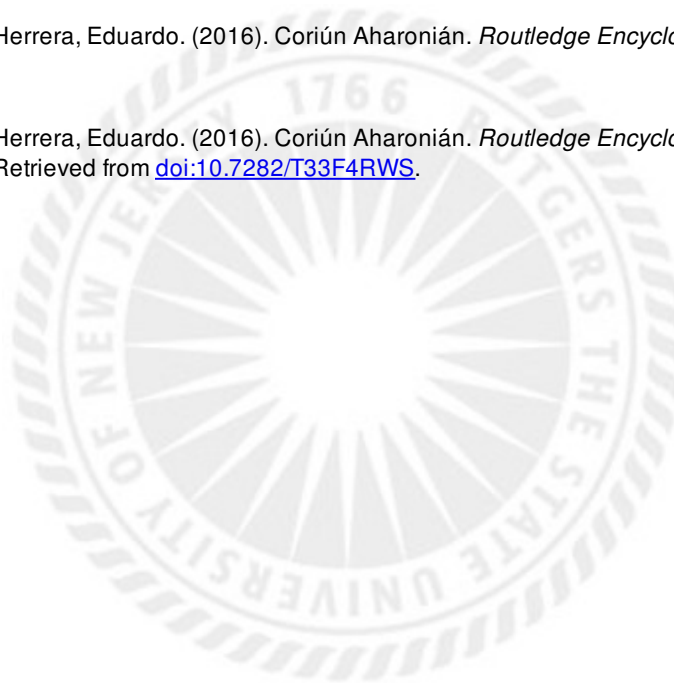


## Coriún Aharonián

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Aharonián (Kharputlián), Coriún (b.1940)

By Eduardo Herrera

[Insert photo here: 630 - coriún 12-i-06.jpg Photography by Graciela Paraskevaídis]

Coriún Aharonián was born in Montevideo, Uruguay on August 4, 1940. His parents Nubar Aharonián and Victoria Kharputlián arrived in Uruguay in 1927 and 1928, part of the massive exodus of Armenians due to the genocide at the hands of the Turk government at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Aharonián's early interest in music was supported by his family, and as a five-year old he begun studies in piano with Adela Herrera-Lerena, which lasted from 1945 until 1959. From 1955 to 1957 and from 1966 to 1969, he studied with the Uruguayan composer Héctor Tosar. Between 1964 and 1966 he worked on his musicological formation with Lauro Ayestarán. Aharonián received a fellowship to study at the *Centro Latinoamericano de Altos Estudios Musicales* at the *Instituto Torcuato Di Tella* in Buenos Aires in 1969-1970, but before the end of 1969 he postponed the fellowship and traveled to Europe to further his studies. With funding from the French government, he studied at the conservatory of Paris and at the *Groupe de Recherche Musicale* (GRM) between 1969-1970. With the help of another scholarship, this time from the Italian government, he studied in Venice with Luigi Nono (Italy, 1924-1990). Aharonián attended the Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik in Darmstadt in 1970 and 1974. He received lessons from several composers such as Gerardo Gandini (Argentina, b.1936-2013), Vinko Globokar (France-Slovenia, b.1934), György Ligeti (Hungary-Romania b.1923-2005), Gordon Mumma (United States, b.1935), Folke Rabe (Sweden, b.1935), Christian Wolff (France-United States, b.1934) and Iannis Xenakis (Greece-France 1922-2001). From his composition teachers, the strongest influences came from Héctor Tosar and Luigi Nono.

Aharonián has taught composition of classical and popular music in Uruguay, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Paraguay, Spain and Venezuela among others. He has also been a teacher of musical folklore, organology, and music history and has had small but successful career in choral conducting. As a music critic, he is frequently invited writer for local news outlets, and his texts tend to be short but poignant. Aharonián's musicological work have earned him an important place in the Latin American musicological scene, appearing regularly in *Latin American Music Review*, *Revista Musical Chilena*, *Pauta*, and *MusikTexte*.

