the seventies, with a passionately Mediterranean reading. Previously, Santos had worked with Joan Brossa and Mestres Quadreny in musical plays, in which gags and performances played an important part (works such as "Satana" (1962), an unorthodox opera built up from a variety of sounds such as coughing, footsteps, hazelnuts breaking or rattles amongst the public; "Conversa", in which the musicians speak together as they play, "Suite Bufa" (1966), in which Fluxus's provocative nature shows itself, and the "Concert Irregular" '(1968), in which the mezzo-soprano Ana Ricci hides under the piano and Carles Santos climbs inside). In March 1970, at the French Institute in Madrid, Santos performed Steve Reich's minimalist piece "Piano Phase", consisting of the single phrase E-F sharp-B-C sharp-D-F sharp-E-C sharp B-F sharp-D-C sharp, for two hours, provoking an angry response from the indignant audience who brought the concert to a violent end when a spectator closed the lid of the piano. Minimalist music, which in the United States appeared as a therapeutic reaction to the directives of the academicist European contemporary music, therefore arrived in our country and found its chief national champions in composers such as Eduardo Polonio and Javier Navarrete, as well as Santos, who during the decade composed various repetitive pieces for piano, guitar or voice. Minimalist art in the sixties, which questioned the ontological reason for the artistic object and proceeded to dematerialize it, sought for pure art, where the work appears as pure presence, where the content is the form itself. Judd's, Flavin's and Le Witt's series and anti-narrative structures were already preparing, along with arte povera, the gentle transition to the conceptual art of the seventies.

The pre-Fluxus catalogue *An Anthology*, by La Monte Young and Jackson Mac Low, announced the idea of an art whose raw material would be the concept, in the same way that sound is the raw material of music, and the Fluxus member Henry Flynt was also the first person to use the term "conceptual art", in 1961. Conceptual art, in its hypervaluation of theoretical precepts, mythicized the idea as art and the work of art as a process and turned towards the perceptive and communicational problems of art. On the other hand, in our country, still under the pressure of the dictatorship, conceptual art had a definite ideological slant as a form of political opposition, which in 1972 was reflected in the creation of the "Grup de Treball". Santos, who at that time, apart from his fascination with American avant-garde music, held radical theories with obvious political links, joined the group (along with Muntades, Francesc Torres, Jordi Benito, Francesc

Abad, Antoni Mercader, Pere Portabella, Dorothee Selz, Imma Julián and Carles Hac Mor, amongst others) to put into practice the ideas of creative collectivism and interdisciplinarity they all shared. Catalan conceptualism developed during the first half of the decade in genres such as performance art (Benito, with work along similar lines to the action art of H.Nitsch, Abad or Pazos) or phonetic poetry (Hac Mor and Santos) and visual poetry (Santi Pau and Carles Camps). In 1976, Santos and Mestres Quadreny founded the Grup Instrumental Català, which presented contemporary works by foreign and national composers at the recently opened Miró Foundation in Barcelona. Amongst the works by local composers performed there we find "Música Vironera", by Llorenç Balsach, which includes butterflies -the same as La Monte Young-, insects and invented instruments reproducing the sound of chickens. Llorenç Balsach originally showed an interest in conceptual experimentation which took the form of works like "Espais sonors" (in which in a darkened hall one heard the noises from the gallery above or from the street) or the piece for guitar "14 poemes sonors sobre 14 poemes visuals de J.Sala Sanahuja" (lead pellets placed in the guitar, strings untuned to create the sound of a helix or pinched strings in the manner of Ben Patterson). At times, this conceptual atmosphere of musical research even reached out to art schools like the Escola Massana, where there were some shortlived episodes like the group Dadà Ataca de Nou (formed by the illustrator Miguel Gallardo, Javier Cuevas, Eduardo Allende, Joan Carbona and a very young Joan Casellas), which during 1976 put on various performances, happenings, interventions and concerts of experimental music, in which they worked with series of numbers, just as Marchetti had done earlier with ZaJ.

Experimental music in general and action music in particular found an essential support at the beginning of the seventies in the País Valencià, and more precisely in the figure of Llorenç Barber. A member of the so-called generation of 76 (the same as Javier Darias, J.L.Berenguer and Santos himself), Barber attended the courses at Darmstadt from the age of fourteen -where he met Stockhausen, Ryle and Mauricio Kagel- but it was after John Cage's reading of "Silence" and his meeting with Hidalgo that he started to turn towards new forms of creation and action music. Barber was to become an essential driving force on his country's experimental music scene, maintaining an iconoclastic and anti-academic attitude which was to mark the way for many people who then chose to embrace experiments with sound outside the endogamic obscurity of official contemporary music. In January 1974, Barber gave a piano concert at which he played La Monte Young's piece "Arabic numeral" ("Take a note and repeat it as often as you like", which went down well with an enlightened audience as regards the most progressive manifestations of the moment. The result of this first contact was Actum, a collective sounding-board open to anyone, which was joined by J.L.Berenguer, Amadeu Marin, Xavier Moreno, Jordi Francès and an indefinite list of occasional members, musicians and otherwise (amongst them Hidalgo, Santos and Barbara Held). As Barber wrote in one of his theoretical pieces of the time, "I am many", Actum's concerts took the form of action music (and drifted towards a fanciful diatonic minimalism), musical theatre and improvisations on different structures (it also became a music publisher) of its own or by kindred composers -the concert dedicated to Cage in 1976-, made music that was immediate and unorthodox, far removed

from virtuosity and not subject to any instrument that wasn't the object nearest at hand, a stance that defended the purpose of music as pleasure and that wasn't without a marked political awareness.

As a result of all this activity the *Ensems* festivals were started, with programmes that as well as local music included important representatives of Fluxus. The first festival, significantly subtitled "After Cage", was held at the Museum of Fine Art in Valencia and lasted nine days. Taking part were Actum, Hidalgo, Santos -who, having abandoned the piano during that period, presented his phonetic piece "To-ca-ti-co-to-ca-ta->, the Taller de Música Mundana -Barber's new group now that he had settled in Madrid- and the Fluxus member Philip Corner. The following year, with the title "New York - Valencia", it included Actum, Polonio, Held, the Taller de Música Mundana and the Fluxus members Alison Knowles, Charlie Morrow and Corner. Taking part in *Ensems 80* was the composer of fiery, discoloured and unwritten music, a Mallorcan pianist by the name of Antoni Caimari, who had never studied music. Seduced by what he saw and heard, he decided to export the idea to the Balearics, where that very summer he organised the first "Encontre de Compositors", in which Barber, Marin, Balsach and others took part.

Once into the eighties, this range of scenarios conceived to present the different musical manifestations of the moment came fully to life and became a meeting-point for ideas -not a school of isms- characterized by the plurality of the existing tendencies and the dehierarchization of inherited models. The need to create an explicit generational awareness, argued by Barber himself in the seventies, in face of the crisis of context arising from the obsolescence of the increasingly rhetorical avant-garde began to seem too remote a horizon. The new generations would grow up, as Merleu-Ponty said, without a knowledge of the origin and without the idea of an origin of knowledge, or, if not, without taking the question of the origin back to a point of view locatable as an absolute beginning. "The eighties," says Claudio Zulian, "appeared as a great nebula entering post-modernity without having been through modernity, but with great sincerity." At the end of the eighties, Claudio Zulian, an Italian flute-player living in Barcelona and a member of the Phonos circles, embarked on a series of experiments with sound that went from an unorthodox electronic approach ("Tres Tigres Tristes", with Ordinas and Mestres), free music influenced by the latest German and Dutch jazz (Cuarteto Albano, with Cervera, Alsina and Nubla, and Colectivo de Improvisación Libre, with Mas) and to works like "Amici" (a phonetic piece for an indeterminate number of performers, whether musicians or not, which marked his subsequent interest in the voice as material and the crisis of discourse as a theme) and "Piano y Naranja", a graphic score made with newspaper cuttings. The graphic possibilities of the score were also investigated, from a very different viewpoint, by Eugènia Balcells, who emerged from the collapse of conceptualism, with the work "Sound Works" (gradual distortion of the pentagram by repeated photocopying, scores on plastic bags with objects, on photographs, video or glass), in collaboration with the New York musician Pete van Riper, a composer capable of producing music with baseball bats. This New York-Barcelona connection was repeated in the figure of Barbara Held, a North-American flute-player who had worked with Santos in the Grup Instrumental Català and in works like "El pianista i la professora", and who

was to be decisiva in the organisation of various concerts such as the Setmana Internacional de *Música Experimental* (1983) and *Músiques Submergides* (1993), both at Metrònom, where various musicians performed, both local (Llorenç Barber, who presented a carillon designed and built by him and on which he played "Tintinabula", Fátima Miranda, a member of the phonetic music group "Flatus Voice Trio", with Barber and Ferrando, who performed a solo, and Oriol Graus, composer of a sound atmosphere) and representatives of the seething New York music scene (Christian Marclay, with a literary composition based on five simultaneously revolving record decks, Charles K. Noyes, a percussionist who used drums and other objects, and Fast Forward, with Fluxus member Takehisa Kosugi, who demonstrated his gift for culinary music). Held, as well as being a performing musician who had trained under Jean Pierre Rampal, started to develop her compositional possibilities at the end of the eighties, producing works like *Inscription for a Cylinder seal*, performed for the first time at the Miró Foundation, with scenography by Francesca Llopis.

With the arrival of the nineties, after the return to painting that dominated the previous decade, we find a revival of the genres that had been used by the conceptualists, but now used without any umbilical link with their socio-ideological circumstances. In the field of phonetic poetry we find, amongst others, rhapsodists like Enric Cassasas and Jordi Pope, and, representing the new polypoetry, activists like Xavier Sabater (who with his *Poliphonética Dinàmica* collaborated with musicians like Anton Ignorant and Miquel Burgues) and Accidents Polipoètics (unprecedented representatives of a popular polypoetry which was to enter the commercial channels of an exclusively musical record label), who as well as their work in itself also contributed to the new creative outlook by organising festivals. In this aspect, also, it is worth mentioning the work of Carles Hac Mor, ex-member of the Grup de Treball, and Esther Xargay as organisers of events publicising the latest work by former conceptualists and the most recent artists (*Poesia Total* and the homage to Arthur Cravan in 1990, and the Revista Parlada from 1992 to 1995). At the end of 1994, the Tàpies Foundation opened the exhibition *En l'esperit de Fluxus*, which consisted of a series of activities organised by Claudio Zulian, including performances by Hidalgo, Corner, Esther Ferrer and Giuseppe Chiari and a concert of musical pieces by Fluxus (works by La Monte Young, Patterson, Brecht, Higgins, Knowles, Shiomi, Maciunes and Beuys) performed by a line-up conducted by Òscar Abril Ascaso and put together for the occasion under the name "Reflux Orchestra". The band was made up of a broad sample of the new generation of performance artists born after the sixties, such as Borja Zabala, Joan Casellas, Lluís Alabern, Julia Montilla, Alexis Tauler, Noel Tatú, Miquel Baixas and Quim Tarrida.

As regards the work of the musicians, the radical operations of previous periods were uninhibitedly and spontaneously taken up again as part of the procedures used by bands working in the nineties. To mention just a few, there are different decontextualization strategies to be found in such widely varying ideas as the oneiricism of Superelvis (demelodized insertion of texts taken from the cultural memory of rock music into vaporous terryrylian sounds), the visceralness of Òscar Abril Ascaso + Sedcontra (articulation of fragments from various records on conventional audio tape), Uri Martínez's "dub" deliriums ("scratch" and

Jamaican rhythms interrupted by, for example, comments by Joan Capri) or in the sound documents of Sagar Malé (recording of sounds from his everyday life made with a tape-recorder). These manoeuvres of sound appropriation are also used by several groups working with the infinite universe of possibilities offered by the new technologies, other strategies that make use of non-musical objects, like the percussion pieces by Gran Motor Cabeza (performed with rubbish bags and bins and egg beating) or Pep Figueres (a member of the group who musicalizes a cocktail), or instruments of low economic cost, like Pascal Comelade (toy instruments) or Quim Tarrida (simple Cassios and toy keyboards). Some of these ideas have had little response from the public and have had to be released in reduced cassette editions produced by the musicians themselves, or simply remain unreleased. Their productions can be heard at occasional concerts or other minority events, such as the Low-Tech Music project (directed at promoting music created with home-made or low technology means). Finally, as regards the use of repetitive structures, we have, amongst others, the unusual musical productions of the historic Macromassa.

Conclusion (or second introduction)

These bands that border on the end of the century and whose progress reflects tics discovered by earlier generations nevertheless find their semantic field in their own internal logic, in a world that displays its interiority and interiorizes its exteriority regardless of filiations or outlooks. Freed from novelty as a tradition, they form the surface of a map where the notion of experiment no longer experiences anything other than its own emptiness of meaning. Now nothing is experimental, but experiential. Returning to Deleuze, it's not a question of producing a tree (genealogical or of any other type), so much as a rhizome, as we tear out one by one, in different ways, the leaves of these pages and revel in the sound.

(Music as) Electric Sculpture

Joan Ordinas

Electric Sculpture

Technology is present in all spheres of our society, and in musical creation and research it shows up in the form of electricity. The ability to turn sound into an electrical signal, to work with this signal and transform it and then once more produce sound with it long ago opened the door to new instruments of work and new approaches to composition. In particular, the possibility of modelling sound in the form of electricity gave rise to a new way of imagining musical material, perhaps as some kind of electrical sculpture, and to the creation of new machines designed to support this model. The short history of the musicians in Catalonia who as from the sixties felt the fascination of electricity and was able to think up new music and new instruments provides the theme of this text.

Material and Techniques

Sound, from the physical point of view, is described as a series of variations in air pressure over time, and these variations are what our eardrum detects. We therefore say that sound is a function of air pressure, and if we represent this graphically we see what we call a sound wave. This wave, once turned into electricity, is the material with which the musician works.

An electrical signal can be subjected to a wide range of manipulations, some of which are familiar to the general public, such as those involving the use of magnetic tape or those that guitarists apply with their effect pedals. There is no room in this article to look at all these manipulations. However, there is one kind of sound-transforming technique worth looking at and that is modulation. Modulation, although applied some time ago in different fields of telecommunications, emerged as a creative means during the period that concerns us here and was an essential part of almost all the instruments of that time.

