

Magic (2010) for electroacoustic sounds. Duration 9' 45

Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic
(Arthur Clarke, *Profiles of the Future*, 1962).

Magic was composed during a residency in summer 2010 at the ZKM studios in Karlsruhe, Germany. It has been commissioned by ZKM institute as part of the *Giga-Hertz Production Award* I received a year ago.

It was a great opportunity for me to work for four weeks without distractions, in excellent facilities and focused exclusively on the piece. This focused schedule gave me about 300 hours of composing (divided by the duration of the piece you could get the speed of the composition process, about 3 second per hour).

The initial version of the piece was made for 32 channels and programmed through *Zirconium* software for multichannel sound diffusion. The premiere of the piece was given on December 4th, 2010 during the *Giga-Hertz Festival* at the Cubus Hall in Karlsruhe using ZKM's unique *KlangDome* diffusion system.

Magic is the third and last piece of a project entitled *Grand Piano Trilogy*-that is based upon the sound of the piano. The rest of the pieces are *Breakwater* (2000) and *Response* (2002). The challenge of the trilogy was to expand the sonic possibilities of the piano, the sound of piano not only as timbre but also a space, material, vibration, history and repertoire. *Magic* in a way aims to distill the experience of the previous two pieces and to bring a fresh approach to the piano sonorities. The sound sources of the work come from around, below and inside the piano played in various virtuosic ways. Moreover, sonic rhetoric and musical excerpts from the piano repertoire are fused within the piece's textures, among others Ravel's *Pavane*, Beethoven's *Waldstein*, Webern's *op27* and John Cage's *4' 33*.

The work incorporates the music technology tools like pitch tracking, physical modeling, music information retrieval tools and diffusion techniques. More than 600 sounds were connected on a note-to-note basis coming out of 7 hours of piano recordings, which I finally reduced to the duration of the piece. The sounds were further processed in order to achieve the virtuosity of the sound, the motion and emotion the piece required.

The title refers to a kind of experience that is fascinating, charming, excellent, marvelous, exciting, to a kind of experience that is impossible to quantify and rationalize.

Since 2010 *Magic* has been received more than 40 performances around the world. *Magic* was awarded the First Prize at the *4th Destellos International Competition of Electroacoustic Composition and Visual-music*, Mar del Plata / Argentina; and a Honourable Mention at the *Prix Ars Electronica 2011 - International Competition for CyberArts*, Linz / Austria.