

ARTURO PARRA

GUITARIST AND COMPOSER



Arturo Parra's initial music and guitar studies were self-guided. He went on to complete his undergraduate work in his native Bogotá, Colombia and to co-found Colombia's first guitar quartet, Espiral, as well as Dúo Contemporáneo de Guitarras. From 1981 to 1989 he gave concerts solo and with these two groups, offering a contemporary repertoire dominated by premieres.

In 1989, Arturo Parra moved to Montreal (Canada), where he obtained master's and doctoral degrees in music from the Université de Montréal in 1991 and 1998, respectively. Early on, his interest in expanding the sonic boundaries of composition led him away from the performer's usual role as purveyor of the standard repertoire. His works feature some fifty new guitar playing techniques that have become part and parcel of his aural signature.

His innovative playing techniques are complemented here by a variety of "vocal expressions". The two "voices", guitar and guitarist, fuse to produce a kind of sound poetry suggestive of a "cinema for the ear" - no screen or projector needed.

Furthering his exploration of the interactions between guitar and other modes of expression, Arturo Parra has taken part in interdisciplinary collaborations involving literature and spoken word (Paroles Égales), wind instruments (Parra/Maheu), electroacoustics, video, dance, theatre/mime, and poetry.

He is currently producing a series of "sound portraits," commissioned works in which the subject's life path and characteristic features are represented in sound.

"Guitar as you've never heard it, cross my heart." – *Octopus* (France)

AWARDS AND DISTINCTIONS

Award, National Composition Competition "Ciudad de Bogotá" 2008; National Award for Excellence in Education 2008 (Colombia); Selection, ICMC 2005, Barcelona (Spain); selection, 12th Annual Florida Electroacoustic Music Festival, 2003 (USA); finalist, Disc of the Year Opus Awards, 2002 (Canada); Voir Magazine International Contemporary Music Top 10, 2002 (Montreal); Audience Appreciation Award, 4th International Electroacoustic Music Competition, 2001, São Paulo (Brazil); finalist, "Musica Nova" International Competition, 2001, Plzen (Czech Republic); selection, 28th Concours International de Musique et d'Art Sonore Électroacoustique, 2001, Bourges (France); finalist, 2nd "Paso al Arte" National Composition Competition, 1999 (Colombia); two-time recipient of the Colombian national composition scholarship (1995, 1997); commissioning, composition and recording grants from the Canada Council for the Arts and the Conseil des Arts et des Lettres du Québec..