

Pedro Amaral * Biography

English

Born in Lisbon (Portugal) in 1972, Pedro Amaral, composer and conductor, is one of the most active European musicians of the young generation.

Studies

He started his studies in composition as a private student of F. Lopes-Graça, in 1986. His general music apprenticeship was made mainly at the **Gregorian Institute** (1989/91) and the **Superior Lisbon Conservatoire** (1991/94) where he graduated in composition at Prof. Christopher Bochmann's class.

Pedro Amaral moved then to Paris, to study at the **Paris Superior Conservatoire** (CNSM) with Emmanuel Nunes. Four years later, he graduated with the "*first prize in composition*", awarded by unanimous vote of the jury.

Later on, he studied conducting with Peter Eötvös (**Eötvös Institute**, 2000) and Emilio Pomarico (**Milan Scuola Civica**, 2001).

Theoretical works

In parallel with his practical apprenticeship, Pedro Amaral proceeded with university studies at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, in Paris, obtaining a Masters degree in contemporary musicology with a thesis on Stockhausen's "Gruppen" (1998) and, later on, in 2003, a Ph.D. with a thesis on "Momente" and the problematic of musical form in serial music. About this huge analysis, Karlheinz Stockhausen commented, in *Le Monde de la Musique* (September 2003): "It is an excellent work that learned me a lot of things" - he then invited Pedro Amaral to become his assistant in some specific projects.

Pedro Amaral develops now a permanent activity in musicology, writing articles, giving speeches, participating in colloquiums and presenting workshops and master-classes. From 2007/2008, he is Professor at the University of Evora, Portugal (Composition and Orchestration, mainly).

The Ircam connection

During his first stay at the French institute **IRCAM**, in 1998/99, he composed "**Transmutations**", for piano and live electronics, which was first performed in Paris, in 1999. The work was also chosen to represent Portugal at the **UNESCO International Composers Tribune**, where it was broadcasted by radio stations all over the world. At the end of 2001 the same piece represented the Portuguese section of **ISCM** at the **World Music Days Festival** in Japan. Still in the same year, the city of Porto, **European Capital of Culture 2001**, commissioned him "**Organa**", for ensemble and live electronics *ad libitum*, which was also developed at **IRCAM**'s studios. In 2003/2004, Pedro Amaral came for the third time to **IRCAM** as "*compositeur en recherche*". He composed then the long "**Script**", for percussion and live electronics.

The opera "The dream"

In May 2010 Pedro Amaral has premiered in England his opera "**The Dream**" after an unachieved drama by Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa. Unanimously applauded by the music critic the work has been interpreted by a prestigious cast of

Portuguese singers accompanied by the London Sinfonietta under the conducting of the composers himself, and it has been successively presented in London and Lisbon.

Commissions

Amaral's works have been commissioned by the Gulbenkian Foundation, the French Ministry of Culture, the Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR), the Macao International Music festival, the Musica Viva Festival, the Grame (Lyon), the city of "Porto - European Capital of Culture 2001", the city of Matosinhos, the GMCL ensemble, the Síntese ensemble, the Casa da Música...

Residences

Pedro Amaral has been "*composer in residence*" at the Herrenhaus Edenkoben, Germany, Villa Medici, in Rome, and at the Lenzi Palace in Florence, Italy.

Performers

His music is a regular presence at the most Festivals, being performed by soloists such as C. Desjardins, P. Galois, A. Corazziari, A.L. Gastaldi, J.M. Cottet, Y. Shibuya, J. Gottlieb..., under his own conducting as well as under the conducting of Peter Eötvös, Mark Foster, Muhai Tang, Lucas Pfaff, Renato Rivolta, Johannes Kalitzke, Franck Ollu, Etienne Siebens, Michael Zilm and many others.

Orchestras and ensembles

As composer and/or as conductor, Pedro Amaral works regularly with Gulbenkian Orchestra, Youth Symphony Orchestra, Lisbon Metropolitan Orchestra, Portuguese Symphony Orchestra, Portuguese Chamber Orchestra, Orquestra Utopica, São Paulo Symphony Orchestra, Ensemble InterContemporain, London Sinfonietta, Prometheus Ensemble (Brussels), Ensemble Futures Musiques (Paris), Les Percussions de Strasbourg, Ensemble Ebrouitez-vous! (Rennes), Ensemble Alternance (Paris), Quatuor Parisii (Paris), Ensemble Recherche (Freiburg), Ensemble Aventure (Freiburg), musikFabrik (Cologne), Piano Possibile (Munich), Art Respirant (Tokyo), Remix Ensemble (Porto), Grupo de Música Contemporânea de Lisboa, Ensemble SeicentoNovecento, Ensemble Contemporâneos, Gulbenkian Choir, Voces Coelestes Choir...

Conductor

Pedro Amaral has been the chief conductor of the National Conservatoire Orchestra (2008/09) and the Sond'Ar-Te Electric Ensemble (2007/10). His repertoire includes mixed music (instrumental ensemble plus live electronics), contemporary opera and, in particular, the works by Stockhausen which he has conducted with several orchestras and ensembles in Europe and in South America.

As assistant conductor for maestro Peter Eötvös, Pedro Amaral has participated in several productions of Stockhausen's *Hymnen mit Orchester* and *Momente*.

CDs

In 2007, the new label Gulbenkian/UK presented Amaral's first monographic CD: four of his works – *Textos*, *Spirales*, *Organa*, *Paraphrase* – recorded by the London Sinfonietta under his conducting. His string quartet with live electronics "*Página*"

Postica has been recorded by the Smith Quartet after a series of concerts and it's released by Miso Records.

Amaral's recordings as conductor include works by Portuguese contemporary composers with the Sond'Ar-Te Electric Ensemble (Miso Records), as well as a monographic CD with works by the German American composer Ursula Mamlok with the ensemble musikFabrik.