Basically, modulation consists of a continuous modification of any characteristic of an electrical signal in relation to another electrical signal acting as a control. In this way, and with only a very few audio signals that can be mutually modulated, and, if possible, some type of feedback in the modulation circuits, it becomes possible to create the new sounds so characteristic of this type of music.

Instruments and Luthiers

If we take as our time reference the presentation in society of the first portable and relatively reasonably priced commercial synthesizer, the 1971 "Mini-Moog", we can situate the state of the art in our country in this field in relation to the developed countries. The conclusion is obvious: technology for generating and transforming sound was still too expensive for us until the seventies. While it's true that a lucky few did get the chance to use the instruments made by Robert

Moog (New York 1934), most musicians had to use their imagination and find more economical solutions.

This limited access to the latest technological innovations led first of all to a more exhaustive exploitation of the technology available and secondly to the creation of original instruments. We find an intensive use of tape manipulating techniques originating in concrete music; at a time when in other countries these had been replaced by analogic sound synthesis or direct synthesis using a computer. As regards the manufacture of instruments, and without ever coming to form a continued industrial practice, there is interesting work by Rafal Duyos, who supplied synthesizers to the main groups playing what was then called "progressive rock", and Lluís Callejo's STOKOS IV, an instrument which, once set up, and without any exterior manipulation, generated complex melodies at random.

If the concept of *instrument* has to be revised to take into account all the apparatus made available to musicians, that of *luthier*, understood as a manufacturer of instruments, also needs to be extended to take in those who came up with new applications for existing instruments, discovered instrumental uses in apparatus or devices designed for other purposes, or made novel combinations of instruments to produce novel solutions. It's from this point of view that the musicians we shall be looking at now have been selected.

Sound-recording Techniques

The simple recording and editing techniques allowed by a straightforward tape-recorder and microphone have been used by many musicians. We might mention works by Josep Maria Mestres i Quadreny (Manresa, 1929) such as "Peça per a serra mecànica" (1964), based on material sounds produced by different electrical implements used by the sculptor Moisés Villèlia to cut wood, such as chain-saws, circular saws, trepans, etc. In the "Tres cànons en homenatge a Galileu" (1965), by the same composer, various tape-recorders combine their reading of the same tape, inevitably out of sync, giving rise to polyphonic material of an imitative type.

The composer Gabriel Brncic Isaza (Santiago de Chile, 1942) has an ample series of works in his catalogue which use all sorts of techniques for generating and transforming sound. If I had to choose, and in keeping with the general intention of this article of stressing unusual and imaginative work, I would mention his work for tape "Preludio de cristal" (1970), produced with the single resource of the so-called Larsen effect. This effect is the well-known phenomenon of feedback produced when the sound picked up by a microphone is sent to a loudspeaker which plays the sound back to the microphone again, and so on successively. This results in a high-pitched sound, whose frequency depends on the distance between the microphone and the loudspeaker. Although normally considered a problem, with suitable skill and feeling it can become an instrument capable of generating expressive variations of pitch according to the position of the microphone in relation to the speaker.

These and other similar techniques appear over the years in different

musicians. We find a sample on the record *Dark Fields* by the group La T, released in 1982 by Klamm Records. The recording consists of two different sets of superimposed material. First there is what La T calls the 'sound belt', consisting of different sounds from nature recorded with a portable UHER tape-recorder. Over this cushion of sound are added other sounds produced in the group's private studio, many of them generated by different devices built by Jaume Camps, one of the members of the group.

The Laboratory of Musical Creation

The equipment needed to generate and combine sound, record it and transform it is gathered in a physical space: the sound laboratory. The laboratory is different from the studio conceived strictly for musical recording and is both the composer's place of work and his musical instrument.

It was Andrés Lewin-Richter Ossiander (Miranda de Ebro, 1937) who first introduced electro-acoustic music to Catalonia. In 1968 he founded the Laboratori de Música Electrònica in Barcelona. This studio later led to the Laboratori Phonos, set up in 1975 in partnership with the composers Lluís Callejo, Gabriel Brcic and Mestres Quadreny.

These laboratories, which were modelled on studios in other countries, were the forerunners of the later personal studios. When sound technologies finally came down in price during the last decade, many composers set up complete studios in their homes with all the elements necessary to carry out their work. This is the situation today, and this has happened without Catalonia ever having had a professional laboratory devoted to creating and speculating with sound, like the many examples to be found in other European countries and at American universities.

Sound Synthesizing

The STOKOS IV is the principal electronic instrument manufactured by Lluís Callejo i Creu (Vilafranca del Penedès, 1930; Barcelona, 1987). Created in 1975, it consisted of four monophonic modules built around a "sample and hold" circuit. This circuit plays a central role in the conversion from analogical to digital and works by taking a sample of a variable voltage at regular intervals. Composers have found interesting applications for "sample and hold", modulating the time between periods or applying the circuit to a sound generator, the case of the STOKOS IV. Each of the four modules of the STOKOS IV could generate random microtonal melodies with controllable register, extension and density. Furthermore, the signal generated by the different modules could be relayed to the other modules, where in turn it acted as a control signal. Several composers showed an interest in this apparatus, which was presented in public at the concert "Espais sonors", held at the Miró Foundation in October 1976 as part of the Ciutat de Barcelona Festival.

Martí Brunet Puigbó (Navàs, 1940), better known as the guitarist from the group Fusioon, also stands out for having built various devices for generating and transforming sound created for his own personal use. One selection can be

heard in the song "Llaves del Subconsciente", which is on Minorisa, Fusioon's third LP. His work, produced during the seventies, is certainly worth noting, and includes harmonic dividers, rhythm boxes, etc., up to a complete modular synthesizer. We could also mention his activities as a promoter of the "Festival de Música, Cibernètica i Natura del Cadí", held between 1984 and 1990.

Rafael Duyos Payà (Elda, 1958) represents a real attempt to establish a local industry in electronic instrument manufacturing. In 1976 he founded Duy Electrònica, a firm devoted to the design and construction of synthesizers and equipment for recording studios. Musical groups such as Suck Electrònic Enciclopèdic, Neuronium and Macromassa were amongst Duy Electrònica's clients, and it would be true to say that the instruments and sounds conceived by Rafael Duyos marked a whole era in Catalan music.

Rafael Duyos's first products were various analogical modular synthesizers built along the lines of equivalent synthesizers being developed abroad, which were out of reach to anyone paying in pesetas. Thanks to these instruments, the groups mentioned above had access to technology, which they would otherwise never have been able to own. The QUASAR synthesizer was the first model designed to be mass-produced, for which a fibreglass mould was made to hold the instrument's circuits. It had a 1024-note digital sequencer and included a specially designed oscillator that kept tune in spite of temperature changes.

Duy Electrònica's best-known product, of which more than 30 units were sold, was the GEMINI-404 digital percussion, which had different sounds sampled in its ROM. The GEMINI-404 could be set off directly by hitting specific sensors and even with a suitable drum sound or one recorded on a multi-track tape-recorder. Other products include mixing tables, noise doors, a digital sequencer, etc. One of Rafael Duyos's last works, which was never completed, was a hybrid polyphonic synthesizer that combined the technologies of sampling and additive and subtractive synthesis. The electrical circuits were fully developed but the programming of the microprocessor incorporated in the system was never completed.

The Computer

While the musical applications of the computer were practically nonexistent during the period under discussion, we could mention two pioneer projects of particular importance.

First of all there is Mestres Quadreny's work "Ibèmia" (1969), for two percussionists and strings. This is the first work composed in Spain making use of the computer, which was used as though it were the composer's partner. The computer work was carried out by Martí Verges i Trias (Barcelona, 1932), at that time director of the Centre de Càlcul at the Polytechnic University of Barcelona. The computer worked on the basis of the random structures proposed by the composer and calculated series of values, which the programme could even show on music-paper. It is also worth remembering Lluís Callejo as the introducer of digital techniques applied to the generation and transformation of sound. His own account takes us back to the historic

moment:

Today, 21 October 1982, for the first time in Catalonia and Iberia, sounds have been generated by additive digital synthesis, at the laboratory of the Fundació Phonos (with a ROCKWELL AIM-55 microcomputer). 21-10-82

Lluís Callejo wrote these words in October 1982. Even today, the document they form part of, a hand-written note on a sheet of paper, still reflects the excitement its author must have felt as he wrote them. That same year, Lluís Callejo composed "Estructures 6502", using the ROCKWELL AIM-65 microcomputer mentioned above. Technological innovation and musical creation go hand in hand, inevitably. Technology is the natural essence of an art that describes a world totally impregnated with technological symbols. It's up to us to decipher the message and look at ourselves in the mirror. Is the world the artist shows us, and which we have made, the world we want?

Home Electronic Studios

Whatever Happened to the Ignorant Foundation for the Use and Misuse of the Audiocassette?

Anton Ignorant

Part One: The Short History ...

(1) Cassette Love Song

A tiny invention (1) developed by Philips in the mid-sixties and which is still today a standard for reproduction on certain circuits (even continents) allowed the combinatorial revolution suggested by concrete music and backed up by the welfare society: that of the self-contained audioproducer.

My own fascination with this medium arose at the beginning of the seventies, when it became the means of exchange between certain secret societies engaged in recording and selling (illegally, of course) legendary and censored Anglo-American progressive rock titles and even pirate LPs that were impossible to find this side of the Pyrenees. Still rudimentary duplicating instruments allowed the miraculous diffusion of this and other material throughout the state (advertisements in Disco-express, Ajoblanco, etcetera and mail order).

With the arrival of punk and, a little bit later for us, of industrial music and the philosophy of musical DIY, the medium took on two complementary identities which it has kept up, on an off, until today: an original artistic production and an alternative to the legal recording companies (be they multinational or independent).

(2) 1980. A New Electrical Appliance

There wasn't long to wait before another great innovation burst onto the scene, this time thanks to the Japanese. This was the multitrack "Home Studio", with four tracks, in "compact cassette" format. By combining flexibility with ever-higher recording quality, the cassette became the centre of a cult that allowed communication between small creative units in different parts of the world and between their supposed public. Naturally assisted by the already operative "mail art" network, with its own emissaries in the form of precarious fanzines or painstaking publications (of which the best example is "C.L.E.M." (2) -published in Vancouver in the eighties by an amateur-, which managed to become the Bible of all the new electronic, industrial and experimental music, especially home recorded), more or less domestic recordings (with or without instruments, manually or -at first, rarely- industrially duplicated, with innovatory designs, often trying for an artistic integration of the object in carefully studied original packaging) began to flood a circuit that was discontented with the musical design of the many variations on pop and rock, thirsty for new sounds (and also noises) and radical aesthetic ideas. The synthesizer (though not alone) also became the basis of many recordings, although the manipulation of different

sounds (the embryo of audio-art) is one of the keys to the movement. There's no getting away from the impact that tapes like "Notte rosa:" (3) had on many future producer/publishers in this country.

If, with a minimal investment, a bedroom can be turned into a recording studio (even with all the paraphernalia stowed under the bed) and produce results, the next necessity -the temptation was to record- is to help other people's projects see the light of day using a small commercial infrastructure and the same circulation channels: mail, alternative festivals, free radios.

3. Poet Musicians and Dilettantes

The interest roused by this audio-mail circuit was used by a growing number of artists and enthusiasts of all sorts and sizes and distributors specializing in this format were set up, until...

By a natural process of selection, many of the first producers started to release work in professional formats (LP/CD) and with the support of the specialist music press and a greater or lesser degree of success managed to join the market. At the same time, the frenzied burgeoning of small labels unleashed a chaos of recordings of widely varying quality and intention, and more and more often enthusiasts were put off by the novelties. Who has forgotten the terrors of the compilation syndrome? The weariness generated by any semi-commercial activity also affected some producers, who preferred being recorded to recording others, and the demand degenerated into "first- and second-division labels", At the end of the eighties, coinciding with the commercial collapse of the LP and the rise of the CD, the Compact Cassette format began its long and predictable decline amongst the public, in the majority of cases reserving its products for the "hard" collector and for private exchange or professional circulation (the demo boom).

The cassette didn't disappear from the music scene (far from it; each year more and more millions of pre-recorded units are sold), but the small, self-sufficient companies did, and with them part of the history of the alternative music of the eighties. In this decade, another Philips invention (the Compact Disk) rules as the standard in the new opto-digital era.

Part Two: A Few Names

Talking of the first home-appliance studios and small companies inevitably takes me back to L.M.D. and its releases in their little blue files, to Secreto Metro, to Entr'acte, to the early eighties and the ineffable '82 World Cup.

It's true that in Catalonia there was never a real recording euphoria, so much as various discreet production units.

A quick chronological review starting in 1983, to mention the production efforts of Ortega i Cassette, Duplicadora, L.M.D., (Este y Sur), 1984 cintas, which in 1985 became Grand Mal Ediciones, Las cintas del fin, Clonaciones Petúnio, all in Barcelona, and the DIY recordings from Terrassa (La Ideé du femelle,

F.d.T.), Abrera (L'Akstrema Unció), sporadic poetic efforts from Lleida (Joan Borda) and other parts of the country to put together 4 sellos, an attempt at a distributor/producer resulting from the short-lived fusion of L.M.D., Duplicadora, Las cintas del fin and Grand Mal, and curiosities such as the *Cinta* partnership with the magazine *Fenici* (in Reus).

At the end of the eighties and beginning of the nineties, the first recordings by Superelvis and Oscar Abril Ascaso + Sedcontra gave way to the last generation of self-recorded musicians (Gos, Mohochemie, Tina Gil, Arcos de Nepal, Alius, etc.). Although in many cases the attempt to reach more mediated formats is obvious ...

The commitment to a shake-up gave way to marginalization: the snipers became the baddies. Miles of recording tape turned to worthless iron oxide on shelves and in drawers. The Ignorant Foundation for the Use and Misuse of the Audiocassette offered its first and last service in the multi-installation "Alas plegables 3"(4) shortly before disappearing in a cloud of smoke ...

Notes

1. 63+102+11.5 mm.
2. "Contact list of Electronic Music".
3. 1982. "Trax" (Forte dei Marmi. Italy).
4. "Sala Transformadors". Barcelona.

