3 thousand RIVERS

VOICES IN THE FOREST

a multimedia opera for chamber orchestra, singers, percussion and contemporary musical instruments, composed by Victor Gama

commissioned by:
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
Prince Claus Fund

Waira Nina Jacamijoy, singer, dancer, Caquetá, Colombia
3thousandRIVERS: voices in the forest

'... a multimedia opera, sung through the stories of people living in the rain forest. Through sound, music and video, you will be carried deep into the rain forest to experience its beauty, but also the threats facing its environment and its peoples...'

Christa Meindersma
director, Prince Claus Fund
2013 Awards Ceremony

3thousandRIVERS: prelude was initially commissioned for the 2013 Prince Claus Awards Ceremony at the Royal Palace in Amsterdam.

In 2014 it received additional funding from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and its full production premiered on the 6th of May 2016 at its Grand Auditorium in Lisbon.
‘Victor Gama’s multimedia opera ‘3thousandRIVERS’ is a visual and aural journey across the rain forests and its cultures. Art and music are perfectly intertwined, featuring a unique combination of opera, cantata and traditional Angolan and Colombian song framed by a compelling visual narrative that unfolds deep in the forests of Colombia. The delicate sounds from Gama’s hand-crafted instruments are complimented by the beauty of their unusual shapes and forms, resulting in a truly multi-sensory experience that is as aesthetic as it is harmonious.”

Selene Wendt
The Global Art Project, Oslo
SYNOPSIS - HEARING VOICES

‘3 thousand RIVERS: Voices in the Forest’ offers a contemporary perspective on the environmental and social impacts of the current wave of industrialization underway in the rain forests of the Chocó, the Andes and the Amazon in Colombia and Brazil. For four years Victor Gama collaborated with local communities and artists who live along some of the main rivers in the Putumayo, Caquetá, Chocó and Pará to hear the voices of those who suffer these impacts first hand. The work was developed in close cooperation and support by environmental and artist’s organizations Amazon Conservation Team Colombia, Mas Arte Mas Acción and Flora ars+natura based in Bogotá, Putumayo, Caquetá and Choco.

ORIGINS

‘3 thousand Rivers’ is the fourth large composition in the series ‘Música para Ríos’ started by Victor Gama in 2006 with ‘Rio Cunene’ exclusively written for the Kronos Quartet which premiered at Carnegie Hall in 2010, ‘Rio Cubango’ commissioned by the Prince Claus Fund and the Amsterdam Fund for the Arts, premiered at Het Concertgebouw, and ‘Vela 6911’ commissioned by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and staged at Harris Theater, with support from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.
Central to the text and score is Roberto Franco's book 'Cariba Malo', the late Colombian anthropologist who traced the history of the Yuris, an indigenous community who lives in voluntary isolation in the Puré National Park in the Amazonas Department in the Colombian Amazon. The book describes a forced encounter by a white settler in 1969 which went viral in the international media, and their struggles to avoid any further contacts with the outside world, from the seventies of the last century to the present, when they saw themselves in the midst of the interests of missionaries, hunters, loggers, guerrillas, gold miners and drug traffickers.

The score divided into three acts lasts approximately 90 minutes, and the action takes place along the great Amazonian rivers of these regions like Putumayo, Caquetá, Tocantins and others on the Pacific coast like Napi and Timbiqui.
CHARACTERS

Idia: Yetzabel Arias Fernandez - soprano
Menesthos: Betty Garces - soprano
Idia and Menesthos are two Oceanides who sing the nature of the forest, their rivers and their current dramas and simultaneously assume the role of some of the testimonies of the forest dwellers. They represent the resistance and the worldview of the peoples originating in the Amazon and who have lived there sustainably for thousands of years.

In Greek and Roman mythology, Oceanides are the ocean nymphs, daughters of Oceanus and Thetis and inhabit the deep and inaccessible seas. The Oceanides had 3,000 rivers as their offspring, thus embodying the fecundity of the water that feeds all animals and forms the sap of all plants.

Kianda: Té Macedo - soprano and marimba
In Angolan mythology Kianda is the divinity of waters, rivers and oceans. Kianda is the link to African traditions and cultures that have settled along the Pacific coast of Colombia.

Auka: Waira Nina Jacanamijoy traditional Inga chant
In the Inga worldview, an Amazonian people currently living in Colombia, the Aukas are invisible beings that inhabit the forest. The Aukas can observe all without being seen, are transparent therefore, and only manifest and become visible when they so wish.

Caraballo: Jaime Lopez Kiriyateke Murui-Muina traditional song.
In a first contact with a tribe in voluntary isolation in the Park of the Pure River in 1969, a family was made hostage by the army and retained for months in La Pedrera. Caraballo, the head of the family (named by his captors because he resembled a famous Colombian boxer) managed to free himself and his family and return to the tribe’s malouca through the intervention of a French journalist and pressures from the international community. Since then he has never been seen again and his community remains in voluntary isolation avoiding any contact with the national society and strangers that infiltrate in his territory.
In 3thousandRIVERS we've made extensive use of surround sound in a 6 + 1 channel configuration using QLab to sync video and audio to a click track sent to the conductor.

