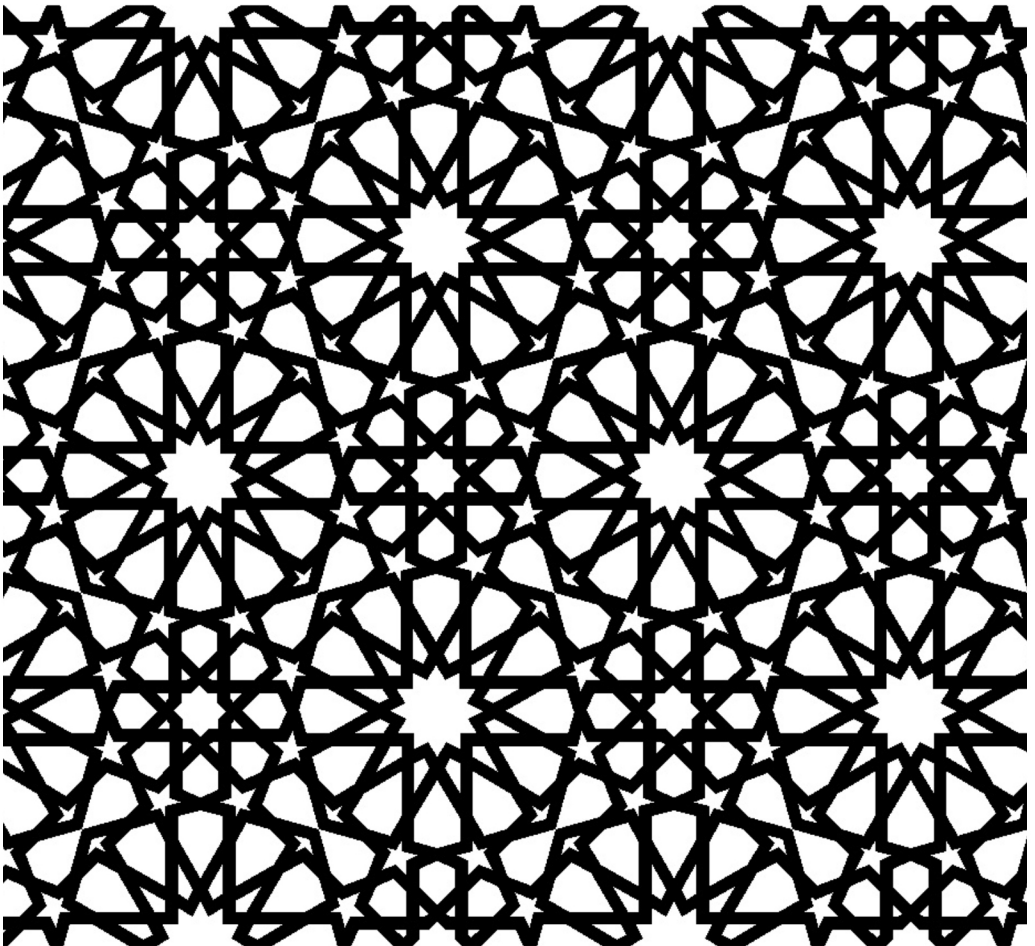
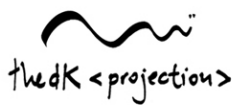


# Toranj

New Iranian electronic music  
The DK <projection>





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## foreword

**Toranj** is a recital of acousmatic pieces created by young Iranian men and women composers. The concert gives insight into the excellent moment and the splendid panorama of the electronic music in Iran, a consolidated country with an enormous creative power and sonic imagination.

Cradle, pass and projection of the oldest civilizations of humanity and diverse ancestral cultures, Iran possesses an artistic and musical tradition deeply rooted and tightly connected to a sort of spirituality, in the visual and sound realms, both of them characterized by the use of filigree, the geometrical virtuosity and the knowledge of space. This emotional approach to sonic phenomena is traceable in Iranian classical and folk music.

The music presented in the recital endeavours to make contemporaneity and tradition converge, dealing masterfully with sound through new technologies. With a deep understanding of space and a ductile treatment of sound, the music by these young Iranian authors unites rationality and emotion at sensitive levels, which are difficult to reach by today's Western composer.

