



THE STORY BEHIND AN IDEA

By: LUIS ANGEL DUQUE

“A sound that blends in with its surroundings, a sound that embraces...”

EDUARDO MARTURET

When the Museum of Contemporary Art in Caracas accepted the idea of allowing its main building to house the first three sound spaces of *Casa Bonita* - at the time an experiment in fusion, ambient music and contemporary art - the project entered the realm of possible architectures and became a museum reality. Here is the private story of how the idea evolved, from its birth to the moment it made its appearance in the spaces of the Museum, whom we thank for the decision not to leave *Casa Bonita* floating in the air as an absolute idea.

Since 1980, when he formed part of *Música Viva*¹, Eduardo Marturet had kept a long, creative silence, composing only a few commissioned works and dedicating his public efforts to conducting symphony orchestras and cultural management. Then, 24 months ago, the silence was broken and, in January 1986, he again tackled the first keystrokes and the fundamental chords, composing the first fragment of *Casa Bonita*, making a full comeback as a creator.

During all that time that he was not composing, Marturet was researching new sound arrangements issuing from concrete sources and the range of inaudible sounds. He engaged in lively reflection concerning the “performance space” of musical works, an endeavor that led him to play with the idea of music in environments other than a concert hall. Marturet thought of a

private event, where the unfolding of the work itself would create other ways for the spectator and this new, sensitized space to relate.

With the Fibonacci numbers (the first sequence of recursive numbers known in European mathematics, invented by Leonardo Fibonacci in the 13th century) as the ratio parameter, and with the first movements of *Casa Bonita* stored on cassettes, Eduardo Marturet joined forces with three artists of his generation to build the first sound spaces in the halls of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Caracas. The three artists - during the course of a year of stimulating work together - became fully immersed in Eduardo Marturet's sound project. For him, the dialectic relationship with three different creative universes –where the stimuli traveled in both directions- forced him to compose, in a violent development, the 24 hours of the macroformat of this first experience of *Casa Bonita* and the movements comprising it.

THE MUSEUM PROJECT

Rafael Barrios, Jorge Pizzani and Marcos Salazar had done earlier works integrated into architecture. Here they have produced three walk-through environments, dominated by elements developed on the basis of the Fibonacci numbers, viewing the work as a free and metaphorical interpretation of the every-day areas in a house, an Artistic Domus. The end product involves three major elements that characterize each of them as objects. There are the phrases of the streak of light in Rafael Barrios' *Slash*, the twin spirals in Jorge Pizzani's *Double Chalice*, and the helicoidal force of Marcos Salazar's crystal, that owe their proportions to the Golden Section and are twined together with the continuous spiral of Eduardo Marturet's music, merging conceptually in the ears and retinas of the viewer, who responds to the twin creations that fuse into one.

RAFAEL BARRIOS: THE LOUNGE

Salon (The Lounge) is the first absolute environment that Rafael Barrios has presented in Venezuela and it is freely located in Hall 3. From their very first encounter, Barrios and Marturet organized their creative integration around a piano and the generic work *Volver, volver, volver*, whose movements are strictly piano. This is the composer's first instrument and his evocation required an area where it could be present, thus the Salon, the first room in *Casa*

Bonita. With a very free-flowing concept of the area, the artist presents two opposite elements, crossing on vast diagonals, in a contrasting representation that clashes with the notion of the quotidian. As is the piano --the source of all the musical movements-- the “Wall” is made up of a group of angular stones, meeting with the earth as an element. Erected on the basis of the Golden Section, it emerges with the force of primary constructions, making the impossible possible.

Vibrating on the “Wall” is the “Slash” that cuts across the diagonal space with a beam of light that repeats the musical vibrations, the sections following the progressive phrases of the Fibonacci numbers. The large concert piano, acting as a music box, is planted in that environment of altered perspective and brings us back to the original idea, the Salon in the Sound House.

JORGE PIZZANI: THE BAR

From the very first four-hand session by artist and composer, they were bound together by the Fibonacci numbers, a constant in the individual creations of each. They quickly agreed on a bar as the space to be created in the Ideal House, where the musical macroformat *Del paraíso* would flow. The Bar would be the place to promote a feeling of gaiety while, at the same time, transmitting the idea of a possible model of the universe. Based on these ideas, Jorge Pizzani developed the *Double Chalice* –a synthesis of the figurations found in his latest pictorial works – as his first notion of an Absolute Object where double constitutive concepts are joined: mystical (the union of heaven and earth) and physical (the state where there is neither space nor time). The *Double Chalice* intercepts the spectator in the entry hall to the Bar, vibrating continuously with the series of progressive numbers that make it up, in the exact center where all the musics of *Casa Bonita* flow together. The environment is created in the circular diorama of Hall One, set up as a reversible space, where the two edges of the painted horizon are joined and inverted, creating a virtual orbital cylinder where the law of gravity is defeated. What prevails in Pizzani’s work is the line of a horizon that seems to swirl continuously around the dislocated spectator, who is doubly stimulated with Marturet’s continuously flowing digital keyboard music.

MARCOS SALAZAR: THE PATIO

The relationship between artist and composer was strong from the very beginning. Upon hearing the movements of *Historia del futuro pasado*, Salazar began to develop a new theory of morphology for his sculptures, conceiving them as a sounding board for an inner music. This is accompanied by a new strain of thought concerning the formation of minerals in the center of the earth, and the force that propels them to emerge.

Taking this new information, he used the geometry in Hall 4 to create a contemporary Patio as an every-day space. Above all, the painted walls set the boundary of the Sound Domus, where – with great simulation– a huge wall is reproduced: standing out is the tall profile of Mount Ávila in summer, placing the figuration at a specific geographical point. The guardian mountain is arranged around the coordinates of the hall that correspond to reality so as to emphasize, for the first time, the location of *Casa Bonita*: in Caracas, in the heart of Venezuela.

The recognizable environment is altered by the large artificial crystal that violently erupts from the center, creating a situation in the placid Patio, now permanently punctuated by a future event. This huge, looming shape, a sort of menhir, is made up of the helicoidal rhythm that forced it up, and is governed by the scale of its development, faithfully following the Fibonacci numbers. Here we have perfect fusion of Eduardo Marturet's dense music and the huge crystal used as a new diapason of the music that the artist finds in its interior.

¹ Musica Viva. Eduardo Marturet at the keyboard, Randall Griffin on the woods and Timothy Kotowich on percussion. The Trio made its debut in 1980 at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Caracas.