

Berklee College of Music

**AMOR8:**

**A/V PERFORMANCE WITH ELECTRONIC MUSIC, COLOMBIAN INSTRUMENTS  
AND RYTHMS**

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Degree of Master in Music Production, Technology and Innovation

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July 2019

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## **Abstract**

Amor8 A/V Performance Project is a master project which includes a live act combining original music compositions in synchronization with live video content using programs such as Resolume Arena 6, Max 8, After Effects and Ableton Live 10. These compositions will be performed by the artist “Diego Amorocho” by using a live set and a visual projection on stage. The musical compositions will unite traditional Colombian rhythms with electronic music and modern mind set and techniques, using sampled and real instruments from the Caribbean region with beats like Cumbia, Bullerengue, Chande, Terapia and Andean rhythms. This thesis main objective is to reinvent the personal brand of “Diego Amorocho” into a hybrid all rounded artist, innovative performer and producer.

*Keywords:* andean, bullerengue, caribbean, chande, colombian, terapia.

## **Acknowledgements**

This whole journey has been invaluable for me. Back in Colombia, after graduating from a Bachelor's degree in music with a minor in music composition and production, I have been working as a composer and producer for several years and worked in different studios, but I always wanted to continue my education in Music Production. For many years I had been searching for a Master degree in Music Production from programs all around the world on the Internet, some of them were focused on specific courses and others just on audio production. Finally, I found the MPTI program in Berklee Valencia years ago, but as time passes by the idea of studying the Masters was becoming more distant. Last year I decided to risk everything and take the chance to live this incredible experience. I would like to first express my gratitude to all my family, my wife Diana Maria Guana for her total support, Billy Herron who encouraged me to take this adventure, Mónica Giraldo who also believes in me as a producer and artist.

I also would like to thank all the Berklee Faculty and staff specially Ben Cantil and Pierce Warnecke for widening my vision about innovation and Technology, and Nacho Marco for his feedback and support as my advisor. I am very grateful also with the MPTI fellows, Collin Watson Jr. Carlos Egas, and specially Dr. Soo Wincci for her coaching and total support during the whole process and all my classmates. David Chivatá for his support and great friendship, Vassilis Malamas for his unconditional collaboration and for helping me to accelerate my understanding of electronic music and building an audio visual team for my Culminating Experience.

## **1. Introduction**

This project started with a selection of the musical material including compositional ideas, musical references, visual images, live videos and artists in relation to the concept. The development of this concept is extremely important and it will be developed further by improvising and experimenting with different genres while providing it space to the creation of new material by incorporating new elements in Live Electronic Production, Nonlinear Structures in Real Time, Live Video Music Production and Analog Synthesis classes. The whole project will result in an audiovisual performance integrating all the new skills acquired and developed ideas according to the visual aesthetic.

## 2. Review on the State of the Art

One of the most important outcomes in this project is the development of the artist Amor8 own voice represented by the different genres combined with visuals.

Colombia, which is currently experiencing a boom in the orange economy, one of the flags of the government of President Iván Duque is projected as the largest music exporter in Latin America, according to an article of the magazine “Dinero”<sup>1</sup>. Colombia is a musical melting pot of genres, instruments, and artists. Indeed, with the country’s incredible cultural diversity comes a wealth of amazing music inspired by folkloric styles, modern sounds, and global genres.<sup>2</sup> That’s why some bands are being known for worldwide mixing Caribbean music from the Pacific Coast region and the Andean region with electronic music.

The different stages such as preproduction, production and final presentation of the process are described in this section. An important aspect for the pre-production stage is the songwriting process. Most of the songs in this project came from a band background and in order to integrate it into a solo live performance and small ensemble for electronic music was a great challenge. Every song was recorded in its original version in a simple format. This includes guitar and voice with the

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<sup>1</sup> EFE, "Colombia el mayor exportador de música en América Latina, "Revista Dinero"; September 16, 2018, <https://www.dinero.com/economia/articulo/colombia-el-mayor-exportador-de-musica-en-america-latina/262115>.

