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PangeiArt

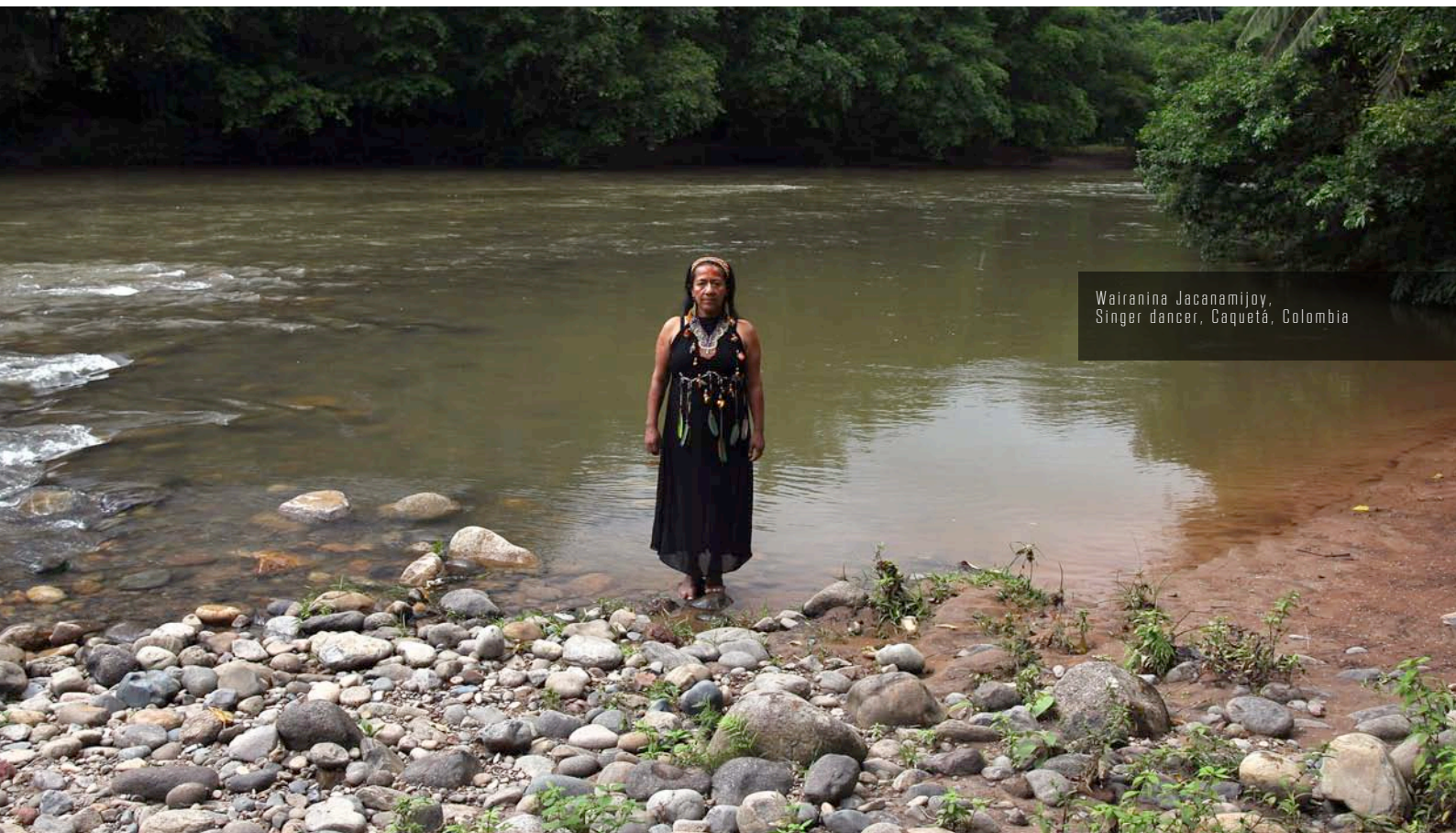
3^{thousand} RIVERS

VOICES IN THE FOREST

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

commissioned by:
Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian
Prince Claus Fund

in partnership with:
Amazon Conservation Team



Wairanina Jacanamijoy,
Singer dancer, Caquetá, Colombia

3_{mil}RÍOS

VOCES EN LA SELVA

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

'... 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
directora, Prince Claus Fund
2013 Awards Ceremony

2016 premiere at the Grand Auditorium Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon.