Nebulous Retrotechno Mechanisms

Javier Hernando

And suddenly, in March 1981, Barcelona, surprisingly, became the international talking-point for many fans of electronic music, and especially of Kraftwerk, after the group decided, along with the journalist from the weekly *NME* Chris Bohn and the photographer Anton Corbijn, that the concert here should be included in the tour to present their record *Computerworld*, which illustrates an anthological reportage. After the performance, Ralf Hütter and Wolfgang Flür want to try the city's dance music and are taken to Studio 54, where their robotic dancing eclipses the lightly-clad go-go dancers and Travoltas in the club. A few hours before, at the height of the concert, as happened in the rest of the cities on the tour, several punks got overexcited during the number "Pocketcalculator", with which the group invited them to get sounds out of their own calculators, a perfectly cathartic ellipsis of generational relief, which foresaw the future easier access to electronic tools and especially their ubiquitousness.

Líneas Aéreas, Metropakt and Velòdrom, Their Memories in a Snapshot One of the people at the concert, Jordi Guber, who was aware of this change, and after his spell with Último Resorte, decided to confront modern electronic music together with another habitué of the Barcelona punk scene, Francisco J.Palomo, in two successive groups, Líneas Aéreas and Metropakt, from which one hundred per cent European synthetic rhythm sounds reach us (Kraftwerk, Telex, Silicon Teens), produced by a careful instrumentation balancing bleeps from now emblematic analogs with the right digital touch, whose control by MIDI was used by them for the first time in our country. A sample of their sounds is to be found in their single-EP *Benelux* and on two numbers for Paris labels.

After the end of Metropakt, Jordi Guber joined forces with Krishna Goineau, freed by the breakup of *Liaisons dangereuses*, and under the name Velòdrom they decided to go abroad and chose Brussels as their centre of operations. There they found a dazzling array of friends and occasional partners, such as Steven Brown of *Tuwedomoon*, Nicky Mono and Natacha Atlas, now with *Trans-Global Underground*. Krishna's successful recent past stepped up the demands of the Belgian producers, with whom no agreement was reached. Producer Daniel Miller's initial enthusiasm and the possibility of recording with Conny Plank at the beginning of her irreversible illness also came to nothing. These setbacks, added to a certain stubborn artistic integrity and technical perfectionism, proved a greater legacy than their only record, the maxi *Au Vélodrome/Glassfabrik*.

The Fruits of Hispano-German Brotherhood

With the current mass production of techno music, many specialists are questioning the origin of this genre. One non-Anglocentric version takes us to countries like Spain and Japan, where the term was used at the end of the seventies to describe electronic new wave music with a touch of the Eurodisc. It was in fact in Japan that the promoter Satoshi Morita predicted that the then already immediate future of techno music could have a high Hispanic content,

which he tied to three names, D.A.F., Esplendor Geométrico and Liaisons dangereuses, an accurate forecast since one of their first mutations, Electronic Body Music, recognized an important focus of influence in these three bands.

Paradoxically, hardly any attention was paid to these trends in our country, something which is illustrated by the fact that a real hit in Castilian, *Los niños en el parque*, by Liaisons dangereuses, reached the lowest figures in Europe according to the Gema (the German Society of Authors). In spite of this adverse outlook, around 1980 record shops started to spring up in Barcelona that were devoted exclusively to dance music, such as RAF and Blanco i Negro. These shops catered for DJs from discotheques mainly on the coast, the only few where electronic dance music was played, mainly hi-NRG, but also bolder efforts like Industrial-machine punk, Dub and even, years earlier, the classics of German krautrock such as Hallogalo de Neu.

A Round of Applause

Finally, a short list of the most representative groups of the techno sound of the beginning of the eighties, already begun earlier with the Líneas aéreas saga, to which we can add Terminal, a common sight at artist's parties or more easy-going places like Metropol, a neoromantic techno club. Far more interesting was the work of Doénado, El Ur, with Metrakilato R., in line with the German *neue walle* with ritual and minimalist touches in the manner of Jon Hassell, whom they even paid tribute to in one number, the talented Toni Parera and his atmospheric techno with the pseudonym *L'Idée du Femelle* and Doner Kebap, with several cassettes released, the same format as the Majorcans Societades en Tetra Brick, who also released a record arising from the Biennial de Barcelona prizes, which made it possible to release the albums of two kindred bands: El Vuelo de l'Avestruz, with Fermín Durán, today a member of G.O.S., and Alien Mar. Jumo, formed by Sergi Caballero and Enric Les Palau, took the place of earlier experiments such as Los Rinos or Le monde. And almost into the subgenre, we can add the techno-funk of Laboratorios Tropicana, the electronic space-rhythm of the ex-Neuronium member Carlos Guirao with *Programa*, and the unclassifiable Faustus Symbol and Autoplex.

Todo Todo arrived from Alacant with their emblem Mass Media Disco Mix - genuine, awe-inspiring techno played by musicians who shifted casually from Cage and Penderecki to the Yellow Magic Orchestra and Bobby Orlando, with moments of brilliance coinciding with pathetic lyrics via "vocoder" sounding like TV advertisements. After the breakup of Todo Todo, Pecky Vidal was much in demand as the producer and arranger of Italian Disco, and the other two members reappeared as Muzak. Without leaving this area, it's worth stressing the considerable following behind the darkest techno music, which allowed events like the performances in a tourist discotheque in Benidorm of Cabaret Voltaire and D.A.F., something unheard of for a long time, even to the specialist media, who unlike nowadays hardly ever reported on this genre, which got even worse treatment from a public which mainly followed rock and described it as shallow, performed by poor little rich boys of doubtful ideology, the same public that a/most threw Human League off the stage in Badalona in 1978, or the Severed Heads, at Studio 54, rare performances that partly relieved all the

anxieties of all this more or less techno scene, without the h in those days, without the urge, luckily, to become a mass movement or to consider being intelligent. And from Revox, polaroid's, and stroboscopic lights to samplers, flayers, lasers and fractals.

Surfing Across Cybercatalonia

Luis Lles Yebrà

Catalonia's geostrategic position, open to the sea, open to Europe, has always allowed an extremely recreative attitude to new cultural trends and the successive musical avant-gardes of the last twenty years. Electronic music, with all its many offshoots, has during this period been the vehicle most frequently used by the most restless musicians, the explorers of new universes of sound.

It's worth remembering that in the seventies and early eighties Barcelona already had an important electronic scene consisting of groups like Los Planeadores, Suck Electrònic Enciclopèdic and Neurònim (in direct connection with the German cosmic trends), the iconoclastic and unorthodox Micromassa and, later on, Avant-Dernières Pensées and Klamm, a group with close links with the ethnic experimentation patented by Byrne Eno.

In the eighties, Barcelona was at the head in independent labels, specialists in the most commercial dance music, always with a marked electronic component. Thus Max Music, Blanco y Negro, Grind, Metropól and Ginger managed to reach market quotas that were unheard-of, even for certain multinationals, with maxisingles, megamixes and compilations that were enormous commercial successes. Producers and mixers like Toni Peret, Viberilla, Josep Maria Catells and Quim Quer were suddenly in demand as dance music stars, and with the rise of "house" and "acid" important figures of dance music emerged such as Raúl Orellana (diskjockey at Studio 54 and inventor of "Flamenco-house", Cesar de Melero, disk-jockey at the legendary Ars Studio, who today is working in a fruitful partnership with the Paris underground project Aleern. Unquestionably, though, it was in the nineties that techno and electronic music spread like a powerful virus and gave rise to a prolific, varied and active scene encompassing everything from the most commercial techno-pop to the most radical experimentation; from musicians who managed to reach the top of the charts to those who stayed in the darkest underground. Amongst the former, there were popular duos specializing in romantic, Mediterranean techno aimed chiefly at a female adolescent public, such as OBK and Ray, who cloaked their sugary pop melodies in a danceable electronic coating.

At precisely the opposite extreme there were projects in an unorthodox, avant-garde spirit that belonged to the world of industrial music, ethnic rhythms, atmosphere or free music. These offerings included Mohoinvasión, RAEO, the flagship of the very interesting label G3G, with Gat (a veteran of Barcelona experimentalism) and Mark Cunningham (of the New York No Wave scene) in their ranks, Gringos (with their attractive work of ethnological experimentation) or Relata Refero, whose activists included former members of Klamm and Suck Electrònic. This section should also include the theatrical group La Fura dels Baus, with an impressive list of recordings swinging between tribal trance and machine rhythms. And finally Jumo, one of the most unclassifiable projects in Catalan techno, who worked indiscriminately with sounds like "underground-house", "cyberdelia" or pure, unadulterated experimentation. As well as this there have been "hiphop" groups such as Eat Meat and "indi-pop" groups such

as Peanut Pie.

Between the two extremes of techno-pop and the avant-garde can be found all the trance and techno-house groups, musicians and projects, which tend to have the dance-floor as their principal objective when elaborating their music and the beat as the connecting thread. The lack of recording infrastructure prevented many of these people from selling their work, so that their recordings are usually reduced to demos, appearances on compilations and the occasional maxisingle. The best of these musicians include Conserge, Ghild B. JON (from Girona), Feel Action, TEM (a parallel project to Peanut Pie), Código de Tempo, Generator Group Electrogen (trance), Divisi3n Barcelona (hard-core techno), Cyborg, U.E.T., Katarsi (from Girona), the exquisite Vanguard (with their blend of "techno", "house" and jazz elements), BCN Orchestra and the various projects by Oriol Crespo, Quim Quer and other dance-music producers, or the already veteran B.U.B., who have evolved from their original Electronic body music (in connection with the cold, hard beat of the Belgian Front 242) to positions in line with progressive techno. Out of all of them though, it is Alex Martin who has managed to stand out as the great star of Catalan techno and the most popular figure of Spanish electronic music abroad, along with Esplendor Geom3trico and Michel Huygen of Neuronium. His sensual music with its Mediterranean timbres is clearly influenced by the Detroit and Chicago scenes (the two points of reference in techno-house) and is released on various European labels using an infinity of different names: Microcomposer, Omni, Oxident Audios, Arexx, Carcioud (together with V3ctor Sol, standard-bearer of the Barcelona-Frankfurt connection) and, especially, Iberian, the name with which he records for Laurent Garnier's prestigious Paris label Communications.

Finally, a fundamental element of the Catalan techno scene is formed by the disk-jockeys, who have managed everywhere to become the new gurus of "cybermusic". Amongst them I would single out Sideral, Guille (Verdes Records), DJ Fussi3 and Gl3ria (from Girona), Delfin, 3ngel, Dr. Grau, Nando Dixcontrol, Zero (an expert on "acid" and Detroit sound), Kosmos (a specialist in "trip-hop" and "jungle") and the group Discjockeys Sense Fronteres, in general.

But none of this riot of names would ever get to the public if there weren't an infrastructure that is getting more and more consolidated as the years go by: the popularizing work of R3dio Pica, the information prepared by fanzines and publications such as Self, Megablast and, especially, Disco 2000 (now a leading magazine on club culture), the organisational work of the Barzelona Elektr3nica collective and the founding of a recording label like Cosmos Records, which has released the indispensable *Disco 2000: una recopilaci3n dance de aqui*, featuring, amongst others, 3lex Martin, Vanguard, TSM, Conserge and C3sar de Melero. The club and discotheque circuit also plays a fundamental part, making performances and DJ sessions possible. Club Nitsa (Barcelona), Rachdingue (Roses) and La Sala del Cel (Girona) deserve a special mention. The stage at La Sala del Cel has been visited by international figures of the calibre of Cassandra Complex, Von Magnet, Front 242, The Source, Lassigne, Bendtham and Psychick Warriors of Gaia.

And finally, the techno scene in Catalonia is rounded off by Art Futura, a forum

on cyberculture whose first three editions were held in Barcelona, and Sónar, the magnificent festival of electronic music organised by the Advanced Music collective. Sónar is not only the first event of its category to take place in the Spanish state; it has also become a must for techno fans. The first two editions included performances by figures of the calibre of Orbital, Transglobal Underground, Sven Väth, Laurent Garnier, Biosphere, Mixmaster, Morris, Fangoria and Kenny Larkin. A genuine forum for the music of the future.

Progressives and "Laietanians"

Jordi Turtós

Revolution? Yes, of course it was! A real revolution. Probably unconscious and without historical, political or social pretensions. Its effects were just that, though. The creative and social scene in 1969 was still marked by the mediocrity of Franco's halfwit, numbskull regime, which condemned musical creation to the coarsest, shoddiest form of folksiness, used pop music as a form of tourist promotion rammed home through song festivals and condemned rock music to the most absolute clandestinity. Only consumer music was allowed, music without the slightest capacity for criticism. The Franco regime, obviously, was not amused by the youthful rebelliousness of rock. With the appearance of Màquina! in 1969, something started to stir and change. Catalonia was fighting this sclerotic regime by means of attitudes, differentiated from those of the rest of the state, which, to emphasize the difference, could read Dylan, The Beatles, The Stones and, in general, blues and British rock. Els Quatre Gats (blues performers) and the Tres Tambors (closer to British pop) were, at the end of the sixties, more than just two groups of musicians, they were the primitive embryos from which everything else developed.

Progressivism, progressive music, took shape in Catalonia with Màquina! and began to take shape with Música Dispersa, the group formed by José Manuel Brabo ("Cachas"), Sisa, Albert Batiste and the singer and flautist Selene. The foundations had been laid by the Grup de Folk in 1967, which broke with the rigidity of the traditional concert -allowing public participation and giving more importance to the music itself- and which focused and defined a large part of the Catalan public that was to be the nucleus of the audiences of festivals of progressive music.

In 1971 Albert Batiste wrote a splendid report on the phenomenon in No. 11 of the magazine CAU (Batiste was an architect). In this magnificent work, Batiste defined progressive music according to a number of characteristics:

- A rebirth of live pop music festivals (Màquina! at the Iris), which ended with the Iris festival of progressive music (October-December 1970).
- The emergence of a public for these festivals, this music and these records; a public not monopolized by industry, a public who, starting out from vocal music, discovered folk and eventually came to progressive music, a very varied public, from differing social origins, who assumed a certain outward uniformity through their clothes and their physical appearance.
- Intellectuals found in this music spontaneity linked to the cultural trends of the moment, and introduced the concept of avant-garde to the phenomenon.
- The musicians came from different fields (written song, commercial music, dance halls, etc.).
- The arrival of Anglo-Saxon records was more and more marked.