Ángel Arranz

The Hague, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014

## concert program

Aso KOHZADI (1982)

**Gosast** (2014, 2 channels)

15.00

*cello and voice: Clara Riviere Visier*

Sohrab MOTABAR (1984)

**Blind** (2013, 4 channels)

05.59

Siamak ANVARI (1981)

**Toranj** (2013, 8 channels)

21.00

*[intermission]*

Donia JOURABCHI (1986)

**Chijchipa** (2013, 6 channels)

09.38

Siavash AKHLAGHI (1983)

**"Adieu DNA" Keykhosro Said** (WFS 192 speakers)

32.00

*(8 channel versions by the composer, 2014)*

*voice: Janneke van der Putten*

*TECHNICAL CONTROL AND SOUND DIFFUSION: Ángel Arranz*

## program notes

The concert is a sort of dimorphic showcase of sound art and electronic composition of the emergent new generation of Iranian composers. Mostra Sonora has the enormous pleasure to present the Spanish premiere of five representative pieces recently composed by young male and female authors from Iran.



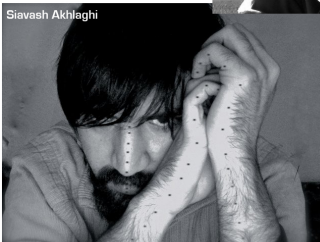
Azo Kohzadi



Sohrab Motabar



Siamak Anvari



Siavash Akhlaghi



Donia Jourabchi

Iranian electronic music could be defined by two common features: on one hand, the exquisite treatment of sounds, both in their spatial and temporal location, which is the result of a spiritualized understanding of arts and the universe. In today's Iranian electronic music (as in more classical, traditional music), the human being is always present as the transmitter of the divine, connected to a millenary cultural root that unites everything. That is clearly reflected in the ductility, delight and poetic sense with which sound material is elaborated. On the other hand, we find a deep, very meditated taste for the development of a sort of boundless, imaginatively enthralling geometry, which uses musical space at the highest degree of industry and knowledge. The western composer, not knowing these keys in depth, would fail in the best cases, lost in the efforts to master something comparable. In the worst cases, he/she would not even suspect the spectacular synthesis between modernity and wisdom which Iranian authors possess. Often, these music deploy, always in a contained manner, an essential taste for the details in the distribution of sound in the space. Such abstract strategies,

where one finds, besides mathematics, poetical and expressive attributions] have an full influence on the listener both at the symbolic and the functional impact level.

We find these gestures in the use of the voice, the text and the instrumental sound sources from the first piece of the recital, ***Gosast***, composed in 2014 by Aso Kohzadi [Teheran, 1982]. In the words of the composer himself, "*Gosast means being ruptured or cut in Persian. The primary idea of the piece came to me from a poem. The narrative of the poem created the imagery picture of a girl cutting her hair and her cello's strings. All the sound materials and structure of the piece are inspired by the creation of imaginal listening which connects audience to the hidden layer of narrativity in the music that could be interpreted as subtext and make them closer to composer's imagery pictures and feelings and thoughts by recognizing the sound's sources and conceiving the relations of musical events during the piece.*"

Composed for two channels distributed in four, we find in the Kohzadi's language a taste for connecting literature and electronics. On one hand, the composer scrutinizes, from a poetical-conceptual point of view, the expressive potentialities inherent to the Persian language. Her piece examines aspects of the rich history of Persian literature, which is for Kohzadi creative stimulus, starting point and a vaste *substratum* of compoundable materials. On the other hand, another equally important aspect in Kohzadi's *oeuvre* is the reinvention of a sort of narrative based on the study of historical voice repertoire and electronics, as well as the techniques, resources and compositional strategies. To a certain extent, *Gosast* proposes to merge both interests [language and electronics] in one, where, besides the intervention of the voice, instrumental materials [cello materials, to be exact] are incorporated, creating a cohesive well-stratified mixture of different sound natures.

A sort of layering can be found as well in the next piece, ***Blind*** by Sohrab Motarab [Teheran, 1984]. The title itself implies the procedure that the composer uses to create the piece. After having generated a series of materials, Motabar imposes himself a *sui generis* distribution of the materials during the composition process, using audio sequencer ProTools. The basic premise for such distribution (which the composer follows strictly) is to avoid, during the composition process and the listening of the piece, establishing any relationships between these materials and the whole which is being created. The only allowed variable is to modify the position of each material literally in the darkness, without any reference whatsoever to the whole, but rather activating other creative processes in the imagination which have apparently nothing to do with listening, but rather are specific to the sense of orientation. Motabar

aims to make sound arise by using cognitive tools, generally very subsidiary during the composition process, stimulating intuition during the temporal structuring, just as visually impaired people would try to describe or sculpt a physical object with their hands.

