

# **I X HERCULEAN**

a staged concert

A project supported by the European Cultural Foundation  
and the ZKM | Karlsruhe

April 2009

## ***General information***

### ***Concept***

Luís Antunes Pena & Jana Griess

### ***Team***

The persons who will be involved in the project are six artists of four different nationalities all based in Europe:

Jana Griess, dancer/performer, Germany  
Julia Mota Carvalho, dancer/performer, Brazil/Holland  
Nuno Aroso, percussionist/performer, Portugal  
Francesco Dillon, cellist/performer, Italy  
Michael E. Kleine, stage director, Germany  
Luís Antunes Pena, composer, Portugal/Germany

### ***When it will take place***

We are going to work on the project in five different phases:

- 1&2. recordings and their processing (June 2009/ July2009)
3. experimental phase (February 2010)
4. final production phase (April 2010) and first performance (April 2010)
5. tour (from Mai 2010 on)

### ***Where it will take place***

The project will be produced at the Institute for Music and Acoustics of the ZKM | Karlsruhe (Centre for Media and Art) which is collaborating with us to realise our project. We will be allowed to use the available resources of the ZKM. This includes a place to work, rehearse, experiment and perform with technical assistance.

At this point we are starting to organise a tour in Europe. Our aim is to make a tour to present the piece in the cities where we made the field recordings: Berlin, Tallinn, Budapest, Rome, Amsterdam. This would underline the whole idea of the project confronting the cities with their own sound in the acoustic context of Europe.

## ***Description of the concept***

We are living in Europe in a culture that we consider as a common one. In spite of having a history, which we all more or less identify ourselves with, the truth is that its' relative importance varies from place to place, as if we had regional cultural areas. The Italian music is different from the German one. And this one from the French one. The French music differs from the Polish. And so on. So in what way are we different? It seems like the way we read and interpret History in Europe is a Country dependent issue. In the particular case of music it is interesting to note that the way music history is passed down in different countries varies according to an emphasis of composers that have a specific relation to these countries. It is not just a question of music in an abstract sense, but rather music in a concrete geographical and cultural context. The "difference" is probably amongst the most interesting and simultaneously most difficult aspects of Europe – taking for example the many languages and traditions we have. We do not intend to give answers to these questions but rather to make "the differences in Europe" an object of our work. This project proposes „The Difference“<sup>1</sup> as a starting point of our artistic speculations.

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1 Allusion to Derrida's "Différance"

## **Realisation**

We will concentrate ourselves in the sonorous aspect of the difference: how could a country sound? This is not meant to be a metaphorical question, but a concrete one, based on field recordings of various places in five European countries. The identity of these countries should arise from the auditive impressions we get from the recordings. We have selected six cities in Europe to make the field recordings. We tried our choice to be a balanced sample of different European sensibilities: Porto/Portugal, Berlin/Germany, Tallinn/Estonia, Rome/Italy, Amsterdam/Holland and Budapest/Hungary. These recorded sounds will supply the material to be used by the performers. The electronics play an important role. There will be sounds coming from the loudspeakers and there will be live-processing of the sung and played parts.

We will next describe the different phases of the work and their pragmatic and artistic aspects. Please see attached detailed timetables with the duration of the phases and with a list of people involved.

### **Phase 1: recordings**

The acoustic material will serve as a basis for the musical and dramaturgical content of the piece. Our team consists of six persons living in four European countries. We decided to record in the places of residence of each group member complementing these with two more cities that have a different political background and geographical location in Europe. We selected three topics, around which we will choose the recording places. These are *global*, *movement* and *language*.

*Global*, the first one, concerns the so-called chain stores. These shops are equal in every European capital and offer the very same (or at least very similar) products everywhere. The identity of the each country is somehow smoothed and equalised by the indifference in marks and products. But we are interested in the sound. In spite of the superficial similarities, do they sound different? We intend to record sound in one of the main shopping streets of each capital and in a supermarket.

The second topic - *movement* - concerns the circulation of masses of people. We are quite certain there is a rhythm in each city and we would try to recreate it in an auditive and dramaturgical manner. Object of recordings would be a square in downtown and a central railway station.

The *language* - the third topic - is in Europe one of the most important identity factors. We decided to hear what non-European citizens have to say about Europe and how they interact in their own languages with the European ones. We will collect interviews of people waiting to be attended at the emigration department.

### **Phase 2: processing recordings**

In this phase the recordings will be evaluated. The selection of the acoustic impressions will take account of the whole dramaturgy and form of the piece and musical potential.

The first part (Phase 2 a) of this phase will be taken by the composer in his own home-studio. The second part (Phase 2 b) will take place in a professional audio studio at the ZKM | Karlsruhe in collaboration with the stage director.

### **Phase 3: experiments**

Before the rehearsal phase can start we will need to make some research with technical equipment. This phase will include experiments, improvisations in music and movement that will arise from evaluating the sound recordings. It will be the first practical attempt to developed ideas and work with the whole group together. Some of the experiments will include tests with sensitive feedback loops reacting to minimal movements. The objective of this phase is to collect material to be developed in the next phase and to give a stronger direction and a more defined form to the piece.

### **Phase 4: rehearsals, premiere**

The longest and most important phase of the working process. The fact that we can use the performance space from the beginning gives us the possibility adapt to the conditions. The rehearsal period of three weeks allows the group of different artists to give a creative contribution to the piece.

## **Phase 5: tour**

This phase is to be organised during the next months and should start right after the first performance (end of April 2010).

## **Our motivations**

This project centres on auditive perception of “the difference” and should produce music that will be written and interpreted. But we also have in mind to create a staged concert (in German: *inszeniertes Konzert*). We actually could call the performers “auditive actors” instead of just musicians or dancers.

We are convinced that the traditional concert situation ignores an important dimension that itself comprehends. The fact that the musicians enter the stage to play is already a theatrical aspect of performance. We are convinced that the consciousness of the theatrical dimension of a music concert is very important. We want to integrate this substantial medium in our project. Neither the music nor the scene of our piece would be able to exist alone. Music and scene call for each other. This is our conscious step against usual ways of concert presentation and against the use of music as accompaniment. Our intention is to recreate the concert situation making the performers play and sing their parts, but also to have a particular attention to their presence on stage and to perform choreographed movement.

## **Personal/professional interest**

We found a similar attitude towards art in the friends we contacted to work on this project. It was enjoyable to assert that their ideas coincided to ours on the perception of the musicians' role on stage and the relation between music and dance.

All elements of the group have a strong artistic background on experimental and non-classical art, whether music or dance. Each one seeks for new ways of artistic expression in its' specific field. This is one of the aspects that connects us as a group. We know each other from different projects where some of us were involved in, like for example, in DOCUMENTA 12 – Trisha Brown, in a research and composition work for percussion and electronics at ZKM, in the international music festival – Jornadas Nova Música, or in the theatre and dance project MUND.

The fragmentation of the work in five phases was created so to stimulate the group work. We want that all members feel free to suggest, criticise, improvise and to creatively contribute to the piece. In this sense, there will not exist a composition/choreography before the rehearsals, but it will appear in co-operation with each other. The professional experience of the performers and their creative resources are of extreme importance for the successful execution of the project.

## **Where to get more infos**

Visit our website at: <http://www.ixherculean.com>

Get in contact with our tour manager:

Stefanie Kusenberg  
Tel: 0221/16906931  
Mobil: 01577/1562344  
Email: s.kusenberg@gmx.de  
Skype: s.kusenberg