



Research > AVANT

Sound art and experimental music arrived to Spain relatively late, but over the course of the last three decades they have produced names, scenes and works that have managed to establish themselves with certain authority on the international stage.

From the most academic electroacoustics to industrial music, from radiophonic art to post-no-wave improvisation, AVANT has joined together with some of the most important performers of experimental music in Spain to retrace some of the key moments of the country's musical avant-garde, scarcely documented until now.

Each AVANT focuses on the work and career of a group project from the scene, documented and composed of two parts: the first part reconstructs the artist's context through interviews, and the second part retraces the artist's work with musical examples.

In charge of Roc Jiménez de Cisneros.

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Roc Jiménez de Cisneros (Barcelona, 1975) is a musician and composer. Since 1996, he is the core of computer music project EVOL, and his work has been released on internationally acclaimed record labels. In 2003 he began developing a series of electroacoustic pieces entitled "Punani", in which he deepens in some of the main aspects of his work, namely algorithmic composition, various synthesis techniques, spectro-morphology and the musical application of fractal geometry and other mathematical phenomena. Since 1997, he co-runs the record label and artists collective Alku with Anna Maria Ramos, as well as imbecil.net, a platform for absurd computing and binary obfuscation. He lives and works in Barcelona.

AVANT #1

Esplendor Geométrico

AVANT #1 looks at the work of the Madrid-based group Esplendor Geométrico. The first part reconstructs the group's context and contributions in the first person, with narration by Arturo Lanz and commentary by Andrés Noarbe, Francisco López and Javier Hernando. The second part follows the group's musical career through a selection of tracks that span over three decades.

01. Biography

The musical direction taken by Esplendor Geométrico is probably one of the most personal in the history of Spanish music over the last thirty years, but their work is also amongst the most isolated, ignored and forgotten. Today, the group's influence is palpable and easy to trace in dozens of productions and movements all over the world (from post-industrial in the 80s to IDM in the 90s). However, for decades this cell of musical creativity struggled to survive on the margins of prevailing trends. They were even marginalised from the Spanish underground.

Set up by a breakaway group from the electronic outfit El Aviador Dro y Sus Obreros Especializados and as a pointed attack on the naïve hedonism that pervaded the Madrid New Wave, the trio initially formed by Gabriel Rianza, Juan Carlos Sastre and Arturo Lanz (the only remaining member from this original line-up today, helped by Saverio Evangelista), began to shape their own sound universe, one formed by just three ingredients: rhythm, repetition and distortion. Musically, Esplendor Geométrico took a one-way street that started out from synth-pop, emerging from the shadow of the likes of Der Plan and Kraftwerk, only to end up as something very different, impossible to classify, in Madrid in the late-70s ("an odd bird", as Francisco López remembers today). All this was the result of an extraordinarily rapid evolutionary process: just a few months came between their early "Moscú está Helado" (one of four tracks on the trio's first demo, included in 1981 on the legendary compilation *Fix Planet - An International Record*, released by the German label Ata Tak) and the brutal *Necrosis en la Poya*, the group's first single, which provided indisputable evidence that they were moving towards the still-virgin terrain of industrial music (though this is a label that Lanz continues to reject).

It is a relatively simple matter to establish comparisons between Esplendor Geométrico and Throbbing Gristle and the rest of the British industrial music scene, a small but immensely influential movement that took the punk maxim that you don't need to be able to play to make music another step forward. Over the course of their meteoric career (TG stayed together for just six years), the Industrial Records flagship demonstrated that the so-called punk revolution had become stuck in the very same conventions that it had attempted to sweep away, and that the only possible way out was to finally break with all formal elements to embrace an idea of sound that appealed directly to the most primary human senses and instincts. In a remarkably similar way, though stripped of all theatricality, the theoretical premises borrowed from John Cage and La Monte Young, and the strong performative element that characterised COUM Transmissions' and Throbbing Gristle's shows, Esplendor Geométrico took a crude, physical approach to their rendering of sound material. A powerfully effective escape valve encased in cold, anti-image and negative spirit, in brutal contrast with most of the groups that formed part of *La Movida*, the Madrid



