

## Southern Cones: Contributors' Notes

### BALARAMA

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The principal sounds I play in *Balarama* via my electronic drums are those of two very different-sounding balafons: Aly Keïta's (in a diatonic tuning close to C major) and Kaba Kouyaté's (also diatonic, but in Guinean Mandingue tradition and basically in G major). At the beginning of the piece, I play samples of Keïta's balafon, completely out of tune. Soon, these samples are joined by Kouyaté's, also detuned. Gradually the tunings change to approach the original tunings of the instruments. Kouyaté's samples reach their destination first and then drop out; when Keïta's do the same, the piece ends. Throughout the composition, Keïta plays with me on his balafon. Our dialogue, then, is one of gradual convergence, developing, as it were, into one acoustic-electronic meta-balafon. (For more details, see the article by Lukas Ligeti, "Beta Foly," in this issue.)

*Lukas Ligeti was born in Austria and studied composition and jazz drums at the Vienna Music Academy. He was a visiting composer at the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics at Stanford University from 1994 to 1996 and now lives in New York City. He has received composition commissions from the Vienna Konzerthaus, Ensemble Modern, Kronos Quartet, Icebreaker and others. His music has been performed by the Austrian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre National de Lyon, London Sinfonietta, San Francisco Contemporary Music Players and the Amadinda Percussion Ensemble of Budapest. As a drummer playing improvised music, he has performed and/or recorded with Henry Kaiser, Gianni Gebbia, Benoit Delbecq, Michael Manring, Elliott Sharp, Mari Kimura, George Lewis, Ned Rothenberg, John Tchicai and many others. With his group Things of Now/Now, he has performed in conjunction with lectures by two pioneers of fractal computer graphics, Heinz-Otto Peitgen and Richard Voss, at universities in Germany in concerts organized by Spektrum der Wissenschaft, the German edition of Scientific American. He has been a member of numerous other bands playing rock, jazz and improvised music. He frequently performs solo on electronic percussion and is becoming increasingly interested in the relationship of music to other media, more recently working with silent film and a site-specific dance performance. Since 1994, when he co-founded Beta Foly in Côte d'Ivoire as a result of a Goethe Institute commission, Ligeti has been active in the field of cultural exchange, working in Zimbabwe with Batonka musicians and in Egypt with musicians from Nubia, and performing in South Africa, Mozambique and Burkina Faso. Recently, he began a project in Florida working with Caribbean musicians as part of the American "Continental Harmony" commissioning series.*

*Aly Keïta was born in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, into a family of balafon builders and players originating from Mali. At the age of 16, he was introduced to jazz by German-Liberian keyboardist George Macintosh. From this introduction, he embarked on a path of cross-*

*cultural experimentation, both as a player and as an instrument builder. Today, he builds balafons of different tunings and sizes, including the largest balafon in the world. Collaborations with musicians outside of his tradition have become a focus of his activities. He also continues to play the traditional music of the Bobo people with his younger brothers Yusuf, Siriki and Seydou. He is a founding member of Beta Foly and has performed at Camel Zekri's Festival de l'Eau (playing with Michel Doneda, Atau Tanaka, Yacouba Moumouni and others); and with Gilles Renne and Philippe Sellam, Waby Spider, Adepo Yapo, Rhoda Scott and Pharoah Sanders and has played many solo concerts in Germany, France and other countries. Commissioned by the Centre Culturel Français, he has conducted workshops in Niger and the Central African Republic.*

### VIENTO EN EL VIENTO

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*Viento en el Viento* is a composition for two flutists, percussion and live electronics; it was realized at the Institut de Recherche et de Coordination Acoustique/Musique (IRCAM), Paris, July–August 1994, and was commissioned and premiered by the Ensemble Intercontemporain in December 1994 at the Georges Pompidou Centre.

Once, after a stormy afternoon, I had the strange feeling of being completely transparent, of being just wind in the wind. I perceived the piece *Viento en el Viento* (Wind in the Wind) as a large empty space being sculpted by wind. The sound of the zampoña—long panpipes from the Andes—served as the main source of acoustic, spatial and poetic imagery. Being a very breathy instrument, the zampoña conveyed for me the fascination I have always felt for air and wind with all its sound(s) and spaces. The electronic sounds in this piece are entirely based on recorded samples of the zampoña. Some of these samples were transposed or time-stretched using the IRCAM software Super Vocoder de Phase (SVP). With the IRCAM workstation I analyzed and then used some other samples in a resynthesis Max patch, designed by Serge Le Mouton, which controls 40 dynamic filters. The parameters (pitch and amplitude) of these filters follow the first 40 harmonics of the analyzed sound. Leslie Stuck was my IRCAM assistant on this project.