Introduction
Scene 1 (8' 00'')
A Dragon on the Loose

First Act: Chocó, the Pacific

Scene 2 (6' 09'')
The Dance of the Minotaur (in G major)
Scene 3 (4' 04'')
Forest Diaries # 1: Conversations about life and work (G major)
Scene 4 (5' 55'')
The Dart Frog's song (in C major) 5' 55'
Scene 5 (3' 17'')
A House in the Forest (in C major)

Scene 6 (6' 41'')
Forest Diaries # 2: Conversations about survival strategies (in C major)

Second Act: the Putumayo

Scene 7 (4' 58'')
Ai Mamã Bambuco with Té Macedo (C major)

Scene 8 (9' 04'')
Dos Torres - Lagoa de La Cocha
Scene 9 (7' 48'')
La Reina (in B major)

Third Act: the Caquetá

Scene 10 (8' 55'')
Wairasasha
Scene 11 (7' 52'')
Cariba Malo (in C major)
Scene 12 (7' 45'')
The cornered Jaguar
Scene 13 (2' 16'')
Eclusa (in G major)
Scene 14 (3' 15'')
Muina-Muira Dance (Jaime)
Scene 15 (4' 52'')
This is my Kingdom (in G major)
INVITING A PRODUCTION OF 3thousandRIVERS

Requires:
12 musicians of a local orchestra or our own.

Travel:
a group of 14 people which include singers, percussionists, composer/musician, conductor, stage director and technicians.

Technical rider, budget, more production details: upon request.

Jaime Lopez Kiriyateke, singer from the Murui-Muina community of Puerto Berlin, Caquetá (Colombia)
VOICES IN THE FOREST
The complete piece has a total duration of approximately 90 minutes.

INSTRUMENTATION:
one flute;
two trombones;
one basson;
two violins;
two violas;
four cellos;
two percussionists (tradicional percussion, bass drum, tubular bells);
two musicians (Victor Gama, Salomé Pais Matos) playing toha, acrux and dino.
five singers.
VICTOR GAMA

"the event’s most impressive and resonant mix of sound, vision and concept was Instrumentos, an exhibition/performance in the beautiful Paul Hamlyn Hall by Angola-born inventor and musician Victor Gama. Each instrument is a beautiful object; each implies a different audio-visual journey that’s both ethnic and high tech."

The Guardian

Victor Gama (Angola/Portugal) is a composer, performer, designer of innovative musical instruments as well as an electronics engineer. He holds a BSc in electronics engineering and an MA in Music Technology from the Sir John Cass Faculty of Art, Architecture and Design in London and was recently guest artist at the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics at Stanford University and at MIT Center for Art Science and Technology.

Gama has collaborated with the Kronos Quartet who premiered his piece 'Rio Cunene' at Carnegie Hall in March 2010.

'Rio Cubango', commissioned by the the Prince Claus Fund and the

Amsterdam Fund for the Arts premiered in November 2011 at Concertgebouw in Amsterdam as part of the series 'Música para Rios'. In 2012, a commission by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra resulted in "Vela 6911" a piece for an ensemble of musicians of that orchestra premiered at Harris Theatre, Chicago in 2012 and staged on the 20th of January 2013 at the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon. His most recent piece, ‘3thousandRIVERS: Voices in the Forest’ was commissioned by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and premiered in Lisbon on the 6th of May 2016.

In 2017 he presented his most recent work, Aisa Tanaf: the Book of Winds, at the Kennedy Center with musicians of the National Symphony Orchestra conducted by Edwin Outwater. He has exhibited his instruments and sound installations and performed extensively in Africa, Latin America, USA, Canada and Europe, and was commissioned to design instruments for museums such as the National Museums of Scotland and the Clay Center in West Virginia.

Among several albums and recordings for dance and film, his album Pangeia Instrumentos was released by Aphex Twin on Rephlex Records. Naloga is a recent compilation of works specially released for the exhibition INSTRUMENTOS installed at the Royal Opera House in London, the Fundación Carlos De Amberes in Madrid, Teatro São Luiz in Lisbon and Museu Nacional de Antropologia in Luanda.
Yetzabel Arias Fernandez was born in Havana where she graduated in singing at the Instituto Superior of the Arts. She continued her studies at the Accademia Internazionale della Musica di Milano. She won the International Baroque Singing Competition of Chimay (Belgium). Since then she performed in prestigious venues in Europe and in 2013 she started an important collaboration with Ton Koopman.

Betty Garcés was born in Buenaventura, in Colombia. She studied singing at the conservatory Antonio Maria Valencia in Cali. She traveled to Germany to proceed with her vocal studies. In 2012 she concluded the Master of Arts from the Superior School of Music in Cologne, having specialized in Opera and Lied. In 2013-14 she was a member of the "Junges Ensemble" of the Gelsenkirchen Opera. Currently she is part of the program "Solo Klasse -Konzertexamen " of the Superior School of Music at Hannover Theater.

Té Macedo Angolan singer, Té Macedo is also a specialist of the Angolan marimba. She was born in Luanda, where she studied piano, classical dance, guitar and clarinet. With a state scholarship from Portugal, she studied piano at the School of Music of the National Conservatory of Lisbon. In 1989 she started taking singing lessons at the Portuguese Youth Academy. She continued her singing education with Filomena Amaro Manuela de Sá, Cristina De Castro and Wagner Dinis. She recorded with Pablo Milanêz.

Waira Nina Jacanamijoy Interdisciplinary artist, Waira Nina is also a cultural activist and consultant for the Inga nation in the Colombian Amazon. Heir of the traditional ceremonies of Ambiwaska, she has a valuable knowledge which was relevant for the recognition of the Inga territories and for the creation of a the Inga language broadcasting network. A researcher of ancestral traditions she composed music for the Amazon Intercultural Radio Network and for a record in collaboration with artists from Colombia, Peru and Ecuador.

Jaime Kiriyateke Jaime Kiriyateke was born in Porto Berlín, in Colombia. He belongs to the Murui-Muina nation of the Caqueta province in the Colombian Amazon. He is a young singer and dancer native to traditional music and culture.

Pedro Ojeda Pedro Ojeda is a composer, drummer and Colombian percussionist who explores the roots of his country’s music and rhythms from around the world. He is part a new generation of bands such as Los Pirañas, Rompe Rayo, Frente Cumbiero and Onda Tropica having participated in many festivals in Colombia and all over the world. He collaborates with Victor Gama since 2013.

