Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Jessica Flores for her support throughout the past 6 years. She helped me materialize my ideas, even when they were questionable or bad, and made them shine and more compelling to our audiences. It is true that she once welcomed me in her office with a baseball bat in hand, pointing it against me. She was a bit skeptical when I proposed a piece in which I would run against the wall repeated times, and thought about many ways to amortize my impact. For that gesture, and for so much more, thank you.

Caroline, shubie, thank you for your kindness, love and support. Thank you also for all the good fights and collaborations we were not — and hopefully will always be — involved with. Can’t wait to defend and go to the beach with you!

Stefani, I’m so grateful for our friendship and all the good stuff we created together! I hope our flying brooms bring us to where we need to be so to continue working together!

Ine, thanks for your friendship and for trusting me with your guts, your vulnerability and your strength. Cheers to that and much more in the future!

Matt, can words ever be sufficient to explain how grateful I am that our lives crossed paths so beautifully? If my words could only have half of the power that you have to move people with your artistry and charisma… I would be frigging Virginia Wolf!

F**************c! LAUNDRY!
Thanks Kyle. For your implacable good mood.

Felipe, I can’t believe I actually manage to make you say “me-me-me-me-me” on a microphone, non-stop, for 20 minutes, while showing graphic photos of femicide and lecturing you on feminism in front of an audience. This was more than sufficient to keep our friendship tight. Obrigada de coração!

To all XX co-organizers: Thank you! Sometimes you were a pain in my Latina bunda (I’m sure I was a pain too!), but I definitely learned a lot from all of you. We definitely made some waves. Please don’t stop!

Katharina, thanks for opening an entire new world of possibilities to me! Your classes, your approach towards music and your energy were definitely one of the most eye-opening experiences I had at UCSD.

Steve, I must say that there was, for the longest time, in the grad student bunker/office, a sticker in the fridge saying “Schick happens”. I’m not sure they meant it in a positive or negative way, but my thought was: “that’s true; he definitely makes things happen!” I truly admire your capacity to master so many different things, and I’m very honored and grateful for all the opportunities you granted me.

Rand, thank you for your guidance, support, expertise, diplomacy and artistry. Thank you for the necessary reality checks deposited in my sometimes idealistic, sometimes delusional account. But most of all, thank you for being so good at nurturing my creativity, in the best way possible. I’m very thankful that you embarked in this half-decade long journey with me, trusting me all the way through it.

Roger, I wish I could say I’m sorry for how I behaved in your analysis class in my first year at UCSD. I was very antagonistic to your approach and very vocal against it. But I can’t say I’m sorry, because… I’m not. It was only because of this adversity that I could actually understand how admirable you are. I always thought that the grandiosity of a person is not seen when the circumstances are favorable, pretty or fresh; the grandiosity of a person is truly seen when they’re moving through unexpected adversities. I’m very thankful for your mentorship, for your relentless support, for always being there for me, for establishing a rigorous, nurturing, safe and creative pedagogical environment in which I could thrive. I will bring with me, forever, your example of relentlessness and uncompromising commitment to music and pedagogy.

Thanks to Kyle Blair, Michael Matsuno, Bob Zelickman, Lauren Jones, Michael Jones, Hilary Young, Shayla James, Kiyoe Wellington, Willindo Terrazas, Judith Fiamm and so many more for performing my music!

Thanks Teresa, Ilana, Mari, Madison, TJ, Alex, Matt for your artistry and friendship, and for making this night possible. I hope we can make music again soon!

Thanks Jeremy for your expertise and support tonight!

And thanks Luke, for being mountain when I was storm.
(also, thanks for hosting a party for me!)

Everyone is invited! Post-concert party at 8322 Via Sonoma, apartment 75.
I. Watching
This piece is composed of fragments of 4 songs: I'll Be Seeing You, Every Breath You Take, About Beauty, and the Internationale.

I. Watching
This fact that music is not and could never be a language, combined with the (perhaps naive) desire of “communicating” and creating meaning through music, and with the (perhaps futile) necessity of creating semi-reducible, seductive, solitary and semi-rational structures of abstractions, led me to the attempt of composing a piece that could be a reconstructed version of a language that was never spoken, never read, never written, but only felt (do we “feel” language?)