2017 South American premiere at Teatro Roberto Arias Perez, Bogota, Colombia.





3 thousand RIVERS has been developed in close partnership with indigenous communities of Putumayo, Caquetá and with Afro-descendants of the Pacific Coast of Colombia.

By working with local artists from these rain forests we aim at bringing ancient vocal techniques and performance skills right into the heart and practise of contemporary opera.



3thousandRIVERS: voices in the forest

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 Rios' 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's Music Now cycle and staged at Harris Theater, with support from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.





TEXT AND SCORE

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.

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 Kiriya-teke
 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.



Wairanina Jacanamijoy,
Yuraikaku Inga community,
Caquetá (Colombia)

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.

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, acru and dino.
five singers.

'... music in its maximum expression of orchestration and song, dance, poetry, prose, video, photography, coupled in harmony and contrast that moves and stimulates, not only the senses, but also, and fundamentally, the emotions ...'

Alonso Ojeda Awad, Kienyke, Bogotá

3thousandRIVERS: voices in the forest

Jaime Kiryiateke,
Murui Muina community,
Amazonas (Colombia)



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3thousandRIVERS: voices in the forest
world premiere, Lisbon, 6th May 2016

Gulbenkian Orchestra
Rui Pinheiro, conductor
Victor Gama, composition, video
Otelo Lapa, stage director

Yetzabel Arias Fernandez (soprano | Cuba)
Betty Garcés (soprano | Colombia)
Waira Nina Jacanamijoy (singer | Colombia)
Jaime Lopez Kiriyaateke (singer | Colombia)

Pedro Ojeda (percussion | Colombia)
Urian Sarmiento (percussion | Colombia)
Salomé Pais Matos (toha | Portugal)
Victor Gama (toha, acru, dino | Angola)
Paulo Machado (sound engineer | Portugal)
Rui Peralta (show control | Portugal)
Jeff Dubois (lighting design | Belgium)

INVITING A PRODUCTION OF 3thousandRIVERS

Requires:

12 musicians of a local orchestra

Travel:

a group of up to 14 people which
include singers, percussionists,
composer/musician, conductor, and
technicians.

Technical rider, budget, more
production details upon request.



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 composer 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, Angola.



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.

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.

Biographies

Jaime Kiriya-teke

Jaime Kiriya-teke was born in Puerto Berlin, 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 Tropicana 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, Urián was part of the Colombian alternative rock band Aterciopelados and founder of the Curupira group. He was also Antonio Arnedo's drummer and has recorded and collaborated on more than 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.

The Amazon Conservation Team



About the team

The Amazon Conservation Team (ACT) is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving South American rainforests. This small but robust outfit occupies a unique niche among other environmental non-profits working in the tropics: ACT works hand in hand with local indigenous communities to devise and implement its conservation strategies.

Our Goals



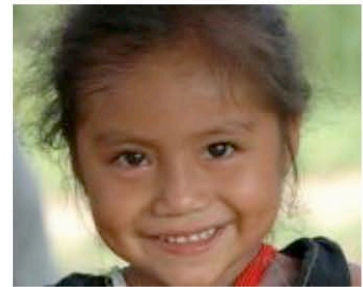
The Amazon Conservation Team seeks to steadily increase the number of indigenous peoples in Amazonia able to monitor, sustainably manage and protect their traditional forestlands, and by extension significantly increase the area of Amazonian rainforest enjoying considerably improved protection.

Our Strategy



The mapping of indigenous lands has been one of ACT's most powerful tools in conserving the Amazon rainforest in partnership with indigenous peoples. Very often, ACT's strategy for the conservation of indigenous lands begins with the generation of a detailed "ethnographic" map that clearly demarcates the region claimed by indigenous groups as their ancestral territory; demonstrates the indigenous groups' use of that region; and identifies the sites of greatest importance to indigenous peoples.

Our Success



The Amazon Conservation Team (ACT) protects the rainforest by working in close partnership with indigenous peoples. Our approach combines idealism, innovation, tradition, science, spirituality and social entrepreneurship.



