

[Amazone multimedia opera presentation](#): December 4th 2008, 9 p.m., December 5th 2008, 5 p.m.
SESC Paulista, Av. Paulista, 119 – Paraíso, São Paulo, Brazil

Experiment «Ópera Amazônia» in São Paulo

Helmut Reuter, dpa, 7. Dez 2008, 12:55

If anybody should expect tenor, soprano, libretto and classical orchestra, will be disappointed by "Ópera Amazônia". This piece of art is contemporary, intends to wake us up and wants to make us face the destruction of Rain Forest progressing second by second.

The project is in the middle of preparations right now and will go through its World Premiere on April 27th 2010 at Münchener Biennale, the 12th edition of this festival. It is a multimedia attempt of a dialogue between the western, high mechanized world and the world of the Yanomamis, which is totally determined by forest and nature in its thoughts and feelings. In 20 million inhabitants megalopolis São Paulo the creators now presented concept and sounds of this german-brasilian experiment.

This contribution on the opera that has been co-created by the german composer Klaus Schedl is drastic and entitled "Execution". "The forest is executed", he is sure. "And everybody is watching, but doing nothing, no matter whether out of fear or carelessness. "This Opera has to get under the skin", Schedl says. Therefore the "opera" - audience watches the Amazone-river, gently and mightily meandering through the rich greenness of the rain forest, till - all of a sudden - it becomes clear, that this picture is projected on a simple matchbox. The matches are lit, the box burns, and the forest is in flames. A message with a challenging perception.

"If a tree is cut down, it is like cutting off his own finger for a Yanomami", Michael Scheidl, director of the first parts of the opera describes the symbiotic relation with the forest of the 33 000 remaining Yanomami, who are living in Amazonia either in its brazilian and venezuelanien part. The opera, which is not an opera in the classical sense of the word, wants to create a correlation between the aborigines and the materialistic oriented western humans. "The Yanomamis can be interpreters for a perception of the rain forest we lost a long time ago.", says the Austrian Michael Scheidl.

The world of Yanomami became tangible for the participants in this project in March 2008, when they moved off into the rain forest to live for a week at a Yanomami village. "That was the most incredible experience I ever went through", the brasilian composer Tato Taborda says. All values and codexes of behaviour where put topsy-turvy. They encountered with an a totally new world of sounds, colors, scents and feelings. "The Yanomamis get their pictures and imaginations directly from the rain forest's spirits", Taborda says. Whereas nowadays the so called civilised human is almost exclusively visually coined, the Yanomamis rely mainly on acoustic perception. They are hearing and listening people. That is something we can learn from them."

The opera, that has been already presented in Munich in May 2008, invades this area of tension between jungle village and pedestrian area in a very peculiar way. For this experiment an area of 800 qm will be required in Munich. The visitors will be supplied with receivers (Scheidl: "Cangaroo - bags"), that will produce sounds through tiny loudspeakers. The scenery gets twilighted, as you do not see clearly in the rain forest either. Yanomami will show their world in an part of the area. Sonor, meditative songs coming from the empire of the shamans, severe rain - pattering and rolling thunder sounds make the audience dive deep into "urihi a" (earth - forest) through a labyrinth of swinging panels of fabric.

Business Executive of the Center for Art and Media-Technology Karlsruhe ZKM, (which is one of the main co-creators of the project), Christiane Riedel, is well aware of the fact, that an opera will not save the rain forest from devastation. But this attempt of an "audiovisual entity" should be a modest contribution to achieve this aim. "The rain forest is the hero of this opera", she says.

On the way to its first night in little less than one and a half years this hero, the homeland of the Yanomami, will stay constantly under ongoing fire: If the deforestation continues at its recent rate, another area of 18.000 square kilometers of rain forest will be irrevocably lost, that is an area, big enough to build a city twenty times as big as Berlin on it.