

RODRIGO LEÃO



“One of the most inspired composers in the world!”

Pedro Almodóvar

Bio:

You may not recognise the name, but you know the talent behind it, and you're sure to have already heard his enchanting way with a melody.

Rodrigo Leão was one of the musicians and composers behind the extraordinarily successful Portuguese ensemble Madredeus; he was in the band for nearly 10 years before leaving to focus on his own solo career.

Madredeus wrote the music for a Wim Wenders movie and many of his own instrumental pieces seemed like soundtrack music in search of a film; Rodrigo's 2004 album was called "Cinema", and from then on his backing group became the Cinema Ensemble. And, as he moved further in his explorations of instrumental textures, he felt the need to return to the simplicity of the pop song.

Yet, Madredeus was only one of the many stops of an incredible 30-year journey that has seen Rodrigo Leão invite internationally acclaimed singers such as Portishead's Beth Gibbons, The Divine Comedy's Neil Hannon or Tindersticks' Stuart Staples to sing on his albums and live shows; perform with Ryuichi Sakamoto or Ludovico Einaudi with whom he toured in a joint project in Portugal, Spain and Italy.

Rodrigo Leão remains, though, the same quietly spoken, modest and talented Lisboner who started out as a bassist in an indie-rock band before moving into Madredeus' chamber-pop, the neoclassical textures of his own early solo material and his own unique, wistful pop songs, with guest singers like alt-Fado singer Lula Pena, Brazilian star Adriana Calcanhoto, the São Paulo newcomer Thiago Pethit. Joan Wasser aka Joan as Policewoman, or the Australian singer Scott Mathew.

This quiet man has extended his talents into new and unexpected territories over the past few years. While performing live in some of the most legendary venues of the world - London's Barbican Cen-

tre, Barcelona's Palau de la Musica, the Parisian theatres Alhambra and Grand Rex, Amsterdam's Melkweg, Teatro Municipal do Rio de Janeiro or Washington's Kennedy Center, he has also found the time to create three major film soundtracks, including for Lee Daniels' Oscar-nominated historical drama "The Butler" starring Forest Whitaker. He was invited to lead the artistic festivities of the 40th anniversary of the Portuguese Revolution of 1974 with a free concert on the steps of the National Parliament in Lisbon, resulting in the live CD/DVD "O Espírito de Um País", and created music for an installation by the late Japanese artist and aquarist Takashi Amano, "Underwater Forests", as well as producing limited-edition electronica album "A Vida Secreta das Máquinas".

Now, his new work for 2015 is yet another step in an incredibly rich path. Marking his signing by the prestigious classical music label Deutsche Grammophon, "O Retiro" is an orchestral project the Portuguese composer had looked forward to for a long time: a collaboration with Lisbon's acclaimed Gulbenkian Orchestra and Choir, supported by Rodrigo's usual string quartet accompanists (Viviana Tupikova, Bruno Silva, Carlos Tony Gomes and Denys Stetsenko) and regular accomplices Celina da Piedade and Selma Uamusse.

"O Retiro" is a thoughtful, reflective, contemplative work, composed over six months between the bustle of Lisbon and the quiet of rural Avis and recorded in the "sanctuary" of extraordinary acoustics that is Lisbon's Gulbenkian Auditorium by Tobias Lehmann (the engineer behind many award-winning Deutsche Grammophon releases). With orchestral arrangements created by Steve Bartek (a regular collaborator of Danny Elfman) and cellist Carlos Tony Gomes, "O Retiro" is a project long held close to Rodrigo's heart - and a moment of peace and pause away from the contemporary world of speed and constant demands.

"Every track is unique and every one's a gem!"

"Rodrigo Leão is Portugal's Brian Eno"

"Boffin genius mixes high and low cultures with panache"

"A serious composer and musical inovator."

"As understated as a Latin lover... irresistible"

in Songlines Magazine

"a treaty of good taste, the best antidote against the stubborn reality" *in El País*

"Some music can have so much poise that it simply radiates. It expands both one's musical and emotional landscapes. Such is

the music of Rodrigo Leao, one of Portugal's finest musicians and producers." (...) His music simply flourishes with ideas and there was a rich and creative outpouring of good music that night."

Rodrigo Leão @ Off Festival, Macedonia — in All About Jazz, Nenad Georgievski

"Leão at the top... the portuguese composer invents the band that does the sound of heaven."

