



VELA 6911

Victor Gama

HARRIS THEATER
CHICAGO
5, MARCH 2012

CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN
FOUNDATION
20, JANUARY, 2013

Vela 6911 was commissioned by:
Chicago Symphony Orchestra,
MusicNOW

with support from:
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

"Vela 6911 is stunning and effected me very deeply."

Ian Harwood,
Executive Management at CSO

*"In two years running these concerts,
I have not seen anyone get a standing ovation at MusicNOW. The piece
is extraordinary, and the video worked seamlessly with it."*

Mason Bates,
Composer-in-residence, Chicago Symphony Orchestra

"VERY GOOD JOB TONIGHT"

Cliff Colnot,
principal conductor, MusicNOW

"serious business"

Pedro Santos,
Music curator, Teatro Maria Matos, Lisbon





VELA 6911 - a new multimedia piece by Victor Gama

a commission by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and MusicNOW.

for eight musicians: 2 violins, 2 violas, 2 cellos, timpani, basson

Victor Gama performing his own instruments: acru, toha and dino.

Salomé Pais Matos performing toha. Duration: 1h 30 mints

Victor Gama's new piece Vela 6911 premiered at Harris Theater on the 5th of March 2012 as part of the MusicNOW series of concerts at the CSO. The piece was a commission by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and MusicNOW with support from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. Vela 6911 was conducted by Cliff Colnot and performed by musicians of the CSO with Victor Gama playing his own instruments acru, toha and dino. In January 2013 the piece premiered in Europe with an ensemble of musicians from the Gulbenkian Orchestra, conducted by Rui Pinheiro and featured harpist Salomé Pais Matos playing toha with Victor Gama.

The piece is based on the diary of a South African Navy officer, lieutenant Lindsey Rooke, who took part in a secret atmospheric nuclear weapons test conducted in 1979 off the coast of Antarctica. The test, detected by a US satellite called Vela, was the validation of

a military power that engulfed the whole Southern African region in a 'cold-war' conflict in the late 70s and 80s. Her diary shows someone in contradiction between 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.

Score

The music score, inspired by Lindsey Rooke's somewhat initiatic journey, which sparked a consciousness awakening, is coupled by a video projection during the performance. The video was shot in Antarctica by Victor Gama and his team during the field research. It also includes observations from scientific stations based in Antarctica. Gama included his own field recordings into the piece, guided by Lindsey's descriptions along the trip.

Review Vela 6911

Chicago Classical Review

Michael Cameron

"The centerpiece of the concert was the commissioned premiere of Victor Gama's *Vela 6911*, a work that also explores the intersection of nature and technology in the guise of an atmospheric nuclear test off the coast of Antarctica in 1979.

The best part of the experience was the inclusion of three of Gama's invented instruments, objects that were as striking visually as they were sonically. The Acrux, Toha, and Dino fall roughly in the

string/wind/percussion families, and bear some resemblance to traditional instruments from Africa, Gama's native continent. An ensemble of strings, bassoon, and timpani performed admirably under the guidance of conductor Cliff Colnot, ...

There was much haunting and memorable music (especially in the final minutes), and the video montage neatly linked the music with its inspiration. "





Vela is a unique sonic experience with a highly diverse range of sounds and an engaging narrative that the audience can follow through music, video and text. In its two presentations we were gifted with two long-standing ovations.

To be performed, Vela 6911 requires an ensemble of eight musicians from a resident orchestra with a conductor and up to nine hours of rehearsal time.

We are a team of four people:

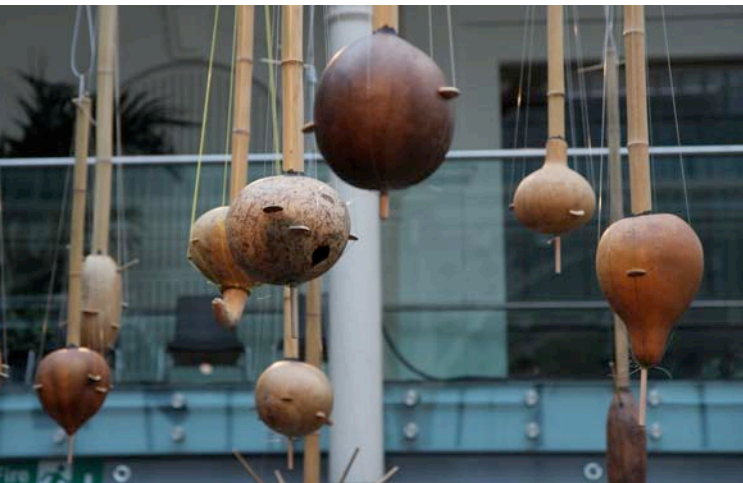
Victor Gama - composer, musician
Salomé Pais Matos - musician
Paulo Machado - sound technician
Rui Peralta - video projection

