

Although *Manipulação* is scored for only one instrument and lasts barely over two minutes, it has taken me more than three years to actually compose it. And on some levels, I've been working on it even longer, perhaps since my childhood...

I've spent virtually my entire life in New York City, but I was born in Miami, Florida, and I returned there to live on and off for a two-year period when I was in elementary school. Apart from figuring out that I never wanted to live anywhere else besides New York City for the rest of my life, I picked up a few other lifelong personality flaws during that time.

It was the early 1970s, and my mother sent me to guitar classes at a strip mall about two miles away from the trailer park where we were living. The guitar is the only instrument I ever studied formally with a teacher, and to this day it is the only instrument I can play somewhat that I feel uncomfortable playing.

Before I was 10, I was barely aware of the world around me much less the musical world—until Nixon was forced to resign I thought the Watergate scandal referred to a broken pipe at a hotel—but music has a way of creeping in to the subconscious whether wittingly or unwittingly. For years afterwards, even long after realizing I was a composer (for better or worse), I was never able to write a piece that wasn't infested with major seventh chords, much to the chagrin of anyone who held the European classical music traditions of the 18th and 19th centuries in high esteem. But, no matter what they said, I just couldn't dislodge those wonderfully emotionally manipulative chords which were ubiquitous on 70s AM radio (Paul McCartney's "My Love," "Day By Day" from the cast album of the Broadway musical *Godspell*, "My Cherie Amour," "You Are The Sunshine of My Life" or just about anything else ever done by Stevie Wonder, etc).

In fact, the negativity toward major sevenths made me uninterested in classical music until I heard Philip Glass repeat them relentlessly in *North Star*, which I was first exposed to on a PBS television documentary as a sophomore in high school and safely back in New York City. A few years later I was a Columbia undergrad (in the early '80s) where liking Glass was not a way to curry favor with the guardians of dodecaphonic atonality. At the time it felt like an intractable divide, but nowadays many composers including myself treat minimalism and serialism as two branches from the same tree.

So much has been made about dodecaphony "emancipating dissonances." But really jarring dissonances can be found throughout music composed long before Schoenberg (B.S.) "heard voices from other planets." The crucial difference is that dissonances from the B.S. era almost always resolved. Dodecaphony made it possible to create dissonances that didn't resolve while still playing it "by the rules."

I've always wondered if major sevenths have been so reviled by classical music traditionalists because they're not resolvable. The developmental nature of the standard repertoire is all about resolution. From a functional tonality standpoint, a major seventh chord (a major triad played simultaneously with its tonic's leading tone) is dissonant and dissonances have to be resolved, yet major seventh chords sound just fine where they are. They actually sound like they shouldn't go anywhere else, except to maybe another major seventh chord and resolving them any other way sounds awkward (which is probably why the inverted major seventh chord at the end of the development section of the first movement of Beethoven's Eroica, one of the chord's few manifestations in the "legit" canon, still sounds startling 200 years after he wrote it).

While major sevenths are out-of-context in functional tonality, the 015 trichord (essentially a major seventh chord missing either its third or fifth depending on whether presented in original or inverted form) is one of twelve possible three-note combinations in atonal theory. And, as the late Dutch composer Peter Schat so beautifully demonstrated both in his music and his magical diagrams, a series of rotations of the 015 trichord, like 11 of the 12 possible trichords can encompass all 12 pitches of the 12-tone equal-tempered octave. Which is to say that the entire octave can be contained in a progression of 4 chords, in this case all major sevenths, giving them a place to go to while asserting tonality, albeit an ever-shifting one, at all times. This little four-chord progression, which is the basis of every pitch contained in *Manipulação*, is a "tone row" yielding non-atonal serial music.

Since moving to Inwood, the Northern-most neighborhood on the island of Manhattan, friends constantly joke that I now live in Canada. While a recent visit to my home by some friends who are actually from Canada forever disabused me of that notion, Inwood is certainly further uptown from "uptown" as "uptown" is from "downtown." *Manipulação* is the next phase of my "beyond uptown" music (or "so-far-uptown-it's-downtown" music), another attempt at reconciling the seemingly irreconcilable. While the entire pitch content is derived from a tone row, the rhythm is strictly bossa-nova. This is in part a tribute to the great Brazilian singer-songwriter Caetano Veloso who, while on stage at the Beacon Theatre in NYC's Upper West Side a few years back, professed his admiration for Arnold Schoenberg. It is also a realization that if Inwood were truly in Canada, then "downtown," based on proportional distances, should probably be much further south than Miami, possibly somewhere in Brazil!