*"I have not refuge in the world other than thy threshold. My head has no resting-place other than this gate."* These verses by the 14<sup>th</sup> century Persian poet Hâfez are interwoven in the so-called *Ardabil* rug, whose manufacture dates from 1540. As if it was a Persian carpet, the composer Siamak Anvari (Teheran, 1981) releases in *Toranj* a plethora of spatially harmonic figures which literally invade the space through sound. Anvari's music evidences his previous training as a designer of Persian rugs, inasmuch as he cultivates highly stylized geometrical developments which serve as controllers of the routes of the material through space. Such patterns, taken from the world of the rug design, and used as a sort of guides for sound spatialization (patterns which, on the other hand, are also base for composition matters such as pitch generation, rhythm and timbre), impose, to a certain extent, a new semantic field in Anvari's musical reflection, where concepts such as proportion, symmetry/asymmetry, repetition, juxtaposition, color combination and general structure are part of the composer's daily life.

The concept of time in Siamak Anvari's music is perhaps the most crucial aspect, more important than, in this order, mathematical figuration itself and the sophisticated underlying composition machinery, since the passing of time makes a radical difference in the use of pictural-abstract symmetries (geometry) and pictural-symbolic symmetries (sound). While the computer-generated visual symmetries reveal themselves at first glance in geometrical conglomerates, these require naturally from the passing of time for their sound/spatial realization, whereby the listener internalizes the listening as a geometric narrative all senses as a sort of figured geometrical story. As with a performance of Chezch Black Theatre, this pressing need to establish a measured, gradual character of illusory choreographic development of the sound materials, moved without any apparent threads and elevated to the category of quintessential characters with logical, closed roles, and therefore necessary in the plot, has as ultimate purpose the piece's intimate disclosure.

Somehow, time here does not play a role as a work table or representation surface on a computer monitor, but rather it is understood as a process to sculpt space, modulated through different speeds assigned to each trajectory. It is about a circumspect music, extremely organized, where the pleasure of listening oscillates between an exquisite external self-contained figuration and a complete gestural

sensuality absolutely primary in its interior.

That the exquisite organization of sound materials can also be a passport to transport oneself virtually to different ecosystems, is obvious in the piece by Donia Jourabchi, ***Chijchipa*** (2013). The work is a virtual recreation of the jungle by means of a field recording made at the Chijchipa region, in Mururata, Bolivia. Diverse stormy sounds and different rhythms produced by the biological diversity of the places structure progressively a sound narration which relays in a minimum edition of the materials, which goes not go further than the filtering filtering and stretching of the signals over time.

For Jourabchi, the identity of sounds is extremely important, not only merely constrained by their own locations, but also to their physical-acoustic conditions, which are understood basically around their geographical context. This relationship between sound and its natural habitat allows to establish a sort of linguistic code able, in turn, to generate an expressive-formal language. That the consequence of understanding the relationship with sound dynamically, using regulations motivated by its location, propagation medium, form, space and listening position, beyond any fixed frameworks, generates necessarily a discursive variety, and that the conditions of the acoustic medium are not the same in an equatorial region in Cambodia, in the Antarctic surroundings of Bransfield Island, or in a desert area in Gobi, are evidences upon which Jourabchi establishes analytical and aesthetical correspondences, being these reasons enough for sound curiosity as to construct an autopoietic discourse and invite the audience to a sensorial immersion.

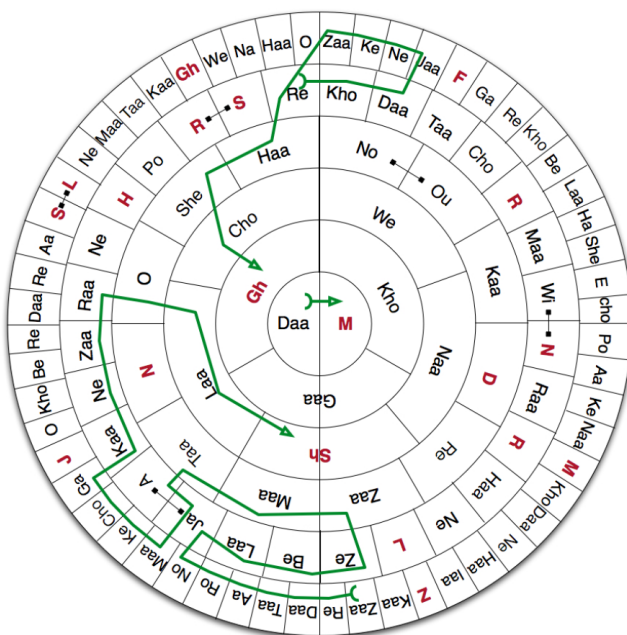
Alluding again to voice and textuality as compositional elements, the program is closed practically as it started: with a high-flying imaginary travel with the piece by Siavash Akhlaghi, ***“Adieu DNA” Keykhosro said***. Originally designed for a 192 Wave Field Synthesis (WFS) speaker system, and adapted by the composer himself to the octophonic set presented tonight, the composition of the piece counted with the collaboration of the multifaceted Dutch artist Janneke van der Putten, who lent Akhlaghi her voice as sound material.