Watch a video of the performance



For more information please contact Victor Gama at:

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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 artist fellow at the Stanford Institute for Creativity and the Arts 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: prelude, for and 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, Canada and Europe, having received a Project Development Award by Visiting Arts/British Council for his exhibition and performance at Ormeau Baths Gallery in Belfast in 2004.

Among several albums and recordings for dance and film, his album Pangeia Instrumentos was released by Aphex Twin on Replex Records. Naloga is a recent compilation of works specially released for the exhibition INSTRUMENTOS instaled at the Royal Opera House in London, the Fundación Carlos De Amberes in Madrid and Teatro São Luiz in Lisbon.

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Music/Tech: Victor Gama at MIT

by Anya Ventura

Victor Gama is 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.

From March 2-7, Gama shared his visionary work with the MIT community: performing in a concert, visiting classes and dorms, and presenting a lecture/demonstration for the class “Music and Technology.” In each of these contexts, people gravitated towards his instruments as if attracted by a magnetic force. The post-digital world, Gama said, has circled back to the object.

“The same technology that has dematerialized the object is working to rematerialize the object,” Gama said in his lecture/demonstration. Innovations like 3D printing and digital CAD modeling have brought the object back to center stage after becoming seemingly obsolete with advances in digital technologies and the creation of digital sound libraries.

It is about being human, Gama said, and finding ways to merge the virtual and physical worlds in profound new ways. “Can an instrument be a living organism?” he asked, “Can it learn? Can it interact?” In Gama’s philosophy — heavily influenced by

the pre-colonial architecture and cosmology of his native Angola — the instrument is a ritual form, a container of meaning whose design reflects a constellation of allusions to stories, beliefs, and social and natural events.

The instrument is not just an instrument, but a “symbolic system” and “semiotic interface” created by the composer. With the greater control afforded by digital technologies, these symbolic systems can become more finely tightened and tuned, actualizing a geometry as complex as their concept. His instrument, “Toha,” for example, was inspired by the nest of the weaver bird. “One of nature’s most astounding sound installations,” Gama said.

The harp-like instrument is meant to be played by two people, just like the many birds who would make a home in the nest. During the military upheavals in Angola from the late 70s onwards, “the nests were totally empty, you couldn’t see any birds. They all had migrated because of the conflict,” Gama said. Like these densely woven nests, Gama’s work — both the instrument and the resulting music — weaves together the complex strands of the cultural, social, spiritual, and nature.

VICTOR GAMA technical rider (own instruments)

Technical Specifications

Personnel required:

- One lighting designer/engineer;
- One sound technician;

Personnel provided:

- one sound and instruments technician;
- one video projection operator;

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:

Sound :

- three (3) short stands;
- three condenser mics (Schoeps, Newman, ... preferable);
- Three (3) stage monitors;
- Mixing console with a minimum of 24 inputs with 8 aux channels;
- four (4) DI boxes;
- two (2) Effects Processors, (patch configurable i.e. dual-mono in series (TC Electronics, Lexicon, other...));
- graphic equalizer

Lighting (adapatable to available equipment):

- Control console;
- 6 Profiles, 3 at front of house and 3 above instruments;
- 12 PC (optional);
- 6 Par (optional);
- One dimmer reserved for light inside instrument (PAR 16 or 32 required);

Video

- appropriate video projector for the hall
- screen for best possible area of projection, 16 x 9 aspect ratio, HD video

Other

- one (1) piano stool;