I resent language for being a perverse, flawed and insufficient tool to produce meaning; I resent music for being so incomplete and yet so self-sufficient.

II. About Beauty

I recognize that for Americans serving overseas during World War II.


III. Permanent alien (and native friends)

It's been eight years since I became an alien. In 2011, when I moved to the United States, I learned that I was an alien—more specifically, a resident alien for taxes purposes (that's how foreigners who pay taxes in the US are identified). I tried to take the breaking news with lightness—which isn't my strongest characteristic. Although I felt alienated by bureaucratic processes, my American friends and most of my American colleagues made me feel welcomed. We learned about idioms and stereotypes regarding our cultural backgrounds, we learned how to overwrite harmful stereotypes, we learned about similarities and differences between our countries and we learned how the idea of “the other” was more of a construct than a reality. However, I never got over the fact that I had to sonically “deface” my name in order to make my name understood in the US. When I said my name with my Brazilian accent, people would never get it.

So, I started saying “it's Fer-nan-da, like the ABBA song (but the feminine version)”. Those who didn't know the song would keep looking at me with a blank face; those who knew the song would usually laugh. Latinx knew exactly what I was talking about, regardless of their awareness of that pop tune.

My grandfather was a Fernando. My progenitor is a Fernando. And as praxis in Brazil, the oldest son of a couple should carry on the tradition and perpetuate the all-so-often violent patriarchy. But ops… it's a girl.

I. Mestiça
As a child growing up in Brazil, it took me a while to fully understand why people would call me and categorize me as “Mestiça”. Activism passed, I understand not only the politics of the term, but also its social implications: I wasn't considered Brazilian enough nor Japanese enough, even though I was born and raised in Brazil. The Japanese have a similar term, “haha”, adapted from English: half. This idea of being “half”, too Brazilian for the Asians and too Asian for the Brazilians, permeated my perception of belonging: neither from here, nor from there. I was 6 years old when I first heard the most remarkable question of my life. A girl my age asked me: “Do you see the way I do, or do you see everything like this?” (she put both index fingers at the outer corner of her eyelids and pulled them outwards, showing me how my eyes looked like to her eyes). I stood at the same spot for a long time after she laughed at me and ran away to play with the other kids. I remember listening to my knees squeaking, tired of supporting my stillness, of waiting for my brain to satisfactorily answer that question. It never occurred to me, until that very moment, that people would see the world differently; I had no way to prove to her how I see and I had no way to see with her eyes. I asked my mom: “do people see the world the same way? do I see the world like this?” (I pulled my eyelids and saw a distorted mom). Her almond shaped eyes dropped a tear and no answer came out of her mouth. It was also around that age when I first learned a piece that used only the black keys of the piano (“The Rickshaw Man”, a rather stereotypical “oriental” pentatonic piece for children, composed by a white man who probably didn't see the borderline racist nature of his work). Mestiça combines simple finger patterns used in children's piano music, interleaved with the difference, clash and mutual assimilation of the “black keys” and the “white keys” of the piano.

II. Uprooted

The main inspiration for Uprooted was the feeling of not belonging; not belonging to the place of departure (a home country, for example) and not fully belonging to the place of arrival either. Another important component is the idea of just her and impermanency — the joy and angst caused by this “to-from” trajectory. This piece is intended to sound as if sound waves were adrift, uprooted, as if lost in oceanic waves, sometimes calm, sometimes violent. I wanted to explore and elicit the delicate physicality of microtonal beating patterns, to highlight the friction and rich eccentrics of the performers working together. A semi-improvised was worked on to increase increase gestural flexibility, to facilitate simultaneity of different rhythmic patterns that don't share the same beat or the same metronome marks, and to use sonic (but non-verbal) communication between the performers. Every iteration of this movement should sound slightly different. Although there is a lot of room for improvisation, there are components that should be followed strictly: the instruments used; the duration of each section; the physical trajectory of the performers in the hall; the overall sonic environment. Movement is one of the most important aspects of this piece. I wanted to make visual the idea of sound in movement, and make sonic the idea of bodies in movement.

III. Impermanence

The piece is composed of fragments of 4 songs: I'll Be Seeing You, Every Breath You Take, About Beauty, and the Internationale.

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