

5 questions, 5 answers with Juan María Solare

The following interview was conducted online in May 2013 by Mr. **Eugene Foley** in the frame of his project "**5 questions, 5 answers**" and originally posted on <http://www.5forfoley.com/music-and-entertainment/item/30-juan-maria-solare>

Since this website doesn't seem to exist any longer, I allow myself to reproduce my answers here. I hope it is OK, Mr. Foley!

The original answers were written in 2013 and I am writing these introductory words in 2020. In these seven years lots of things happened, both good and - suboptimal. Also, some of the wishes expressed in the last question are still open (concretely *Filmscapes*). It's time to make them happen!

Besides, after seven years, some of the links are dead. Please ignore them (or, if you are a real nerd, find them in the Wayback Machine / Internet Archive)

I also want to thank **Dr. Harry Price** (Kennesaw State University), who carefully read my original answers and contributed a good amount of suggestions. However, if you still find any mistakes in the following text, they are all mine, not his.

Juan María Solare

Bremen, 22 June 2020



ONE

Foley: How would you describe your sound and what do you feel makes you stand out over others in your genre?

Juan María Solare:

The keyword is *musical bilingualism*. My music sounds at the confluence between several 'rivers', *tango music* and *contemporary classical* (sometimes called *post-tonal music*) being the main 'streams'.



Picture yourself in a force field with poles -or attractors- such as *Astor Piazzolla*, *Karlheinz Stockhausen*, *John Cage*, *Franz Liszt* or *Freddie Mercury*, and you will begin to intuit my musical affinities. This mental model of a force field is dynamic: sometimes my music will sound closer to *tango*, sometimes closer to *experimental* - and often you'll find overlappings. *Art music* and *light music* are not irreconcilable extremes, but poles in a force field.

My music is not a *crossover*, it is a *synthesis*. It's not *eclectic*, since everything is *integrated*: my goal is composing music that can *harmonize antagonist forces*.

My sound is not a fusion, it's a *coexistence of diversity*. In music, differences and even contrasts can -may- coexist without contradictions; I wish this coexistence would also be achieved some day by the *homo sapiens*.

As for 'standing out over others': I strongly believe that every composer, every musician, every artist, every person, fulfills an irreplaceable function, contributes his or her own voice and produces unique results (as long as he or she is being sincere with him- or herself). If one looks at it this way, *standing over others* should be put in perspective. There is not such a thing as the 'best' composer, but a *multiplicity of singular voices* - and I call this *aesthetic richness*. Everyone is the 'best' - at something different.

TWO

Foley: What can fans expect from your live show?

Juan María Solare:

Fans can expect energy, communication, expressivity - and consolation. At my concerts, it's not only about producing and perceiving *beauty*; it's about getting moved. My goal is to *touch souls*, to strengthen people's *belief in life*, to reconnect people with their *energy source*. My shows can make you smile, but would also allow you to shed a tear. Since actually only those who can cry, can also laugh deeply.

At my recitals, concert-goers would get new -stimulating and refreshing- aesthetic experiences. Their understanding of other souls, of other cultures, of other sounds, will improve. Their stress of everyday's life would slow down. Their aptitude for mental multitasking would speed up. Their capability of correlating things and therefore -hopefully- their intelligence would increase. They will notice that vigour and smoothness are not irreconcilable. Regions of their soul will be touched that they didn't even suspect existed.

Even if nothing of this wishlist happens, at least they would have had a great time through new music. Nobody ever got bored at my concerts.

THREE

Foley: What is the main inspiration for your music? Where do you get your ideas for new songs?

Juan María Solare:

Inspiration is everywhere -- if you are aware. And if you are not aware, inspiration is elsewhere. What I mean is that inspiration is actually *inside*, within, and can be *triggered* by external events, by persons, animals, objects, situations, places, sounds, noises...

Therefore I can get inspiration from paintings, conversations, abstract forms, concrete objects, numbers and proportions, faces, books (literature or dictionaries), animal behavior, maps, being in love, being abandoned, buildings, an unprejudiced performer, red cars with the wheel on the right side, snow, tears (both own and other's), explanations of historical processes, thin air, interviews, enumerations...