Aharonián, together with Ariel Martínez (Uruguay, 1940), Conrado Silva (Uruguay, 1940-2014), and Daniel Viglietti (Uruguay, 1939) founded the *Núcleo Música Nueva de Montevideo* in 1966. The *Núcleo Música Nueva* has been during its existence a launching pad for new composers, a frequent organizer of new music concerts, and a meeting point for most of the musicians interested in contemporary music in Montevideo. He was also a major force behind the *Cursos Latinoamericanos de Música Contemporánea* (Latin American Courses for Contemporary Music), a series of courses that took place between 1971 and 1989 in Argentina, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Since 1971 Aharonián has been involved with the non-commercial, independent record company *Tacuabé*, providing high-quality recordings and editions both of art and popular

music. The company has become an example for other similar experiments in Latin America. Aharonián's advocacy for the works of his teacher Lauro Ayestarán and the Argentinean musicologist Carlos Vega (Argentina, 1898-1966) has been central for the preservation and reception of their work.

Aharonián has been invited as a resident artist for the *Groupe de Musique Expérimentale* in Bourges, the *Elektronmusikstudion* in Stockholm, the *Akademie der Künste* in Berlin, and the city of Freiburg. He has received commissions from the "Warsaw Music Workshop" quartet for the "Warsaw Autumn" Festival in 1980, the Ensemble *Aventure* in Freiburg in 1991, the Donaueschingen Festival in 1993, the *Internationale Hanns Eisler Gesellschaft* in Leipzig in 1998, of the city of Köln in 2001 and from the *Deutschlandfunk* together with the Ensemble *MusikFabrik NRW*. He lives in Montevideo, and is the honorary director of the Centro Nacional de Documentación Musical Lauro Ayestarán.

As a composer and musicologist, Coriún Aharonián has shown relentless concern for issues of politics, the role of the artist in society, imperialism, and the vindication of less-favored social groups. He has developed an iconoclastic musical style marked by its austerity, a non-discursive syntax, the use of microvariations instead of extended developments, the use of non-mechanical reiteration, and the constant presence of silence as structural element. All of the above make Aharonián's music challenging, disquieting, violent, and provocative. One of the foremost characteristics of Aharonián's work is the self-imposed economy of materials. In his compositions one finds what others have called the 'technology of the poor' or 'aesthetics of the poor', characterized by the innovative use of limited musical resources. Compositions such as *Pequeña pieza para gente que superó la angustia* (1973) for piano, *Gran Tiempo* (1974) for solo electroacoustics, *Los cadadías* (1980) for clarinet, trombone, piano and violoncello, and *¿Y ahora?* (1984) for piano solo, exemplify an extreme austerity in the selection of materials. *Digo, es un decir* (1979) and *Los cadadías* (1980) are also examples of Aharonián's avoidance of teleological musical discourse, and instead, the use of blocks of materials that, although highly expressive, do not show any predictable directionality in their structure or form. The lack of transitions between sections is typical of what Aharonián has called 'hard-edges', for example in the electroacoustic composition *Secas las pilas de todos los timbres* (1995) or in the orchestral composition *Mestizo* (1993). Most of Aharonián's instrumental works explore the tensions embedded in the use of non-mechanical ostinatos or short reiterative figure, use of extreme dynamics (both loud and soft), and the use of silences, all exemplified in the ensemble compositions *Una carta* (2001) and *Cachó la barreta* (2004).

