

## **About *Monologue II, Injertos de Oscuridad*, by Samuel Cedillo**

**By Wilfrido Terrazas**

(Text written for the CD Monologues I-V, solo works 2006-2013 of Samuel Cedillo, Cero-Records 2013)

Few pieces have represented to me the challenge which in its moment constituted to put on, to premier and, years later, to record the *Monologue II, Injertos de oscuridad*, written for bass flute, by the mexican composer Samuel Cedillo. I have premiered music for more than 20 years, and I must say that only a handful of works that I have found which, in spite of standing out because of their complex notation, they keep a balanced correlation between effort and result. *Monologue II* is one of them. I'll be back to this subject later, but before, please allow me a series of background.

I met Samuel in 1999, when both of us were students at the *Conservatorio de las Rosas*, in Morelia. I was in my last year of studies, while he was just beginning. Since then, we have coincided in several points of our careers. Although Samuel is some years younger than me, I consider that, some how we have grown together, sharing related sound worlds. This is the way I conceive my work in collaboration with other artists (not only with composers): as a long term growing process, beneficial and enriching for both parties. Samuel is a member of first importance of the one I consider the most vigorous generation of Mexican musicians on the recent decades. Even when he has conducted his career in a solitary way, almost as a hermit (in such case, a very young one!), Samuel has always been clear and precise in his search, and his work speaks with a very own voice. Maybe as a result of having been artisan during his childhood, of having been close to the ground (truly and unpretentious), Samuel writes his music as someone who works with his hands and is not afraid of getting dirty; not afraid of making mistakes, nor to go beyond the traditional limits of the instruments. In his music, it is present that mud which Samuel shaped when he was child. It can almost be smelled. For the same reason, Samuel does not fear either going beyond the oxidized rhetorical of what is called Contemporary Music. The music he writes is connected to this ground in its origin without fail.

In 2008, I premiered a first version of what later would become *Monologue II*. It was a duet for bass flute and percussion, inspired in a text by Samuel Beckett. Then, Samuel reconfigured the piece and it remained as a solo, with the poem *Injertos de Oscuridad* by Paul Celan as an epigraph. I premiered the piece in 2009, in Guadalajara, Mexico. Until the date, it is one of the pieces that most times and in most places I have played, and I consider it one of the pillar works in my repertory. I mentioned before that *Monologue II* is one of the pieces for flute with complex notation best achieved. Its correlation between effort and result has an unsurpassable balance. I explain myself, without attempting the historian role. The world of complex notation has brought quite interesting sonorities to

contemporary music since its emergence back in the early seventies. The flute has always been part of this revolution from its beginnings, with classics as *Cassandra's Dream Song*, *Unity Capsule*, *Sgothan*, etc. However, by the decade of 1990, the complex notation showed signs of being depleted, at the time that some composers struggled to incorporate more and more elements to it. (This process seems not to be finished yet). In my opinion, this fight was largely driven from the, in that time, new idea of the *multiparametricity*, that is, the conception of sound as something that can be broken down into several elements, each with its own logic, and therefore, it should be written separately. This idea seemed to work very well in the particular case of bowed string instruments, which they are themselves, the union of several things of different natures: top, ribs, fingerboard, strings, pegs, bridge, sound post, etc. And rubbed also by a separated object: the bow. The multiparametric notation made of the strings its fertile soil. As many things in them are separable in fact (and perhaps in a lesser extent, in percussion and keyboard instruments). With the wind instruments, however, the multiparametric notation was less successful. The cause of this fact is very simple. Organologically, the wind instruments are no more than one single thing: a tube. The mechanisms serve to extend or to shorten the tube's length. That's all. In my experience, the works with complex notation should consider this fact very carefully, to be successful. No matter how many items the notation could have *there's only one column of air*. I recall working several pieces in the past, where the correlation effort-result was completely unbalanced. Multiple efforts, for a rather simple result, that could have been written in a much simpler way. The multiparametric notation in those cases only hindered the musical idea, whose result was one and not multiple, as the notation attempted to suggest. Contrary to what happens with the strings, with the winds there is a fundamental idea of unity. They are organisms and not devices, extensions of our breath. Samuel Cedillo understood this perfectly.

*Monologue II, Injertos de oscuridad* is a successful work precisely because of the care with which is approached a complex notation that not only doesn't hinder the musical idea, but that favors it. It is a truly *tour de force* for the performer, it requires endurance and a lot of energy, but it rewards all the effort with an amazing sonorous result. The piece is difficult, of course, but the mounting process is always driven by the favorable correlation effort-result of which I have talked. It is an organic oeuvre in the most basic sense of the word. What I mean is that, like few others, it's a work that makes you grow, and understand, organically and aboveboard, the intensity of the fundamental experience which we call to live.

**Wilfrido Terrazas, Mexico City, 2013**