

[EDGAR GUZMÁN'S *DIFFERÁNCE*]

By WILFRIDO TERRAZAS

I'm very far from being an expert on Critical Theory. I have much respect for Jacques Derrida's work and thought, but I've always had trouble relating it to music. Don't get me wrong, I'm not denying any connections. Far from it. They must be there, if someone else sees them. It's simply that, as a musician, I tend to think that it's not my mission to look for them. The fact that anybody feels compelled to look for all sorts of connections between music and the world of ideas is, in my opinion, yet another beautiful mystery of life. I have a strong sense, though, that Edgar Guzmán has succeeded in doing so, as I listen to his remarkable debut album, *Differánce*.

Before I go on, I should clarify something. In listening to music I rely, among other aspects, on a raw perception of energy flow. It manifests itself to me as a kind of elementary, intuitive understanding of the life of sound itself, as presented within the timeframe of a particular piece of music. What I mean to say is that certain music gives you the choice of *living* with and through it. That, to me, is an immediately appealing quality, one that makes that music authentic and irreplaceable. Keeping track of a wild energy flow is most certainly a patent aspect of listening to Edgar's music. There is no escaping that, once you're "in".

I met Edgar back in 2002 or 2003, when he was one of the youngest members of Ignacio Baca Lobera's composition class in Querétaro, Mexico. He had already written a few pieces, and it was evident to me that he was brilliant and utterly committed to his music. As I got to work with him (I have premiered not less than four of his works in the past years), I could witness his passion for creation, sound and music firsthand. I have no doubt in considering him now as being one of the most talented and relevant Mexican musicians of his generation.

This album, *Differánce*, is a particularly welcome token of the faith many of us have put in Edgar's work. It comprises several of his most significant pieces from the period 2004-2008. All the works contained in *Differánce* are electro-acoustic. Some of them feature the mix of acoustic instruments with electro-acoustic media (*Memento*, piano; *Apnea*, guitar; and *8¿?*, bassoon). The rest are purely electro-acoustic works (*Dogma* also features video). An aspect that all works in the album denote is an extraordinary sensibility towards sound and its treatment. Acoustical and electro-acoustical sound sources are blended in such an organic way, that they are one and the same. They build *a* sound. Edgar knows his craft, and we can appreciate the mastery of his sound constructions over and over throughout the record. But there is always the question of what to do with those sounds constructed. As I mentioned before, it is the energy flow which binds this music together and makes it into a force to be reckoned with. An intense ride which takes the listener through different stages of emotionally charged sound. It is, after all, music: Electro-acoustic music which has found an impeccable and rare balance between craft and emotion. Another beautiful mystery of life.