Urián Sarmiento Colombian percussionist, gaitero, a musicologist and producer, Urian was part of the Colombian alternative rock Aterciopelados and founder of the Curupira group. He was also Antonio Arnedo’s drummer and has recorded and collaborated on more then thirty albums of Colombian music.

Salomé Pais Matos Studied harp at the National Conservatory of Lisbon and at the Conservatory Giuseppe Verdi of Milan, where he concluded a masters degree. She has performed extensively in Portugal and in Europe, having played in at prestigious venues like Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and the Royal Opera House in London. Salomé is a harp teacher at the University of Children’s Musical Academy and at the Loures Conservatory of Arts.
Visit our video collection of 3 thousand RIVERS at: https://vimeo.com/channels/3thousandrivers

and find more details on Victor Gama’s website: http://www.victorgama.org

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3thousandRIVERS: voices in the forest  download this brochure from www.victorgama.org
[VICTOR GAMA]

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MÚSICAS DO MUNDO

3milRIOS: Vozes na Floresta
ÓPERA DE VICTOR GAMA

6 Maio 2016
SEXTA-FEIRA, 21:00h
Grande Auditório

GULBENKIAN.MÚSICA
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
February 20, 2012

MusicNOW EXPLORES NATURAL WORLD THROUGH DIGITAL PRISM WITH SPECIAL GUEST VICTOR GAMA

Monday, March 5 at 7 p.m. at Harris Theater in Millennium Park

CHICAGO — The third concert in this season’s MusicNOW series explores the natural world through a digital prism on Monday, March 5 at 7 p.m. at Millennium Park’s Harris Theater for Music and Dance. Hosted and curated by CSO Mead Composers-in-Residence Mason Bates and Anna Clyne, the series offers groundbreaking compositions and collaborations; this concert features a world premiere piece from Angolan-born composer and instrument builder Victor Gama.

Gama’s Vela 6911—written specifically for MusicNOW—was inspired by the secret nuclear test carried out by South Africa in Antarctica in 1979 and detected by the Vela 6911 satellite. Principal Conductor Cliff Colnot leads the piece, which fuses Gama’s unique, handmade instruments—the Acrux, Toha and Dino from his Pangeia Instrumentos series—with beautiful digital projections created from Gama’s specially undertaken trip on a polar research ship to the Antarctic Peninsula in January 2011 to collect sound and video to incorporate into the piece.

Also featured is Mason Bates’ chamber work Red River, which traces the complete path of the Colorado River from the Continental Divide in the Rocky Mountains to the river’s end in the Sonoran Desert. Evan Ziporyn’s Speak, At-man!, a wandering piece for solo flute and piano, rounds out the program.

Before the concert, music in public spaces of the Harris Theater is provided by Justin Reed of illmeasures Chicago. The postconcert reception performance features original electronic compositions from Dubfront Records recording artist Ryan Keesling (Searchl1te) with accompaniment from Dominick Johnson on electric viola. The postconcert reception also includes complimentary food and drink.

The final MusicNOW concert of this season takes place on Monday, May 14, 2012, featuring members of the Chicago Symphony Chorus led by Chorus Director and Conductor Duain Wolfe.
MÚSICAS DO MUNDO

Victor Gama

Vela 6911

20/01 domingo 20Janeiro 2013
19:00h — Grande Auditório

GULBENKIAN MÚSICA
Vela 6911

Victor Gama ACRUX, TOHA E DINO
Salomé Pais Matos TOHA

Rui Pinheiro MAESTRO

Músicos da Orquestra Gulbenkian
Bin Chao 1º VIOLINO
Cecília Branco 2º VIOLINO
Barbara Friedoff VIOLA
Samuel Barsegian VIOLA
Maria José Falcão VIOLONCELLO
Raquel Reis VIOLONCELLO
Vera Dias FAGOTE
Pedro Araújo e Silva TIMPANEIRO

Rui Peralta OPERAÇÃO DE VÍDEO (PROJEÇÃO)
Paulo Machado TÉCNICO DE SOM
Isabel Worm ILUMINAÇÃO

Vela 6911 é o nome do satélite norte-americano que detetou, a 22 de Setembro de 1979, uma explosão nuclear atmosférica próxima das ilhas Marion e Prince Edward, na proximidade da costa da Antártida, sob administração da África do Sul. Esta explosão validou o programa de armas nucleares e o poderio militar desenvolvido pelo regime do apartheid, sendo as ogivas posteriormente desmanteladas no início dos anos 90 sob supervisão da ONU.

A peça Vela 6911 baseia-se no diário de bordo de uma oficial da Marinha Sul-Africana, a tenente Lindsey Rooke, que revela um conflito entre o seu amor pela natureza e a missão de contaminação radiativa em que participava. Vela 6911 teve estreia mundial em Chicago no Harris Theater a 5 de Março de 2012, integrada no ciclo de concertos MusicNOW da Chicago Symphony Orchestra. A peça resultou de um convite feito a Victor Gama para compor para um ensemble de músicos daquela Orquestra e para os instrumentos por si construídos, acrux, toha e dino. Vela 6911 é uma peça multimédia com uma componente vídeo filmada por Victor Gama na Antártida em Janeiro de 2012, com o apoio da Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian.

Victor Gama nasceu em Angola, em 1960. Músico, compositor e criador de instrumentos contemporâneos, Victor Gama explora a interceção entre o virtual e o físico, o digital e o analógico, e a forma como nela se manifesta como um novo território musical e sonoro. No seu trabalho de permanente pesquisa, faz uso de elementos dinâmicos e variáveis que surgem num processo de composição que inclui a conceção, design e construção dos instrumentos com que a obra é executada, dando assim origem ao instrumentário e instalações da série Pangeia Instrumentos. Como resultado tem vindo a atrair encomendas por parte de ensembles e instituições de prestígio mundial como a Chicago Symphony Orchestra, a Kronos Performing Arts Association, o National Museums of Scotland, o Tenement Museum de Nova Iorque ou a Prince Claus Fonds da Holanda. Desenvolve desde 1997 o primeiro arquivo digital de música e músicos do interior de Angola, o projecto Tsikaya – Músicos do Interior. Entre trabalhos editados encontram-se o álbum Pangeia Instruments produzido por Aphex Twin para a Rephlex Records e Oceanites Erraticus editado pela PangeiArt.