Inspiration is intransitive: one is not inspired for this or that, but one is inspired 'in itself', as a state of being: a state not far from *high receptiveness* (minus the tension). In easier language: inspiration calls you to action - but *what* you will exactly do depends on you, on your life story, your motivations. Inspirational triggers help you -even force you- to look inside and discover.

Having said that, here is a more prosaic answer: often I get inspiration when *taking a shower*. Possibly the fact of being alone, confronted with myself (since composing is a dialog between me and myself), not having to do something for others, and -not only symbolically- cleaning myself from the dust collected in everyday's life.

FOUR

Foley: You moved from Argentina to Germany years ago. What inspired you to make that move? What differences did you notice between the music scenes in those countries?

Juan María Solare:

My main motivation for coming to Germany was to make a career as a musician, getting my pieces performed by first-range performers, getting royalties for my music, being able to live of my art. In Argentina, at that time (twenty years ago, in 1993), living of music was not precisely easy. In Germany it is quite difficult (there is no shortage of excellent musicians), but at least not impossible.

Officially I came to Germany to study composition (and I actually undertook postgraduate studies at the Musikhochschule in Cologne and took invaluable lessons with *Mauricio Kagel*, *Clarence Barlow* or *Karlheinz Stockhausen*), but this was not my main concern, since music education was in Argentina extremely good - and now it is even better. This is a terrible contradiction: we educate people extremely well but cannot give them a stable working position, so they leave the country. This is called *brain drain* (or *human capital flight*), and I can tell you that the price of exile is high. Nobody leaves home behind without scars.

You will be surprised to know that I first wanted to go to London. So I asked for a scholarship six times - all denied. But already at my second try in Germany, the DAAD (*Germany Academic Exchange Service*) granted me a 17-month scholarship.



About comparing the music scenes in Argentina and Germany, I find the biggest differences when comparing the *classical music* and the *tango* scenes (my niches). Due to historical reasons, the tango scene has in Argentina a first range status, while in Germany (and I would dare say in Europe) is limited to something undefined between *Latin* and *World music*, maybe *modern jazz*. Try finding a *tango CD* at a shop: they can be in any of these categories, when not just "others". In Argentina, the tango has the status of classical music. Tango is Argentina's classical music. In Germany, it's mostly entertainment music - or an accompaniment to dance.

Also due to historical reasons, *classical music* has in Germany a first range status (Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Wagner, where did all these guys come from after all?) So this scene is more developed and differentiated - and supported. Also in one of my two niches, the *contemporary classical*: Germany financed it very much in the 50's and 60's. Immediately after World War II they said to themselves "we have to start again, but we cannot allow ourselves to repeat the past; we must reconstruct buildings and bridges but also the arts and the *way of looking at things*; in music we have to make *tabula rasa* and support new ideas, new sounds that look into the future and open new paths, *new ways of thinking*". This is not a secret, of course: it was a well-planned program.

FIVE

Foley: What do you have planned for the rest of this year and where can people find out more about you online?

Juan María Solare:

In a couple of weeks, my CD *Tango Monologues* will be digital available in *iTunes* and 200+ other shops (including *amazon mp3*), and also in webradio or streaming services such as *spotify* or *deezer*). You can read and listen about *Tango Monologues* at http://www.juanmariasolare.com/CD_tango_monologues.html [and you can find my *Spotify* profile at <https://sptfy.com/jmsolare>]

Scheduled are a couple of performances in Bremen, Hamburg and other German cities (one should always take care of the local base, and not only as a musician). Scheduled is also a concert trip to Argentina (one always comes back to Buenos Aires...). I will also perform in London twice: on 17th and 18th May (at the festival *Tango Rojo*, with my quartet *Tanguedad*, <http://tangorojo.eu/artists/tanguedad>) and on 1st November at the legendary church of *St Martin in the Fields*, at Trafalgar Square, in the very heart of London. There I will play a balanced mix of *tango nuevo* and *contemporary classical music* - my ideal programme!

