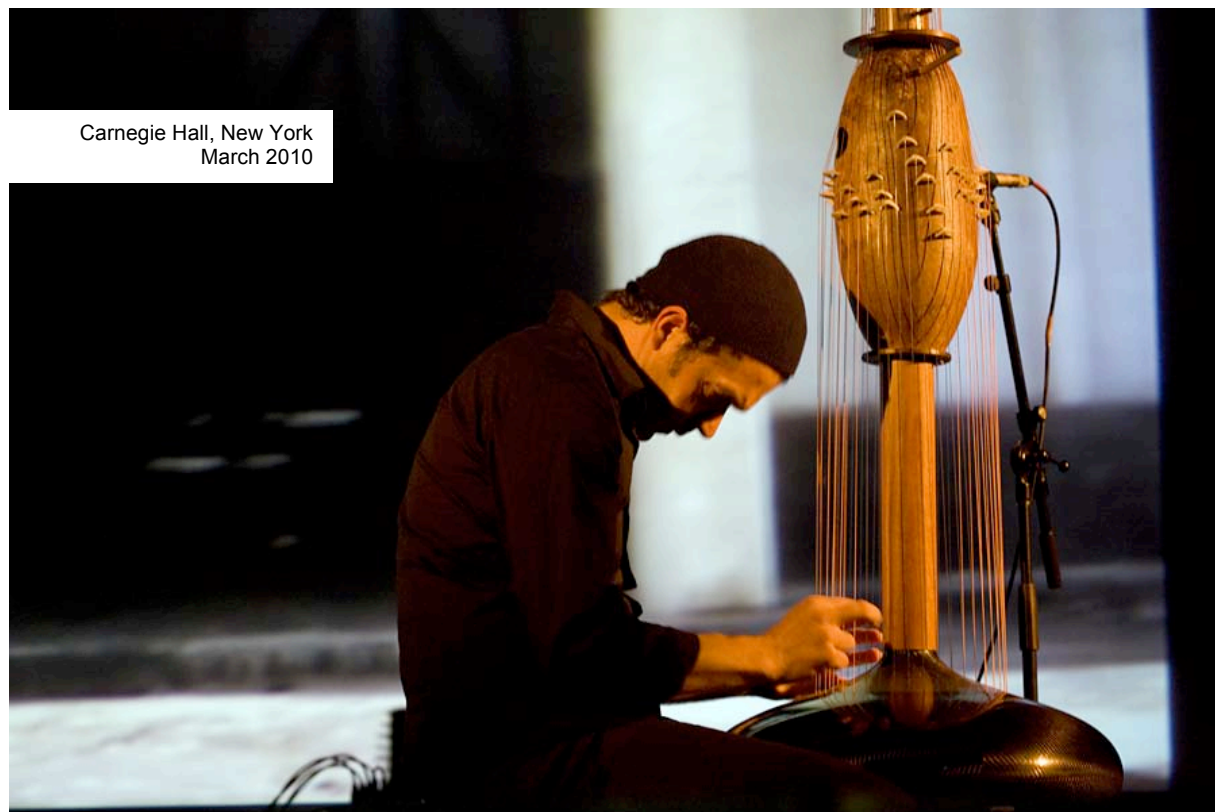


PangeiArt 2013/2014 touring - promoters pack

Project: Victor Gama - SOL(t)O

Solo performance, music / arts



Carnegie Hall, New York
March 2010

photo: Niklas Zimmer

Performer: Victor Gama (toha, acru, dino, lap-top, electronics)

Press

"Gama creates a wonderful set of noises in which you can trace African, European and South American overtones, in addition to the classical minimalism of Nyman, Arvo Part or Glenn Branca."

fRoots

"Given a world wide release via Aphex Twin's Rephlex label, Pangeia Instrumentos is dedicated to a fuller exploration of this music maker's work ..."

The Wire

Gama's music reveals an extraordinary sonic world with echoes of Californian minimalism.

Songlines, UK

"...In performance, Gama's meditative solo pieces for the metallic acru evoked both the Balinese gamelan and Cage's prepared piano, while his studies for the gleaming toha had the sophisticated simplicity of Howard Skempton or Ludovico Einaudi..."

