

YOUTH ORCHESTRA OF THE AMERICAS · ORQUESTA DE
JÓVENES DE LAS AMERICAS · ORCHESTRE DES JEUNESSES
DES AMÉRIQUES · ORQUESTRA JOVEM DAS AMÉRICAS



YOA's Ilmari Hopkins & Aline Rocha with NEOJIBÁ youth orchestra
Salvador da Bahia, Brazil
14 - 18 December 2008

NEOJIBÁ & YOA

NEOJIBÁ (Núcleos Estaduais de Orquestras Juvenis e Infantis da Bahia) is a project created by YOA piano faculty, Ricardo Castro. YOA's 2008 residency in Costa do Sauípe (Bahia) served as a catalyst for this emerging youth orchestra movement in this region of Brazil and laid the ground for future YOA-NEOJIBÁ collaborations.

YOUTH MUSICIANS AT DECEMBER 2008 MERCOSUR SUMMIT

Ricardo Castro invited YOA cello faculty, Ilmari Hopkins, and three teachers from Venezuela's FESNOJIV to coach the NEOJIBÁ orchestra during five full, exciting days in December. Young Brazilian pianist and YOA musician, Aline Rocha, a student of Mr. Castro's, was also invited to participate in this program.

ILMARI HOPKINS & YOA

This is just the beginning of a long list of other projects Mr. Hopkins is arranging in Stavanger (Norway) which all either directly started from or got inspired from his experience as a member of the music faculty of YOA last summer. "My participation in YOA has almost felt like a cultural explosion in my life, with so many new interesting projects and ideas. I came home from YOA in a very inspired state of mind and that inspiration has also touched many other people around me, so this is just the beginning of something really great, I feel. After YOA, I have also for the first time in my life started loving to teach (that always used to be my least interesting musical activity, until last July!). YOA has changed my life in many ways, and I'm forever thankful for that!" Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Castro have arranged for NEOJIBÁ musicians to study and perform in Stavanger, Norway, as well as a skiing tour to the mountains with Norwegian students and other sightseeing in Norway for these young Bahian musicians. And, Mr. Hopkins arrived in Salvador with a collection of strings and rosin and a \$1,500 contribution for purchasing new instruments.

NEOJIBÁ PROGRAM IN BAHIA

This 5-day didactic program did not allow much time for individual or sectional lessons - the timetable was very tight and the music program difficult - so it was important to be helping out in the long full-orchestra rehearsals (up to 4 hours without a pause!!!). Somehow over the course of 5 days, Mr. Hopkins found time to give a sectional class to four cellos from the beginners' orchestra (only 5-8 months experience) and individual lessons to seven more experienced NEOJIBÁ cellists. The main purpose of the program was to prepare the young musicians for one public and two "special" concerts with NEOJIBÁ as the centerpiece. The "special" concerts were to entertain visiting dignitaries of the International Summit of MERCOSUR & Caribbean nations being held in Salvador da Bahia. Many Latin American presidents were in the audiences, including President Lula.

CONCERT PERFORMANCES

The first concert took place on December 14 at an outdoor amphitheatre of Teatro Castro Alves in Salvador. Under the baton of Ricardo Castro, the young NEOJIBÁ musicians performed for a public audience of 400. The music program included Beethoven's *5th Symphony*, Ginastera's *Estancias*, Tchaikovsky's *Marche Slave*, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Russian Easter*, Arturo Márquez's *Danzon No. 2*, and the famous Brazilian song *Tico-Tico*.

On December 16, NEOJIBÁ performed this same impressive program in a huge tent in Costa do Sauípe, the beautiful seaside resort where YOA held its July 2008 residency. President Lula, the Governor of the State of Bahia, Mr. Wagner, and the Latin American leaders at the Summit were in attendance (below). The performance was a huge success with a long standing ovation!



On December 17, a gala concert was given at Salvador's Teatro Castro Alves, again for the visiting dignitaries of the Summit. This time, the young NEOJIBÁ musicians performed with legendary soloists Mercedes Sosa (Argentina), Susana Baca (Perú), Cecilia Todd (Venezuela) and Carlinhos Brown (Brazil), as well as a local berimbau-group. The orchestral music for the songs with the soloists were only received on that same day, so there was lots of work to do: marking bowings, correcting printing errors and energetically rehearsing the music. This audience was lucky to witness a probably unique moment when Carlinhos Brown got Mercedes Sosa to dance few steps of samba during *Tico-Tico* played by the orchestra!

The NEOJIBÁ concerts earned standing ovations, leaving the presidents and public audiences with wide smiles on their faces. On the last day of the 5-day program, Ilmari Hopkins and YOA musician Aline Rocha gave a duo piano-cello recital for the NEOJIBÁ orchestra members at Teatro Castro Alves in Salvador.