In July I will launch a *webradio* devoted to *Tango Nuevo*. The address is not a secret: http://www.juanmariasolare.com/radio_tango_nuevo.html; anyway, until July there is only a humble, rotating program. From July you'll find much more, with incredible good music that is scarcely promoted elsewhere. If you are a *composer*, stay tuned, since later this year I will launch a "*call for cortinas*", a composition competition for *real miniatures*: music pieces from 15 to 60 seconds each, all styles acceptable.

From August, I will conduct a German orchestra, the *Bremer Orchestergemeinschaft* (<http://www.bremerorchestergemeinschaft.de>), that in 2013 is turning 150 years old! They chose me as their main conductor. What made me particularly happy is that after the audition their comment was "we performed this piece -it was Beethoven's First Symphony- several times already, but after rehearsing with you, it became a new piece for us: we listened to things that we have never heard, you refreshed our ears." When you conduct an *orchestra*, or when you are the

leader of any group, the main concern is to take out the best of every member. You are their trigger of inspiration!

And -breaking news- I will be in the USA for the first time in 10 years. From 21st to 24th October 2013, I will be Artist in Residence at the *Texas A&M University*, giving lectures and a *concert* - theme: *tango music* in different aspects. Check closer to the date for my [activities agenda](http://www.JuanMariaSolare.com/agenda.html) at <http://www.JuanMariaSolare.com/agenda.html>

Besides, my ongoing activities, such as teaching *Composition and Arrangements* at the *Hochschule für Künste* in Bremen, or at the University Bremen (here I have conducted a chamber group devoted to tango music for more than ten years: the [Orquesta no Típica](http://www.tango.uni-bremen.de), <http://www.tango.uni-bremen.de>) and at the private *Jacobs University*. Additionally, I teach some well-selected piano pupils.

In the last months of the year I will begin working at two CDs: *Beyond Tango* (as a pianist) and *Filmscapes* (my compositions for an imaginary movie).

All these are *iceberg tips*, the things people see. Below, there is a lot of invisible work.

Half joking, half serious, I see my musical career as an enterprise, with departments of production, finances and publicity & networking. All of them play a role, all are essential at different degrees, and if one doesn't understand, accept and even love it, one could get very frustrated. *Production* means composing and practicing piano. *Finances* is teaching, negotiating reasonable fees for my concerts or composition commissions and organizing royalties issues. *Networking* persuades potential performers of my music that they will have a great time playing my compositions, implies telling radio producers that I exist, or just being around in the "scene". As for *publicity*, I think it's the Bible that states that when the light comes in, nobody hides it under a vessel or under the bed. Well, since I strongly believe in the expressive strength of my music and I think it has a potential to improve people's lives... I show it.



* JMS *

Juan María Solare

Buenos Aires (Argentina), 1966

Composer & Pianist

Links & Co.

Biography, Works Catalogue, Concert agenda, articles, recordings:

<http://www.JuanMariaSolare.com>

Listen on the webradio Spotify:

<https://open.spotify.com/artist/0sr00YxbHKRAruzYrJ6PEg>

Audio examples (SoundCloud): <https://soundcloud.com/juan-maria-solare>

Audio examples (BandCamp): <https://juanmariasolare.bandcamp.com/>

Video channel: <http://www.youtube.com/c/juanmariasolare>

Follow / Like on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/JuanMariaSolare>

Purchase music (audio) on iTunes: <https://itunes.apple.com/artist/juan-maria-solare/id471775791>

Purchase sheet music on Sheet Music Plus:

http://www.sheetmusicplus.com/publishers/juan-maria-solare-sheet-music/3003582?aff_id=565049

If you appreciate my work, consider dropping me a **line** (and eventually signing in to my **mailing list**), or joining my circle of Patrons at **Patreon**: <https://www.patreon.com/juanmariasolare>

Find Juan María Solare also on **twitter**, **reddit**, **instagram**, **DeviantArt**, **Quora**, etc.

On performance of a work by Juan María Solare,
organizers are kindly requested to:

- notify the composer in advance (we can contribute to the promotion of the concert),
- send copies of the programme (in digital format –PDF– is OK).

www.JuanMariaSolare.com/contact.html