*Diego Luzuriaga was born in 1955 in Loja, a small agricultural town in the south of Ecuador, and is number 11 in a family of 12 children. He started his musical studies in Quito at the National Conservatory and, assisted by a French government fellowship, continued his education at the École Normale de Musique de Paris, and later at Columbia University, New York. He has also lived in Brazil, where he taught composition at the University of Brasília.*

*In 1978 Luzuriaga founded the ensemble Taller de Música, with which he composed, performed and recorded many instrumental and vocal pieces based on Ecuadorian and Latin American folk music. He has received commissions from the Tokyo Philharmonic, the en-*

*sembles Intercontemporain and Itinéraire of Paris, the Ensemble Aventure of Freiburg, the Nieuw Ensemble of Amsterdam, the ensemble Pro Musica Nipponia of Japan, the duo Aurele Nicolet, Robert Aitken and the Quintet of the Americas. His music has been performed at many international events hosted by, among other organizations, the Centre Georges Pompidou, the ISCM World Music Days in Warsaw and Mexico, the Helsinki Biennale, the Royal Festival Hall in London, the Foro de Música Nueva in Mexico, the Société de Musique Contemporaine du Québec and the Festival Latinoamericano de Música in Caracas. Luzuriaga received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1993.*

### ***I WISH YOU STRENGTH AND INNER PEACE***

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The album from which the track *I Wish You Strength and Inner Peace* is taken was recorded April–June 1998 in the Gerald Lapierre Studio of the Music Department at the University of Natal, Durban, South Africa. The core participants were Feya Faku, Monde Lex Futshane and myself (together we are FELEMA), accompanied by guest artists Simon Stengel (violin) and Lizo Koni (vocals and lyrics). We had no reason for producing this album other than it was the first meeting in 10 years of the three core participants. (We had been students together in the Music Department at Natal University.) We wanted to produce modern contemporary African music by experimenting with mixing the South African tradition of jazz with Western popular music production techniques (primarily sampling and MIDI sequencing) but, most importantly, we wanted to enjoy ourselves, there being no commercial or record company pressures. For this piece, we played flugelhorn and bass and performed vocals in real time; all other sounds were programmed via a sampler and MIDI sequencer. The latter sounds were the first ones to be designed and sequenced, with the other instruments overdubbed at a later stage. Sequenced music can suffer from being metronomically exact, like an automaton—this was not what we wanted. Human feel and fallibility were deliberately invested in the music—being jazz, broadly speaking—by use of the mantra “as few takes as possible”—that is, most instrumental recordings, “mistakes” and all, were not re-recorded unless the mistakes were too obvious. In *I Wish You Strength and Inner Peace*, a 4/4 drum loop taken from a hip-hop record was digitally time-stretched and pitch-changed down to provide the rhythmic base—the “pig grunting” is actually the singer—over which a panning stereo sample of a piano bass string hit with a metal object was laid. These samples were placed in the sequencer and looped several times in a 3/4 meter form with reverse cymbal, snare drum rolls, marimba samples and other percussive effects providing structure. Futshane’s electric bass pattern was recorded onto the hard-disk recorder and looped appropriately, at which stage Faku suggested the flugelhorn melody. Subsequently, a vocal chorus was devised with Xhosa lyrics:

Ndikunqwenelela amandla noxolo (2×)  
Kuzo inzingo zalomhlaba/Ndikunqwenelela amandla noxolo (2×)  
Kuzo inzingo zalomhlaba/Amandla noxolo, uxolo kuwe

I wish you strength and inner peace/  
In all the difficulties of this world/I wish you strength and inner piece/

In all the difficulties of this world/Strength and peace, peace to you

These lyrics led to the composition of a preceding section comprised of a three-way conversation conceived by Lizo Koni, a drama student at the University of Durban-Westville. Briefly, a man worries that his loved one, who is away, will not return to him, and he is made fun of by his friends for worrying too much. Finally, he realizes that they are right and that he is concerned over nothing.

Mark Grimshaw studied music at Natal University, Durban, before completing his studies in Music Technology at York University, U.K. After 2 years in Italy, where he worked as a studio sound engineer, he was appointed as a lecturer in the Music Department of the University of Salford, England, where he is currently head of Music Technology and Studio Production.

Feya Faku is an internationally known musician, who studied music at the University of Natal, Durban, and rose to prominence playing with, among many others, Abdullah Ibrahim, whom he cites as his mentor. He recently released his debut solo album *Homage* and still finds time in his very busy schedule to teach at various institutions in Durban.

Monde Lex Futshane studied music at the University of Natal, Durban, and has since recorded around the world with the NU Jazz Connection, Counterculture and dUrban Noise Workers, in addition to numerous television shows with, among others, *Mosaic*, *the Core* and *the Feya Faku Quartet*. Currently, in between performing and recording, he teaches bass and pursues an interest in recording and video technology through his work at University of Natal’s Audio-Visual Centre.

### ***ELECTROACOUSTIC SAMBA I***

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*Electroacoustic Samba I* is the first of a large suite of electroacoustic sambas. Currently there are 10 in all, and this number will probably continue to increase. My original intention in each of these sambas was to explore particular composition techniques, such as dodecaphonic serialism, minimalism, fractal and granular synthesis, etc., but this is no longer mandatory for all of them.

I completed *Electroacoustic Samba I* in 1991; it embodies a compositional praxis that I call “tecno-pobre,” a term that contrasts nicely with the expression “techno-pop”: *pobre* is the Portuguese word for “poor.” The “tecno-pobre” praxis originated from the fact that in Brazil very few artists have access to the most up-do-date technological paraphernalia to make contemporary art, and so they have to work with what is available and under extreme limitations. As a contemporary artist in such circumstances, where the global communication network offers a great deal of information and publicity, but very little means to render this information useful in practice, one may forget that the tools and the medium should not be taken as references to assess creativity.

*Electroacoustic Samba I* was composed solely with a microphone, two tape recorders and a vocoder. No computers or digital signal processing were involved in the composition. First, I created two tape loops, each with a different rhythmic pattern inspired by Brazilian samba. Then I played the loops through a vocoder and executed all the signal processing on