<sup>2</sup> “Chris Bell, “The most exciting new bands in Bogotá Colombia”. “The Culture Trip”. August 17, 2017, YouTube, <https://theculturetrip.com/south-america/colombia/articles/the-most-exciting-new-bands-in-bogota-colombia/>.

purpose to analyze different elements like song structure, harmony, beats, basslines, groove, melodies, tempo, lyrics.

Parallel to this process is the live video collecting and creating of images in accordance to the project. The video concept at this moment will concentrate on exploring different visual artists work like Steve Haman<sup>3</sup>, Tas Visuals<sup>4</sup> in order to start building the images of the project in coherence with the music proposed.

After the pre-production process, a prototype performance was tested to analyze the technical challenges and conceptual ideas before proceeding to the financial budget stage. This process was documented from the start till the end.

It is also important to consider interviewing similar artists and producers via mail or personally in order to learn from their perspectives and advices.

The production process of the A/V Performance demanded various rehearsals and revisions of the audio and video material. A trial and error method guided the process of synching the videos within Max using Vsynth, Ableton Live 10 and Resolume Arena 6. Performance is the crucial point of the project and it revealed the viability and skills required for the final presentation as this format

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<sup>3</sup> Steven Haman, “Incedigris/globular,” Animation by Steven Haman featuring the artwork of Incedigris, tune by “Glubular”, September 29, 2011, YouTube video, 1:30. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWSmRjhqSGI>

<sup>4</sup> TAS Visuals, (Full dome Preview), visuals by “TAS”, audio by Ollie Bassweight, April 8, 2016, YouTube video, 2:38 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCSbzk1s-p4&t=81s>



is new to the artist and it took time to practice the set, in order to decide the most suitable way to perform it.

The final defense was a real live performance with the collaboration of a VJ (Vassilis Malamas) performing with the content that was provided by Amor8.

The musical references came from some well-known artists like Quantic<sup>5</sup> in order to create the music of the pacific coast of Colombia with electronic music. Ghetto Kumbé<sup>6</sup> for the use of Afro Colombian beats, La Chica<sup>7</sup>, for the live performance and the experimental electronic production of her songs. All of them are well known artist in the national and international scene for music traditional rhythms and Folklore with electronic music.

### **3. Plan of Action & Projected Timeline**

Preproduction consisted of the gathering of all the information and development of the concept before setting the performance, the CE (culminating Experience) proposal and finishing the project from the classes in relation to the project. The production process includes the setup

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<sup>5</sup> Quantic & Nidia Góngora, “Que me duele,” Directed by B +”, September 29, 2011, YouTube video, 4:20. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFEC9XeAMW8>

<sup>6</sup> Ghetto Kumbé, “Dagbani Dance” Feat “Zongo Abongo” and the “Busy Twist”, YouTube video, 3:53, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=3&v=AxK0igfWJhk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=AxK0igfWJhk)

<sup>7</sup> La Chica, “Sola” Live @ red house studio, Directed by Pauline Pénicaud, YouTube, 3:54 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HadAxAbHkJanuary>

for the performance, rehearsals and planning of the show, adjusting the technical and artistic aspects of it and in the final stage presentation consisting on the preparation and correction of the final presentation. Both plan of action and projected timeline are shown in the appendix section.

#### **4. Deliverables**

The project includes the deliverables of tracks composed for the live performance and a video showing excerpts of the project, a 4 -7 video documenting the performances that will serve as material for online promotion.

#### **5. Resources**

##### **5.1 Equipment.**

The following equipment that I used required for this project includes: An Apple Mac Laptop with the technical requirements with the following software: Ableton Live 10, Resolume Arena 6, Adobe Premiere, Max 7 and Max 8 versions, Native Instruments Komplete bundle, Avid ProTools 12, and iLok. A midi keyboard such as the AKAI APC 25 and APC 40 to map and control the software parameters, an audio interface Focusrite Scarlett, a video projector, a video screen, a 16-channel mixer, 2 PA Cabinets, professional headphones (Audio Technica ATH-MX50), SDHC Memory Card, Class 10, 32GB minimum, a Canon EOS 4000D digital camera, 2 external hard drives for backup purposes.