"Magnificent night today at the Gulbenkian ...
a work where everything ends up converging into a
contemporary art form that's fair, honest and human."

Vitor Belanciano, Público, Portugal

Visit our video collection at:

[3thousandRIVERS channel](#)

and find more details on Victor Gama's website:

[here](#)

Contact:

Victor Gama

email: victorgama@pangeiart.org

whatsapp/mobile: +351 91270 6612

commissioned by:



supported by:



MASARTEMASACCION

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3thousandRIVERS: voices in the forest

MÚSICAS DO MUNDO

3milRÍOS: Vozes na Floresta

ÓPERA DE VÍCTOR GAMA



6 Maio 2016

SEXTA-FEIRA, 21:00h

Grande Auditório

GULBENKIAN.PT/MUSICA

JAI ME KIRIYATEKE © VÍCTOR GAMA

FUNDAÇÃO CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN
60 ANOS
1956 — 2016



CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION

220 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60604-2559

News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Press Contacts:

[Rachelle Roe](#)

[Maggie Berndt](#)

[Erin Dennis](#)

***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 (*Search11te*) 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.

RICCARDO MUTI
Music Director

WILLIAM A. OSBORN
Chairman

DEBORAH F. RUTTER
President

YO-YO MA
Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant

MÚSICAS DO MUNDO

Victor Gama

Vela 6911

20
/ 01

DOMINGO 20 Janeiro 2013
19:00h — Grande Auditório

GULBENKIAN
MÚSICA



FUNDAÇÃO
CALOUSTE
GULBENKIAN



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 Bator. 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*.



CARNEGIE HALL
presents



Kronos Quartet Margaret Leng Tan Victor Gama Matmos

Friday, March 12, 2010 at 7:30 PM
Zankel Hall

• • • • • Violin | • • • • • Violin
• • • • • Viola | • • • • • Cello
• • • • • , Toy Piano, Toy Orchestra, and Vocals
• • • • • , Pangeia Instrumentos
• • • • • , Electronics | • • • • • , Electronics

PLAYING WITH TOYS AND TECHNOLOGY

Using an orchestra of toys, instruments constructed from remnant 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 J.G. 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

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Photos: Kronos Quartet by Michael O'Brien; Toy Orchestra: Victor Gama; Pangeia Instrumentos: Pangeia Instrumentos; Matmos: Matmos

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KRONOS QUARTET e VICTOR GAMA
CENTRO CULTURAL DE BELÉM | 21 DE NOVEMBRO, 21H



Créditos: Richard Termine

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Desconto de 20% para grupos de 10 a 50 pessoas

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 Electrónica 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 fez 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 Pangeia 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 Pangeia 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 reaproveitam os detritos que ficaram de uma guerra». Para Victor, é um prazer poder partilhar a criatividade imensa 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».



FOTOS DR.

'Rio Cunene' Um espetáculo em que o Kronos Quartet (*em cima*), 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»

Restos de armas transformam-se em peça musical

Concerto. Victor Gama estreia com o Kronos Quartet no CCB a peça 'Rio Cunene'

JOÃO MOÇO

Foi há oito anos que terminou a guerra civil em Angola e foi nessa altura que o músico e compositor

Victor Gama encontrou várias crianças que construíam os seus instrumentos musicais com despojos de armas e equipamento militar. Este acontecimento levou o músico a compor a peça *Rio Cunene*, que será apresentada esta noite ao lado do norte-americano Kronos Quartet, um dos mais prestigiados quartetos de cordas, no grande auditório do CCB, depois da estreia mundial no Carnegie Hall, em Nova Iorque.

"As crianças brincam com tudo e se não tiverem brinquedos transformam-nos. O facto de criarem instrumentos musicais com restos de armas tem um impacto muito forte também por este as-

pecto metafórico, de conseguirem dar a volta a instrumentos de violência e destrutivos e transformá-los em algo que pode transmitir paz", referiu o músico ao DN.

Quando há cinco anos Victor Gama propôs ao Kronos Quartet compor uma peça tendo estes instrumentos e esta temática como pano de fundo, logo o grupo se mostrou bastante interessado: "Eles têm uma postura muito vanguardista e progressista na música, andam sempre à procura de algo que tenha uma mensagem, e expandem o seu repertório muito além do quarteto de cordas", explicou.