Vela 6911

Salomé Pais Matos finalizou a sua formação em harpa no Conservatório Giuseppe Verdi de Milão em 2010. Desde então colabora em diversos projetos a solo e com grupos de música de câmara e orquestras como a Orquestra Sinfónica Portuguesa, Metropolitana de Lisboa e Gulbenkian. Apresentou-se no Concertgebouw, em Amsterdã, Casa da Música, no Porto, Sala Puccini, em Milão, Teatro Nacional de São Carlos e Centro Cultural de Belém, em Lisboa.

Rui Pinheiro foi Maestro Associado da Orquestra Sinfónica de Bournemouth (Reino Unido) nos dois últimos anos. Em Portugal dirigiu a Orquestra Sinfónica Portuguesa, a Orquestra Nacional do Porto e a Metropolitana de Lisboa, entre outras. Internacionalmente destacam-se concertos com a Ópera do País de Gales e apresentações nos BBC – PromsPlus e no Barbican, em Londres. Após terminar os seus estudos de piano em Portugal e na Hungria, Rui Pinheiro concluiu o Mestrado em Direção de Orquestra no Royal College of Music de Londres.
VELA 6911
VICTOR GAMA

MULTIMEDIA CONCERT
Friday 6th March 7:30 pm
Dinkelspiel, Stanford University

VICTOR GAMA WITH
STANFORD NEW ENSEMBLE
CONDUCTED BY JINDONG CAI

ALERT 747 exhibit
CECIL H. GREEN LIBRARY
South Lobby
3 February to 9 March, 2015
VELA 6911
A MULTIMEDIA PIECE BY VICTOR GAMA

This concert and Green Library exhibit is produced in collaboration with the Stanford Department of Music, Stanford University Libraries (SUL) and the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics (CCRMA).

STANFORD NEW ENSEMBLE
JINDONG CAI CONDUCTOR
VICTOR GAMA ACRUX, TOHA, DINO, COMPOSITION, VIDEO
DAVID GRUNZWEIG TOHA
CHRIS CHAFE CELETO
JOHN GRANDZOW DAXOPHONE
ALISON RUSH CETACANT
ALVARO BARBOSA RADIAL STRING CHIMES
DAVID KERR VIDEO TECHNOLOGY

Vela 6911 is based on the diary of Lieutenant Lindsey Rooke, an officer who was on board one of the ships taking part in a secret nuclear weapons test conducted in 1979 by the South African apartheid regime off the coast of Antarctica. The test, detected by a US satellite called Vela, was the validation of apartheid’s military power that engulfed the whole Southern African region in a destructive ‘cold-war’ conflict in the late 70s and 80s. Her diary, found in 2001 by South African journalist Stacy Hardy, reveals someone in conflict over her love for nature and the mission she was on, which left a trace of devastation, death and radioactive contamination in one of the most pristine and protected environments on earth.

The idea to compose Vela 6911 started at Stanford in 2010 when Gama was a SICA Arts Visitor at the Humanities Center. Valuable contributions during the research phase of this project were provided by Stanford University Libraries and specifically by librarian, Regina Roberts. The piece was subsequently commissioned by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and premiered at Harris Theater in 2012. It was presented at the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon in 2013 and in Luanda, Angola in 2014. Vela 6911’s video component was shot in Antarctica by Gama in January 2012. In 2013, Gama gifted all of his Vela 6911 research and production content materials to the Archive of Recorded Sound at Stanford University Libraries. This collection features 507 videos, 3,093 high-resolution photographs, 600 research documents, scanned original scores and performance information.

This multi-faceted collaboration also represents the important role of libraries in the cycle of research, access to historical insight, creative output, and thinking through contemporary issues and challenges. The performance of this piece by the Stanford New Ensemble with Gama and collaborators from CCRMA is a unique opportunity to make this collection come alive, one that challenges representations of the past and encourages current generations to evaluate more deeply the consequences of our actions.
Victor Gama

a composer whose process begins with the creation of an entirely new instrument, one whose design is steeped in symbolic meaning. Concept design, the selection of materials, fabrication, and scoring is all part of the rigorous way Gama creates new music for the 21st century, blending current fabrication technologies with ideas, materials and traditions inspired by the natural world. He holds a BSc in electronics engineering and an MA in Music Technology from the Sir John Cass Faculty of Art, Architecture and Design in London. Gama has collaborated with the Kronos Quartet who premiered his piece ‘Rio Cunene’ at Carnegie Hall in March 2010. ‘Rio Cubango’, commissioned by the the Prince Claus Fund and the Amsterdam Fund for the Arts premiered in November 2011 at Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. His most recent piece ‘3thousandRIVERS: prelude’, for ensemble and soprano singers was commissioned for the 2013 Prince Claus Awards Ceremony at the Royal Palace in Amsterdam. He has exhibited his instruments and sound installations and performed extensively in Africa, Latin America, USA and Europe. His album Pangeia Instrumentos was released by Aphex Twin on Rephlex Records. www.victorgama.org

