

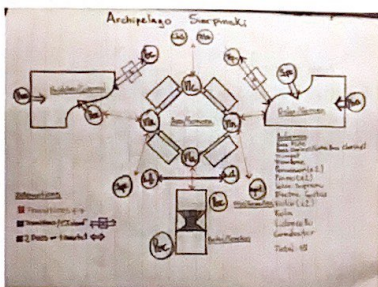
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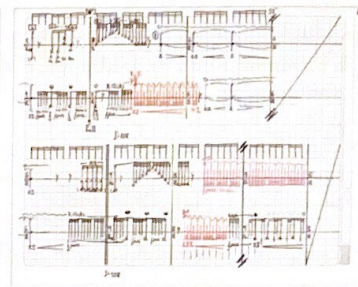
## Archipiélago Sierpinski: A collection of collections Archipiélago Sierpinski : 串連在一起的合集



Archipelago Sierpinski - Overall Structure  
Archipelago Sierpinski — 大致的結構



Uslar/Gorong Sketch  
Uslar/Gorong的草圖



Volpi/Formentera Sketch  
Volpi/Formentera的草圖

Dr. Camilo Mendez joined the Department of Music at Hong Kong Baptist University as Assistant Professor in 2018. He is a composer of acoustic concert music. He conceives his works as compositional cycles; series of pieces orbiting around the same musical ideas, but written for different instrumental combinations. He completed a Doctorate and a Master's in advanced composition at the Royal College of Music in London. He has also studied privately with Rebecca Saunders and Pierluigi Billone. In 2017, Dr. Mendez was the Rieman and Baketel Fellow for Music at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University.

Camilo Mendez 博士是音樂會原聲音樂的作曲家，2018年加入香港浸會大學音樂系任職助理教授。他在皇家音樂學院獲得博士和碩士的作曲學位，曾在英國作曲家Rebecca Saunders和意大利作曲家Pierluigi Billone門下學藝，不少當代演奏家和樂團都演奏過他的作品，在國際藝術文化活動中也可以聽到他的樂曲，例如墨西哥舉行的Festival Internacional Cervantino。2009年，他憑著作品Tropical Textures VI奪得哥倫比亞國家作曲獎。2017年，Mendez博士在哈佛大學拉德克利夫高等研究院擔任Rieman和Bakete的音樂研究員。他還在班福中心擔任過常駐人員。

His music has been performed by ensembles and soloists who specialise in contemporary concert music, and has been featured in such international festivals as Festival Internacional Cervantino, the International Summer Course for New Music Darmstadt, June in Buffalo, Klask Keyfler, the Mallorca Saxophone Festival, and Next Generation Donaueschingen. In 2009, he was awarded the Colombian national prize in composition for his work Tropical Textures VI. He has also held residencies at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity and Willapa Bay AIR.

The research project *Archipiélago Sierpinski* is a compositional cycle that to date contains five works for different instrumental combinations. The title of each work is the combination of the name of a writer he admires and a physical place. *Ungar/Comala*, for example, combines the surname of Colombian writer Antonio Ungar and the Mexican town of Comala. This town is also the fictional location in which the novel *Pedro Paramo* by Juan Rulfo is set.

The reason he titled the works of this cycle using the pattern 'writer/place' or 'place/writer', is to emphasize the role of literature as an important source of inspiration for him. 'When I look back to the pieces, I know exactly what I was reading at that time' is what he told me during the interview.

A few years ago he became obsessed with the novel *Infinite Jest* by American writer David Foster Wallace, which according to the analysis of some scholars is structured to imitate a fractal object called the Sierpinski Gasket. This fractal object inspired Dr. Mendez and became the main idea of *Archipiélago Sierpinski*. In this compositional

*Archipiélago Sierpinski*是Mendez博士創作的套曲，以不同樂器演奏，目前有五個樂章，每個樂章的標題都結合了一個地方名稱和一個他所敬佩的作家名字。例如，*Ungar/Comala*包含了哥倫比亞作家Antonio Ungar的姓氏和墨西哥小鎮Comala。他用「作家/地方」或「地方/作家」來命名，是為了強調文學作品是他的重要靈感泉源。「當我重溫作品時，我確切地知道當時我在看甚麼書。」他在採訪中這樣告訴我。

幾年前他曾經沉醉於美國作家大衛·福斯特·華萊士的作品《無盡的玩笑》，當中那個名為Sierpinski Gasket的分形物體啟發了Mendez博士去創作*Archipiélago Sierpinski*，探索模組化結構的可能性。*Archipiélago Sierpinski*有五個樂章，其中之一就是上述的*Ungar/Comala*，它是由數個元素組成的「合集」，能以不同的方式和順序去演奏，產生不同的效果，其他四個樂章也是如此。而*Archipiélago Sierpinski*就是把這五個「合集」再串連為一個大「合集」。



Prepared flute detail  
經過改裝的長笛



Total Performance Space - Impossible Object Built for Baikol Sorokin  
整體表演空間 - Baikol Sorokin的不可能圖形

cycle, he is exploring the possibilities of modular structures. Each work consists of fragments or 'islands' that can be performed or 'navigated' in many different ways as 'structural archipelagos', so the overall design of the cycle is a collection of collections or a 'collection of archipelagos.' In the particular case of Ungar/Comala, this work consists of five 'islands' that can be performed in any order, but always as a single movement, thus different combinations will produce different results.