Ao longo destes últimos cinco anos, Victor Gama foi trabalhando com crianças da aldeia de Xangongo, situada numa das margens do rio Cunene, em Angola, e quatro dos instrumentos que serão tocados esta noite foram construí-



Victor Gama começou a trabalhar com o Kronos Quartet em 2005

FOTOGRAFIA: J. SOARES

dos por essas crianças. "O rio Cunene é um rio muito presente na vida das pessoas daquela região. Na época das chuvas torna-se uma zona de inundação e transforma tudo. Além disso, como toda aquela região foi marcada pelo conflito, primeiro com África

do Sul e o *apartheid*, depois com a guerra civil, faz com que o rio seja uma testemunha dessa época e também um agente pacificador e de comunhão e tudo isso entra subconscientemente na peça", salientou.

Além da peça *Rio Cunene*, inter-

'ENSEMBLE': Kronos Quartet revisita Paredes

> Esta colaboração do Kronos Quartet com Victor Gama não é a primeira vez que o *ensemble* toma contacto com um artista nacional. Há dez anos, o quarteto lançou o álbum *Caravan*, no qual interpretava peças de compositores de vários países. Entre os vários nomes encontra-se o do guitarrista Carlos Paredes, que foi assim evocado através das reinterpretações de *Romance N.º 1* e *Cancão Verdes Anos*. O quarteto, formado em 1973, já trabalhou com compositores como Arvo Pärt, Philip Glass, Steve Reich ou Henryk Górecki. Colaboraram ainda com Björk ou David Bowie e compuseram a banda sonora de *A Vida não É Um Sonho*, de Darren Aronofsky.

pretada por Victor Gama e pelo Kronos Quartet, o espectáculo desta noite, integrado no Festival Temps D'Images, contempla ainda repertório habitual do *ensemble* de câmara e o espectáculo multimédia *SOL(t)O*, da autoria de Victor Gama. Bilhetes a 15 euros.



Victor Gama

Max Eastley/Victor Gama

Kings Place, London, UK

Brian Eno once told a cautionary tale that a contact at one of the major digital instrument companies had in turn related to him: when buyers brought in their synths, 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 touch 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 via 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 1975 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 ski with a string. Eastley bows and finger-stops the ark, 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 as much. That's not to say that his music is too encumbered to be responsive.

As this evening's improvised *Accrux Creation* demonstrates (Gama is joined on laptop by digital artist and sometime collaborator David Gunn), 'dialoguing' – his term – is the key. The *accrux*, one of Gama's Pangeia-invented instruments, is an extraordinary object: something like a small kettledrum acting as a resonator, with four spindles 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 Gunn and Gama feed excerpts 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 exuberance that its inventor brings to it.

Louise Gray

Longplayer Live

The Roundhouse, London, UK

Jem Finer's *Longplayer* project is nothing if not ambitious. As originally conceived by the British artist and composer, it's the longest 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 can be heard at various listening posts around the world. As a work not destined to mature until the dizzying date of 2999, one of the key themes *Longplayer* raises is the question of its 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-ceilinged expanse of North London's Roundhouse venue, the teams include improvisors such as Steve Beresford, Kaffe Mathews 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 throbbing bongs 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

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's *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 1989, not 2009, and even the more 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 messing with Aphex Twin's early Pac-Man mixes, while Hudson Mohawke's hypercoloured pop draws breath from the excesses of 80s soul. The older 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 Bleep – splicing "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 him sound like a teenager auditioning for *Seinfeld*.

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

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Treasured

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 in display in 2011. As Dr Henrietta Lidchi, 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



Artist and musician Victor Gama demonstrates the new Tipaw instrument.

External links

- ▶ www.victorgama.org
- ▶ [Meet Victor the Music Maker](#)
- ▶ [Slideshow of Victor and the new instruments](#)

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Remix culture finds space in NG Kerk

MARY FARAGHER

SPACES of Possibility will bring a white traditional healer and an Angolan musician into an unbelievably overtrampoline NG Kerk.

Rod Suskin, 45, is a well-known figure in South Africa. He's a traditional healer who received his initiation in 1982 and has several books to his name.