## **5. 2 Personnel**

The musical arrangements for the track Penas were made by Nic Wheeler, who add to the project a different approach in beat programing, given his experience and ability to create modern sounds.

Dr. Soo Wincci for the purpose of video production filming and editing and also helping through the process and the performance.

Vassilis Malamas in electronic music arrangement, coproduction and additional mixing of the tracks, also VJing at the final defense performance.

The budget will be attached in the appendix which includes the costs of the resources

## 6. Description

“Amor8” is a personal brand by Diego Amorocho to create and develop an audio visual performance as an artist and music producer. The main purpose is to return to the performance side after years of doing it with a different genre like rock and pop, but this time with an innovative concept combining Colombian rhythms and Instruments from the Caribbean coast and electronic music. Three tracks with different tempos and rhythms were performed live: 1) “Penas”, 2) Jaguar 3) Neon. Two more tracks compose for this CE were included in the Video documentation, “Sol” and “Andean Dreams”. The creation of original visual content is also a goal and a challenge of the project.

### 6.1 Music Production

For the creation, composition, editing, mixing and audio live performance Amor8 uses Ableton Live 10 software, in combination with virtual instruments like Serum and Massive, creating original presets from the sound design class portfolio pieces and assignments. A hybrid combination of analog hardware like the Prophet '08 synthesizer module for the track “Jaguar” adds character to the arpeggiators and bass instruments. Also, a great concept seen in the sound design class called “Idea Jams” complements and enhances the third track called “Neon”. A max for live device called Picó<sup>8</sup> is used in addition to samples from Colombian Rhythms

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<sup>8</sup> "Picó - Colombia's Sound Systems in A Free Ableton Pack." Ableton. Accessed July 04, 2019. <https://www.ableton.com/en/blog/pico-new-global-beat/>.

## 6.2 Music Genre & Influences

The main genres used for this CE are "Bullerengue" (Colombian rhythm derived from the Cumbia) for the track "Penas" combined with elements of Trap and Hip Hop, programmed by Nic Wheeler, Cumbia and house music for the track "Jaguar" and Techno mixed with a rhythm called Terapia and Chandé.

Whereas the main influences for the traditional genres are artists like Petrona Martinez and Totó La Momosina two main references of Folklore in Colombia and Latin America also Batata III, a legendary drummer from San Basilio de Palenque in Bolivar, Colombia.

Andean music was also a genre of interest in this project having Calle 13's song "Latinoamerica" as a key reference track, that was called "Andean Dreams" and was included in the video documentation.

For the electronic music references Amor8 has researched a vast quantity of artists and genres finding as inspiration specific influences artists like Populous and Soulwax, discovering in Techno music a style suitable for combining both traditional and electronic music.

### 6.3 Live Video Production

The aesthetic proposed for this performance is based in Op Art known as Optical Art that is based in optical illusions.<sup>9</sup>

The video content was created mostly in Resolume using sources with different effects, thinking in a visual theme for each track. For example for the first track “ Penas” the visuals are more geometric and close to the Op Art. For the second track of the performance the visual theme was about circles and the figure of the Jaguar in the track also called “Jaguar”. For the final one the idea was to develop a sequence based in geometrical objects combined with circles.

Resolume Arena 6 is being used For Live video (fig. 1) by triggering session clips via midi from Ableton Live and mapped to different clips and layers. Subsequently, it is being projected and mapped via Resolume.

Different parameters from Ableton such as filters and delays are controlled by CC Messages (fig. 2) with a Max for Live device called “CC\_map8” inserted on a channel in Live and sent to Resolume and syncing them with the effects of the software via midi giving the performance a more audio reactive response and synchronization.

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<sup>9</sup> Tate. "Op Art – What Is That?" Tate Kids. Accessed July 04, 2019. <https://www.tate.org.uk/kids/explore/what-is/op-art>.

