

Wednesday, March 17, 2010, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

Gilberto Gil



The String Concert

Gilberto Gil *vocals, guitar*

Jaques Morelenbaum *cello*

Bem Gil *guitars, percussion*

Cal Performances' 2009–2010 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

Gilberto Gil plays a leading role in the constant modernization of Brazilian popular music. Having participated in the music scene for 46 years, he has developed one of the most relevant and renowned careers as a singer, composer and guitarist. Mr. Gil has had albums released abroad since 1978, the year of his successful performance at the Montreux Jazz Festival. Each year, he tours Europe, North America, Latin America and Japan with his contagious pop music sung in Portuguese-Brazilian—a music with a strong rhythmic appeal and melodic richness, as mixed as its people.

Rhythms from the northeast of Brazil, such as *baião*, along with *samba* and *bossa nova*, were fundamental to the development of his style. Using them as a starting point, Mr. Gil forged his own music, into which he incorporated rock, reggae, funk and rhythms from Bahia, such as *afoxé*. He has tackled a wide variety of social issues in his lyrics—from class inequality to the race question, from African to Oriental culture, from science to religion. The mastery with which Mr. Gil explores these subjects makes him one of the greatest Brazilian lyricists.

Mr. Gil's importance to the culture of his country goes back to the 1960s, when he and Caetano Veloso created *tropicália*. Radically innovative in the music scene, the movement assimilated pop culture to national genres; deeply critical on political and moral levels, *tropicália* was repressed by the authoritarian regime. Both Mr. Gil and Mr. Veloso were imprisoned and subsequently exiled.

In London, Mr. Gil recorded an album in English for the Philips label. When he returned to Brazil in the 1970s, he began a series of anthological records: *Expresso 2222*, *Gil Jorge* (with Jorge Ben Jor), *Os Doces Bárbaros* (with *baianos* Mr. Caetano, Gal Costa and Maria Bethânia) and a conceptual trilogy made up of *Refazenda*, *Refavela* (with rhythms from Jamaica, Nigeria, Rio and Bahia) and *Realce*. The latter, recorded in Los Angeles, became the model for his work in the 1980s. In the 1990s came *Parabolicamará*, *Tropicália 2* (a celebration, with Mr. Veloso, of 25 years of the *tropicália* movement) and *Unplugged* (recorded live for MTV). In 1997, the double CD *Quanta gente veio ver* was released; the next year, *Quanta* won a Grammy Award. In 2000 came *Eu Tu Eles* and *São João Vivo*. In 2002 came *Kaya N'Gandaya*, a

live CD and DVD recorded after a worldwide tour. In 2004, *Eletracústico* (live CD and DVD) was the result of Mr. Gil's concert at the United Nations in New York. Mr. Gil was then appointed to serve as Brazil's Minister of Culture, and he returned to Rio to complete his journey into politics and begin his career as public servant.

In 2006, the Biscoito Fino label re-released *Gil Luminoso*, a CD recorded in 1999 to be packaged with the book *Giluminoso: A Poética do Ser*, by Bené Fonteles, an homage to Mr. Gil with more than 50 lyrics by the songwriter, photographs, and a long essay by Mr. Gil. The *Gil Luminoso* tour, one of the most successful of his career, traveled to Europe and the United States.

In 2008, Mr. Gil released *Banda Larga Cordel*, reaffirming his irreversible engagement with the new rules and parameters of the universe of bits and bytes—a subject that has fascinated him for more than 30 years—where Mr. Gil makes his work widely available for webcasts, podcasts, cellcasts, etc. The shows included warm invitations to photograph and film whatever and however one wants. Backstage scenes from the tour were posted on the Internet in diverse platforms from a specially created hot site.

In November 2009, Mr. Gil toured Europe for 32 days (15 shows in 9 countries) with *The String Concert*, his new show in which he performs with his son, guitarist Bem Gil, and the super-talented cellist-producer-conductor Jaques Morelenbaum to re-imagine acoustic interpretations of his enormous catalog. *The String Concert* tours North America in 2010.

As Mr. Gil asserts: “The enchanted world of music is made of the miracle of meetings among creators. I have dedicated my life to meeting those with whom I can share my love of music and one day I had the pleasure of crossing paths with Jaques Morelenbaum. He has also dedicated his life to these encounters. We have had a few opportunities to meet and share our love of music together and with others. We are now going to be three: Jaques, myself and Bem, my son, who is starting his career and is in search of his own musical direction. It will for sure be a joy and a pleasure to play together and I will try to give to those who come to see us, an idea of the eternal miracle of the song.”

About the project, Mr. Morelenbaum states: “Gilberto Gil is and has always been a live synonym of the path I have dreamt of crossing in Brazilian Popular Music. The richness of his lyrics, the brightness and swing of his melodies, his unique way of singing, playing and conceiving music result in an inextinguishable light and deep inspiration for the hearts and minds of generations of artists, Brazilian and foreigners. Being closer to him now and sharing the stage with his energy and fuel to embody endless dreams is one of the greatest joys in my life.”

And Bem Gil states: “Oh, what luck; it doesn't matter if its new, old, green, yellow! Playing with Mr. Gil is always special, this acoustic version is unbelievable and now with Mr. Jaques! I think that this will be one of the most memorable musical experiences I will have in my whole career, not only for the fact that they are both musical giants but also because this formation will be spectacular! I cannot yet visualize or hear the final result of all this but I am anxiously awaiting!”

Both Mr. Gil and Mr. Morelenbaum have dreamed of this moment since they performed together in 2005, in Nantes, France, and in Riva del Garda, Italy, with local orchestras conducted by the Brazilian maestro, Isaac Karabtchevsky.

In December 2009, a new CD/DVD, *Bandadois*, was released, recorded live in September at Bradesco Theatre in São Paulo and directed by Andrucha Waddington. Special guests included Maria Rita and Bem Gil on guitar and the youngest in the family, José, who surprised the audience by playing bass on a few songs.

With 52 albums released, Mr. Gil has earned 12 gold records, 5 platinum albums and 7 Grammy Awards, and has sold more than 4 million records. For his unflinching creative engagement in bringing to the world the heart and soul of the Brazilian music, Gilberto Gil has received many awards and prizes in Brazil and abroad, including the Polar Prize in 2005. Mr. Gil is a unique composer powered by immense talent and curiosity—a unique musical ambassador powered by firm cultural convictions.