Jindong Cai

Jindong Cai joined the Stanford University faculty in 2004 as the Director of Orchestral Studies and Associate Professor of Music in Performance. He is Music Director and Conductor of the Stanford Symphony Orchestra, the Stanford Philharmonia Orchestra, and the Stanford New Ensemble. He is also the Artistic Director of the Stanford Pan-Asian Music Festival, which he founded in 2005. Jindong Cai serves as the Principal Guest Conductor of the Shenzhen Symphony Orchestra in China, and of the Mongolia State Academic Theater of Opera and Ballet in Ulan Batar. Jindong Cai received the ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music with the Stanford Symphony Orchestra. He has recorded for Centaur, Innova, and Vienna Modern Masters labels. Together with Sheila Melvin, Mr. Cai has co-authored several New York Times articles on the performing arts in China and a book Rhapsody in Red: How Western Classical Music Became Chinese.
Kronos Quartet
Margaret Leng Tan
Victor Gama
Matmos
Friday, March 12, 2010 at 7:30 PM
Zankel Hall

Playing with Toys and Technology
Using an orchestra of toys, instruments constructed from remnants, military materials by children from Angola, and technology capable of capturing tones emitted by the desert, Kronos revisits the joy in discovering new sounds through new means. The program features toy piano virtuoso Margaret Leng Tan and Portuguese instrument builder Victor Gama, and a new work for Kronos by JG Thirlwell inspired by environmental acoustic phenomena. To conclude the evening, Kronos is joined by electronic duo Matmos, for a tribute to Terry Riley.

Perspectives: Kronos Quartet

Tickets: $28, $42
KRONOS QUARTET e VICTOR GAMA
CENTRO CULTURAL DE BELÉM | 21 DE NOVEMBRO, 21H

Créditos: Richard Termine

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Um rio com memórias

A estreia europeia de *Rio Cunene*, uma ideia de Victor Gama, convida-nos a descobrir pontes improváveis entre a guerra e a paz

POR ERICA FRANCO

Foi seguindo um irresistível “impulso criativo” que Victor Gama, nascido em Angola nos anos 60, formado em Engenharia Eléctronica e Telecomunicações, procurou, na música, uma forma de se exprimir. “Achei que, na música, podia ser absolutamente livre, fazer aquilo que me apetecia, sem os constrangimentos da academia da época”, diz, ao falar do percurso que o levou até aos palcos.

Reciclagem maior

O presente, esse, é marcado por diversos projetos em simultâneo, entre eles a peça *Rio Cunene* — estreada no Carnegie Hall, em Nova Iorque, em março de 2010, e com estreia europeia marcada para este domingo, 21, no Grande Auditório do CCB, em Lisboa, encerrando o Festival Temps d’Images — que o faz viajar até às suas raízes angolanas. “O que me inspira em Angola é algo que só depois vim a compreender, mas não totalmente”, diz, falando de um “reflexo de uma liberdade criadora que segue parâmetros pouco definíveis” — característica da música angolana e, no fundo, da sua própria forma de estar na música.

O espetáculo *Rio Cunene* é, na realidade, uma montagem de várias peças, que integra, para além da composição homónima interpretada pelo Kronos Quartet, uma apresentação a solo de Victor Gama: SOL(t)O. Mas se, em *Rio Cunene*, o fio condutor é o rio, no caso de SOL(t)O é “uma estrada”, marcada pela pluralidade e transversalidade dos elementos que a compõem. SOL(t)O é um espetáculo multimédia que reúne um conjunto de composições para Pangea Instrumentos, desenhados e construídos por Victor Gama, como um “reflexo das significâncias, dos símbolos e dos conteúdos da narrativa que estrutura uma peça”. Por outras palavras, estes instrumentos surgem, não como base, mas como resultado do processo de criação e escrita musical.

A ideia do projeto *Rio Cunene* surgiu de uma conversa com David Harrington (fundador do Kronos Quartet), em que Victor se propôs escrever uma peça, usando instrumentos do quarteto de cordas e da série Pangea Instrumentos. Como nos conta Victor, “ele [David Harrington] ficou muito interessado numa coisa que eu lhe contei, que era o facto de algumas pessoas, durante o conflito armado em Angola, viverem em zonas muito isoladas, tendo como principais recursos detritos dos equipamentos militares, e o facto de existirem crianças que construíam brinquedos e instrumentos musicais a partir desses objectos”. Daqui nasceu o motor deste projeto, “uma grande metáfora sobre o potencial que existe na natureza humana de recuperar de situações de conflito, neste caso demonstrado por crianças que reappropriaram os detritos que ficaram de uma guerra”. Para Victor, é um prazer poder partilhar a criatividade inmensa destas crianças que pegam em resquícios da violência e “alegremente os transformam em música”. No segundo momento do espetáculo entram em cena esses instrumentos construídos pelas crianças da vila de Xangongo: o carregador, o batuque, a viola, a lata...

No vídeo projetado durante o espetáculo, podemos ver as crianças a brincarem num tanque, que para elas é, sobretudo, um baloiço. São muitas as histórias por contar, por detrás deste espetáculo, um trabalho fascinante com um grupo de miúdos “ávidos de aprender, desejosos de ir à escola e de conviver com as pessoas”.

*Rio Cunene* Um espetáculo em que o Kronos Quartet (em cena), instrumentos inventados por Victor Gama (à esq.) e outros por crianças angolanas (à dir.) são protagonistas

Victor Gama

“Achei que na música podia ser absolutamente livre, fazer aquilo que me apetecia, sem constrangimentos”
Concerto. Victor Cama estrena con O Kronos

En pena musical

Restos de armas
Longplayer Live
The Roundhouse, London, UK
Jon Finer's Longplayer project is nothing if not ambitious. As originally conceived by the British artist and composer, it's the oldest piece of music in history: six differently pitched two minute loops taken from an original piece of source music performed on Tibetan singing bowls selected to run continuously in such a way that no combination is repeated until exactly 1000 years have passed. It started in digital form in London at midnight on New Year's Eve 1999, and has been performed in various locations around the world as a work not destined to mature until the dizzying date of 2999. One of the key themes of Longplayer raises is the question of the music's own survival in the face of technological and environmental uncertainty. What methods will be used to perpetuate the music into that far distant future? The obvious answer is that, as long as there are people to hear it, there will be people who can play it. Longplayer Live is an orchestral installation that gives a glimpse of how that performance could work.