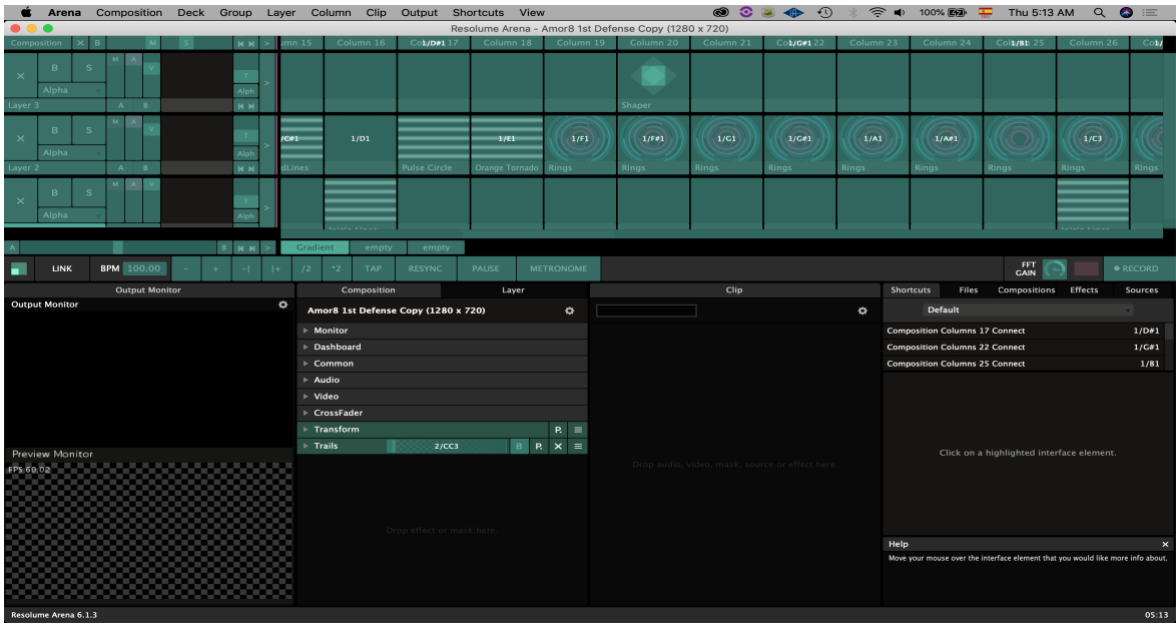


Figure 1. Midi Mapping on Resolume



Figure 2. CC Messages to Resolume

## **7. Innovative Aspect**

### **7.1 Changing from a producer background into artist and performer**

After years of working as a composer and producer making music for advertising, documentaries, producing bands, Diego Amorocho is innovating on his career to become an audio-visual Performer and artist. This aspect changes his approach to work with technology and to collaborate with different artists.

### **7.2 Avoiding Visual and Sonic Clichés**

By searching for a different aesthetic far from the common use of colorful and tropical references for Caribbean music, Amor8 seeks for a minimal and artistic proposal based on geometry, black and white, based on Op Art, Kinetic Art and Moiré Patterns

### **7.3 Keeping it consistent**

By not following one specific genre in electronic music but keeping the concept consistent according to the fusion on styles between organic and electronics music.

## **8. New Skills Acquired**

### **8.1 Technology & Software**

#### **(i) Ableton**



For Music composition, arraigning, Live Performance, sound design, songwriting, mixing, synchronization with Resolume, all the project was done with this software. Because of the versatility of Ableton to work with visual sync and also max for live applications.

**(ii) Resolume**

Not only the triggering, syncing and projection of the visual content was done with it but mostly all of the content was created and done by the real time generative visual using its own effects and combining different layers until the final images were designed as desired.

**(iv) Adobe Premiere Pro**

This was the main video software to edit all the videos from the different performance and also for the journey video documentation.

**(v) Max 7. Vsynth**

This software is essential for experimenting with different possibilities of creating visuals. The geometrical images and patterns for the visual concept of the project were done in this software.

