

---

## Ricardo Jacinto

### Segmentos

Opening | November 13th | 10pm

Concert\_Installation | 10.30pm

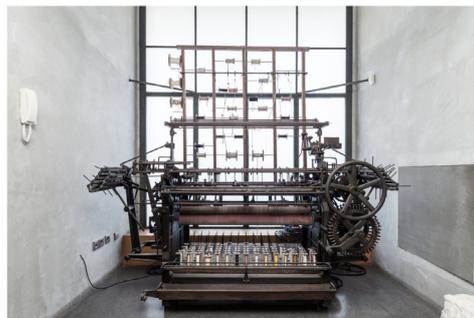
:for cello, electronics and objects

November 14 - December 6 2014

Appleton Square

Rua Acácio de Paiva 27

1700-004 Lisboa



---

Ricardo Jacinto's Medusa: Exploded Cello: an aural window into the mechanisms of music.

Ricardo Jacinto's performance (Medusa: Exploded Cello) is an explicit manifestation of a usually silent truth about the relationship between a player, a musical instrument, and a performance environment, which is that the boundaries between these three apparently separate entities are in fact mutable. It may be a folk tale that Jascha Heifetz,, the legendary violinist, when told by a fan that his Stradivarius sounded wonderful, put his ear to the violin and replied "it doesn't sound at all", but such a tale illustrates well that it is the precise interaction between player and instrument - the intensely personal touch and response to the resistances and affordances of the physical system of the instrument - which makes a sound plausible, convincing and beautiful, indeed which makes sound at all. And the context in which this intimate refusal of boundaries takes place, both socially and acoustically, adds another complex layer of interactions to the mix: The environment in which something happens contributes significantly to the sound that is made, to the manner in which it projects into and around the space, and this in turn forms sensory feedback for the player, informing his or her moment-to-moment decisions.

Jacinto lays bare this 'hidden' truth by amplification, exaggeration and projection. Transducers within the cello disclose the characteristic sound of precise points within the instrument's physical structure and distribute these subtly different signals to precise external points in the architectural space of the performance - externalizing and exaggerating the spatial separation of the cello's secret inner structure. The points within the cello which Jacinto chooses to 'explode' into the room are chosen with care for their already subtly distinct versions of the cello's sound. As an experienced performer and improviser Jacinto is aware of and draws our attention to the sound of strings touching the ebony of the fingerboard, the sense of enhanced tension and 'nasality' around the bridge, the softer and more reflected sound within the bouts of the instrument's body. These are mapped across the space of the performance area, their differences often enhanced subtly by digital treatments, immersing the audience in a new 'virtual' instrument body. Every gesture made on the cello is written in larger form across the room.

And Jacinto is not only 'turning his instrument inside out' and laying bare the smallest details of his technique. As a trained architect he also has a heightened awareness of the geometric and dramatic potentials of the space in which he is performing, and is, in a very real sense, 'playing the room'. This is significant for his audience in that all of our inter-personal experiences are informed by the negotiation of distance. The anthropologist Edward Hall introduced (in the 1960s) the notion of 'proxemics' - codifying the unwritten codes of conduct which determine whether our interactions connote an intimate, a local, a social or an environmental relationship (with people, with sounds, with objects). Jacinto's manipulation of these various distances enhances our sense of the relationship between tactility and hearing.

By implication the performance asks questions about territory, about public and private space. By exposing the relationship between one body and one instrument so ruthlessly, but incorporating the bodies of the audience within the result, Jacinto asks what are the limits of his body. Of course these limits are transcended here through technology, but, he asks us, isn't this what music always does? Isn't there always a transduction between my body, as a performer, and yours - as a listener, which is the condition of music. Some traces of my fingers, depressing this taut string, at this particular point, and in this particular way, resonate sympathetically within your autonomic nervous system. And as I move into the high register on the top string, something of the difficulty of doing so, of the sense that this is an acoustic and physical system approaching the upper limits of its viability, transgresses the merely physical boundaries between individuals, temporarily suspending them - touching you at a variety of distances - some intimate, some less so.

This permeability of boundaries between individuals echoes the permeability with which we began - between performer, instrument, and environment. The permeability which is the condition of music is also a condition of being human. In music-making human beings find a crucible for a non-appropriative acknowledgement of otherness - a suspension of the boundaries of the self. The qualities of empathy and inquisitiveness which make us human are enhanced. So it's no surprise that the 'exploded cello' has another life, away from its site-specific orientation, in improvised ensemble music, where groups of musicians negotiate and renegotiate boundaries and selfhoods on a moment-by-moment basis.

In this case however, the performance precedes and feeds into an installation which lasts approximately a month after the initial event. The physical gestures of the live performance are captured and have an 'after-life' - occupying the architectural space beyond the presence of the player, and extending the musical material into a different time frame. Perhaps the density of musical events will lessen and the texture become sparser the longer the installation operates beyond the live performed event, in a conscious echo of the gradual decay of all sounds in time... But with a digital system that is invested with some aspects of a life of its own, who knows what the eventual result will be. There's a quality of emergence, rather than design, about this, which betrays Jacinto's status as an improviser as well as a designer!

Simon Waters

project:



collaboration:



support:

VERA  
CORTÈS  
ART  
AGENCY

**Simon Waters** is an improviser, composer, curator and academic who recently joined the staff of the Sonic Arts Research Centre at Queen's University in Belfast, having been for nearly twenty years the Director of the electroacoustic music studios at the University of East Anglia where he curated the Sonic Arts series. Simon's work has shifted from studio-based acousmatic composition (in the 1980s) to a position which reflects his sense that music is primarily concerned with human action, and only secondarily with acoustic fact. His research investigates the relationship between music and other activities, contiguities between performing and composing/improvising, 'instrument building', and the manner in which musical thought and practice operate in highly technologised contexts. He has worked with many contemporary dance and physical theatre companies and visual artists and his works have been widely presented and broadcast in the UK, Europe and the USA. He is currently artistic director of the Sonorities Festival.

project:



collaboration:



support:

VERA  
CORTÈS  
ART  
AGENCY