**Gustavo Valdivia 03/28/2012 Gramophony**

Tomás Tello is one of the most innovative Peruvian musicians nowadays. In this essay we will show that his music constitutes a great example of how recording, instead of condemning music to become repetitive and tedious, can be used to overcome the limits of the current hegemonic musical practices in Peru.

Deliberately using an unexpected and unusual combination of acoustic instruments and materials, Tello recreates different soundscapes with Andean reverberations. In his music, traditional Peruvian instruments, aging tape recorders, metal objects, bells, remote controllers, eight bit keyboards and digital and analog synthesizers; are lyrically fixed employing inexpensive, old, but very sophisticated phonographic techniques.

Furthermore, most of the time Tello plays, cuts, samples, loops and couples his musical pieces live, which impregnates his music with a plangent, intimate but paradoxically fragile character. Moreover, the juxtaposition of the live and sampled instruments creates dense and very complex layers of sound that reconfigures the way we usually listen to Andean instruments.

Tello’s piece *Los dibujantes de las líneas de Nazca* [The painters of the Nazca lines] is a clear example of this. This piece evokes a multi-colored soundscape with Andean reminiscences, while bringing us into a larger cosmos-like environment. With artistic precision and noticeable dedication, Tello creates a dense collage of subtle ethereal sounds and mysterious rhythms that produce altogether an extremely introspective experience.

*In Los dibujantes…,* Tello explores the idea of phonographic repetition -by carefully placing samples combined with expert sound manipulation and editing- to a very large temporal, spatial and cultural scale. In fact, Tello compiles the structure and form of his song using samples of an Andean flute, an AM radio and his own voice; which are manipulated through several parallel inter connected synthesizers ("non-contact interface" (AirFX), reverb, delay, flanger, loop station and octave). This allows the basic and relatively simple sounds to expand lyrically far beyond of the socio historical musical limits of their original sources.

Tello’s fascination for the possibilities that recording techniques offer for expanding the range of acoustic instruments limits, while deliberately creating music that is always unique, gives us a new vision of the Andean pre-Hispanic music, powerfully embedded but liberated from its folkloric and stereotyped representations.

As we have seen, Tello‘s musical conception provides new ways to produce and experience music. But most importantly, it can be considered one of the most serious efforts of building a new musical framework capable of recognizing the specific elements of the different indigenous musical traditions in Peru.