



# VELA 6911

Victor Gama

HARRIS THEATER  
CHICAGO  
5, MARCH 2012

CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN  
FOUNDATION  
20, JANUARY, 2013

Vela 6911 was commissioned by:  
Chicago Symphony Orchestra,  
MusicNOW

with support from:  
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

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

**Ian Harwood,**  
Executive Management at CSO

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

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

*"VERY GOOD JOB TONIGHT"*

**Cliff Colnot,**  
principal conductor, MusicNOW

*"serious business"*

**Pedro Santos,**  
Music curator, Teatro Maria Matos, Lisbon





## VELA 6911 - a new multimedia piece by Victor Gama

a commission by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and MusicNOW.

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

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

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

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

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

satellite called Vela, was the validation of a military power that engulfed the whole Southern African region in a 'cold-war' conflict in the late 70s and 80s. Her diary shows someone in contradiction between her love for nature and the mission she was on, which left a trace of devastation, death and radioactive contamination in one of the most pristine and protected environments on earth.

### **Score**

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

## Review Vela 6911

Chicago Classical Review

Michael Cameron

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

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

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

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





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

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

We are a team of five people:

Victor Gama - composer, musician

Salomé Pais Matos - musician

Isabel Worm - producer

Paulo Machado - sound technician

Rui Peralta - video and projection operator

Watch a video of the performance



For more information please contact Victor Gama at:

email1: [victorgama@pangeiart.org](mailto:victorgama@pangeiart.org)

email2: [pangeiart@gmail.com](mailto:pangeiart@gmail.com)

mobile: +351 91 270 6612