- The inclusion of progressive music in the media, especially radio ("El clan de la una", "Al mil por mil", "Trotadiscos", etc.), later reinforced by the growth of FM and eventually forcing newspapers to start sections on pop music.
- Nevertheless, there was never a stable professionalization amongst the new groups, and the progressive music boom was thought of as a mirage.

In short, Albert Batiste, in his report, provides an accurate summary of the progressive movement: "This music breaks with established forms and tries to communicate something, it is deeply striking avant-garde music, speaking to us through feelings and thought. And at the same time it says all this in a language that is not overspecialized, or overintellectual, but direct, intuitive, a language that can be understood and produced by anyone willing to listen, whatever their technical level: conducting a large orchestra or hitting a chair with a stick. A living, anti-academic phenomenon, an example of popular culture in the widest sense of the word".

Màquina! were the first, the essential group, a group whose paternity should be attributed to Àngel Fabregas -the name behind the Als 4 Vents record label, the focus for the Grup de Folk and later the head of the Discòbolo publishing house-, Enric Herrera, the group's business manager, and Jordi Batiste, who gave the group its name and its stage concept. Along with them, the guitarist Luigi Cabanach and the first drummer, Santiago ("Jackie") García (later replaced by Josep Maria Vilaseca, "Tapi") gave birth to the career of Màquina!, of which Oriol Regàs took the reins as manager. Màquina! gave a concert on 22 February 1970 at the Saló Iris which was a massive hit and went down in history as the "official" beginning of the progressive scene in Barcelona.

But it wasn't only Màquina! (who released their first LP, *Why?*, in June 1970). Other names appeared at the same time, with different ideas, but which taken together make up the point of departure of musical progressivism: Pau Riba, for one, with his *Dioptria 1* and his live show *Elèctric Tóxic Clàxon So*, and also Música Dispersa and Toti Soler with his group OM. This completes the initial make-up of the scene in 1970, which reached its maximum expression with the Festival de Música Progresiva organised by Oriol Regàs and held at the Saló Iris in Barcelona between 16 October and 4 December 1970 on Friday Evenings and Sunday Mornings (tickets for Friday evening cost 50 pesetas and the Sunday matinée, 25).

The festival became the most comprehensive sample of Catalan and Spanish groups in the progressive sphere. Performing were: Màquina!, Agua de Regaliz (which later changed their name to Pan y Regaliz), Dos més Un, Los Canarios, Buzz, Los Bravos, Crac, Los Bricos, Green Piano, Música Dispersa, Cerebrum, Evolution, Los Puntos, Smash and Pau Riba. As Albert Batiste said, the movement was a mirage, but it wasn't all wasted. Although the progressive groups didn't survive for long, the seed took root. The songs, for their part, maintained a critical and fighting spirit that was fed by the progressive generation. On 22 May 1971, Family performed at the first big open-air festival in Granollers; the following year, Brian Auger performed at the former Price; later, Gay Mercader brought King Crimson to the Sports Complex at Granollers

and started his career as a concert promoter in Catalonia. Premises like the old Enagua, in the carrer de Casanovas, offered live music, and just round the corner the Cova del Drac presented local jazz and vocal music, while all over the city the assembly halls of the religious schools (Josepets de Gràcia, the Salesians at Horta and Rocafort, etc.) and various parish centres allowed the new bands to play live. Musical activity in Catalonia was intense, despite the obstacles of Franco's bureaucracy and the few resources available for the musicians to go fully professional.

It was during this period that the group Fusioon was born, a bridge between the progressive generation and the rise of the Laietana musicians who grew up with Zeleste, the legendary club in the carrer Plateria opened on 10 May 1973.

With the inauguration of Zeleste, Víctor Jou and Rafael Moll, its directors, started something that was fundamental to the development of modern Catalan music, heir to the progressivist spirit that also sought to get itself established in its social sphere. The new *Laietana* bands brought an obvious, combative and differentiating Catalanness to the progressive concept. In the rest of the state it gave rise to the "rock with roots" label, as the example caught on and bands like Triana and Guadalquivir, in Andalusia, turned over traditional music for defining elements of their own with which to face up to Franco's monolith, already then beginning to show signs of weakness and of inability to keep up with the times.

In this respect, vocal music did an unstoppable job of promoting national awareness, which crystallized year after year at the Festival de Canet (in 1971 it was visited by 1,500 people and the figure doubled progressively until it reached 60,000 in 1976). This awareness was a focus for the anti-Franco movement, not just in its cultural and social perspectives, but from the political point of view as well. The progressive spirit was evolving.

Thanks to Zeleste, a whole generation of musicians were able to start giving live performances and making records for the brand new Zeleste/Edigsa label. The Mirasol orchestra is an essential starting point and touchstone for understanding what came to be called *Laietana* music, unquestionably the perfect continuation of the idea of progressive music begun by Màquina! and their companions in 1969. Their first work, *Salsa Catalana*, perfectly sums up the key features of much of the work of those years:

- A distinctly Catalan origin, embracing traditional music and Latin root as a point of encounter and exchange.
- The use of jazz following the lessons in fusion by Miles Davis and his disciples (Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, Weather Report, John McLaughlin, etc.).
- An openly anticommercial attitude opposed to the consumer music imposed by the record industry.
- The negation of pop, taken as an excessively frivolous forms of music idealized in the "hit of the summer", the sole objective of the musical industry and culture under Franco.

- The importance of instrumental technique (which later opened the way to the excesses of groups and musicians fascinated by symphonic virtuosity of ill-fated consequences).

- The *Laietana* movement reached its collective peak at the rock festivals held at Canet between 1975 and 1977. The first was visited by 25,000 people, a figure which was doubled in subsequent years. It was the end of the Franco era, which only succumbed following the dictator's death, after which the streets were physically taken over by a whole generation that couldn't stay in closed premises any longer.

The roster of *Laietana* musicians and groups is immense:

Orquestra Mirasol (along with the later Mirasol-Colores), Companyia Elèctrica Dharma, Blay Tritono, Barcelona Traction, Esqueixada Sniff, Secta Sònica (along with their predecessors Slo Blo), Gato Pérez, Borne, Gòtic, La Rondalla de la Costa, La & Batiste, Música Urbana, Oriol Tramvia, Orquestra Plateria, Jordi Sabatés, Toti Soler, etc., not forgetting Sisa and Pau Riba, who are still going and who provide a perfect link between the progressive sphere of the early seventies and the *Laietana* scene.

One thing we mustn't forget if we want to study, understand and make sense of this period is the appearance in October 1974 of the magazine *Vibraciones*, which became an essential source of information from abroad and a sounding board for what was happening here, under the editorship of Àngel Casas. A generation of music writers grew up with a progressivist vocation, anxious to break down the pre-eminence of commercial and consumer music: Claudi Montaña, Constantino Romero, Josep M. Martí, Lluís Crous, Jordi Garcia Soler, Francesc Fàbregas, Diego A. Manrique, J.M. Costa and many more laid the foundations for the earliest specialized musical journalism. Alongside them, *Popular 1*, *Disco Exprés*, *Sal Común* and even magazines like *El Viejo Topo* make up a journalistic offer, which is essential for following musical development during those years.

It was a lively, intense period, when euphoria, following the death of the dictator, invaded the streets, which were now free of the usual "Break it up!" from the police. Zeleste wasn't the only place to go for concerts; Màgic and then Karma were new venues in which to develop music that didn't necessarily have to be "Laietanian".

Iceberg came onto the scene in 1975 without obvious evidence of "Laietanian" affiliation. Max Sunyer, Jordi Colomer, Kitflus, "Primi" Sancho and Àngel Riba came from a background in recording studios and as backing musicians for pop stars; they were "groupers", a different origin not very highly thought of by the "Laietanians". Iceberg, though, caught on like nobody's business. They offered a totally professional stage show, pledged everything to pay for equipment worthy of any foreign band and were the first to embark on tours all over the country. Iceberg fed on the progressive rock Max Sunyer had championed and on the compositional elegance of Kitflus, with the support of the impeccable rhythm section of "Primi" Sancho and Jordi Colomer. What Iceberg had to say

was different in spite of the unmistakable Mediterranean vocation of their music. They borrowed from jazz, while keeping their feet in rock, and weren't averse to certain symphonic complications.

After Iceberg came other bands, which while not packaged in the bottle of "Laietanian" essences also featured prominently on the Catalan scene outside Zeleste. CMB, Atila, Fluint, Migdia, Stigma, Carretera i Manta, Suck Electrònic Enciclopèdic, Vuzz, Micky Espuma, Abedul and others lived on amongst musical discourses that were more and more open to other languages. In many cases these broke with some of the defining features of the *Laietana* wave, which was getting stuck in a deepening rut and sliding steadily towards Latin-American rhythms and salsa, which came from New York and -with the Fania model for ensign- was beginning to whet people's appetite for dance orchestras. Following the model of the Orquestra Plateria, created almost as a divertimento, quite considerable chances arose for the *Laietana* musicians to go professional. The proliferation of dance orchestras after 1977 meant the end of the so-called *Laietana* wave.

1977 was the year of the final decline of the *Laietana* wave. Punk was beginning to make its appearance on the Barcelona stages and the younger generations showed a certain weariness of virtuoso and progressive ideas. With the democratic transition at its peak, the time was ripe for a change to new forms of music that were to return to the original rebellious spirit of rock, forgotten by "Laietanians" and symphonics, who were more concerned with forms (technique) than with attitudes.

A cycle was ending, but history went on. Other names, other attitudes would take over. And it would be unfair to condemn those times to nostalgia or to indulgent criticism. The period from 1970 to 1977 was rich, creative and utopian, and it left a deep imprint on the history of the Catalan music of our time. A period in which the way was opened up to experiment and sensibilities were discovered that were receptive to fusions and later revolutions, perhaps more pragmatic and more effective. Whatever the case, progressives and "Laietanians" wrote one of the most creative pages of our recent music.

Maximum Distortion

Javier Hernando

Looking Back On Dissonance

In the mid-seventies, the promotion by circles such as Zeleste, Màgic and Canet Rock of musical virtuosity and the search for national musical entities and rock with roots became more and more overwhelming. The winds of convulsion and renewal that appeared in 1976 in England were a long-awaited source of contagion for the rest of Europe, except, perhaps, for France. This happened late and with questionable results. We mustn't forget that in England the legacy of the pop culture is more noticeable and more widespread than on the continent.

Zero year for punk (1976) almost coincides with the beginning of the Spanish political transition. It was at the end of 1977 that the first festival of punk music was held, at the Teatre l'Aliança del Poble Nou, with La Banda Trapera del Rio, Marxa, Peligro and Mortimer as the local representatives, along with Ramoncin. No one can deny the bands' ferocity, brazenness or enthusiasm, which was a necessary first step, but only Mortimer seemed to have anything in common with the new British scene, as a journalist for *Melody Maker* pointed out. At the same time, new groups playing a more urban style of rock began to emerge and could be seen at the concerts organised by the Club Juvenil Meridiana and in other parts of Barcelona and which seemed to steal the limelight from Valldoreig and Canet.

In the wake of the optimism generated by these new projects, the Cuc Sonat agency was set up and new festivals organised once again, of which the two days at the Saló Diana stand out, with the usual groups plus the transformation of Marxa as Basura and the terrifying a la page punk of French Dogs. In spite of the unquestionable musical and public success, newspapers such as Avui and Tele-Exprés spoke of a lack of communication between public and groups. The atmosphere in the press became even more strained with the unfortunate article published in Ajoblanco under the title "Punk y fascismo, dos caras de la misma moneda?" (Punk and fascism, two sides of the same coin?). With this sort of journalistic intoxication it's hardly surprising that posters advertising this sort of concert in schools and universities should have been torn down. The transition was beginning to repress any movement that didn't come from trade unions or didn't belong to the political parties.

It was immensely naive to think that these bands could have any power of social subversion. Their leaders, like Morfi Grey, of the Banda Trapera del Rio, were only there with their contortions and their jerky music to provoke the lumpen punks from the satellite town of Cornellà and the most up-to-date music critics of the time. Like Panotxa, of Basura, who, like the rest of the group, knew no limits at the best moments of their improvisation. Gay, of Peligro, said it all with his slogan Shout, spit, vomit, and Javier, of Mortimer, said that taking the mickey out of people fed his basic instincts. The inspiration and agitation provoked by the situationists in some sectors of British punk wasn't repeated

here, where the situationists were far from having the slightest influence, in spite of the fact that at that same time Editorial Castellote published Guy Debord's *La sociedad de l'espectacle* and passages from *the Revista Internacional Siutacionista*. The anti-authoritarian offensive was marked by the attack on the Barcelona premises of Hoeh in response to Andreas Baader's and Ulrike Meinhoff's "suicide in the name of society" or the mobilizations before the arrest of a libertarian squad for supposedly setting fire to the Sala Escala.

The macro-festival at La Tortuga Ligera, in Castelldefels, provided a further opportunity to see new groups like Masturbadores Mongólicos -whose singer had just done a spell at the Model Prison accused of incitement to violence and unruly behaviour-, Melodrama and their beat "revivalism", or the freakish punk of the Valencians "La morgue", or the first performance by Kaka de Luxe outside Madrid, at which they announced "They have the power: We have the filth", prophesied "Punk is dead, long live psychedelia" and sentenced "What a gormless public I've got!", after which some punks threw raw meat at them, a warning of the local aversion to the future new wave from Madrid.

The death of Sid Vicious seemed to raise the spirit of recklessness of our punks to new heights. They acquired deathly complexions by drinking vinegar; one youth on military service showed off his blue-dyed hair as he pledged allegiance to the flag; in Berga a group of physically handicapped musicians formed Fervor Mariano, and in Mollerussa a pogo contest was organised at which it was possible to "explode your brain chemistry". It was a time for fun and for being loyal to punk and the climate was right for memorable performances by Último Resorte, the first of which was held at the Sant Boi Psychiatric Hospital, before a delighted audience who threw coins onto the stage after each number. Jordi Guber stands out for the first-rate techno groups he formed during the eighties: Lineas aéreas, Metropakt and Velódrome. So does Marc Viaplana, a disturbing appropriationist photographer, along with Mabel Palacín and Strong, a member of Alien Mar, who at one time were guitarists with Último Resorte, which shows the band's potential. This quality was also present -with even greater innovatory urge if possible- in groups like Clinic Humanoids and the Valencians Juguetes de Precisión.