The idea of composing music using modular structures is not new to Dr. Mendez. In his work *CAGE-RICHTER* from 2012 he composed six miniatures, each one inspired by the paintings of the series *Cage* by German artist Gerhard Richter. The paintings were produced while Richter was listening to the recording of the *Sonatas and Interludios* for prepared piano by American composer John Cage, and for that reason the title refers to both artists.

The work of Dr. Mendez is not only concerned with structural experimentation. There are other interesting aspects of his music. In *Ungar/Comala*, all the instruments are prepared or altered in many different ways to produce unconventional sounds. For example, the flute is disassembled by removing the headjoint to attach the mouthpiece of an alto recorder, whereas the headjoint is performed independently, and the percussionists are assigned the interesting task of performing 'found objects', such as pieces of polystyrene, corrugated pipes, pieces of paper and metal sheets. Due to the unconventional techniques and extensive alteration of the instruments in his compositions he has to travel to rehearse with the ensembles performing his works, in order to help the musicians to produce the preparations for their instruments and to find the specific sounds he has imagined. This way of working is not always easy. Travelling with these materials and objects can be difficult. On certain occasions, custom officials have seized some of these materials or inquired about the contents of his luggage.

At the end of the interview with Dr. Mendez, I asked what music creation means to him; he answered without hesitation that it is like breathing. Research and composing are essential and inseparable aspects of his life. With his compositions, he is trying to offer people different ways to see the world and perceive it through sound.

模組化結構對於Mendez博士並不陌生，他2012年的作品CAGE-RICHTER包括了六個縮小模型，每一個都受到德國藝術家葛哈·李希特(Gerhard Richter)的Cage的啟發，而李希特是受到美國作曲家約翰·基治(John Cage)的啟發，所以Mendez博士用兩位藝術家的名字去命名。

Mendez博士的作品還有另一個有趣的地方，在Ungar/Comala一曲中，所有樂器都用非一般的方法處理，務求發出與別不同的聲音。例如長笛拆去笛頭，換成牧童笛的吹口去吹奏，而長笛的笛頭則用來單獨吹奏；所有敲擊樂器轉為隨處可見的物品，例如發泡膠、水管、紙張和金屬片。Mendez博士會走訪各地去尋找適用的物品演奏，並與樂團採排，過程非常不容易，因為海關人員會查問甚至沒收這些「樂器」。

來到訪問的尾聲，我問Mendez博士音樂創作對他的意義，他毫不猶豫地回答：像呼吸一樣。是一生中不可缺少的部分。他透過作品，嘗試令人們通過聲音去感知世界。

#### Representative publications:

1. Mendez, Camilo. 2019. Prepared Saxophone Quartet (9 minutes): *(White) Planes in Dissolution*, commissioned by Fukio Saxophone Quartet; Premiered by Fukio Saxophone Quartet, Jornadas de Musica Contemporanea, Centro Gallego de Arte Contemporaneo, Santiago de Compostela, Spain.
2. Mendez, Camilo. 2019. Female Vocalist (producing sounds inside Piano) and Pianist (10 minutes): *Uslar/Gorong*, commissioned by the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study (Harvard University) and the Creative Arts Initiative of New York University at Buffalo; Premiered by The Hayley-Laufer Duo, Burchfield Penney Art Center, Buffalo, NY, USA.
3. Mendez, Camilo. 2018. Reimagining Musical Instruments: The Sound of Impossible Objects in My Music; Lecture and Portrait Concert Performed by Yarn/Wire; Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study (Harvard University), Cambridge, MA, USA.
4. Mendez, Camilo. 2018. 2 Pianists and 2 Percussionists (9 minutes): *Cartography of Confined Spaces*, ICEBERG New Music; Performed by Yarn/ Wire at Tenri Cultural Center, New York, NY, USA.
5. Mendez, Camilo. 2016. Prepared Oboe, Prepared Alto Saxophone, Percussion (x2), Piano and Prepared Double Bass (8 minutes): *Cartography of Convoluted Spaces*, Commissioned by New Dots, Premiered by Workers Union Ensemble, London.