A clinical psychologist and a medical astrologer, Suskin is a teacher who strives to distill the essence of metaphysical knowledge and bring it to a wider audience.

Victor Gama, 47, is an Angolan national who has presented workshops, exhibitions, and concerts all over the world. He is writing music for the groundbreaking Kronos Quartet and records for famous electronic artist Aphex Twin's label, Rephlex.

Most composers make music according to what is possible using the instruments available, whether those are acoustic or electronic devices. Victor Gama however, turns the process on its head. He creates instruments that produce a specific sound required by the unique composition and performance. His performances are visual musical events

which facilitate universal dialogue between people, the environment and the cosmos.

Suskin and Gama will be presenting a talk and a performance that speak to the theme *Spaces of Possibility*. Julia Raynham of Resonance Bazaar organised the event, and specifically chose the NG Kerk as the venue. Despite the "overtrampoline" image of the NG Kerk, and the new-age hippie

They are presenting material that is spiritual but not religious

associations of astrology, she thinks the church is the perfect setting.

She said: "I was looking for a non-mainstream place, and I saw this green space, it has a beautiful garden. So I just asked them (the NG Kerk), and they were really keen, it was amazing."

It's the kind of thing that

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SPACES OF POSSIBILITY: Multi-instrumentalist Victor Gama will perform at the NG Kerk in Sea Point on Thursday.

LISTINGS

MUSIC

MILES KEYLOCK

★ **Aseka Son of Dharma**, 68 Wood Street, Cape Town. Hot young Mother City jazz quartet, the Restless Natives, comprising Lee Thomson (trumpet), Mark Fransman (saxophone), Jason Reddon (piano), Shane Cooper (bass) and Keshian Naidoo (drums), cook up an original hard-bop brew every Tuesday. Starts at 9pm. Booking is suggested. Tel: 021 422 0909.

★ **Bang Bang Club**, 70 Loop Street, Cape Town. Darryl Cash supported by Shaun Darel and Freddy the Tulp spin the discs on October 12. DJ's Sox, Jerald and Weeds mix up the sexy house jam—was at FHM's Homegrown Honey's 2007 party on October 13. Doors open at 9pm. Admission is R50. Tel: 082 881 8555. Website: www.thefabangbangclub.co.za.

★ **Baran Theatre Restaurant**, corner Burg and Shortmarket streets, Greenmarket Square, Cape Town. Fly Paper Jet perform spoon-tancrediously jazzy, funky, alternative rock- and pop-filtered nuggets of their CD, *Let's Go Back to the Carnival*, at their new show, *Traveling Jet Salesmen* every Monday from 8.30pm. Starts at R40. Admission is R60 or R140 including Mediterranean buffet from 7.15pm. Tel: 021 426 4446. Website: www.baran.co.za.

★ **Baxter Theatre Centre**, Main Road, Rondebosch. The University of Cape Town Big Band and guest soloists and arrangers including Darryl Mawes (guitar), Mike Ross (sax), Jason Reddon (piano) and Abdul Pateen perform at the SAKM Jazz Festival on October 12 and 13. Starts at 8.15pm.

Conductor Peter—Louis van Dijk leads the ICT symphony orchestra and soloist Justin Carter (clarinet) through Matthias van Dijk's passing time, Weber's Chamber Concerto No 2 in E-flat major, Opus 74, J118 and Bazz's *Symphony No 1 in C major* at the ICT symphony concert on October 16. Starts at 8.15pm. Admission is R40. Rossi delivers his performance-based musical lecture on contrast and continuity in jazz improvisation on October 17.

Any instrument you like



Angolan musician Victor Gama plays a variety of hand-made instruments

In his new solo show *SOL (I/O)*, celebrated Angolan composer, designer, sound artist and master musician **Victor Gama** navigates a borderless territory between music, installation art, performance art, education and therapy by using his unique hand-made Pangaia Instruments (toha, acryu, dino and kisingale) as "mediators of dialogue among people and with nature, the cosmos and the ancestors' world." Sound a tad esoteric? Sure, but there's also a fundamental activism at the core of such an arcane approach to making music. By foregrounding the construction of the instrument in his compositional process, Gama taps into a tradition of experimenting with the metamorphosis of instruments that goes back to prehistoric times. The exercise of "giving form" or "writing through form" becomes a pivotal component in his work.