## Timeline of Life

1940: Born

1945-59: Piano studies with Adela Herrera-Lerena

1955-57: First period of composition studies with Héctor Tosar  
 1964-1966: Studies musicology Lauro Ayestarán. Later becomes field assistant for Ayestarán  
 1966-69: Second period of composition studies with Héctor Tosar together with Ariel Martínez (Uruguay, 1940), Conrado Silva (Uruguay, 1940), and for a short period, Daniel Viglietti (Uruguay, 1939).  
 1966: Creation of the Núcleo Música Nueva  
 1967: Influential first encounter with Luigi Nono  
 1967-1973: Uruguay starts a shift towards authoritarianism, a preamble of the upcoming military dictatorship  
 1969: Fellowship at the Centro Latinoamericano de Altos Estudios Musicales at the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella in Buenos Aires. Leaves before the end of the fellowship.  
 1969-1970: Studies in France at the GRM and the Conservatory  
 1970: Studies in Venice, Italy with Luigi Nono  
 1970: Attends the Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik in Darmstadt  
 1971: Creation of the record company Tacuabé (labels Tacuabé and Ayuí)  
 1971-1989: Cursos Latinoamericanos de Música Contemporánea  
 1973-1985: Military dictatorship in Uruguay  
 1974: Attends the Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik in Darmstadt  
 1984-1985: Resident artist in West Berlin's Künstlerprogramm  
 1984: Resident composer in Stockholm at the Elektronmusikstudion  
 1991: Publication of Héctor Tosar, compositor uruguayo  
 1995: Resident composer at Berlin's Akademie der Künste  
 1997: Resident composer, Institut für Neue Musik in Freiburg  
 1992: Publication of Conversaciones sobre música, cultura e identidad  
 2004: Publication of Educación, arte, música  
 2007: Publication of Músicas populares del Uruguay  
 2009: Opening of the Centro Nacional de Documentación Musical Lauro Ayestarán  
 2012: Publication of Hacer música en América Latina

### Timeline of Works

1966 Pequeña pieza para gente que sufre la angustia en la soledad or Pequeña pieza para piano I [for piano solo]  
 1966 Hecho 1 [for 4 actors in wheelchairs]  
 1967 Música para aluminios [for 3 percussionists on aluminium pieces and tape]  
 1968 Música para tres [for violin, flute and piano]  
 1968 Lorenzaccio [for orchestra]  
 1969 Una estrella, esta estrella, nuestra estrella [for small choir, harpsichord, bandoneón, guitar, piano, and double bass]  
 1969 Que [for solo electroacoustics]  
 1972 Música para cinco [for alto flute, French horn, trumpet, trombone, and drums]  
 1973 Pequeña pieza para gente con angustia colectiva or Pequeña pieza para piano II [for piano solo]

1973 Pequeña pieza para gente que superó la angustia or Pequeña pieza para piano III [for piano solo]  
 1973 Dos canciones sobre poemas de Idea Vilariño [for popular female singer, guitar and bandoneón]  
 1974 Homenaje a la flecha clavada en el pecho de Don Juan Díaz de Solís [for solo electroacoustics]  
 1974 Gran tiempo [for solo electroacoustics]  
 1976 ¡Salvad los niños! [for solo electroacoustics]  
 1978 Esos silencios [for solo electroacoustics]  
 1979 Digo, es un decir [for 3 flutes, 3 oboes, 3 clarinets, 1 trumpet and 2 double basses]  
 1980 Los cadadías [for clarinet, trombone, piano and cello]  
 1981 En el sombrío bosque un canto un pájaro [for non conventional instruments]  
 1984 ¿Y ahora? [for piano solo]  
 1984 Apruebo el sol [for solo electroacoustics]  
 1990 Gente [for flute, clarinet, oboe, bassoon, French horn, trumpet, trombone, double bass, marímbula, and steelpad]  
 1993 Mestizo [for orchestra]  
 1995 Secas las pilas de todos los timbres [for solo electroacoustics]  
 1998 Una canción [for flute, clarinet, viola, cello, and piano]  
 2000 Lluve sobre el Rio de la Plata [for guitar]  
 2001 Una carta [for flute/piccolo, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, French horn, trumpet, tenor-bass trombone, tuba, violin, viola, cello, double bass, piano, guitar and percussion]  
 2004 Cachó la barreta [for six percussionists]  
 2006 ¿De qué estamos hablando? [for bass and piccolo clarinets, bassoon, and cello]

Selected writing by Aharonián:

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