

GRUPO CORPO



[2022]

choreographer: Rodrigo Pederneiras

music: Gilberto Gil

scenography and lighting: Paulo Pederneiras

costumes: Freusa Zechmeister

The soundtrack, especially created by one of the godfathers of Brazilian music, Gilberto Gil, was first heard by Grupo Corpo's Paulo and Rodrigo Pederneiras in 2019. Its first onstage interpretation – GIL – followed soon after. Three years later (including a lengthy interruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic) the music is back on the stage in a new incarnation, and in a spirit of renewing, rebuilding, revising, reviving. Remaking. "It isn't just new choreography: it's a new show," says Grupo Corpo artistic director Paulo Pederneiras. That spirit is captured in the name: GIL REMAKING (Gil Refazendo). Like Gilberto Gil's music, which is based on a reinterpretation of the Bahian songwriter's most famous songs, known by heart throughout Brazil, the ballet has been reconstructed in its entirety.

As well as the opportunity to pay tribute to Gil on his 80th birthday in 2022, the decision to start from scratch was reinforced by the radical transformation the world – and Brazil in particular – underwent during this period. "We decided on the idea of a renaissance, a remaking, a replanting, a rebuilding," continues Paulo. "Gilberto Gil, with his metaphysical thinking, his ideas and his deep-rooted environmental activism, became a perfect interpretation of the need to rebuild what has been devastated, to put right what has been allowed to collapse."

The soundtrack propels a high-intensity show. "Music is like a mighty river, with a strong current," says choreographer Rodrigo Pederneiras. "I embraced this dynamic, with large groups on stage, instead of a prevalence of duos and trios. And there's no floor – the energy rises upwards." Even in the finale, in which the music deviates from the usual direction towards a climax and opts for a slowing down, the strength of the movements "pulls it upwards", says Rodrigo. A single, enchanting, exception remains in the reconstructed choreography: Mari's samba – a solo by dancer Mariana do Rosário, in the reinterpretation of the Gil song *Aquele Abraço*.

The scenography is supported by a minutely shifting background image. "These are magnified images of sunflowers slowly coming back to life," says Paulo Pederneiras. "We made an uninterrupted, fifteen-day recording of the transformation of live flowers into withered plants; in the onstage projection, we reversed the process. The audience watches life returning, at first without realizing what is happening, then, at the end, explicitly understanding". Dressed in raw linen – female dancers in shirts over a two-piece knitted outfit, male dancers in casual pants and shirts – the performers dance under a "simple white" light, says Paulo.

On the 38-minute soundtrack, phrases and themes from Gilberto Gil songs such as *Aquele Abraço*, *Realce*, *Tempo Rei*, *Andar com Fé*, *Toda Menina Baiana*, *Sítio do Pica-Pau Amarelo*, *Raça Humana* emerge – reworked, but in perfectly recognizable variations. The arch of the soundtrack includes four themes, or four musical environments, in the composer's own definition: an instrumental chorus; a chamber-style approach (with inspiration "in Brahms or Satie", he says); a third section of improvisational freedom and, finally, an abstract construction based on geometric figures. "Circle, triangle, rectangle, pentagon, the return to the circle and finally dissolution in a straight line," explains Gilberto Gil.

In the arrangements, ancestral drums and electronic distortions alternate; the *afoxé*¹ and the jazzy woodwind section; the *modinha*² and the *berimbau*³. These echoes dance among themselves, intertwining and dialoguing as the music progresses through the arch of the soundtrack. "The closing of the soundtrack also includes a concrete poem recited by Gil, where the five letters of BODY (CORPO) unfold into CRAVO (CARNATION), CEDRO (CEDAR), FLORA (FLORA), PALCO (STAGE), PERNA (LEG), BRAÇO (ARM), PEDRA (STONE). "Listening to the final result, I realized that there are many elements to my rhythmic dimensions, elements of Bahia, of Afro-Bahian music," concludes the composer.

¹ Afro-Brazilian musical instrument composed of a gourd wrapped with a net threaded with beads.

² a type of sentimental love song

³ a single-string percussion instrument or musical bow, originally from Africa