While drawing inspiration from the African Diaspora and his own native Angolan folk music, his work as a composer further elaborates on music's transformative potential beyond the

ty as a whole. In my practice I respond to this by creating resonating objects that act as mediators of dialogue."

Through employing these "mediators of dialogue" Gama establishes a bridge between new digital production tools

premised on the creation of music without an object or instrument, and a new mode of creation where the re-materialisation of new musical instruments establishes a continuum between old and new topologies of music. It's this conversation between tradition and innovation that has informed his collaborations with everyone from composer Nana Vasconcelos, jazzmen William Parker and Guillermo E Brown to The Kronos Quartet and Aphex Twin. As the press release on his website says, "The sound palette he creates on these beautiful sonic sculptures are hypnotic and otherworldly: percussive loops and string arpeggios built from the barest of components that square the circle between Gama's music, the work of turn-of-the-century composers such as Eric Satie and the

music of the 20th-century minimalists Steve Reich, Michael Nyman or Arvo Part." Admission is R50 or R20 (marginal masses, migrants, refugees, students and senior citizens). Website: www.victorgama.org. — Miles Keylock

MMMU Auditorium, South Campus, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Summerstrand, Port Elizabeth. The music department's annual start concert on October 17 features guitar duo Dr Howard Nock and Rudi Bower performing works by John Dowland and Manuel de Falla, piano duo Erika Bothma and Celia Campbell performing Mhaidli's *Sacramente* and more. Starts at 7.30pm. Tel: 041 504 2250.

★ **Obz Café**, Lower Main Road, Observatory. Acoustic fans can catch emerging singer-songwriters at Like Honey, Like Fire every Sunday. Starts at 8pm. Admission is R20 to R40. Tel: 021 448 0649.

★ **Old Cash Store**, Sandringham, Port Elizabeth. Guy Buttery weaves a mesmerising tapestry of improvisations and mandolin-picked pastoral-tone poems kissed with classical folk, bluegrass and start-grade films on October 17. Starts at 7pm. Tel: 041 366 1211.

★ **Pala Pala MWC Lounge**, 24 Bree Street, DUS Mill, Stender, Keilo, Ashton Ables, Kaurids, Phura and guests spin R&B, hip-hop and house at Thrifty Thursdays. Admission is R20 (ladies) or R30 (men). Tel: 021 426 4446.

★ **Rocktober Tour**, various venues. Funky ride—Robbie Fowler brings the noise to Beller's Mooring in Gordons Bay on October 12 and Shokwane in George on October 13. 16 South-point passionate hard-rock nuggets of their CD, *The Collapse of Af*, at The Deck in East London on October 12. Wordroom and Morgan Street play at Tropic Sol Port Elizabeth on October 18. Website: www.sowenl.co.za/rocktober.html.

★ **Silvertree Restaurant**, Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, Kirstenbosch, Cape Town. Funky jazz-pop tunesmiths Dream Soda perform tracks off their new CD, *Empty Vase*, at the next Winter Warner Concert on October 14. Expect an unremittingly chic, albeit jazz, funk, kwela, goema and breakbeat-blended groove cocktail. Starts at 6.45pm. Admission is R80 or R81 (members) and includes a welcome drink and soup service. Booking is essential. Tel: 021 762 9555.

into his from Elvis Presley, Queen, Led Zeppelin, Jimi Hendrix, The Police, U2, Pink Floyd, Nirvana. The DJ set every Thursday to Saturday until December 2. Shows start at 8pm. Admission is R95 or R180 (including dinner from 9pm in the Fascination Café downstairs). Book at Computicket. Tel: 021 419 7661. Website: www.thefascination.co.za.

★ **TwentyBrand**, secret venue, Western Cape. An all-star cast of masters including Harry and Muscle (Italy), Fresh, Hoogie Goodie, Ready D, Viny da Viny, Dino Bravo, Leighton Moody, Plat Jack, Mimi Kears and more lubricate the groove on October 13. Website: www.twentybrand.com.

