

Symposium & Concert  
further to the completion by Rafael Reina of his PhD

# Karnatic rhythmic structures as a source for new thinking in Western music

With B.C. Manjunath, dr. Mysore Manjunath,  
Peter Wiegold, Miles Okazaki, and students and teachers of the  
Conservatorium van Amsterdam

**Saturday, November 23rd, 2013**

From 9:00 a.m., Amsterdam Blue Note & Lecture Hall (8.03)



**Conservatorium van Amsterdam**  
Amsterdamse Hogeschool voor de Kunsten

fotografie: Vanessa Goad

# Programme

## Morning – Amsterdam Blue Note

- 09.00-09.30 Coffee & Tea
- 09.30-09.45 Welcome & introduction  
Michiel Schuijjer and Rafael Reina
- 09.45-10.30 **Applications of Karnatic rhythm to Western music I**  
David de Marez Oyens (Conservatorium van Amsterdam)
- 10.30-11.15 **Applications of Karnatic Rhythm to Western music II**  
Jos Zwaanenburg (Conservatorium van Amsterdam)
- 11.15-11.45 Coffee & Tea
- 11.45-12.45 **A Karnatic seminar**  
B.C. Manjunath (Bangalore, Karnataka, India), mrandangam  
Dr. Mysore Manjunath (Mysore, Karnataka, India), violin
- 12.45-13.45 Lunchtime

## Afternoon – Lecture Hall (8.03)

- 13.45-14.30 **The backbone**  
Peter Wiegold (Brunel University, London)
- 14.30-15.15 **'How I feel the time' – Constructing a personal rhythmic dialect in composition and improvisation**  
Miles Okazaki (New York)
- 15.15-15.45 Coffee & Tea
- 15.45-16.45 **Applications of Karnatic rhythm to Western music III**  
Rafael Reina (Conservatorium van Amsterdam)
- 17.00-18.00 Round table (Michiel Schuijjer, chair)

## Evening – Amsterdam Blue Note

- 20.00-22.30 Concert

## Abstracts and Biographies

### **Applications of Karnatic rhythm to Western music I**

David de Marez Oyens explores the basic principles of Karnatic rhythm, its use as a pedagogical tool as well as its possible creative applications, which will be demonstrated through parallels with existing jazz repertoire.

#### David de Marez Oyens

From the very beginning, David's career has been characterized by a wide musical interest. Born in Hilversum, on the 21st of July, 1960, into a family where music took a central role, David began piano lessons at six years old. The piano made way for the oboe, bass guitar and double bass. David's first bands played a combination of Latin, Jazz and rock, anticipating the later 'Fusion'.

"As a bass guitar player interested in the music of Zappa and Mahavishnu in the late 70's, having played more complex jazz-rock with transfusion and contemporary classical music with De Volharding in the 1980s followed by the Dutch radio orchestras and the René Engel Band in the 1990s, it was a logical step for me to go deeper in the more complex rhythmical structures of South-Indian music as offered by the course Contemporary Improvisation through Non-Western Techniques. After having taken the four year programme and additional workshops with Jahnavi Jayaprakash and B.C. Manjunat, I now feel much more equipped for the music of the 21st century."

Right now David is touring with the Jan Akkerman Band as well with Eric Vaarson Morel and Niti Ranjan Biswas in IndiAndaLuz.

### **Applications of Karnatic rhythm to Western music II**

Jos Zwaanenburg demonstrates the use of Karnatic phrasing techniques as a support for the analysis & performance of Western metre changes and tempo changes.

#### Jos Zwaanenburg

In 1985 Jos Zwaanenburg graduated 'with distinction' from the Sweelinck Conservatory in Amsterdam where he had studied flute and composition. In the preceding year he was one of the prizewinners at the Gaudeamus International Interpreters Competition, where he received an additional honorary mention for performing his own compositions. He has performed extensively throughout Europe, the USA, South America, India, the Russian Federation, and Japan; he was heard in radio and television broadcasts, as a soloist and as a member of chamber music ensembles involved in both classical and improvised music.

Jos is also known for initiating the development, in 1986/87, of the open-hole alto flute in cooperation with the Dutch flute makers Eva Kingma and Dirk Kuiper. He has often used it to display his command of extended techniques.

He is a senior lecturer at the Conservatory of Amsterdam where he teaches Live Electronics and Contemporary Music through Non-Western Techniques. Many CD recordings, on a variety of labels, feature Jos as a player as well as a composer. .”

## **A Karnatic seminar**

In Karnatic music the inner construction of a tala is an important guideline and motor for musical decisions. However, no instrument underlines or articulates the tala, which makes the music more ‘abstract’ and the cycle more difficult to recognize by inexperienced listeners. In this master class of B.C. Manjunath and dr. Mysore Manjunath, two pallavis will be performed; one in a simple tala with complex developments and another one with different complex structure but easier development. Karnatic music tries to avoid that all parameters are complex.