"Rodrigo Leão promène sa barque au fil d'une rêverie musicale où se reflètent des émotions cinématographiques dues à Visconti ou Lynch... Une mélancolie bien à part."

in LES INROCKUPTIBLES

Collaborations:

Orquestra and Choir Gulbenkian (2015)

Ólafur Arnalds (2014)

Ludovico Einaudi (2006-2009)

Beth Gibbons (Portishead) (2004)

Rosa Passos (2004)

Adriana Calcanhoto (2000)

Stuart Staples (Tindersticks) (2009)

Ryuichi Sakamoto (2004)

Neil Hannon (The Divine Comedy) (2009)

Thiago Pethit (2011)

Scott Matthew (2011-2014)

Discography:

Solo Albums

2015 - O Retiro

2014 - A Vida Secreta das Máquinas

2014 - O Espírito de um País

2013 - "La Cage Dorée" (OST)

2013 - The Butler (OST)

2012 - Songs (compilation with new material)

2011 - A Montanha Mágica

2009 - A Mãe

2007 - Portugal, um Retrato Social (OST)

2006 - O Mundo (compilation with new material)

2004 - Cinema

2001 - Pasión (Ao vivo)

2000 - Alma Mater

1996 - Theatrum

1995 - Mysterium (EP)

1993 - Ave Mundi Luminar

With Os Poetas

2013 - Autografia

1997 - Entre Nós e as Palavras

With Madredeus

1995 - Ainda (OST)

1994 - O Espírito da Paz

1992 - Lisboa (Live)

1990 - Existir

1987 - Os Dias da Madredeus

With Sétima Legião

1999 - Sexto Sentido

1994 - Auto da Fé (Ao vivo)

1992 - O Fogo

1989 - De um Tempo Ausente

1987 - Mar d'Outubro

1984 - A Um Deus Desconhecido

Soundtracks and Film Scores:

2013 - **O Mordomo** (OST) - Lee Daniels

2013 - **NJINGA, Rainha de Angola** (OST) - Sérgio Graciano

2013 - **La Cage Dorée** (OST) - Ruben Alves

2013 - **O Frágil Som do Meu Motor** - Leonardo António

2007 - **Portugal, um Retrato Social** (OST) - Joana Pontes

2007 - **Santiago** (OST) - João Moreira Sales (Brasil)

2006 - **Paris Je T'aime** (OST) - Isabel Coixet

1995 - **Ainda** (BSO) - Wim Wenders' "Lisbon Story"

"A new
magical
record"

in *El País*

"Wise
and visual
music"

in *Vibrations*

"Sublime"

in *El Mundo*

Links: *(click to watch the videos)*

Teaser "O retiro", com Orquestra e Coro Gulbenkian

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41BLXyp2abY>

A Vida Secreta das Máquinas:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGneYTzius&sns=em>

"A Mãe" live at Casino do Estoril:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CTyPuuq9yLM>

Florestas Submersas/ Underwater Forests:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_9g239VF13I

Sic Notícias Special:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDhA8BGnybA>

The Butler:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJ3vtQdPmWo>

Live at Porto Coliseu, feat. Neil Hannon:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00cJFMhZIU8>

Espir II - Live

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0i1TPvA1Sik>

As Ilhas dos Açores:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fZXXJMofm8>

Aviões de Papel:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c7742c00S74>

Incomplete, feat. Scott Matthew:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acM5IzJCJww>

Awards and Special Recognitions:

2014 - ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers), American Film and Television Awards for the music score on Lee Daniels' "The Butler".

2014 - Medal of Merit of the Order of Prince Infante D. Henrique, for valuable services rendered to Portuguese Culture (*assigned by the President of Portuguese Republic*)

2013 - Pre-nomination to the Oscars 2014

2010 - Magazine "Les Inrockuptibles" (France)

"A Mãe" considered one of the Top Albums of the Year (Top 20)

2009 - SIC National TV / Magazine Caras "Golden Globes 2008"

Best Composer

2005 - National TV SIC / Magazine Caras "Golden Globes 2004"

Best Composer

2004 - Billboard Magazine (USA)

Second best album of the year 2013. Best Chill-Out Album 2004

2002 - Fantaspporto, Film Festival

Best videoclip for the song "A Casa"

2001 - Blitz Music Awards

Album of the year - "Alma Mater"

Song of the year - "A Casa"

2000 - DN Awards (daily newspaper)

Album of the year - "Alma Mater"