[Esplendor Geométrico (Arturo Lanz), live, 1984]

post-Franco scene, as well as opening the door to generations of artists who neither belonged to the world of pop nor felt particularly attached to the world of academia or the sound art movement. *Futurism my arse*, as Lanz forcefully puts it today. The fact that the group's name was taken from a futurist text (like the name Aviator Dro and titles like "Mecánica del Mundo") was purely an accident with a one hundred per cent aesthetic purpose. The vast majority of the identifying elements in Esplendor Geométrico's music — from the provocative lyrics to the Arabic music influences — respond to this same purpose, and should be seen as different pieces in an unfinished jigsaw puzzle, a quest that has so far lasted nearly thirty years, determinedly exploring rhythm as a driving force and means of expression, with an involutory purpose (a purpose not shaken even by the leap from analogue equipment to digital technology) in an enforced isolation that has cloaked the project in an almost mystic aura, creating a cult.

Today, Esplendor Geométrico are Arturo Lanz (who lives between Beijing and Shanghai) and Saverio Evangelista (based in Rome). Their recordings are released, in the main, by Geometrik Records, the Madrid label run by Andrés Noarbe (another former member of Aviator Dro), established in 1990 to provide an outlet for music by the band and other artists with similar leanings, performing the role played by the Discos Esplendor Geométrico label, now closed, in earlier years.

02. List of sound fragments

Part I

- El Aviator Dro, "Nuclear Sí" (in *Nuclear Sí*, DRO, 1982)
- Esplendor Geométrico, "Muerte a Escala Industrial" (in *EG1*, casset autoeditat, 1981)
- Esplendor Geométrico, "El Acero del Partido" (in *El Acero del Partido / Héroe del Trabajo*, Tic Tac, 1982)
- El Aviator Dro, "La Chica de Plexiglás" (in *La Chica de Plexiglás*, Movieplay, 1980)
- Almodovar y Mcnamara, "Voy a Ser Mamá" (in *Cómo Está el Servicio... de Señoras!*, Victoria, 1983)
- Parálisis Permanente, "Quiero Ser Santa" (in *Quiero Ser Santa*, DRO, 1982)
- Tino Casal, "Champú de Huevo" (in *Neocasal*, EMI, 1981)
- Alaska y los Pegamoides, "Bote de Colón" (in *Grandes Éxitos*, Hispavox, 1982)
- Alaska y los Pegamoides, "Otra Dimensión" (in *Otra Dimensión*, Hispavox, 1981)
- Esplendor Geométrico, "Necrosis en la Poya" (in *Necrosis en la Poya*, Tic Tac, 1981)
- Esplendor Geométrico, "Héroe del Trabajo" (in *El Acero del Partido / Héroe del Trabajo*, Tic Tac, 1982)
- Esplendor Geométrico, "Ven a Jugar" (in *Mekano-Turbo*, Discos Esplendor Geométrico, 1988)
- Excerpt from an interview on the radio program "Diario Pop", Radio3, 1985.
- Throbbing Gristle, "CD1" (in *CD1*, The Grey Area, 1986)
- Esplendor Geométrico, "Destrozaron sus Ovarios" (in *EG1*, casset autoeditat, 1981)
- Panasonic, "Telako" (in *Osasto*, Mute, 1996)
- Whitehouse, "I'm Coming Up Your Ass" (in *Great White Death*, Come Organisation, 1985)
- Esplendor Geométrico, "Baraka" (in *Sheikh Aljama*, Daft Records, 1991)
- Esplendor Geométrico, "Hemen Nago" (in *Polyglophone*, Geometrik, 1997)
- Francisco López, "Untitled #180" (in *Untitled #180*, Alien8 Recordings, 2006)
- Esplendor Geométrico, "Sinaya" (in *Sheikh Aljama*, Daft Records, 1991)
- Excerpt from an interview with Peter Sleazy Christopherson of Throbbing Gristle/Coil. (Dutch Radio 4 Supplement Disc 1, 2001)
- Fortunato Depero, "Canzone Humorista" (in *Pionieri del Nuovo Suono in Musica*, Fondazione Russolo Pratella, 1997)
- Filippo Tomasso Marinetti, "Sintesi Musicali Futuriste" (in *Futurism & Dada Reviewed 1912-1959*, Sub Rosa/LTM, 2000)
- Esplendor Geométrico, "Trans-Umma" (1989) (in *Anthology 1981-2003*, Geometrik, 2005)
- Esplendor Geométrico, "La La La La" (in *Kosmos Kino*, Discos Esplendor Geométrico, 1988)