Self-declared traditionalist, Akhlaghi's music legitimizes that sentence so dear to the Spanish composer Paco Guerrero: *“Lo que no es plagio, es tradición”* (that which is not tradition is plagiarism). The piece is an imaginary interpretation in which different characters or identities participate, such as Iranian classical music and symbolic-conceptual sources from the Sufism, which refers, as could not have been otherwise, to the idiomatic idiosyncrasy peculiar to a composer which is mindful of his own cultural



roots. By collecting texts of four Iranian poets of different times and regions of the country (processing them as basically elements of syllabic articulation), Akhlaghi proposes not so much to renew of classical elements of the Iranian culture, but rather to confer his creations with a strong cultural roots and attention to the past as the only possible way of evolution.

Far from establishing a continuous narrative thread, the piece is based in the chronicles of an Iranian historical figure from the Kayanian dynasty, king Kai Khosrow, a legendary character elevated to the status of demigod and part of Persian mythology. The story tells us that Kaikhosro raised up to take revenge from his grandfather, Afrasiab, who has killed his father, Siavash. But after killing Afrasiab he decides to wipe all devils and demons off the world. Exactly after his final victory and at the moment when he could begin his peaceful and powerful monarchy, he makes a weird decision. He decides to kill the last demon, which he was himself.



Beyond the more or less whimsical legends, Akhlaghi's piece betrays his background as an architect. This is quite recognizable in the organic structuring of the materials, a rich pre-compositional work and astonishing engineering skills, all of them typical qualities of Iranian architecture. The author adopts symbolic/geometrical structures from the Sufi world, which he renders into abstract machineries that form part of a complex compositional, highly sophisticated compositional system, responsible basically of the

composition of the sounds, its intimate modeling at the level of digital sound processing, and its extremely rich position behaviours in space.

## BIOS

**Aso KOHZADI** was born in June 1982 in Tehran, Iran. She has played violin since eight. She accomplished Bachelor studies in Music and Master studies in Composition at the Art University of Tehran. She was rewarded for her Master project from the university. She studied the Sonology course in 2011-2012 in the Royal Conservatory of The Hague and currently she is a MA aspirant in Sonology at the same institution.

**Sohrab MOTABAR** (Tehran, 1984) started his career by playing Electric Guitar and Bass in local rock bands. In 2002 he entered Tehran conservatory to study jazz guitar, but during the third year he found his interest in composition. Currently he is studying Sonology in Royal Conservatory of The Hague.

**Siamak ANVARI** was born in Tehran, Iran in 1981. He studied composition at the Art University of Tehran. He has composed many instrumental pieces in which Iranian music plays an important role. After being interested in electroacoustic music, he moved to The Netherlands to study at the Institute of Sonology, Royal Conservatory of The Hague. He is currently studying a Master in Sonology at the same school. His music has been performed in Iran, Netherlands, Spain and Germany.

**Donia JOURABCHI** (1986) is a sound explorer, an ongoing practice that takes various forms depending on the situation. She is trained as a sound engineer (SAE, Brussels) and followed courses in realtime sound processing, interface design (CECN, Mons), electroacoustic composition (Artzoyd, Valenciennes) and Sonology (Institute of Sonology, The Hague). She intervened in and realized diverse artistic projects, worked as sound engineer and provided workshops. As a member of the collective Stichting Centrum (The Hague), she contributes to a freezone that provides space for activities related to sound, music, design of instruments and visual works. Since 2011, she collaborates with Taufan ter Weel on Hoorbare Herinneringen, a series of projects investigating the railway area in Delft, its urban context in relations to its sound environment. In her work, Donia explores the acoustic environment, the surrounding social activities and sculpts textures of sound as a physical matter.

**Siavash AKHLAGHI** (1983) graduates in 2004 in Arts & Architecture at the Azad University Azad of Tehran. He devotes to composition and continues his studies realizing in 2013 a Master in Sonology at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague centered in algorithmic composition. Nowadays he lives and works in Tehran.