### **B.C. Manjunath**

Mridangam artist B(asavanhalli) C(handramouli) Manjunath was born in 1976. He inherited his talent from his father Sri B.K. Chandramouli. He was trained in by Karnataka Kalasree K N Krishna Murthy. Presently, he is also trained by Sangeetha Kalanidhi Sri T.K.Murthy. He has performed in all the major cultural centres of South India. He has toured worldwide, as a soloist, as an accompanist, and with dance companies such as the renowned English Akram Khan Dance Company, a very renowned dance company from England). B.C. Manjunath has participated in Jugalbandhi recitals and fusion music concerts. He collaborated with the Turkish sufi singer Kani karaka, Italian pop music icon Lucio Dalla, American trombonist Robin Eubanks, and many others. He is the primary teacher and president of the music school Sri Mookambika Talavadya sangeetha kalashale which was founded by his father 25 years ago.

### **Mysore Manjunath**

Dr. Mysore Manjunath was a remarkable child prodigy who matured quickly to emerge as one of the top ranking violinists in India today. He obtained a Master in Music with honours, and a PhD in Violin from the University of Mysore. He was one of the youngest musicians to be awarded an A-Top status by All India Radio. With his exceptional musical genius, extraordinary musical acumen & technical virtuosity, Dr. Manjunath has represented Indian Music at many international events, including the San Diego International Violin Conference and the World Music Festival in Chicago.

## The backbone

Peter Wiegold has for a long time been working with the concept of the 'backbone', core material that carries the heart of the music, but can be realised in different ways, on different occasions, and with a wide range of musicians. He will discuss his methodologies in terms of composition, realisation, performance and leadership, and relate the ideas to principles of core/key rhythm often found in Asian music.

### Peter Wiegold

Peter Wiegold is a composer and Head of Music Research at Brunel University. His recent works include *He is armoured without* for the BBC Proms, *Bow-Wave* for the National Youth Orchestra and *The End of the Line*, an opera for 150 performers from the Royal Northern College of Music for Manchester Piccadilly Railway station.

Peter has recently conducted the Composers' Ensemble, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, Northern Sinfonia, the Hourglass Ensemble, and Symphony Nova Scotia. Next year he will be directing concerts with Beltane, a new music ensemble within the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. His own ensemble, Notes inégales, combines playing written music with improvisation. Their club at Euston, Club inégales, has fortnightly events; guests have included Evan Parker, folk singer Chris Wood, poet Benjamin Zephaniah 'Polar Bear' drummer Seb Rochford, and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

Notes inégales recently performed in Singapore and Hong Kong, combining with musicians there, and have just released a CD entitled *Kafka's Wound*, featuring Will Self and klesmer music that began with Will Self's London Review of Books/Arts Council SPACE project 'Kafka's Wound'. A CD of Peter's music featuring Notes inégales, *Earth and Stars* was released in 2010 on the NMC label.

## 'How I feel the time' – Constructing a personal rhythmic dialect in composition and improvisation

New York-based guitarist/composer Miles Okazaki will survey the compositional trilogy that he completed from the period of 2006-2012, describing his techniques and process. He will focus on the particular challenges involved in using highly detailed rhythmic vocabulary as the source material in an improvising ensemble. Topics will include: rhythmic cadences and linear forms, rhythmic counterpoint and unequal cycles, rhythmic illusion, rhythmic canons, proportions and golden ratios in rhythmic form, temporal shuffling and stochastic processes, and stylistic considerations such as swing, groove, and feel.

## Miles Okazaki

Miles Okazaki is an American composer and guitarist, recognized as one of the most innovative musicians of his generation. Okazaki's compositions are focused on rhythm, and are known for a balance of technical intricacy and an ability to reach audiences on a visceral level. His most recent album, *Figurations*, was selected as one of the *New York Times* top ten albums of 2012, described as 'slowly evolving puzzles of brilliant jazz logic'. He has studied in many areas of music outside of Jazz, including ten years with Karnatic Percussionist Ganesh Kumar (India), private studies of Counterpoint with Kendall Briggs (Juilliard), and undergraduate studies in Literature and Visual Arts.

As a guitarist, Okazaki works in many areas, ranging from Standard repertoire to experimental music. His most recent recordings and tours include Steve Coleman and Five Elements, Kenny Barron, Jonathan Finlayson, and Dan Weiss. He is a graduate of Harvard University, Manhattan School of Music, and the Juilliard School, and teaches a large body of students, on a variety of instruments. In addition to private teaching, he has served as faculty for Queens College, The New School, The Banff Centre, and the Juilliard School, and has given clinics and master classes all over the world. Currently he lives in Brooklyn, NY.