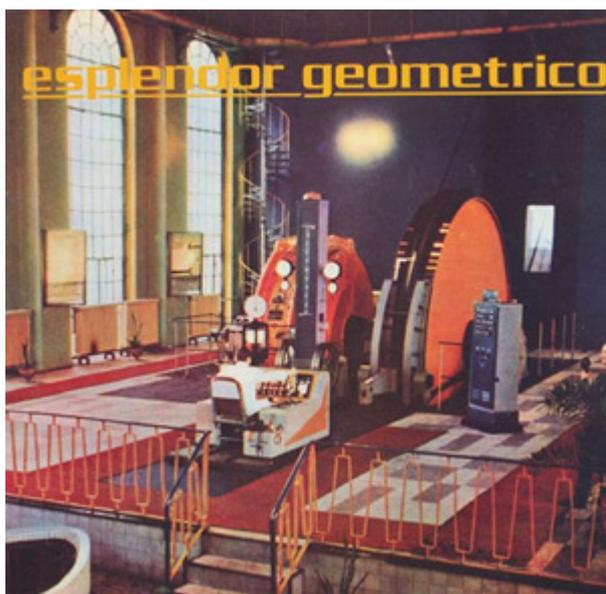
[Esplendor Geométrico (Arturo Lanz), live, 2007]



[Esplendor Geométrico, live, 2007]



[Single cover "Necrosis en la poya", 1981]



[LP cover "Mecano-Turbo", 1988]

Part II

- 00:00:15 Esplendor Geométrico, **"Moscú está Helado"** (in *Fix Planet - An International Record*, Der Plan, 1981)
 00:04:05 Esplendor Geométrico, **"Necrosis en la Poya"** (in *Necrosis en la Poya*, Tic Tac, 1981)
 00:08:15 Esplendor Geométrico, **"Ven a Jugar"** (in *Mekano-Turbo*, Discos Esplendor Geométrico, 1988)
 00:12:10 Esplendor Geométrico, **"Baraka"** (in *Sheikh Aljama*, Daft Records, 1991)
 00:16:48 Esplendor Geométrico, **"La Producción Sigue"** (in *1980-1981*, EGK, 1986)
 00:19:54 Esplendor Geométrico, **"Noising in the Rain III"** (in *1983-1987*, Geometrik Records, 1994)
 00:24:06 Esplendor Geométrico, **"Yurta"** (in *Anthology 1981-2003*, Geometrik, 2005)
 00:28:47 Esplendor Geométrico, **"Horno Fundidor"** (in *1980-1981*, EGK, 1986)
 00:31:53 Esplendor Geométrico, **"Dinamo 3"** (in *Nador*, Daft Records, 1995)
 00:37:29 Esplendor Geométrico, **"Who's that Señorita"** (in *Mekano-Turbo*, Discos Esplendor Geométrico, 1988)
 00:40:13 Esplendor Geométrico, **"Noising in the Rain I"** (in *1983-1987*, Geometrik Records, 1994)
 00:46:07 Esplendor Geométrico, **"Baobab"** (in *Tarikat*, Daft Records, 1997)
 00:51:58 Esplendor Geométrico, **"Sheik"** (in *Mekano-Turbo*, Discos Esplendor Geométrico, 1988)
 00:56:10 Esplendor Geométrico, **"Balearic Rhythms"** (in *Balearic Rhythms*, Geometrik Records, 1996)
 01:03:09 Esplendor Geométrico, **"Rotor"** (in *Mekano-Turbo*, Discos Esplendor Geométrico, 1988)
 01:07:28 Esplendor Geométrico, **"Principio"** (in *8 Traks & Live*, Geometrik Records, 2007)
 01:13:45 Esplendor Geométrico, **"Final"** (in *1980-1981*, EGK, 1986)

Nota: the tracks on this compilation come from recordings released on various formats. The differences in sound quality and feel were preserved for the sake of historical value.

03. Related links

<http://www.geometrikrecords.com/esplendor>
<http://www.geometrikrecords.com>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esplendor_Geometrico
<http://www.throbbing-gristle.com>
<http://media.hyperreal.org/zines/est/articles/freedom.html>
<http://www.unknown.nu/futurism>
<http://www.rotordiscos.com>

04. Acknowledgements

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05. Copyright note

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