Underground Sound Boutique, 120 Main Road, Sea Point. DJS Peter A. Leroy, Chris Klass, Super Fly, Nick E and Steve Hyon mix up the sexy, funky flavors at Klub on Fridays. Resident DJS Andrew F. Nick E, Louder, Leroy, Daniel, Chris Klass, Andy Dunn and Fadi spin the chic mix of electronic, techno and progressive beats at Quarter Club on October 13. Deck jockeys Jaydee, Jany, Leo, Gela and Selva drop hip-hop, R&B and salsa into the urban beat mix at Biny the Up Scooty on October 18. Doors open at 9pm. Dress code: trendy smart casual. Tel: 021 439 8000.

★ **Wadda**, 14 Stegmann Road, off Main Road, Claremont. Goldfish renovate the dance floor with their live electro-jazz-house mix in order to raise funds for a close friend in need of a more narrow transplant on October 13. Doors open at 9pm. Admission is R40 before 11pm, R50 after. RORR, no guys under 21, no girls under 19. Tel: 021 671 2180. Website: www.wadda.co.za.

★ **Zulu Sound Bar and Restaurant**, 188 Long Street, Cape Town. The Fong Kong Bantu Sounstays' tent's Red Roast, Dumastia China, Nore Ebbake and Boela E didi out the Funkadelic-affiliated jazz-disco-funk-soul mash-up on October 13. Waks adds the live sax and title hits. Admission is R20. Emerging singer-songwriters strum their stuff in the Acoustic Sessions from 9pm and in the Stage Fight set from 11pm on October 16. Songwriter Jack Mills

WIREF

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Worlds in miniature

By Louise Gray



Victor Gama with his totem harp

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 Tsikaya, 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 primeval 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 hypnotising 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 *Odantalan* 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* (2005), 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 Pangeia Instrumentos project, whose debut album was released in 2003 on Rephlex, Gama invented instruments such as the acru – a dish of stacked metal discs – and the toha, or totem harp. On a piece called "JetStream", the latter is played by the wind and edited 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 unearthly aeolian sounds of "JetStream" – to stress a natural process. His compositions are often a single section of a tripartite structure. For example, *Odantalan* (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. "Odantalan aimed mainly at the philosophical and knowledge systems of the Kongo/Angolan civilisation 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 cosmogram from which, according to African, Cuban and American researchers, the whole writing system and vision of the cosmos derives. This cosmogram, 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 Prenda or in Brazil as Inkizi, 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

Victor Gama

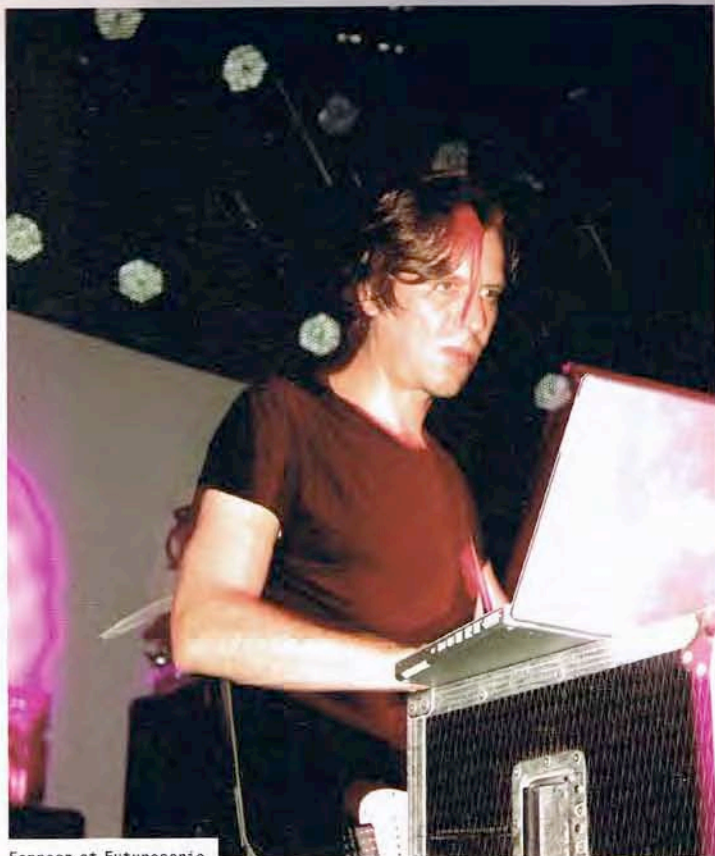
better harmony and understanding, and control the feelings and emotions for world comprehension and protection. In my work I am particularly interested in the association of the concepts between the Dikenga and the N'kizi. This association, which call the Golian Modes, has become the framework for the Pangeia Instrumentos project and my project.