Guardian



SOL(t)O is a multimedia solo show by Victor Gama featuring pieces for Acrux, Toha and Dino, from the Pangeia Instrumentos series of contemporary musical instruments, and projected footage from his Tectonik:TOMBUA project in the Namibe desert.

In SOL(t)O, Victor Gama develops a sound palette with his instruments that square the circle between Gamelan music, the work of turn of the century composers such as Eric Satie, and the music of the twentieth century minimalists Steve Reich, Michael Nyman or Arvo Part. Performing the instruments he has created, the Pangeia Instrumentos, name of the critically-acclaimed album produced by Aphex Twin, Gama pushes the envelop of folk based structures while mixing sounds from his lap-top and electronic loop stations.

SOL(t)O is a multimedia show that has recently been presented in major international venues such as the Carnegie Hall in New York, the Dinkelspiel Hall in California or the Centro Cultural de Belém in Lisbon, along the celebrated Kronos Quartet.

In the past few years Victor Gama has created a well programmed and exciting live show in which his instrumental virtuosity and creative chemistry has captured audiences across the world. His show

appeals as much to the mainstream world music crowd as to avant-garde, improvised music and electronica audiences.

Victor Gama

Victor Gama has been steadily building an impressive array of instruments since the early-'90s. Slightly visually reminiscent of the Swiss-Brazilian instrument builder Walter Smetak's creations in the '40s, '50s, and '60s, and sonically somewhat related to Harry Partch's more widely celebrated constructions and compositions, Victor Gama's concerts, exhibitions and workshops have been presented all over the world at festivals, cultural centres, galleries and institutions such as the Royal Opera House in London, Harbourfront Centre in Toronto, Fundação Serralves in Portugal, the Carnegie Hall in New York among many others. Gama collaborates with Naná Vasconcelos on the Berimbau-Ungu project and is part of the Folk Songs Trio with William Parker and Guillermo E. Brown. He has recently premiered his new piece Vela 6911 commissioned by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and MusicNOW in Chicago. His piece Rio Cunene exclusively written for The Kronos Quartet has been premiered at Carnegie Hall in March 2010.

Main recent shows:

5 March 2012, with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Chicago

2, 3, September, Royal Opera House, London

15 November, Fundación Carlos D'Amberes, Madrid

20 January 2013, with the Gulbenkian Orchestra, Lisbon

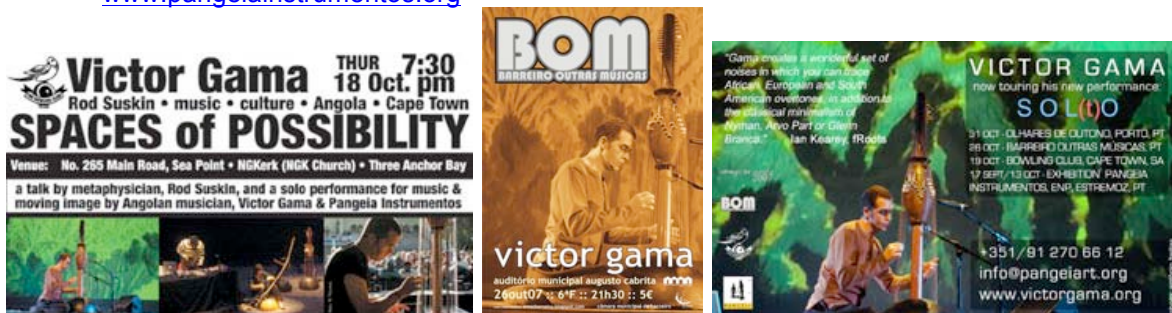
6 March 2013, Killian Hall, MIT, Boston

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Web: www.victorgama.org
<http://www.myspace.com/victorgamamusic>
www.pangeiainstrumentos.org



VICTOR GAMA / PANGEIA INSTRUMENTOS

Technical Specifications

Masking :

- Black box formation.
- Flat black floor is preferable.

Type of venue required :

- Traditional theatre venues, intimate, seating. Other sites like churches or open air theaters possible with proper technical conditions.