The loops are represented by six concentric wooden circles - the largest 25 metres wide - incorporating curved tables laden with Singing Bowls of varying sizes, an arrangement that Finer calls 'a vast, Bronze Age synthesizer'. A team of two musicians is stationed at each table, one conducting with the aid of a stopwatch, the other striking or rubbing the bowls as Finer's graphic score dictates. For this debut in the bell-like, high-collared expanses of North London's Roundhouse venue, the teams include improvisers such as Steve Beresford, Kaffe Matthews and The Wire contributor David Toop - straight-faced and sombre in matching grey polyester uniforms like some radical revolutionary cadre - each performing for a few minutes before being replaced, as if in a closely choreographed tag-team event. Although this performance is only scheduled to run for a relatively brief 1000 minutes - from early Saturday morning until the small hours of Sunday - the rising tones, sparse chimes and churning songs of the singing bowls still manage to impart a sense of the project's grand scale. It's easy to imagine this lingering, elongated, astral gamelan being used as a means of interstellar communication.

And ultimately, it brings a message of hope. Despite all of the threats to humanity's continued existence, despite the human race's maddening, self-destructive folly, Longplayer seems to suggest that, a millennium from now, there will still be people prepared to lose themselves in the rippling resonances of lightly struck bronze.

Daniel Spicer

Max Eastley/Victor Gama
Kings Place, London, UK
Brian Eno once told a cautionary tale that at a contact of one of the major digital instrument companies had in turn related to him: when buyers brought in their synthesiser, drum machines and the like to be serviced, the company's engineers were dismayed to find that only a minute proportion of said buyers had modified the presets of their machines in any way. Most hadn't bothered to tamper with them. Which is a long-winded way of saying that, given the infinite possibilities offered up by the digital age, an aspect of imagination in the musicians had been closed down. They preferred to express their own music rather than another person's sonic language.

While Eno didn't have to say which side he was on, there is nothing inherently wrong with those who choose not to twiddle with their presets, or, for that matter, pre-existing instruments. The manipulation of pre-existing sounds will yield great poetry, but there is an argument to be made for recognising the instrument builders themselves as the real pioneers of sound. This was the premise for a dedicated evening of short concerts for New And Rediscovered Musical Instruments (the title of Max Eastley's 1970 collaboration with David Toop on Eno's Obscure label). Max Eastley opened things up with an unobtrusive solo for his arc. This is an electroacoustic monochord, an instrument that looks like a stringed instrument. Eastley bowes and finger-stops the arc, generating waves of multilayered sounds. Its timbres range from high to low and hard to soft, with sudden endings, scratchings and sawings, and there's a point where the string is percussed by what looks like a metal chopstick. After about half an hour, Eastley is controlling the fallout of a whirl of harmonic clusters, and the resonance created is always a rich one. His history as an improviser is a long one, during which he has created many new instruments to express himself.

In Portuguese composer and instrument builder Victor Gama's work, sound and its production are inseparable. To this end, his longstanding project Pangeia Instrumentos has involved making instruments, and exploring new electroacoustic modalities, notational and even belief systems. For Gama, music is embedded within a wider culture and needs to reflect that. As not to say that his music is too encumbered to be responsive.

As this evening's improvised Accrux Croation demonstrates (Gama is joined on laptop by digital artist and sometime collaborator David Gare), 'dialoguing' - his term - is the key. The accrux, one of Gama's Pangeia-invented instruments, is an extraordinary object: something like a small kettle-drum acting as a resonator, with four spiralled coils loaded with metal discs which can be strummed or plucked. Seated, he quickly loops some of the accrux's sounds, building up a mesh of tones. Ghostly clangings and delicate marimba-like patterns ensue while Gama's feed excerts back and forth, each one modulating, refining and transforming what came before.

As with Eastley's arc, the accrux comes without pre-ordained rules of engagement, and much of the listening pleasure comes from the wit and invention that the instrument brings to it.

Louise Gray

Warp 20
Various venues, Sheffield, UK
Park Hill Flats, Sheffield's answers to Le Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation, looms above town like a monument to a forgotten future. Four miles away, the Templeborough Steel Works glowers, its smokeless chimneys now industrial cenotaphs. Warp have chosen these venues to celebrate their 20th birthday, and although both buildings fit in with the label's urban aesthetic, one worries if their failures as modern projects are being fetishised. But then the work starts to appear - Warp films unfurling against towering concrete and music juddering through metal juts, showing us how great art can flourish in the most peculiar places.

At Park Hill Flats, as the sun sets, we watch pop promos and short films. Aphex Twin's incredible track "Come To Daddy" still pinpoints the terror inherent in brutalist buildings that their architects, and their defenders, always ignore; Shane Meadows' The Living Room, a film about Clayhill's Gavin Clark going solo, becomes a heartbreaking account of struggle and survival; and a documentary about the All Tomorrow's Parties festivals shows another architectural utopia - the great British holiday camp - in a much more upbeat light. Coaches then transport us to the steelworks for a prosaic touch of Sheffield's no-nonsense soul. Now a science and adventure centre by day, it has been transformed for one night into an Acid-era industrial space.