## Ángel Arranz

curator and technical realization



**Ángel ARRANZ** [ES/NL, 1976] is a composer, sonologist and musicologist living at The Netherlands. His music explores the interchangeable assemblage, hybridization between acoustical instruments and electronics and sound spatialization. Several territories define his work: the utilization of time as a constructional matter through applied mathematics; spatiality in physical, structural, notational and DSP domains; organicism by means of the study of morphology of the natural forms, fractality, stochastic and biological processes; affinity to deconstructivism and the Baroque universe; the interdisciplinary approaches to other arts, especially the relationship between architecture and music.

During his formation in Spain, he was a private student of Alberto Posadas. In 2006 he fixed his residency in The Netherlands, accomplishing *with distinction* a Master in Sonology in 2008 at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague. He received lessons from Paul Berg [algorithmic composition], Kees Tazelaar [voltage control techniques and analog studio], Johan van Kreijl [Max/MSP], Paul Jeukendrup [sound engineering] and Richard Barrett [advanced composition]. Since 2008 Ángel Arranz is officially an associated researcher at the Institute of Sonology of The Hague working as a freelance composer.

Ángel Arranz **develops since 2006 an innovative non-harmonic compositional system denominated sinusoidal deconstruction**, whose efficacy is comparable to the diverse worldwide classical harmonic systems. The system allows joining and combining various instrumental parts into an organic whole given a composition, whatever is the number and configuration of its parts.

Interdisciplinary investigations at the Institute of Sonology upon historical aspects of Philips Pavilion at the Brussels World Fair in 1958 have orientated Arranz since 2006 to deepen into the relationship between architecture and music, **creating various series of compositions inspired by/based on/worked within avant-garde winery buildings**, designed by renowned architects and architectural bureaus in Spain, such as Richard Rogers, Frank Gehry or KonkritBlu Arquitectura, among others.

In 2012 his **8-channel work *Extrusion* was selected to represent the Spanish Federation in China** at the Musicacoustica Festival in Beijing.

In 2013, **the prestigious musicadhyo dedicated a portrait concert in La Casa Encendida, Madrid**, where it was performed the series of pieces entitled *sonic architectures* together with Beatriz del Saz (video), Akane Takada (piano), Josetxo

Silguero (bass saxophone) and Ralph Krause (cello), as well as the tape/performance for mobile phones *callingHiggs*.

This same year, **the Festival Peñafiel Milenio 2013 commissioned him two pieces to celebrate 1000 Years of the Foundation of Peñafiel City [1013 – 2013]:** *Toposonia*, a massive sound intervention that uses the whole urban layout of Peñafiel, and *DK <protos>* a series of three compositions inspired by the building Bodegas Protos of Peñafiel designed by Richard Rogers, to be performed within the building. Both commissions were addressed to respectively the first and last concerts of the festival.

His pieces have been performed in The Netherlands, Italy, Portugal, South Korea, China and Spain. He has realized commissions for Ensemble Modelo 62, Smash Ensemble; Josetxo Silguero, Ralph-Raimund Krause, Raphaël Simon, Carlos Gálvez; Bodegas Protos, Bodegas Gumran; City Hall of Peñafiel and Orchestra of University of Valladolid; playing at venues and festival such as DNK - Smart Project Space, Incubate Tilburg; Symposium Music Spaces The Hague [NL]; Synthese Festival Guarda [PT]; Università degli Studi di Salerno [IT]; Fundación Phonos, Festival Sonar MACBA Barcelona, Festival AMEE de Valencia, Festival Synchresis – Valencia, Festival de Primavera USAL, Quincena Musical de San Sebastián, Festival SON – musicadhoj, Festival Peñafiel Milenio 2013 [ES]; Busan International Electronic Music Festival [KR], Musicacoustica Beijing [CHN].

He has collaborated as a journalist with several specialized magazines in Spain, such as Sonograma Magazine, Sul Ponticello and Espacio Sonoro. He regularly lectures on new music and contemporary creation.

Together with the visual artist Beatriz del Saz, Ángel Arranz founds in 2009 The DK <projection>, an independent multi[inter]disciplinary group based in The Netherlands.

[www.angelarranz.com](http://www.angelarranz.com)

## The DK <projection>

The DK <projection> is an independent multi[inter]disciplinary group whose creative stimulus is the use of technology as a vehicle of musical and artistic transformation.

Algorithmic composition, fixed media, live electronics, live video performance, video installation, sound installation, photography, architecture and documentary film, are some of the multimedia expressions explored within an organic whole, starting from the reinvention of musical genres that play a role in visual arts, applied technology and sound spatialization.

Further information at [info \[at\] thedkprojection.com](mailto:info@thedkprojection.com)

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