## Applications of Karnatic rhythm to Western music III

The purpose of Rafael Reina's Master lesson is a double one; on one hand, it shows how a complex passage of a piece by Xenakis can be performed with the aid of complex Karnatic techniques. On the other hand, it is a demonstration of how the Karnatic developmental approach to polyrhythms and polypulses in two separate and highly sophisticated bodies of theory (namely Nadai Bhedam and Anuloma-Pratiloma) can help us rethink the way Western composers and improvisers have conceived the use of these devices.

## Rafael Reina

Born in Equatorial Guinea, West Africa in 1961, Rafael Reina moved to Madrid at the age of seven. He graduated 'Summa cum Laude' in composition from Berklee College of Music in Boston, USA. On returning to Spain he composed a lot of music for dance, including a piece featuring Marco Berriel and Joaquin Cortes for the 1992 Expo in Seville and Madrid Symphony Orchestra. He won twice the prize for the 'Best music for Dance' (1992 and 1994).

From 1993, when he moved to Amsterdam, Reina spent long periods in South India studying the theory of Karnatic music with Jahnvi Jayaprakash and N.G.Ravi. These studies led to the creation of the programme 'Contemporary Music Through Non-Western Techniques' at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam. Next to his regular teaching, he has given master lessons and seminars in numerous European conservatoires.

He co-founded in 1996 the Interval Chamber Amsterdam Ensemble, specialised in music using non-western influences, rhythmical complexities and microtonal tunings. He wrote a number of pieces for this ensemble.

In co-production with the Interval Chamber Amsterdam and Healing Theatre Cologne, Reina composed the opera, Wölfli, a journey into chaos, directed by Petra Weimer (who worked two years in Peter Brook's Mahabharata). In 2004, Reina wrote part of the collective opera 1714 Mon de Guerres a co-production of Festival de Peralada and Barcelona Forum 2004.

Reina's extensive oeuvre of ensemble pieces has been performed all over Europe, USA, Taiwan and India. He is also the co-founder of the Axyz Ensemble, another ensemble addressing music with non-western influences and made up of former students of his program. This ensemble, in co-production with the Theater Rampe (Stuttgart) and also under the direction of Petra Weimer, performed his opera HesseIndia.

## Concert Programme Notes

The first part of tonight's concert presents six compositions written and performed by students who have followed the programme 'Contemporary music through non-Western techniques'. The creators utilise the techniques and concepts in their own way and combine them with their own background, aesthetics etc. Three of these pieces have a very clear jazz influence whilst the other three can be classified as contemporary classical music.

### **A prayer**

Jelle Verstraten

Sophie Fetocacis, voice; Jelena Popovic, piano; Dolan Jones, violin;  
Charis Konstantinou, clarinet; Francesca Clements, recorder

Conducted by Jamie Man

When composing I used to think in terms of melody and harmony to create musical textures and tension. Although it used to work for me in most cases, sometimes I felt there was a need for another perspective, another direction to take to achieve this goal.

After taking the programme 'Contemporary Music through Non-Western Techniques', I became much more aware of the possibilities to create textures and tension by using rhythmical techniques as a tool of expression. Another concept, which spoke to me from the start (and which I used extensively in my music), was that of basing an entire piece on one constructed tala, a cycle through which the piece breathes in and out. The cycle provides a unity, and the frame on which you can explore the large amount of Karnatic techniques.

For this piece I used an elaborate tala of 49/8, subdivided 11/8 (x3) and 16/8 (with inner subdivision of 4,5,7).

### **Sorry to interfere... anyone cares?**

Andys Skordis

Marleen Wester and Anna Britala, violin; Wilma Pastorius, cello; Charis Konstantinou, clarinet; Anne Veinberg, piano; Marc Aixa, percussion

Conducted by Jos Zwaanenburg

I used the instrumentation in two groups. The first group (string instruments) and the second group (the rest) work like a double trio. Interfering means that

one group 'clashes' with the other one by using contrasting elements.

Even though I used the techniques in a polyphonic manner, where every technique might not be audible as a technique itself, I felt that the whole piece always had something holding it together. As Karnatic musicians see it, the whole development is somehow like a tree, where a seed brings forth branches, sub-branches etc. I feel the same way about this piece - that every section or even single voice is just another branch of a tree.

This piece has been the starting point of a musical journey. Previously I tried various ways to create polyrhythmic structures, but I always had the sensation that an organic part was missing. By using Karnatic techniques the relationship that every rhythmical cell has with the following or the preceding one is like a spider's web, and I tend to believe that this relationship is something one may even feel at an unconscious level.