This is the sound of Warp 1999, not 2009, and even more the recent acts on the bill extract life from this seed. Mark Pritchard's Harmonic 313 expertly revives the ghosts of Detroit Techno; Clark mesmerises by meshing with Aphex Twin's early Pan-Mixes, while Hudson Mohawke's hypercoloured pop draws breath from the excesses of 80s soul. The elder acts also look back to their early years. Nightmares On Wax work best, pivoting their vivid set around the emergence of the sound we once called Northern Beat - spinning "Dextrous" and "Aftermath" around A Guy Called Gerald's 'Voodoo Ray', and shouting "It's Old School! Say Yorkshire!" when their power briefly cuts. Squarepusher provides the event's only sour note by spoiling his intricate rhythms with bass slapping that makes his sound like a teenager auditioning for Salford.

The night ends well, and warmly. Andrew Weatherall brings House classics by Hercules and Frankie Knuckles out of the shadows, with The Forgemasters playing "Track With No Name" - Warp's first ever 12" - as the day breaks. Rather than providing a night of innovation, Warp have shown that they are proud of their roots, justifiably.

Jude Rodgers
A tiger in the Museum!

Get your paws on some amazing new instruments, invented specially for the new Museum.

Portuguese musician Victor Gama has unveiled the extraordinary musical instruments that will provide a focal point in the new Performance & Lives gallery. We asked Gama to create four contemporary musical instruments, inspired by the Museum collections, for everyone to play.

Gama is a unique artist – a composer, performer and designer of innovative musical instruments created from a variety of materials. He has exhibited and performed with his sound installations and instruments throughout Africa, Latin America, USA, Canada and Europe.

Each instrument has its own name and story. Tipaw, takes its name from its resemblance to a tiger’s paw and was inspired by Gama’s visits to Edinburgh: “Every time I visited the museum,” he says, “I would pass Edinburgh Zoo on the way from the airport. So I thought about a tiger escaping from the zoo and hiding overnight in the Museum. It prowls around the halls until the morning, when it leaps upon a visitor, leaving these paw prints behind.”

The musical function is provided by the paw pads, inverted Tibetan ringing bowls that Gama found in Bengal, home to the famous tigers.

All the instruments are designed to be communal, sounding more harmonious when played by more than one person – which is just as well, as they’re going to prove popular when they go on display in 2011. As Dr Henrietta Litchi, Keeper of World Cultures, says: “You just look at them and just want to work out how to play them, to make them sing.”

If you can’t wait until we reopen, you can see and learn more about the man and his work at www.victorgama.org.


ReMix culture finds space in NG K

MARY FARRER

ARTS

Cape Times

Wednesday, October 17, 2007
Any Instrument You Like
For the Angolan-Portuguese composer and instrument maker Victor Gama, music began in a simple and affecting way. "One of the first musical impressions I can recall when I was a kid was an old player of *ungu*, the ancient bow that gave origin to the berimbau in Brazil, who would play along the beaches of Luanda," he says via email. Although now based in Portugal, Gama is currently in the small Angolan village of Lubango, where he is researching a project called *Talikw*, an archive of field recordings of traditional music, before travelling to London to participate in this month's Atlantic Waves festival.

The sound of the *ungu* and the old player's music was almost like a primal awakening that transported me to far away places," he continues. "The repeated hitting of the stick on a single string, suddenly stopped and then released by one finger, along with the effect produced by the mouth of the gourd touching the belly of the musician, produced a magical and hypnotizing soundscape. I would walk along with him for as far as I could and those encounters were probably my first lessons in music.

Gama, who went on to study music and electronic engineering in Lisbon, returns to this memory as the basis of his approach to music. For him, music is more than just the organisation and replication of sounds: it is charged with cultural, social and sometimes mystical import. In certain works, such as his *Odantai-an* project (2002), there were times when collaborators needed to first obtain the blessings of their ancestors, via various religious rituals. Web compositions such as *Folk Songs For The Five Points* (2003), a sound map conceived with William Parker and Guillermo E. Brown for New York's Tenement Museum (and reprised at the recent Futuresonic event in Manchester), invited people to construct their own acoustic maps of a city and its musical communities. And for his Pangela Instrumentos project, whose debut album was released in 2003 on Rephlex, Gama invented instruments such as the acrux - a dish of stacked metal discs - and the tohe, or totem harp. On a place called "JetStream", the latter is played by the wind and altered by ProTools to include a silent rhythm.

Gama's source materials for his instruments can be prosaic - discarded metal, gourds, a soldier's helmet - but out of them he creates new musical experiences that exist outside conventional frameworks.

Whatever digital manipulation there is in Gama's music, it is kept at an unobtrusive level, often used - as on the unworldly aecnian sounds of "JetStream" - to stress a natural process. His compositions are often a single section of a tripartite structure. For example, *Odantai-an* (the name an inversion of the Angolan city N'dalatando, manifests itself as a book, a recording and nothing less than a cultural exchange deploying ancient knowledge in new creative processes. *Odantai-an* aimed mainly at the philosophical and knowledge systems of the Konga/ Angolan civilization and particularly at its graphic writing system and its continuities in the Caribbean and South America," explains Gama. "The writing tradition known as Bidimbo in Angola has a central cosmogramm from which, according to African, Cuban and American researchers, the whole writing system and vision of the cosmos derives. This cosmogramm, a kind of logo which is composed of four circles in a cross formation within a main circle, is called Dikenga. The Dikenga represents the cyclical nature of all life on earth. It represents the cyclical nature of our lives traversing alternatively the material and spiritual worlds, incessantly spinning round and round like a wheel, and is therefore also a religious symbol.