Lines of Escape

"Reality, for us, is a fraud, a social obsession, which we don't believe in". These words were spoken by Psicópatas del Norte, who performed during the summer of 1977 at the "Libertarian Gathering", an event centring on creative freedom and self-management. There were other radical groups, like La Propiedad es un Robo, Peruchos and Jaume Cuadreny. Two years later, Psicópatas del Norte became Erizos, and a little bit later Carlos Merserburguer and Rosa Arruti perfected their sound with Tendre Tembles, about which they announced "We're against labels; we're not a "new wave" band. We simply play modern music, today's music, provisional music, primitive music, crisis music. We're concerned about the present state of affairs; when we do something, we're influenced by the tension and "imbalance". Tendre Tembles was one of the few groups here who managed to appear at just the right moment; their most

poignant compositions came close to bands like Pere Ubu or the New York "no-wave", but their repertory also included melodic elements like the unforgettable "Le dernier croissant", a sudden calm as extinction loomed on the horizon.

Amongst the city's other sonic aggressors were bands like La Propiedad es un robo and Peruchos, which in their day were labelled "free" to link them with the Colectivo Free Difusion which organised concerts at the Sala Orquidea and published the Boletín de Limpieza Musical. More relaxed, but no less disquieting, was Jaume Cuadreny, an electric psychoballad singer, whose performances, backed only by Jordi Riba on bass, included deliberately monochordal songs in which the slightest variation became exciting. Later on, together with ex-members of Tendre Tembles, they founded Liquid Car, who recorded a single. This was the first recording made by any of these groups, whose music was only available through their performances or the pages of the indispensable Star or wherever they practised, as was the case with Xeerox, whose members produced a sonic constant of improvisations using guitars as noise generators. Their atonal punk eliminated any song pattern. Their singer, Khrisna Goineau, later achieved fame in Berlin when he formed Liaisons Dangereuses with ex-D.A.F. Chris Haas and ex-Mania D. Bettina Bartel.

All this activity coincided in time with the beginning of the new wave in Madrid, whose most lucid examples -sometimes a brilliant, reorganised plagiarism- could nevertheless not compete with the Barcelona bands. This was recognized by the pegamoide Nacho Canut, who lived in Barcelona for a year out of necessity, and Ignacio Ajuria, "Poch", then a travelling musician in this city. The almost total absence of recordings of this talent was frustrating, in spite of the supposed interest on the part of Zeleste/Edigsa to record La Propiedad es un Robo and Jaume Cuadreny. When it actually happened, as with La Banda Trapera del Rio or Basura, they came out on absurdly inappropriate labels like Belter. This wasn't surprising, as the Catalan and Spanish record companies had practically no interest in releasing the increasing amount of original material on their international catalogues here. When they did, they gave it so little promotion that they were lucky to sell five hundred copies. The result was that the concert promoters weren't interested either and only events like Canet Rock managed to raise morale a bit, in spite of the intolerance and stupidity of a great many of its public, who threw Nico out and, in a malignly biased plebiscite, preferred Tequila to Ultravox. This was the long-awaited freedom of the age of Aquarius. The new movements in synthetic music went down better in certain discotheques in Catalonia, for example Cracks, Moustache, Chic or Génesis, and in premises like La Planchadora, in Barcelona, a city that was reaching modernity with "drugstore" aesthetics.

Electronic Experimentation

Progressive music, which was well represented in Catalonia, underwent a renovation at the beginning of the seventies with the new European trends that had arisen from spheres such as psychedelia, free jazz and experimental music, which eventually found their ideal medium for intervention in electronic music and instrumentation. This was understood in 1974 by Suck Electrònic Enciclopèdic, a group with no less than four keyboard players in its first line-up,

who were soon to be seen in outrageous light-shows such as one with texts by Gregorio Corso and Tristan Tzara. After Michael Huygen left to form Neuronium, Jordi Garcia shortened the name to Suck Electrònic, livened it up with two drums and a guitar and brought their music and their interest in science-fiction literature in line with groups like Hawkwind and Heldon. They started to perform all over Europe on the "rock in opposition" circuits, whose most emblematic group, Henry Cow, they played with at the Sala Helena. Later they contributed to the performance by Mother Gong at the Doble Zero discotheque. At the same time, Neuronium started to take off on a career that started with the support of EMI, who released their first LP, Quasar 2C 361, as the first Spanish cosmic rock record. It was followed by Vuelo Químico, with the presence of Nico reciting E.A.Poe. This partnership, and another with Van Gelis and Ash Ra Tempel on the television programme Musical Express, made Neuronium one of the most sought-after groups of euro-synth music, which was full of stereotyped names along the lines of Tangerine Dream or Klaus Schulze.

In September 1976, the public loyal to the Sala Magic looked on in bewildered indignation at the discordant sounds so vigorously unleashed by Macromassa at their first performance. Far from losing spirit, the group itself released an extract from this concert on a single called Darlia Microtònica, whose effect was compared by a North-American journalist to the act of sticking one's fingers into an electric socket. Two years later, a further concert was the origin of their next record, an LP called Concierto para ir en globo, a renewed assault with free urban electronics produced by Juan Crek's audiogenerator and Agoom An Huba (Victor Nubla)'s synthesized clarinet. The two records were the first releases by their own label, UMYU, the first independent company in Spain and a move to put an end to the marginalization of local outsider groups. These new distribution channels helped Macromassa to cross borders and perform at the Músiques de Traverses Festivals in Reims, along with This Heat and Hector Zazou's ZNR. Plunging successfully into Macromassa means not only appreciating their unlikely, imaginative and impossible music, but also appreciating their entire inner world, filled with course Rousselian humour, a clever formula that sets them apart from "serious" contemporary music. The same sort of thing can be said of Eduardo Polonio, in his case founded on the melodic and rhythmic elements his minimalist electronic music has contained since his beginnings in 1969 at the Alea studio in Madrid and the Duo Música Electrònica Libre. Coinciding with the founding of the Laboratorio de Música Electroacústica Phonos, in 1976, Polonio moved to Barcelona and his concerts took on a more audiovisual quality. This led him to collaborate with various musicians and broke with the predominantly unidisciplinary character of the time, which prevented work by people like Joan Rom, Francesc Vidal, Joan Fontcuberta, Marcel Pey and Neon de Suro, whose style was clearly in line with many of the groups mentioned, from taking on a new joint dimension.

With Vagina Dentata Organ, Jordi Valls showed that you don't need to be a musician to make records, though you do need great skill in self advertising strategy, which he must have picked up from the Génesis member P.Orridge, who invited him to join in the infrastructure of Throbbing Gristle. With the gradual "mellowing" of the emblematic industrial music group, the London scene was once more shaken by the more extreme sounds of Whitehouse.

Jordi Valls inevitably met up with them when he took care of their label Come Organization, a job he shared with Psychic TV, especially on their second record *Dreams less sweet*, to which he contributed singing a song in Catalan, later put into pictures by Derek Jarman, and in the extraction of a fragment of wolf howls. After making a loop out of all this and altering it holophonically with an emulator, it became the LP *Music for the Hashishins*. This was the first released by his organisation World Satanic System, the launching of which was a project going back to the days of "T.G.", when Eliseu Huertas, another Catalan living in London and also a follower of the group, planned to record and amplify the powerful noise of the exhaust pipe on his Harley Davidson. Industrial music via Throbbing Gristle was introduced into Spain with *Esplendor Geomètrico*, and in Barcelona, Raül Guber, ex-member of Xeerox, fascinated after attending a concert by the London group at the Scala Cinema, decided to explore this new field through *Los Toreros del Este* and *Los Mortíferos Torpedos de Disneylandia*, and staged a fashion show of women's hair styles, "Industrial Music for Fashion People". This short-lived one-person group was the antechamber for various individualities, whose work with electronic means gave them a self-sufficiency, which also reached their recordings, usually in the form of cassettes. Various labels were set up, such as L.M.D., Ortega I Cassette and 1984 Cintas, which are key references in our electronic music from the early eighties.

Before I end, I would like to point out that the musical activity described so far comes mainly from the period between 1976 and 1981 (leaving aside subsequent developments in groups and movements). In other words, and to refresh our memories, it goes from the Sala Apòstrof to the Piano Bar, from the Mercadillo de Balmes to Star Records, from Radiofónica François to La Rosa de Vietnam and Ràdio Pica, each of them an indispensable part of the promotion of these underground or submerged groups, whose work is amongst the most far-out as regards the local commercial and artistic establishment.

Twilight Zone

Rosa Pera

Exploring the landscape of alternative music means taking on a journey into a terrain woven with criss-cross paths, where the horizon isn't the high definition line that guides the walker along the tourist routes. "There is music that remains silent and there is music that searches, investigates, experiments and tries to communicate new impressions, that proposes a new approach to the performer and to the listener"(1) "Altermusic", far from becoming stifled by labels, has fought against the lack of proper infrastructures for its development. Overcoming the obstacles of the virtual non-existence of places to perform and the precariousness of production means has since the seventies been the aim of independent collectives often founded by the musicians themselves, tenacious constructors of an integrated network of new circuits, creating their own channels for distribution and circulation.

One imperishable node in this network is the Laboratori de Música Desconeguda (Laboratory of Unknown Music). Led by the Macromassa members Victor Nubla and Joan Crek, it played a key role in the nourishment and subsequent growth of the new music. During its ample existence (it has kept up permanent agitation since 1976), LMD has never stopped, simultaneously adopting every form of creation, distribution and diffusion: record labels, publications, radio programmes, installations, videos, etc., thinking up public events, exhibitions and concerts and collaborating in a large part of the city's creative events. Nevertheless, quite a number of groups have emerged from the magma generated by one of the organisations that featured in our underground geography. A huge catalogue of sound has been engendered and gestated, planned and recorded thanks to the tireless work of the most energetic Gs: Gat, Guillem and Glòria, G3G, a label, a club and a radio messenger agency at the service of the avant-garde.

With its reason for existing -and resisting- hidden under its initials, Ràdio P.I.CA (Promoció Independent Coordinació Artística), spawned by the first free radios of the seventies (Ona Lliure and La Campana de Gràcia), and taking as its model experiences assimilated through Cuc Sonat, formed the aerial bastion of independent broadcasting. They broadcast every day without a break programmes by musicians such as the already veteran Escupemetralla, with "Escuela de Sirenas", G3G, with "El Punto G", and Macromassa, with "Mónstruo sin Cola", or other more recent ones such as Òscar Abril Ascaso + Sedcontra, and Ivo Naïf, with the new programme "Teta Veleta". They also reported on the most interesting cultural events and organised quite a few concerts.

In the last twenty years, the lack of permanent facilities willing to take risks and experiment has spoken for itself. Apart from a handful of concert halls promoting innovatory activities with any regularity, they have circulated in unusual scenarios, apart from the support provided by some "daring" (and unfortunately ephemeral, bearing in mind how far back this type of music goes) institutional initiative.

"There are only two places I would never go to. One: the cold. Two: the heat. There's not a great deal to do there. Or rather there's not much you can do. There are only two places I would never go to. One: the North Pole. Two: the South Pole. And it's certainly strange that there isn't an East or a West Pole. I suppose it must be a question of susceptibilities ... " (2)

The first attempt to organise a stable multidisciplinary space was by the ADTE (Union of Stage Workers) at the Saló Diana, the setting for a large part of the activities of the Parc Güell International Libertarian Gathering, where an international exchange of political and creative ideas and experiences took place for the first time. The protagonists were Cuadreny, Perucho's and Pau Riba. Pau Riba took part alongside Miki Espuma and Oriol Tramvia -notable exponents of the wildest music rampaging in those days- in the concert organised by the La Bombilla collective. At the height of the political reform and on the eve of the referendum, the response by the public was overwhelming: "Neither Juan Carlos nor Sofía, Oriol Tramvia!" (the Barceloneta district can vouch for this).

At the same time, other slogans of a less political nature also flourished. To cries of "Put a Free in your life" and "Suck on a Free", Free Diffusion filled the nights of private premises with high-risk concerts. In the Gràcia district (the heart of the city's experimental creation, as we shall see), La Orquídea became the centre of operations for the "free" of the Perucho's and of such unusual groups as Boicot, Nick Cominos, Anolecrab, Cuadreny or Psicópatas del Norte.

"November 1977. Barcelona; a group of musicians and technicians shunned on account of their attitude to show business and other cancers decides to organise collectively so as to attack the entertainment world through the creation of new circuits, technical equipment, distribution channels, etc. ... and enlarge the desired wound on the eternal enemy: bad taste, boredom and money-grubbing in the name of art."(3)

Other than this, Otras Músicas started its tour of various venues in the mid-eighties, organising concerts with local and foreign bands; Enric Cervera and Naïf, Macromassa, Moisés-Moisés and Koniec combined with imported improvisations, like those of Eugene Chadbourne or Takashi Kazamaki, the inimitable sounds of Elliot Sharp, Hiroshi Kobayashi's flute and equally unclassifiable music like that of Fat or Peter Brötzman. Interspersed amongst the sometimes unforeseeable circuit of private venues there have been other settings, often with far from artistic functions, emergency venues, such as a private garage in l'Hospitalet, which opened its doors to ears that were thirsty for live experimental music, with regular performances off the commercial circuits. The Joan Tabique Foundation, one of the most prolific collectives on the experimental scene, established its headquarters in a uniquely emblematic setting: the lighthouse on Montjuïc, a laboratory that turned up such unusual formulas as the Sociedad Gastronómica Irene Tabique, La Voz de su Mano and the magazine *Fijate*, with an exceptional master of ceremonies: Leo Mariño, life and soul of Klamm and Matavacas, a composer of music for video and dance, literary creator and habitual collaborator with Victor Nubla, both prolific and untiring members of the family of pluricreators and cultural agitators, always busy

pushing back the frontiers of boredom put up by the lack of stable structures. One of the "more robust structures" for promotion and diffusion was the Juke Box Paleopoètic, a device created by La Hiena Ya No se Rie and presented at the Espai Cèl·lula de Barcelona Taller on the occasion of the Mostra de Poesia Paleopoètica, which through the interaction of the public broadcast productions by Accidents Polipoètics, Jordi Pope, the Veivi Gius Urkestra, Macromassa, Òscar Abril Ascaso + Sedcontra, Enric Casassas and Noel Tatú.