Personnel :

- One lighting operator
- One sound operator

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:

Sound :

- two (2) short stands
- two condenser mics
- Three (3) stage monitors
- Mixing console with a minimum of 16 inputs
- four (4) DI boxes
- Multi-effects processor with reverbs, TC Electronics, Lexicon or similar.

Lighting (generally needed but adaptable to existing equipment) :

- Control console
- 8 Profile
- 8 PC or Fresnels
- 8 Par
- One dimmer reserved for light inside instrument (normal 220V 60 w lamp)

Video

- DVD player
- Projector 3000 to 6000 lumen
- Wide angle projector lens if possible and necessary to cover whole area of stage wall
- Stage screen from stage level to grid level and as wide as possible

Other

- one (1) piano stool
- two (2) black round cushions for seating (aprox. 15 cm high)

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS PROVIDED BY THE ARTIST :

Ground Plan

Three (3) AKG contact condenser mics

Two (2) pedal effect processors

Lap-Top computer (on stage floor)

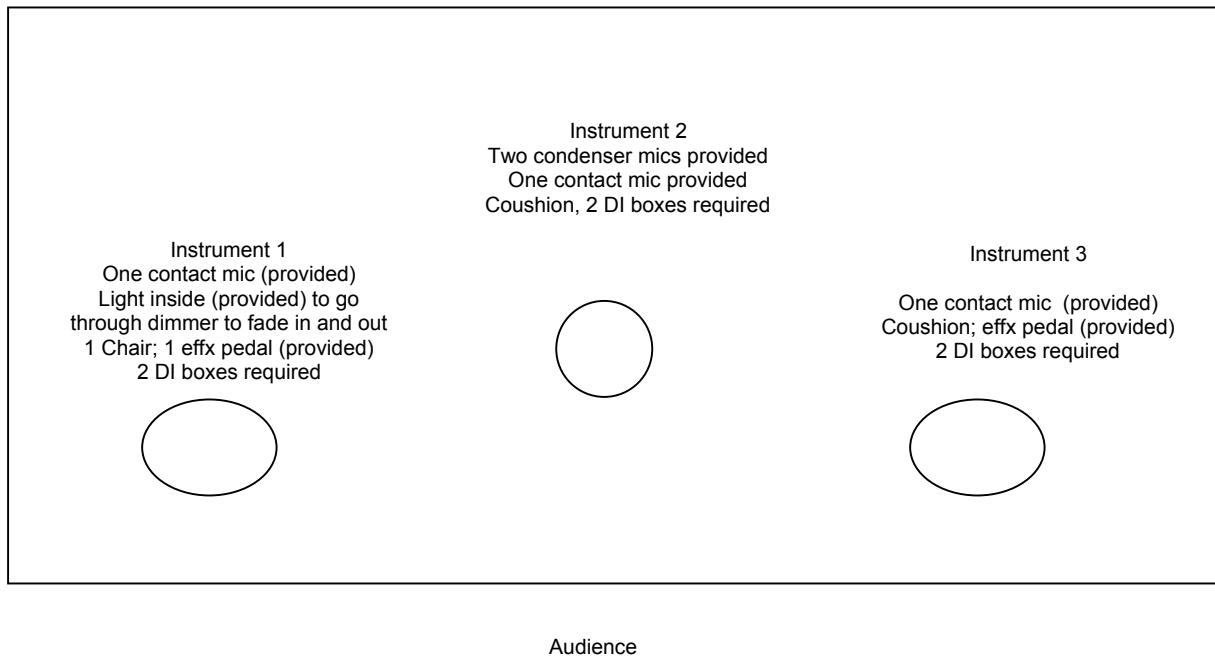
PLEASE NOTE THIS LISTING IS A GUIDELINE.

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

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT Victor Gama.

pangeiart@gmail.com

GROUND PLAN



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 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

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Photos: Kronos Quartet by Michael Wilens; Toy Piano Margaret Tan; Toy Orchestra Victor Gama; Matmos by Andrew Fenton. Programs and artists subject to change. © 2010 CHC.

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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

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

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.