"It is also associated with many other concepts," he goes on. "One of them is particularly meaningful to me and has played a major role in the development of my work. The concept of N'Kizi, also known in Cuba as Pranda or in Brazil as Iniki, which derives from the notion that the earth is like a package in which all existing things are meant to interact. The N'kizi is an object that contains meanings represented by things that are put inside it, like leaves, little stones, feathers, dried parts of animals, blood from animals, water, tobacco - a representation of the world in miniature. Miniaturising the world is a means by which to simplify and condense the Earth, without changing its value, in order to disseminate better harmony and understanding, and control the feelings and emotions for world comprehension and protection. In my work I am particularly interested in the association of the concepts between the Dikenga and the N'Kizi. This association, which I call the Collan Modes, has become the framework for the Pangela Instrumentos project and my piece *JetStream*. Gama's work might maintain a dialogue with ethnomusicology, but it's not predicated on any academic discipline. The intention of the Talikw project, begun in 1997, was initially to make an ad of the fast-disappearing music from a country saved by 30 years of war. It started in the Goma says, that there was a new urgency "to get musicians to do workshops, teaching how to play their music and how to build their instruments in schools in the villages and pass their knowledge to younger generations." Musical objects have historically been "making machines", he continues, with the implication that we all need to find our own machines for it. To that purpose, he, along with some other music designers and interested parties, has created the Portuguese based MITAL (Musical Instruments Technology And Innovations Laboratory), a research centre that builds instruments and generates ideas about what music can do.

At Atlantic Waves, Gama, with his acrux and the JetStream, will be putting those ideas in motion alongside Thomas Köner, Anselm Tischchen and Max Easti, a performance where we all bring in our own approaches to music and sound sculpting through acoustic instruments and devices, electronics and multimedia projections.

"I'll be totally improvised as we won't have a chance of rehearsing," he concludes, "but this is what makes it even more interesting as we will be performing with the particular and unique alignment of the world in miniature, without changing its value, in order to disseminate better harmony and understanding, and control the feelings and emotions for world comprehension and protection. In my work I am particularly interested in the association of the concepts between the Dikenga and the N'Kizi. This association, which I call the Collan Modes, has become the framework for the Pangela Instrumentos project and my piece *JetStream*. Gama's work might maintain a dialogue with ethnomusicology, but it's not predicated on any academic discipline. The intention of the Talikw project, begun in 1997, was initially to make an ad of the fast-disappearing music from a country saved by 30 years of war. It started in the Goma says, that there was a new urgency "to get musicians to do workshops, teaching how to play their music and how to build their instruments in schools in the villages and pass their knowledge to younger generations." Musical objects have historically been "making machines", he continues, with the implication that we all need to find our own machines for it. To that purpose, he, along with some other music designers and interested parties, has created the Portuguese based MITAL (Musical Instruments Technology And Innovations Laboratory), a research centre that builds instruments and generates ideas about what music can do.

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Futuresonic at Futuresonic

superstar Nintendo game creator and electronics artist remained mercifully within the realms of entertainment. The conclusion saw him performing with his own invention, the electro-plankton, a matrix board which pulsed, pulsed and glowed with joystick manipulation. This preceded his actual musical performance, 24 hours later at Academy TWO, where he took his place among a Music For The Beep Generation event. Here, his flamboyance was flanked by New York punk bands Battles and Austria’s Fennesz. To the bafflement of many, the conventional boundaries of what defines a concert were subtly breached. Battles are aptly named, as their complexity - a postulating shock and snap based on mathematical equations - provided an instant challenge to all but the most openminded audience members. Their set built to a thunderous climax, where light and sound merged to a dizzying extreme.

Christian Fennesz, by stark contrast, has gained a powerful reputation for using technology with traditional instrumentation. At the Academy, the result was a haunting piece of guitar drones pulled directly from the edges of rock clichés and hurled into a colourful, melodic mix. At times this would slide into a recognisable song form, although this would swiftly disband to a state of gentle chaos.

The interactive nature of Futuresonic was perhaps most succinctly voiced by Pangaea Instrumentos’ Victor Gama, whose artist talk, also at the Museum of Science & Industry, focused on the link, albeit tenuous, between ancient and African music forms and the possibilities posed by hi-tech instrumentation. This, if one wishes, can even translate into a spiritual dimension with the concept of n’kay, a religious object used to communicate with the ancestral world. Gama’s unique contribution, however, became clear with his self-designed instruments, which added a wholesome acoustic flavour - a starkly intriguing contrast within the framework of an electronics festival. Gama’s ideas of connecting with voices from the past was echoed in the Futuresonic-commissioned Folk Songs Project Website hosted by a collective called Manchester Peripheral, which encouraged viewers to create their own acoustic maps of the city sounds, from noises sampled around various districts.

By this time, the festival’s interactive appeal had been fully ignited, with the vast spread of events and venues controlled by a central hub, situated in the city’s northern quarter. Of note, and down in the blackened cubic Roadhouse - a 1977-style venue, rather more fitting for a period Feel Gig - came a hip hop showcase from Manchester label KB’s, which featured the raw, untempered talents of a precocious pair of 12 year olds (seriously) named Metrodome and Jordan. Amid the preposterous normality of a shirt and tie, Metrodome, cute as a choirboy, dipped between decks, and scratched and shifted to unsettling effect.

The sea may be seen as mere drops in the vast Futuresonic ocean - more than 100 acts crowding 30 events - and this disparate nature did provide problems of invisibility. Everywhere and nowhere, one wandered among the venues, not always aware of what might or might not be under the umbrella. Even poring over the programme proved a somewhat dizzying experience.

Personally, wishing for an alternative dense rock-like atmosphere at the Roadhouse, I lingered awhile amid shards of sunlight in Kro Bar, where the Electroplasm event saw DJ Dave Haslam ably supported by a swathe of electronic collectives - Tramp, Chips With Everything, Contact Yourself - under a Love Music Hate Racism banner, and Berlin’s electrifying Cobra Killer, in mind-warping fury at the Blakzkallar. Here again, it was possible to sample the fire of sheer energising innovation contained in the most traditional venue in the city. But that, perhaps, became the theme of this year’s three-day blast. A spread of new acts and technologies all recognising and utilising the advancements of the past - as if a reflection of the city itself. Futuresonic sees a state of regeneration while retaining a respectful nod to the past.

MICK KIDDIES