Precariousness of means was an endemic phenomenon, which even affected the institutional venue that was supposed to become the leading focus of the avant-garde. The idea of setting up a centre in the city with the object of supporting and promoting multidisciplinary projects arose out of Tendències, a direct precedent to "la Biennal". In spite of the deficient infrastructure at Transformadors -it had no soundproofing-, impressive projects took place there such as "Alas Plegables 3", an installation (in the broadest sense of the word) of the Macromassa universe, and the II Exposición de Músicos Pintores (the first was held at the Cafè del Sol), organised by Sergio Caballero and Victor Nubla, which exhibited work by Anton Ignorant, Carles Pazos, Tres, Pascal Comelade, Marcel·lí Antúnez, Leo Mariño, Sergio Oca and Zush, amongst others. The shortcomings of Transformadors led to an agreement being made with places like Zeleste, from which "Música Inaudita" emerged, a real feast of the most suggestive work on the creative scene of the time: la Voz de su Mano, Moisés-Moisés, Alien Mar, Jumo, Pierre Bastien, Enric Casassas, Matavacas, La Fundación Joan Tabique, Macromassa, Galagos, U.M.B.N. Aleatoria, Audiopeste, Pascal Comelade, etc., an explosive mixture designed and produced by LMD with the support of the CIEJ.

Posthumously, Barcelona Taller invaded what had been a Showcase of Youth Culture. "Assalt a l'Atzar", fruit of the frantic activity of artists from all backgrounds, demonstrated the Olympic city's total lack of infrastructures. The improvisations by Superelvis, with the delirious ravings of Òscar Abril Ascaso + Sedcontra, the indefinable Audiopeste and the poetry of Enric Casassas, Carles Hac Mor, Benet Rossell and Esther Xargay, and Accidents Polipoètics blended with performance art, theatre, visual art, dance and a devoted audience in a great festival of and for creation. Two years later, it was once again the association Barcelona Taller that was responsible for resurrecting Transformadors, gathering the independent living forces in *Rollo Positivo II: Salvad Júpiter*, where we confessed ourselves thanks to La 12 Visual, in between improvisations by La Porta, and the corrosive outdoor lampoons of the "Pamflets d'Agri-Cultura", by De Calor, enlivened by the scientific cabaret of the L.E.M. (Mobile Extensive Latitude Device) conceived by LMD, with the participation of Alan Baumann, Tina Gil, Jacob Draminsky, Rafael Metilkóvec, Mark Cunningham, Joan Saura, Anton Ignorant and Pep Figueres, who presented unprecedented experimental aperitifs. Unforgettable, too were the festivals organised by La Hiena Ya No se Rie, such as De Reptiles y Batracios, at the Puerto Hurraco Sister's Bar, and Robespierre contra el Capitàn Trueno in the yard of a workshop in the carrer Montcada. In Poblenou there was a Sunday performance of "a natural selection of evolutionary poetry experiments": Accidents Polipoètics, the alarming Veivi Gius Urkestra, Enric Casassas, Jordi Pope, Pep Blai, and *Audiopeste* with Òscar Abril Ascaso + Sedcontra, this time

with the collaboration of Núria Canal, one-night alter ego of Isabel Pantoja. In Ciutat Vella, all of them took part again, protected by Saint Pancras (Xavier Manubens), in weekly sessions of performance art by Joan Casellas, C-72 Rand Jaume Alcalde and interventions by Noel Tatú, Atòmic Cafè (with the "praecupatus" Quim Tarrida and Miquel Baixas) and Superelvis, some of whom had already paid tribute to Arthur Cravan in *All Dadà en Acció*, at the Palau de la Virreina in the festival coordinated by Carles Hac Mor and Esther Xargay.

Certain parts of the city also played an important part, especially Gràcia and two associations established in the district that have provided atypical music for the local celebrations. In the carrer Santa Magdalena until very recently there still survived La Papa (Performers, Artistas i Poetes Associats, directly responsible for the Mostra d'Art Alternatiu which took place last year in the Plaça Rovira i Trias, where they presented more than 40 bands including Embryo, Mohochemle and the Koniec. Its forerunner was the Unió Solar, with LMD collaborating in the organisation of festivals at the plaça Raspall and the plaça del Sol featuring La Fura dels Baus, El Hombre de Pekín, Bootunoo, Pascal Comelade (with the first concert of Bel Canto in the Peninsula), El Grito Acusador and many others. But this wasn't the only occasion on which LMD came out into the streets. Closing the last Festes de la Mercè, at the Plaça Reial, on the initiative of Macromassa, Superelvis, Accidents Polipoètics, Koniec and Pau Riba, and under the general heading of M.I.D.I. (Músics Independents de les Discogràfiques Independents), they presented Grups de Risc, a new type of show characterized by the permanent backstage establishment that accompanies any musical event (organisers, catering, stage direction, performers waiting to go on stage, etc.) on the stage itself, forming one big party that was part of the show, while Oriol Perucho, Macromassa, Anton Ignorant, Sergio Oca, Tina Gil, Enric Casassas, Miki Espuma, Pau Riba, Accidents Polipoètics and Gàrgola, with appearances fitted in between sandwiches and beer, played the part of performer and public at the same time.

But the protagonists of the alter music haven't only embodied these characters: heirs of Punk DIY, the artists, organised in independent collectives, also set up their own distribution channels. Post office box numbers, answer phones and street stalls are the channels most often used for exchanging and feeding the flow of information, with the cassette and the photocopy as the stars of this ceaseless propagation. The new record labels took as their models foreign organisations, such as the internationalist Recommended Records, or the one directed by Nell Cooper in New York, ROIR (Reach Out International Records), one of the paradigms of cassette diffusion. As regards international contacts, names that stand out are Francisco and Rosa M^a Puerto, publishers of the Revista Pere Ubu, who brought to Barcelona the English group Cow, founders of Rock in Opposition, an international organisation of alternative rock that promoted the music of groups like Macromassa and Suck Electrònic Enciclopèdic outside our country. Another important factor was the establishment in Barcelona of artists like the Murphy Federation, Marc Cunningham, Alain Baumann, Sophie Borthwick and Jakob Draminski Hojmarck.

The record companies' principal organs of diffusion have also copied initiatives

from abroad like the *Clem* guide, a truly endless list of cassette recordings from all over the world, or *Time Out*, the direct model for the *Underguia*, which appeared with the object of providing "a bridge to add to the several already spanning the gap between the archaic present and the difficult but limited forthcoming present... , a genuine medium of intercommunication at the service of popular participation in what we call culture" (4) a job which was taken up again years later, in 1994, by *Comuns Virus de Barcelona Taller*, a pocket leaflet that gathered all the activities not included in the usual circuits, indispensable for anyone interested in the avant-garde.

"Keep the door open that separates dreams from wakefulness" (5) " said Macromassa, founders in 1976 of UMYU-LMD ("The Biggest Organisation not in Existence"), a record label providing the model for other producers that appeared during the eighties, such as Filobús Records, Klamm Records, Domestic Records and Música Inaudita, centring their activity in the production and distribution of cassettes and providing a recording studio for their members, at the same time as they publicized their products in publications like *KGA2*, the first fanzine produced in the Spanish state.

While labels appeared within the groups themselves, like the case of Camino al Desvan, with the creation of Ortega i Cassette and Extensión SVL, and Anton Ignorant, with 1984 Cintas, traces of foreign labels were visible in distributors like Duplicadora (a direct forerunner of today's G3G Records), one of the components, along with Las Cintas del Fin, Grand Mal Edicions and LMD, of 4 Sellos, a group which appeared when Guillem Castaño, Felix Menkar, Anton Ignorant and Victor Nubla decided to get together to share information and infrastructures, amplify the expansion waves of their own mailing lists and organise recitals and performances in venues like Transversal, Públíc and Ultramarinos.

Always self-administrating and with the investment of large doses of energy, LMD and G3G Records, the most representative record labels in Barcelona today, have managed to produce and distribute a considerable range of products. Amongst LMD's releases I would single out the compilations *Domestic Sampler Umyu*, *Naif/Atlas*, *Barcelona Ficción Romance* (with the support of Transformadors) and *Obtención de Galletas A*, and in the case of G3G Records, its collection of tarot card records, which began with the release of Ignorant Buildings (XVIII La Luna), followed by others such as Raeo Mark Cunningham Gat (XV El Diablo) or Macroelvis Supermassa (XIX El Sol), the fruits of magical nights, always unusual and surprising, at the G's Club at the Comunicqué, the nerve centre of the latest musical activity in Barcelona since 1991, when the G3G decided to describe this initiative as a concept, an atmosphere, a sensation, a feeling ... that would answer to the need of the city's musicians to play live.

"When the Tuesdays at the G's Club come to an end, we'll remember them as the good old days" (6)

Finally, all that remains is to speak of the work of diffusion carried out by a whole series of fanzines, fundamental underground messengers which arose

from the independent radio stations (Radio Caroline) and other collectives such as *Exóticas Nuevas* (Laboratorio Informal de Actividades Diversas), *Trepidación*, *Suspiros de España*, *B.O.E.S.*, *Destape*, *El Papel de la Merienda*, *La Cloaca*, *Último Grito*, *Movimiento Moderno*, *Rigor Mortis*, *Zombi*, *Sonotone*, *El Boletín de Limpieza Musical*, *Periodicoenadamasunahoja*, amongst others, a whole gamut of information, interviews, reviews and contacts that complete the direct information provided by interviews, reviews and articles in magazines like *Polinèsia* and *Fenici*, essential publications for anyone wanting to follow the course of events in the alter music.

All this and much more from the "Twilight Zone". There only remains one question: for how long?

Notes

1. "En la órbita de la no-música", in *Exóticas Nuevas* (*Fanzine* of the Laboratorio Informal de Actividades Diversas) No. 2, 1983.
2. Leo Mariño. Extract from "Eso es lo que pensaba", *Fijate* No.12, November 1991.
3. Free Diffusion, *Boletín de Limpieza Musical*, 1977.
4. Jaime Pujagut Grau, *Underguia* No. O, June 1976.
5. "En la orbita de la no-música", in *Exóticas Nuevas* (*Fanzine* of the Laboratorio Informal de Actividades Diversas), No. 2, 1983.
6. Superelvis, "(ancianes inadecuadas)", *Polinèsia*, No.O, January 1993.

Surrealist Madness

Karles Torra

Granollers

A news article headed "Seventy-five per cent took marijuana and twenty-five per cent LSD" stood out eyecatchingly amidst a series of parricides and thieveries on the pages of the weekly crime sheet *¿Por Qué?* The report, a bombshell in the West's spiritual reserve, referred to *the Festival Internacional de Música Progressiva* in Granollers, which took place in May 1971. The article stated with a shudder that "when it was over mountains of used condoms were left behind", and came up with some killing ideas: "If what this town of Granollers wants is to attract attention, we suggest that for next year they let loose a pack of jackals." Things being the way they are, people's reactions are almost always more surreal than events themselves.

Soon after Wight, Granollers hosted 20 hours of open-air music, with an official permit that didn't arrive until the last minute and the presence of the prominent English group Family. Amongst the four thousand insurrectionists who turned out for the festival, a chosen few had already listened to songs about the lysergic experience thanks to Pau Riba's "Al matí just a trenc d'alba" (1969), a formative song in Catalan psychodelia. But Granollers was the first collective trip, the real big bang of psychedelia in Spain. The hallucinogenic flamenco-rock of the Seville group Smash and the acid turn-ons of *Màquina!*, with their croissant-record *Why?* still hot under their arm, began to get people moving, but the climax came when Roger Chapman's Family came on to the stage. With an absolutely electrifying performance, the Britons made it clear that there were other worlds apart from the short and narrow world of the bull's hide and they altered the conscience of the public of freaks who had never seen or heard anything like it live.

Sisa, who sang "Els reis del país deshabitats" and the best part of the material from *Orgia*, perhaps the most oneiric and disconcerting record of the period, introduced the surrealist note. Another disconcerting figure, a sort of Don Quixote of Granollers, was Joan Illa Morell, the promoter of this historic event. The journalist Carme Casas said of him in 1979 that he wouldn't begin to be understood until the year 2000. "You must bring the Grateful Dead to Granollers; they're good friends of mine", advised Salvador Dalí when Illa discussed the possibility of organising a second edition of the festival. With their usual narrow-mindedness, the politicians weren't prepared to allow another psychedelic ceremony in the Western world's spiritual reserve. Nevertheless, at Gay Mercader's debut as a promoter, Granollers returned to the fore, at the end of 1973, with a double concert by King Crimson that was like a sort of doctorate for the first generation of Catalan psychonauts.

Cadaqués

John Lennon openly thanked surrealism for having shown him he wasn't mad. This important revelation came to him after spending a week with Yoko at Dalí's

house in Port Lligat. Being in permanent contact with the genius, he realised with relief that there was nothing odd about the tangle of images that filled his head. Before leaving, the author of "Mind Games" made an honest proposal to the painter of soft watches. The idea was that he should spend a week with him at a stand in one of Paris's principal avenues campaigning for peace. Dalí agreed, but with the condition that Lennon should spend a week with him at a stand in favour of war. When Lennon flatly refused, the wizard of the Empordà, in his characteristically guttural manner, quoted Joan Salvat-Papasseit:

"Love and war is the salt of the earth".

During that period -the mid-seventies-, the surrealist who outdid the surrealists used to make public appearances with a gelatinous pink brain in his hands. When asked where it came from, Dalí invariably answered "It's Alice Cooper's brain." The sympathy between the king of gay power and the emperor of the surrealist galaxies was mutual: "I admire Dalí because he's a master of confusion and chaos."