Gama's work might maintain a dialogue with ethnomusicology, but it's not predicated on any academic discipline. The intention of the Tsikaya project, begun in 1997, was initially to make an archive of the fast-disappearing music from a country savaged by 30 years of war. It soon became clear, Gama 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 "meaning-making machines", he continues, with the implication that we all need to find our own machines for life. To that purpose, he, along with some other music designers and interested parties, has created the Portuguese based MITAIL (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 acru and will be putting those ideas in motion alongside Thomas Köner, Asmus Tietchens and Max Eastley a performance "where we all bring in our own approaches to music and sound sculpting acoustic instruments and devices, electronics and multimedia projections."

"It'll be totally improvised as we won't have 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 planet with the moon, the sun and the rest of the constellations on that night. There won't be another moment like that." □ Victor Gama appears with Thomas Köner, Asmus Tietchens and Max Eastley at the Atlantic Waves festival this month. Out There for details. www.victorgama.org



Fennesz at Futuresonic



Victor Gama

Futuresonic

VARIOUS VENUES
MANCHESTER, UK

Rooted in Manchester's mid-90s dance scene, and now in a celebratory tenth year mode (signature balloons floating in clusters on street corners), Futuresonic has broadened from niche event to a fully eclectic urban festival, guided by a genuine thirst for the unexpected, be it audio, visual or an ingenious blending of both. The ethos of the festival is no longer provided solely by the ebb and flow of electronica, but by a reputation for stretching into lonely areas of innovation, where art installations and social issues are both built into the festival's unique framework. It's a delicate balance and the organisers' greatest challenge is to contain a distinctive flavour in a two-strand festival which sees disparate artists cattered across myriad city venues, from chic cafe bars to sullen jazz cellars, from canal boat trips to Castlefield's Museum of Science & Industry, which fittingly housed the festival's opening and somewhat defining event.

This featured Toshio Iwai, less a musician and more a rolling concept multimedia talent. Iwai provided a keynote talk laced with an amish attitude towards his own distinctive mix of Techno-naïveté. Even with the city cowed by cloying humidity, his carefully constructed tale of his own journey from the simplistic flick-book animation of his schooldays to life as

superstar Nintendo game creator and electronica artist remained mercifully within the realms of entertainment. The conclusion saw him performing with his own invention, the electroplankton, a matrix board which pumped, pulsated and glowed with joypad 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 quartet Battles and Austria's Fennesz. To the bafflement of many, the conventional boundaries of what defines a concert were fabulously crashed. Battles are aptly named, as their complexity – a postulating crack and snap based on mathematical equations – provides an instant challenge to all but the most openly receptive of audience members. Their set built to a thunderous climax, where light and sound wove to a dizzying extreme.

Christian Fennesz, by stark contrast, has gained a powerful reputation for fusing technology with traditional instrumentation. At the Academy, the result was a haunting tumble of guitar chops pulled directly from the edges of rock cliché and hurled into a colourful melodic mix. At times this would shade into a recognisable songform, although this would swiftly dismantle to a state of gentle chaos.

The interactive nature of Futuresonic was perhaps most succinctly voiced by Pangea

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'kizi, 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 stark and intriguing contrast within the framework of an electronica 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 encourages viewers to create their own acoustic maps of 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 Fall gig – came a hip-hop showcase from Manchester label Kr8z, which featured the raw, untempered talents of a precocious pair of 12 year olds (seriously) named Metrodome and Jordan. Clad in the preposterous normality of a shirt and tie,

Metrodome, cute as a choirboy, dipped between decks, and scratched and shifted to unsettling effect.

These 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 Eletroplasm event saw DJ Dave Haslam ably supported by a swathe of electronic collectives – Tramp, Chips With Everything, Contort Yourself – under a Love Music Hate Racism banner, and Berlin's electrifying Cobra Killer, in mind-warping fury at the Bierkeller. 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 MIDDLES