## **8.2 Soft Skills**

**(i) Audio Visual Performance**

The most important skill acquired during the process. From developing and idea musically and in a way translating it in visual terms, defining a visual aesthetic coherent and to tell a compelling story. Performing Live, using technology as a tool and as a main instrument, in the case of controllers and laptops. A new way to keep innovating as an artist and developing the concept of Amor8.

## 9. Challenges

Amor8 has been a project with many challenges and questions. A huge part of the work has been a continuous research and composition of many tracks as possible to find out what kind of music genre or style would fit into the concept and which kind of art would be proposed for the visual complement. After that many situations were related to troubleshooting and how, where and when to make the performance. Various issues with the laptop came up and as a result the video from Resolume Arena 6 wasn't working smoothly. The long learning curve to develop a visual composition without having a strong background in design or a visual arts demanded long hours of trial and error, trying different software's like aftereffects, vsynth and Resolume. The final decision was to generate all the content in Resolume using generative content starting with simple concept like lines and circles and then making it more complex by experimenting with different effects from the same software like trails, feedback, edge detection, noise and mirror.

The real challenge was in the performance itself without performing before any electronic music and coming from the rock and pop performance background. A series of rehearsal and videos were very useful to understand the role of the electronic music performer along with the lucky opportunity to participate in the "Transitions" ensemble that helped the project to gain knowledge and the experience needed to start growing.

Finally, another important fact was the participation and second opinion of a VJ in the performance, that changed the perspective of the project. Working and collaborating with someone else put things in perspective with the challenge of keeping the concept despite of other interesting ideas. The result was very surprising and took the performance to another level.

## **10. Future Plans**

Amor8 is the beginning journey of a music artist and producer A/V performance career. The starting plan is to find a label which is interested in this kind of music. Secondly to find a publisher for licensing the music for films and Tv. Thirdly find a booking agent and start touring and playing in clubs and festivals aligned with the project. Consequently, start working on a second EP.

## **11. Conclusion**

In conclusion, this is an A/V performance and artist producer personal brand experiment and development. In this project, various elements of traditional instruments and rhythms from Colombia, world music instruments and electronic music were combined to create a new hybrid experimental world electronic music for Amor8. The most important outcome was the creation of a concept as a result of researching, iterating, failing and succeeding, being consistent and never giving up even in the most difficult and challenging circumstances. This is a project that will keep evolving and has a solid base to build a A/V performance with the ever-changing technologies and will keep innovating constantly sonically and visually.

**Appendix A. Plan of Action and Projected Timeline**

	Preproduction	Production	Presentation
Research, Concept and CE Proposal 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Draft	Nov 1 – Nov 28		
First tracks and video prototypes	Nov 12 – Dec 21		
Ableton Performance Rehearsals and composition		Jan15 -June	
VJ Rehearsals and content development		Jan – June 25	
Video presentation		May 1 – June 30	
Correction and Advising for the final presentation		June 24	
Final Presentation			June 27

**Appendix B. Budget and Cost**

ITEMS FINAL	PROPOSED	REAL	ACTUAL	AFTER
			INITIAL RUNNING	1 MONTH
<b>Materials (Disposables)</b>				
2 Hard Drives.	\$100	\$0	\$0	
Memory Card	\$30	\$0	\$0	
<b>Equipment</b>				
<b>Hardware</b>				
Mics (Rental)	\$200	\$0	\$0	
Audio Interfase (purchase)	\$500	\$0	\$0	
Electric Guitar	\$2000	\$0	\$0	
Midi Keyboard Controller	\$150	\$0	\$0	
Laptop	\$2500	\$0	\$0	
Camera (Rental) 10 days	\$1200	\$0	\$0	
Projector (Rental) 10 days	\$1000			
<b>Software</b>				
Resolume Arena 6	\$150	\$0	\$0	
Ableton Live 10	\$700	\$0	\$0	
Max 7	\$59	\$59	\$0	
Max 8	\$59	\$59	\$0	

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**Personnel**

<b>Arranger</b>	<b>\$100</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Beat Programming</b>	<b>\$100</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Bass Player</b>	<b>\$100</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Assistant</b>	<b>\$ 50</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$8998</b>	<b>\$118</b>	
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