Deià

If Dalí, according to Alice Cooper, was a galactic traveller who had chosen Catalonia to live in, Daevid Allen came from the planet Gong and fell out of the tin sky over Deià. In this geographical micropoint where sea and mountains converge esoterically, Allen set up his Bananamoon Observatory, with the single crazy idea of bringing together surrealism and psychedelia. The experiment materialized admirably in striking sidereal records like *Good Morning* (1976), signed jointly by the extraterrestrial Daevid Allen and Pepe Milàn's Balearic Euterpe. The unmistakable Gilli Smyth acted as cosmic cheerleader on this project, undoubtedly one of the most interesting ever cooked up in the Mediterranean.

Some time after this fractal hallucination, the first mixtures were being prepared in the hold of the Bananamoon for *Licors* (1977), an explosive cocktail with room for any kind of drug you can think of, brashly vomited up by an inspired Pau Riba. That shook the foundations of the political transition to whatever you want to call it. Nothing like it had ever been heard before; in Catalan, please.

Valencia

Although Riba had already tried, in *Electròccid Àccid Alquimistic Xoc* (1975) and the fantastic "Lluna robada", to go beyond the writing and the pretensions and achieve a clearly psychedelic instrumentation, a guitarist from Valencia called Eduardo Brot turned his concerts in the mid-sixties into sonic acid-rock rituals. And in the town of Piquer there emerged, also with words of great surrealist power, one Remigi Palmero. "Angelets", a song by his inseparable soul mate Bustamante included on *Humitat relativa* (1979), took up the thread of angelology promoted by the philosophers d'Ors and Pujols. Later, *L'habitació desmuntable* appeared, a journey from order to chaos in which Palmero continued to perfect his surrealist view of things.

Barcelona

The mandala on the cover of OM's record, graced with the electrical scrawls of Toti Soler, and the lysergic visions of the incomparable chronicler Claudi Montaña set the tone of the acid/Zen culture in the Barcelona of the early seventies. In the surrealist camp, Sisa attacked armed with a delightfully offbeat poetic world. "We've got to celebrate our first Communion on the balcony dressed as horses", sang the star from Poble Sec in a litany that went on and on. In his magnum opus, *La Catedral* (1977), we find jewels like "Tres cavalls", in which a hermetic philosophy of life seems to lurk beneath the surrealist surface of the images. After completing this prodigious work, Sisa went off hitchhiking down the road to success ... and we never saw him again.

In 1979 a night of psychedelia was held at the Cine Napoles, where at that time there was a club devoted to the subject, called Doble Zero. The star of the event was Gilli Smyth, who arrived on a Gong Airlines flight that had stopped off at Deià. As a protest, because they considered they were psychedelic and no one had invited them to play, the madcap members of La Truita Perfecta, a kind of Catalan version of Gong, improvised a concert in the vestibule of the cinema. The final result isn't hard to imagine: Gilli Smyth playing with Panotxa, Micky Espuma and company in a mad jam.

If any duo has kept the flame of psychedelia and surrealism alive during the eighties and nineties, it's been Macromassa. Ever since one American critic said of their first single, "it's like sticking your fingers in an electric socket", Juan Crek and Victor Nubla didn't stop investigating with their modified wind instruments until they polished their key work, *Los Hechos Pérez* (1991). The very titles of the pieces speak for their surrealist approach: "El difuso aspecto de Neumático", "El consecuente aspecto de Geometria", "Sólo pez", "Ahora sus cubos" ... Anton Ignorant's guitar crosses Nubla and Crek's underground universe from top to bottom, and contributes an enormous quantity of lysergic emanations to the affair. The same rise and fall can be found in *L'hora feliç* and *Avantdernières pensées*, Ignorant's original tribute to Satie, the brilliant French musician who saw himself as a rational earthquake.

For some time now, the subject of psychedelia has been taken up once more in Barcelona by the technos. In this respect, there's a striking futurist version of Led Zeppelin's acid classic "Kashmir", included by KRAB on their debut album *Big Bull Female* (1995). On the base we once more find Micky Espuma, a character who, like el Panotxa, symbolizes the myth of eternal return in Barcelona psychedelia.

Castellfollit de la Roca

In *Electric Kool-aid Acid Test*, Tom Wolfe gives a blow-by-blow account of the adventures of Ken Kesey and his merry men in a psychedelic bus in the North America of the sixties. Amongst other inventions, these primordial psychonauts had the habit of putting microphones in the engine of their old charabanc so as to mix two planes of reality in their headphones. The trippers listened to music through one ear and the sound of the pistons through the other.

Returning more or less to this theme, Vagina Dentata Organ has just released a recording called *Un chien catalan*, which reproduces a journey by Harley Davison from Castellfollit de la Roca to Cadaqués. Listening to it is as exciting as watching *Catalan*, a video by Derek Jarman in which psychedelia and surrealism fornicate over our little country.

Vernet

To describe the music of Pascal Comelade as a kind of surrealist minimalism is about as close as you can get. In his latest work, *El Cabaret Galàctic* (1995), this artist from Catalonia North combines Marcel Duchamp and La Comparsita to offer a product that is different and full of gems like "Danser le tango descendant un escalier", crammed with crazy vocals by the *enragé* poet Enric Casassas. For the same price, one also gets "Dali's moustache with gitano's chaussure" in the sound package, Comelade's personal tribute to the great surrealist genius of the twentieth century.

Eix

"Love and war is the salt of the earth", pronounced the divine Dalí as an initiatory introduction to his opera-poem "Etre Dieu". These words by Salvat-Papasseit and the spirit of Heraclitus set off more than an hour and a half of musical madness inspired in Wagner and "El Misteri d'Eix", the paradigm of Catalan mystery plays.

At Eix, more precisely in one of the performances of the mystery play, the impetuous artist experienced a strikingly surrealist event. When the doors of heaven under the dome of the church open, a little angel is lowered on a mechanical device. The descent to the altar is long and the actor has to keep his balance. Suddenly the little angel began to look unwell, trembled and finally vomited over the actor waiting for him beside the altar in the part of the Virgin Mary.

As Xuang-Zu said, "Extreme purity is not to be surprised at anything." And this, precisely, is what both surrealism and psychedelia are all about.

The Experience of the "Colectivo de Improvisación Libre": Avant-garde Music, Free-Jazz and Alternative Music

Claudio Zulian

At the end of the seventies, Phonos was the *refugium peccatorum* for musical culture in Barcelona. The abysmal level of teaching at the music schools, the remains of the musical avant-garde of the sixties -now at bay- and, with a few exceptions, the lack of concerts and sources of information had pushed all sorts of restless young people towards the unlikely-looking chalet in Sarrià that housed the Phonos electro-acoustic laboratory. Some, such as Joan Josep Ordinas and myself, had come from the conservatoire, others from *Laietana* music, others from rock or jazz and yet others from non-musical adventures. There we met with the more orthodox concrete and electronic music -illustrated by Andrés Lewin-Richter-, the repetitive minimalist music of Eduardo Polonio and Javier Navarrete and the speculative computer music of Lluís Callejo. In the midst of them all, acting as master of ceremonies, was Gabriel Brncic, recently exiled from Argentina, who with his extreme open-mindedness, his academic knowledge, his experience in different types of contemporary music, his insight into technical problems and his willing nature was able to reply to and encourage everyone who attended his classes.

At Phonos there was an "avant-garde" atmosphere. The fact that we were in tune with the most advanced and dynamic music being made in Europe made us feel possessed by the typical avant-garde spirit that sees present difficulties in the light of future victories. The connection with the central cultural and intellectual issues of the moment was a real one, in both the practice and the reflection, and the political situation of the time gave a special air to everything that was going on. We felt we were partners in the reconstruction of what the Franco regime had destroyed. During those years, on my frequent visits to Italy, I was able to attend concerts of free jazz and bring back records by Antony Braxton, Cecil Taylor, Evan Parker, Misha Mengelberg, Hans Bennink and Derek Bailey. With these examples ringing in our ears, Joan Josep Ordinas and I started to make our own first free improvisations in 1978. Before long we were joined by Robert Tomàs, then as now lecturer in Economy at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, and the dancer Juan Carlos Garcia. This was how we formed the Colectivo de Improvisación Libre (OL), which gave its first concert in 1979 at the Cuina de les Arts. The sort of improvisation we did was, in general, deliberately divorced from any preestablished or fixed melodic, harmonious or rhythmic pattern. We used a lot of reject material, both in our playing -blowing, making noises into the wind instruments, all kinds of unorthodox manipulations in the strings and the percussion- and in the choice of instrument -flutes and plastic tubes, tins and frying pans. The numbers tended to develop through a series of successive climaxes in which all these elements were combined in a way that was usually dramatic.

For us, to a certain extent, it was a continuation of the work of composition and reflection that went on at Phonos. The music therefore had links not only with free jazz but also with the European and North American musical avant-garde.

Forming the CIL provided the opportunity to make contact with other musicians interested in free improvisation. In Barcelona at the end of the seventies, there were two other groups of musicians who were gravitating towards these experiments and who were differentiated by their cultural background. On one hand there were musicians from the pop and rock culture: Victor Nubla, Juan Crek, Enric Cervera and Eduard Altaba, amongst others. On the other, the musicians from the jazz culture: Jorge Sarraute, Zè Eduardo, Zlatko Kaucic.

The people in the Macromassa circle (Victor Nubla and Juan Crek's group) had backgrounds, ideas and experience that were radically different from ours. Amongst them there predominated a certain spontaneity, which had its origin in the pop culture of the sixties and which meant that all political, intellectual or technical concerns took second place or disappeared. Criticism -to, which the rock world, a reality somewhat remote from the members of the CIL, was particularly prone-, fell immediately on the attitude of derision and flippant triviality towards everything that was going on. The contempt for any consideration of technical quality or stylistic coherence allowed the immediate appropriation of any element and in any order. All sorts of instruments, all sorts of styles and even incursions into non-musical arts -painting, writing- were the order of the day. This group was characterized by its attitude of activist and combative outsidership, linked to the progressive rock circuits in the rest of Europe. It could be considered the template for today's alternative music, a term which in those days wasn't used.

The other group, the jazz musicians, was characterized by its strong feeling of identity with a repertory (that of classical and modern jazz), a marked concern for technical perfection and a sense of aristocratic outsidership. The jazz musicians lived the free-jazz adventure in a way, which was, perhaps less radical, since improvisation formed an integral part of its tradition and it had always lent itself to unorthodoxy.

For this reason, to o, the most orthodox part of its tradition (certain rhythms, certain melodic or harmonic phrasing) was very noticeable in their music, more than in the other two groups' respective traditions.

As for the rest, they suffered the same difficulties that everyone did, but, as laid down by jazz mythology, with guile and refinement.

So, three groups of musicians converged on the territory of free improvisation, each along its own paths and with very different intentions and models: a "high-cult" avant-garde, the urban pop misfits and a jazz tradition that had found its own breakthrough point.

From the meeting of these three groups of musicians a few stable groups were born: the CIL, already mentioned, Duo Denho, the Quartet Albano and Tres Tristes Tigres, which were always made up out of the same ten or fifteen people mentioned above (who, naturally, also formed duos, trios and quartets according to the circumstances).

The territory of free improvisation was common ground as regards the two chief

characteristics that defined it: negation and immediacy, both central ideas in the culture that emerged in the sixties .

Negation was evident in the urge to make a clean sweep, to break with everything and to forget, with the intention of sacrificing previous traditions in the name of newness. In the sphere of pop culture, this negation was almost a constituent element, because this culture had grown up precisely in the sixties fed by new forms of communication, new instruments and even radically transformed cities. In jazz and cultured music, negation had already shown itself earlier.

The fact that all of us, whatever our background, were marked by this negation placed us in a comfortable and vital musical no man's land, where listening to others was very easy. The blend of all forms of music (since in practice they were sometimes negated and sometimes remembered) took place naturally: we were all willing to make room for it.

The result of wiping the slate clean was necessarily a glorification of the present, and the immediacy required of any expression due to the urgency of that present was best expressed in the very act of playing, in which composing, improvising and performing came together as a single act.

The eighties marked a return to order, in a culture that was eminently conservative though dotted with superficial flashes of novelty. Almost unavoidably, this intermediate zone in which we all understood each other gradually shrank, and it was no accident that the last group in the CIL line of descent, Tres Tristes Tigres, was a homogeneous group made up of classically trained musicians: Joan Josep Ordinas, Josep Maria Mestres and Claudio Zulian. In 1983, Tres Tristes Tigres broke up after a concert in Italy, at the Autunno Musicale di Como. There was still a final fling with the extensive work of Ordinas and Zulian, *El libro de los excesos*, in which the two musicians improvised over a tape-recording of acoustic instruments with a minimum of manipulation.

Echoes of the practices of free improvisation continued to appear regularly in the work created and performed during the eighties by Multimúsica, a group formed by Gabriel Brncic, Eduardo Polonio and Claudio Zulian. From the earliest approximations, in the seventies, to these last echoes, free improvisation gave us some magnificently intense moments of music.

Native Music and Audiovisual Expression

(This text is dedicated to the memory of Conrado T. Costa, of Moisés, Moisés, who always wanted to make music for the cinema)

Quim Casas

1

The cinema has always fascinated musicians, whether as actors, composers of soundtracks or even trying their luck behind the camera as directors. In the broad context of Anglo-Saxon music there are examples of all sorts. Venerable stars of the calibre of David Bowie (The Man Who Fell To Earth, Merry Christmas, Mr Lawrence The Hunger), Mick Jagger (Performance, Ned Kelly, Freejack), Bob Dylan (Hearts of Fire), Sting (Quadrophenia, The Bride, Dune), Madonna (Shangai Surprise, Dick Tracy), or musicians of a more independent nature such as John Lurie (Stranger than Paradise, Down By Law, Wild at Heart), Richard Hell (The Girl from New York), Nick Cave (Ghosts ... Of The Civil Dead) and Tom Waits (Down By Law, Ironweed, Dracula) have all wanted to show off their acting abilities.