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 overtrampled 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 the 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 "vertramp" 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



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

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LISTINGS

MUSIC

MILES KEYLOCK

★ **Asoka Son of Dharma**, 68 Koor Street, Cape Town. Hot young Mother City jazz quartet, the Resilient 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 Davel and Freddy the Tulp spin the discs on October 12. DJ's Sox, Jerald and Weeks mix up the sexy house flavoured at FHM's Homegrown Honey's 2007 party on October 13. Doors open at 9pm. Admission is R50. Tel: 082 881 8565. Website: www.thefangbangclub.co.za.

★ **Baran's Theatre Restaurant**, corner Burg and Shortmarket streets, Greenmarket Square, Cape Town. Fly Paper Jet perform spontaneously jazzy, funky, alternative rock- and pop-filtered nuggets of their CD, *Let's Go Back to the Carnival*, at their new show, *Traveling 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 Mavens (guitar), Mike Rossi (sax), Jason Reddon (piano) and Abdul Petersen perform at the SACM Jazz Festival on October 12 and 13. Starts at R15pm.

Conductor Peter-Louis van Dijk leads the ICT symphony orchestra and soloist Justin Carter (clarinet) through Matthias van Dijk's passing time. Weber's *Clarinet Concerto No 2 in E-flat major*, Opus 74, J118 and Beethoven's *Symphony No 1 in C major* at the ICT symphony concert on October 16. Starts at R15pm. Admission is R40. Rossi delivers his performance-based musical theatre 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 *SOUL (T/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 (toba, acryu, dino and kissing) 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 pre-historic 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 structures of tradition, Gama explains: "As a musician-citizen I am mostly interested in processes of cultural resistance and generation of spaces of freedom. Destruction and damage of cultural heritage, cultural imposition and control of cultural

ity 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

MMU 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 Colin Campbell performing Mahaul'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 Lake Honey, Lake 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 improvisational acoustic guitar sketches, quietly psychedelic sitar improvisations and mandolin-picked pastoral-tone poems kitted with classical folk, bluegrass and start-grade blues on October 17. Starts at 7pm. Tel: 041 366 1211.

★ **Pala Pala MWG Lounge**, 24 Bree Street, D'S Will, Shuter, Kenilworth. Ashton Abies, Kachela 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 night-rockers Flower bring the noise to Bernie's Mooring in Gordon's Bay on October 12 and ShooWare in George on October 13. 16 South passportable hard-rock nuggets of their CD, *The Collapse of A/C*, at The Deck in East London on October 12. Wordroom and Morgan Street play at Traces Al Soli Port Elizabeth on October 18. Website: www.sowent.co.za/rocktober.html.

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

into his from Elms Presley, Queen, Led Zeppelin, Jimi Hendrix, The Police, U2, Pink Floyd, Nirvana. The Defress and more at Rock Enrol! on 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, Hoodie Good, Ready D, Viny da Vinci, Dino Bravo, Leighton Moody, Flat Jack, Mimi Kears and more lubricate the groove on October 13. Website: www.twentybrand.com.

Underground Sound Boutique, 120 Main Road, Sea Point. DJ's Peter A. Leroy, Chris Klass, Super Fly, Nick E and Steve Hyppa mix up the sexy, funky flavors at Klub on Fridays. Resident DJ's Andrew F. Nick E, Louder, Leroy, Daniel, Chris Klass, Andy Dunn and Fadi spin the chic mix of electronic, techno and progressive beats at Counter Culture on October 13. Deck jockeys Jardee, Juncy, Leo, Gela and Josh drop hip-hop, R&B and salsa into the urban heat mix at Bling the Up Scooty on October 18. Doors open at 9pm. Dress code: trendy smart casual. Tel: 021 439 8000.

★ **Wedda**, 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 bone marrow 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.wedda.co.za.

★ **Zulu Sound Bar and Restaurant**, 188 Loop Street, Cape Town. The Fong Kong Bantu Sound System's ten's Red Rozzano, Quinesta China, Nore Eubank and Boella G. delist out the Funkadelic-affiliated jazz-disco-funk-soul mash-up on Saturday 13. Wicks adds the live sax and title kicks. Admission is R20. Emerging singer-songwriters strum their stuff in the Acoustic Sessions from 9pm and in the Stage Fright 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 to 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, pulsed 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.

NICK MIDDLES