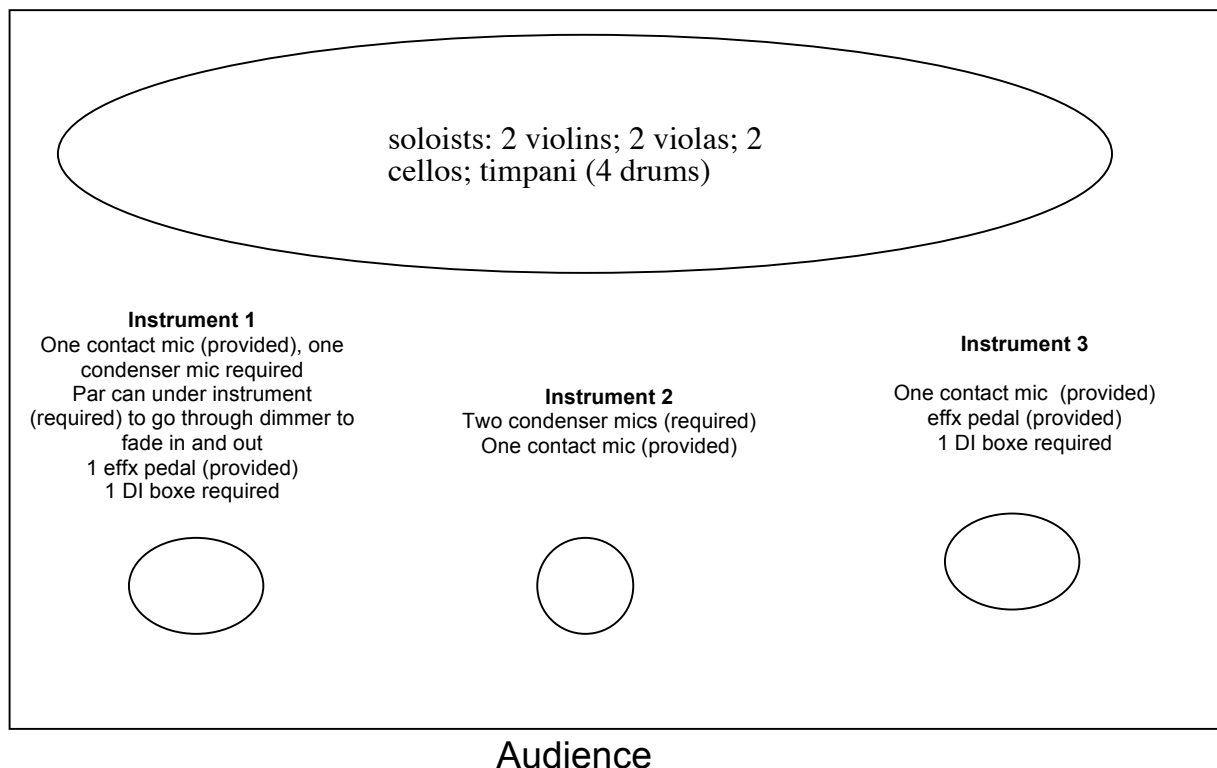
Reharsal and tuning

- the artist needs to tune the Toha harp, for 30 minutes before doors open to the public;

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS PROVIDED BY THE ARTIST :

Ground Plan ;
Lighting plan;
Three (3) AKG contact condenser mics requiring phantom power;
Two (2) pedal effect processors;
Two (2) Pre-Sonus pre-amps;

GROUND PLAN



Track listing (channel number as needed):

Instrument 1 – contact mic goes to pre-amp (own) and to main desk (ch1)

From pre-amp (own) to effx pedal; from pedal to DI; to main desk (ch2);

One condenser mic (ch3)

Single delay - 100 ms, Mix 5% on ch1

Overall short reverb depending on hall characteristics

Dimmer reserved for light inside instrument – one par can as light attached under instrument

Instrument 2 – two condenser and one contact on three channels (ch4, ch5, ch6);

overall reverb to be adjusted depending on hall characteristics

Instrument 3 – contact mic goes to pre-amp (own) and to main desk (ch6)

From pre-amp (own) to effx pedal; from pedal to DI; to main desk (ch7)

Overall Reverb to be adjusted depending on hall characteristics

Specifications suggested for soloists

Sound :

- each instrument should have a microphone;
- timpani should have overhead mics;
- stage monitors according to the need of musicians;

Lighting:

- to discuss with lighting designer/engineer

PLEASE NOTE THIS LISTING IS A GUIDELINE.

The tech plot is generally easily adaptable to the existing equipment.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT Victor Gama.

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