Other have worked, with varying results, in the field of soundtracks:

Stewart Copeland's compositions for Francis Ford Coppola (Rumblefish) and Ken Loach (Hidden Agenda, Riff-Raff); John Cale's music for productions by Paul Morrissey (Heat), Jonathan Demme (Caged Heat, Something Wild) Oliver Assayas (Paris s'eveille) and Philippe Garrel (La naissance de l'amour); Ryuichi Sakamoto's music for films by Bernardo Bertolucci (The Last Emperor, The Sheltering Sky) and Nagisa Oshima (Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence); Peter Hammill's recent soundtrack for the French film-maker Michael Espinosa (Emmene-mo/); Dylan's excellent music for Sam Peckinpah's crepuscular western Pat Garret and Billy the Kid; Waits's songs for Coppola's stylized One from the Heart. And a few, finally, have even tried the director's chair: Neil Young directed two films, Journey Through The Past and, with pseudonym Bernard Sharkey, Never Rust Sleep; Dylan made the egocentric Renaldo and Clara; Laurie Anderson, the experimental Home of the Brave; David Byrne, the curious True Stories; Prince, the narcissistic Under the Cherry Moon and Sign of the Times.

Surprisingly, hardly any cases of the opposite occur. One classic filmmaker, Charles Chaplin, wrote the music for his films; a contemporary working in the fantastic genre, John Carpenter, has done the same; an independent, Jim Jarmush, had a parallel musical adventure playing the keyboards of the group Del-Byzanteens; an iconoclast, David Lynch, wrote the words for the songs in his films and, along with his faithful Angelo Badalamenti, has ventured into the terrain of musical production in two records by the singer Julee Cruise. Very few further examples are to be found of filmmakers lured into different aspects of music.

I don't claim to have been exhaustive, amongst other things because I'm not

going to speak of mainstream cinema and music here, but of the work done in our country. Even so, there are some interrelated examples:

Iggy Pop, for instance, took part as an actor in Oscar Aibar's recent production *Atolladero*, and John Cale wrote the soundtrack for *Antartida*, a film by Manuel Huerga whose very title brings to mind the sensitive and obscure melodies of the ex-Velvet Underground (the song "Antarctica Starts Here"). At all events, it was simply a way of looking at the relationship between two languages, not always very appropriate, which has found quite a few adaptations in our country. What was known as *Laietana* music, music by the members of the far from insignificant avant-garde that emerged in Catalonia, has illustrated and cohabited with films, comics, plays and ballet. A detailed probe would show that these weren't exceptions or isolated experiments.

Good representatives of the progressive wave of the seventies found an alternative in film music. Música Urbana and Blay Tritono, along with La Rondalla de la Costa, made the soundtrack for *Tatuaje* (1976), Bigas Lunas's debut as a director, based on one of Manuel Vázquez Montalbán's novels about the gourmet detective Pepe Carvalho. For his next film, *Bilbao* (1978), Bigas had the collaboration of the group Iceberg. Santi Arisa, now the days of Fusioon are over, has specialized in writing soundtracks for the films his friend Manuel Iborra makes: *Cain* (1986), *El baile del pato* (1989) and *Orquesta Club Virginia* (1992). The first featured Pau Riba and Ricardo Solfa (Jaume Sisa's secret twin) as actors, while in the third, based on Arisa's own experiences as a travelling musician in African countries, Riba starred alone.

Arisa also wrote the music for *El timbalero del Bruch* (1981), historical folklore directed by Jordi Grau. The drummer's task on this occasion is similar to that of other musicians of his generation who have looked for an almost non-existent niche in Catalonia's shrunken film industry. This is the case of the guitarist Emili Baleriola, a collaborator with Crac and Màquina!, working with Carles Balagué on the frenzied thriller *L'amor és estrany* (1987) and the comedy *Les aparences enganyen* (1991); of Toti Soler, who had a brief flirtation with the celluloid in *L'home de neó* (1988), by Albert Abril; the keyboarder from Iceberg and Pegasus, Kitflus, who put music to the seafaring adventures of Carles Benpar in *El capità Escalaborns* (1989); the bass player Toni Xuclà, a member of La Rondalla de la Costa and other groups, who took part in the soundtrack for the rural drama *Solitud* (1991), by Romà Guardiet; or the pianist Manuel Camp, Arisa's partner in Fusioon, in his attempt to emulate Jerry Goldsmith-style Hollywood orchestrations in the Olympic thriller *El complot dels anells* (1987) and in the detective film *Un negre amb un saxo* (1988), both by Francesc Bellmunt, who also made the only two accounts on film of that period, *La nova cançó* (1975), with eclectic appearances by Riba and Sisa, and *Canet Rock* (1975), filmed at the first edition of the festival.

The work by names from alternative or avant-garde music seem to me far more interrelated and creative, over and above straightforward academic illustration by sound. For example, Leo Mariño's industrial score for Jesús Garay's strangely obsessive *Més enllà de la passió*, (1987) where the mechanical sounds are beautifully complemented with the terrifying, icy scenes that tell the

story of a rock singer who loses her voice and becomes stigmatized. Equally coherent and active is the always-valuable exercise of putting music to silent, black and white scenes from jewels of the cinema. Victor Nubla wrote the score for one of the purest examples of avant-garde cinema, Fernand Léger's *Ballet mécanique* (1924), a polychrome mixture of pictorial abstractions, poetry of objects and human faces. More recently, Pascal Comelade and the members of his Bel Canto Orquestra -Gat, Jakob Draminsky Hojmark and Mark Cuninghame- have produced the music for *A propos de Nice* (1929), an admirable short-length documentary by Jean Vigo which introduces his theories on truly social cinema.

These two projects by Nubla and Comelade belong to a long and increasingly accepted tradition of composing and performing soundtracks for silent classics, of which a leading figure is the British musician Carl Davis. In the United States, for example, it has become very popular amongst avant-garde musicians, and at the Knitting Factory -the heart of the downtown New York scene- there have been projections of films by Buster Keaton, Dziga Vertov, Tod Browning and the animator Max Fleischer, set to live music by Any Denio, Tom Cora, Phillip Johnston and Sam Bennett, respectively. At the same time, Bill Friseli's interpretations of Keaton films have been seen at various cinemas. In Catalonia there are noteworthy previous examples. The group Pegasus produced their disputable version of one of the high points of cinema-collage, Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin, sinfonia de una gran ciudad* (1928), while Jordi Sabatés provided piano accompaniment to a projection of F.W.Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922) at the Sitges Festival of Fantastic Cinema, and recently, having been seduced by this experience, he has set music to twelve short-length films by Georges Méliès shown in Barcelona and Valencia in early 1995.

So much for the reality, the work that can be seen, the links between languages that have always been sought and found. But let's give free rein to the imagination as Sisa, Cachas, Selene and Albert Batiste -that is, Música Dispersa- perhaps evoke the legendary Rita Hayworth in a song called "Gilda", recorded twenty years before the cinema made the redhead actress popular again in *Beltenebros* and *Madregilda*; when "Secta Sònica" dedicates "Castrelos, one of the songs on their record *Astroferia* (1977), to the surrealist Groucho Marx, when they don't hesitate to give another number the title "El tresor de Port Lligat", in a reference to the home of another famous surrealist; when Jordi Sabatés and Tete Montoliu seem to be immersed in a Gothic tale of vampires with their joint project *Vampyría*; when Carles Santos appears in a single, unreal, phantasmagorical urban performance in a film by his good friend Pere Portabella, *Pont de Varsòvia* (1989); or when Pascal Comelade with his toy instruments revisits the musical worlds that accompanied the performers of *Johnny Guitar*, *Giulietta de 105 espiritus*, *Amarcord*, *Moulin Rouge*, *Ben-Hur*, *Hasta que llegó su hora*, *Río Bravo*, *The Third Man* and *The Godfather*.

2

As well as the cinema, the theatre -exemplary work first by Sisa, then by Jordi Batiste, leading Dagoll Dagom's show *La nit de Sant Joan*; the combination of tribal music and post-industrial theatre in the work of La Fura dels Baus-

television -a suggestive musical introduction by Agustí Fernandez for the programme "Glassnost": soundtrack by Alien Mar for *La taverna galàctica*; musical investigation by Los Gringos for the documentary series *Històries del Carib*-, and dance -Jumo's work for the show *Entre esesinos*, by the Trànsit company-, music is coming to comics, an idea as fantastic as the language of comics always is. The spectator's or reader's retina doesn't have to play with the black membrane separating the frames of a film and allowing the rapid, marvellous and inimitable film sequencing, when he decides to replace the screen with the frames of a comic. A language related to film through its movement and visual synthesis, rather than through the avalanche of adaptations from one medium to another of muscular heroes like Batman, Superman and Judge Dredd, the comic has given imagination to some particularly significant songs from the progressive music of the sixties. For example, the most representative number from the beginnings of the Companyia Elèctrica Dharma, included on the Canet group's first record, *Companyia Eléctrica Dharma* (1975), was named after an emblematic hero of Spanish comics, "Capitàn Trueno", a character created in 1956 by Víctor Mora i Ambrós.

But it's in Jaume Sisa's oneiric *Qualsevol nit pot sortir el sol*, the sang that closes the record of the same title released in 1976, where characters from comics, fairy tales, Eastern adventure stories, cartoon films, silent comedies and fantastic film of the golden age all venture out of their paper-and-ink universe of their own accord to become tender, slightly nostalgic figures on a delightful musical score. Sisa invokes Asterix, Obelix, Superman, Popeye, Snoopy the dog, the Ulises family, Carpanta, Mortadelo y Filemón, Doña Urraca, Roberto Alcázar y Pedrín and, of course, Capitán Trueno. He mixes them with King Kong, Frankenstein and the Wolf-man, with Charlie Chaplin, Tom and Jerry and Pinnocchio, with Moby Dick, the big bad wolf and even the caganer himself, because time and space, fact and fiction, are of no account on a clear, still night when the sun could come out. It's not surprising that after this happy evocation of the world of dreams on printed paper, Jaume Sisa -sorry, Ricardo Solfa- should have joined forces with another dreamer, Pascal Comelade, to make a beautiful version of the sang "Yo quiero un tebeo" as the music for the 1993 edition of the *Saló del Còmic de Barcelona*.

30 Years of Future

Donat Putx

It's 1965, and a band called Tabaco has recorded *Desintegración*. I've got the record in my hand; the sleeve looks like an astral explosion, and there's something engraved in the vinyl that vaguely brings to mind an attempt at the characteristic sound of Booker T. and the MG's. This bit of old plastic seems to me like the big bang, the cataclysm that certifies the beginning of a craze that has thrived in the records and recordings of this sort for thirty years. Relative theories and new chemistry have given rise to unusual visions: visions like that of Pau Riba, who one day in 1971 glimpsed something new in the orange sky of Formentera: the *avioloncel*, scratching the belly of the sky and performing with a flair worthy of the best Xesco Boix school. Reversible Pau, who was to grow at a capillary rate until he met Daevid Allen. Allen -where can he be now?- is, or was, from another world: from the Planet Gong, the land of the Doctors Octavi us who gave him the job of founding the Banana Moon Observatory at Deià. Milan, Bibiloni, dear Pau de Licors: what red dots didn't you eat with that austral extraterrestrial who arrived aboard a teapot? And we needn't move from 1977, because in Poble Sec in Barcelona there's another one, called Sisa, who freaks out and freaks you out riding a Galactic Biscuit. By dint of counting stars, the dioptric Sisa ends up signing a will declaring himself a galactic singer-songwriter. No way! How many friends, associates and nodding acquaintances heard him speak for hours on end about a Galactic Theory which no-one really quite knew if it was a theory, a hypothesis or what? All in all, he lived on the studies and the questions set up by Edwin P. Hubble, astronomer, American, a student of the movement of the galaxies: the same stylistic movement which, if you look carefully, appears throughout Sisa's record collection -Sisa, the boy in love with The Incredible String Band and Machín, all at the same time.

But there must be something real in all this, because Paus and Sisas pay taxes, and complain, and have their feet on the ground the same as the renowned Dalí dido Let's go back to 1965, because Don Salvador gets off a train, notices a strange tickling sensation in his espadrilles and says, "Perpignan Station is the Centre of the Universe". There is, in such a vision, a remarkable ultra-localism. The same overwhelming logic that led Francesc Pujols, philosopher and clubman, to speak of machines for separating Spirit and Matter. The same impulse as the apologetic Llull, the precursor of today's computer science. In fact, the same poison you can taste in Sisa's neighbourhood poetics, in the mums, kids and toads of the hippy from the Riba house. So that you'd better have your wits about you, because one day you'll see white butterflies on the snow and the sun will come up when you least expect it. René Thom, the mathematician, has shown that Dalí knew perfectly well what he was saying when he spoke of Perpignan. And you should have seen the faces of Macromassa, four days ago, when they got a paper from the Carnegie Mellon University, USA, about a cybernetic strategy called "ZOG". You'd have died laughing, because they, Macromassa, had just given birth to Saturnian urban mental folk; to jazz from Mars; to Ganimedean instrumental pop; rock from Neptune's methane clouds which, on the basis of the shape of the instruments they play, they had baptised "ZOG". In other words, when you bump into

Norman Spinrad, the agent of chaos, and he says, "My fiction is Reality", when that happens, you can see we're doing all right.

Meanwhile, important things have happened: machines, sequencers, synthesizers, samplers. Freedom to invent sounds has made the straightforward use of this material an act from the future, unique and -once more- real, as real as the bills from the electricity company, or the beverage that appeared one day on the bar of the Magic: a Suck Electrònic, Enciclopèdic even, which you can drink in peace because there are no bad trips: they're trips. So don't be afraid when you get to Ninsey City, Fura dels Baus territory, with their women suppurating volcanic fluxes. Don't. Don't be like that laughable traveller the Corporación Alien Mar reported, that frightened individual who goes down the platforms "in the belief that closed eyes and fists will help him keep his balance, not retain his serenity". Pay attention to old Kesey:

STAY ON THE BUS sand enjoy the new mental states, pocket the money at Evrugo, the planet of Zush and the silent Tres, and learn their language, so different from the "kobaïa" that Magma speak. Because Klamm's special metal and La T.'s trees with doors and the agonizing, paranoid lights of Mohochemie and the ears that grow at the rate of one millimetre per second and the destroyed Jupiter of Raeo are the truths that are coming, kid. Things (I'm copying from a newspaper) that science-fiction considers possible -that is, non-fiction.