## **It was always stark ... .. this just makes it starker**

Dolan Jones

Dolan Jones, violin; Jason Alder, (bass) clarinet; F. Murat Yatmaz, electric bass; Christopher Klassen, voice; Igor Plzak, drums

When I first began studying Karnatic music, something about it connected to a way of thinking I had always employed but had not been able to develop. When I came to Amsterdam and began taking classes in 'Contemporary improvisation through non-Western techniques' it was not so much that a whole new world opened up, but that I was given the tools to understand and develop the thoughts I was previously unable to comprehend.

This piece as such is my second composition ever: when I started sketching this piece I undertook to construct everything from a single cell and melody using only Karnatic techniques. This meant that the abyss of endless possibilities became a manageable series of best choices. I had to be creative with the numbers, but the techniques gave parameters that reduced the process to workable tasks about proportionality, ordering of events and orchestration. The Karnatic process also enabled me to envision multiple layers of complexity without losing sight of the overarching musical narrative of the piece.

## Oru de Igbođú II

Louis Aguirre

Whinnies Cheng, violin; Kata Szanyi (III) and Kelly Kicken (VI), flute; Iulin Vecliuc, oboe; Jason Alder, clarinet; Stefan de Wijs, saxophone, Hans Leeuw, trumpet; Ere Lievonen (V) and Jelena Popovic (V, VI), piano; Bence Major, Sven Hoscheit, and Marc Aixa, percussion; Louis Aguirre, voice

Conducted by Jos Zwaanenburg

(The cycle of compositions by Louis Aguirre has been made possible with funds provided by the Danish Statens Kunstfond and the Danish Composers' Society.)

This piece is a cycle of six compositions, in which this Cuban composer explores his knowledge of African music and rituals in combination with Karnatic rhythmical structures. The names of the pieces is:

- I Toque a Eshu y Ochosi (violin)
- II Eggun y Olokun (voice);
- III Oshun Olodi (flute and clarinet);
- IV Toque a Eggun II (3 percussionists);
- V Oru a Yemaya y Obba (clarinet, trumpet, percussion, 2 pianos);
- VI Toque a Oshun y Olokun (violin, piano, flute, sax, oboe, clarinet, percussion)

Oru is a sequence of chants and percussive strokes dedicated to the Orishas (the pantheon of African Gods). My sequence of pieces is dedicated to invoke, worship and communicate with the Orishas.

My music is nourished by Santería ceremonies, where music forms an integral part of making contact with 'other worlds'. In most of my music, sound is the vehicle of catharsis and sacred meaning. It was indeed, my spiritual beliefs that made me realise I needed a sound that would reflect the atmosphere of these rituals. To this end, I came to Amsterdam to study the programme 'Contemporary music through non-Western techniques'. I somehow knew that the complexity of Karnatic rhythms could be an answer to my search.

What interested me of Karnatic music was the unfolding of rhythmical richness that this system has created and how I could use it for my own aims.

## How could I know

F. Murat Yatmaz

F. Murat Yatmaz, electric bass; Jason Alder, bass clarinet; Jelena Popovic, piano; Francesco Bongiorno, drums

I see myself as a bass player who tries to think like a drummer. At the beginning of my musical career, I often had trouble with keeping the pulse. After studying the programme 'Contemporary music through non-Western techniques', I can say that I have become a very tight bass player, even when dealing with very complex material. Every topic of the program interested me and I tend to push my limits as much as I can, both as a performer and as a creator. 'Contemporary Music Through non-Western techniques' has not only influenced my music, it has become my music. In this piece there is not one single note without the effect of a Karnatic technique or concept.

## Shape Shifting

Hans Leeuw

Hans Leeuw, electrumptet; Esmée Olthuis, saxophone; Axel Schappert, trombone; Ere Lievonen, microtonal keyboard; F. Murat Yatmaz, electric bass; Maurizio Ramirez, drums

The programme 'Contemporary music through non-western techniques' has been of significant influence for my musical development. I had always been searching for a way into jazz composition that would be both structured and free, a way of composing that would enable me to use grooves and rhythms of a more complex kind but that would still sound organic.

The content of the programme is a constant source for generating material. I am not completely strict with it, but I do create rules on a piece-to-piece basis that are derived from the way of thinking I learnt during the studies. As the base for my compositions, I mostly use some sort of algorithmic cell and I build from there. I do not use the tala as such, but rather the concept of a fixed length, similar somehow to the concept of cycle. Using the material in this way I can use the logic of Karnatic music as a starting point whilst adapting it to my own whims.

INTERMISSION

The second part of the concert features two great masters from South India; Dr. Mysore Manjunath on the violin and B.C. Manjunath on percussion. They will perform two pieces, both in a very intricate form called 'pallavi'.

The first piece is set to a simple tala but features very complex development as well as various sorts of polypulses between the violin and the percussion. The second piece is constructed around a very complex tala using less intricate material. Both pieces are the result of applying Karnatic tradition. but looking for different angles and musical result.

