



Lecture on Nancarrow Carlos Sandoval

This lecture is about one of the geniuses of the XX century music. Today we composers can go so easily far beyond the border of traditional music aesthetics (whatever that means) and create our own composing environments and worlds to speculate with our sounding imagination. But in the forties Nancarrow was the brave radical, the truly and only "mechanized" composer who developed a self contained system to envisage and create one of the most original and imaginative music ever made. In this lecture I will try to introduce Nancarrow in terms of his musical art, his complex theoretical thoughts and his "system setup" development. I use about 25 sound examples and about 20 illustrations. I use extracts on Wergo's recordings and some custom-edited audio files based on MIDI sequences originally made by Trimpin using his "Piano-roll reader" from the original rolls.

Contents:

1. **Where is Nancarrow ?** The time-frequency approach within a Player-Piano roll. Perception and memory in the music of Nancarrow
2. **Early works** Sarabande and Scherzo, Prelude and Blues, Toccata
3. **Early Studies** Ostinato, overlapped melody activity, polytonal and polymetric textures, degenerative processes and accumulation of materials. Studies 3a, 3b and 5 for player piano.
4. **Links with popular and traditional music** Studies 6 and 12 for player piano
5. **The light of Henry Cowell** The frequency-rhythm dichotomy resolved. Real frequencies, and frequency ratios in Polytemporal structures
6. **Compositional Techniques** Tempo ratios and templates. Punching score and composition process. The punching machine and the player piano: possibilities and limitations
7. **More Studies** Canon and polytempo: studies 13, 15, (and 21, 37, in detail)
8. **Conclusions** Discussion

Composer Carlos Sandoval was Nancarrow's assistant (1990-94). He is the only one person who systematically worked near Nancarrow in his studio when he still was an active composer. Sandoval translated into Spanish "The Music of Conlon Nancarrow" (K. Gann, Cambridge, 1995, Ca. 330p.) and a pair of Nancarrow's articles and correspondence (Pauta, INBA, several issues). He has published some of the most complete articles and essays on Nancarrow available in Spanish. He is an active lecturer on Nancarrow in Mexico and Europe.

Carlos Sandoval was curator of the two most important exhibits-concerts-homages to Conlon Nancarrow ever (National University -1990, and National Fine Arts Institute, ISCM-World Music Days -1993, Mexico). He was coordinator of the International Seminar Year 2000: Music, Mathematics, Composition-1990. Has been composer-in-residence at Les ateliers UPIC (1989 and 1990); at RDP Trimpin's studio (1994); at the Donaueschinger MusikTage festival (1994); the STEIM Foundation (Amsterdam, 1996, 1999, 2005) and the TU studio, Technische Universität (09.2005). He has received several scholarships in and out Mexico and was a member of the Mexican "Sistema Nacional de Creadores" (1999-2005). Lives in Germany (Berlin) since 2003.