

A talk between Gabriel Ananda and Andreas M. Kaufmann on October 13, 2006

I conducted the following interview with Gabriel Ananda as part of this publication, which rounds off the project entitled "Stuffed Silence." I intentionally focused on Gabriel Ananda's personality and his music when asking him questions during this interview, but also addressed the creative process we shared in collaborating on this project. The interview can be viewed as a reflection of a very inspiring encounter with Ananda, and of the many talks we've had on the connection between art and music, which had – until now – not been recorded on tape. Such talks have been the result of a pleasant coincidence, namely that we have been working in studios on the same floor of the same building since 2004. Our talks are what set an initially abstract wish to work on a project together into motion.

Andreas M. Kaufmann, November 2006

PERSONALITY, CAREER AND SIGNIFICANT ENCOUNTERS

Andreas M. Kaufmann (AMK): You once said that your most important project is called "Gabriel Ananda." What did you mean by that?

Gabriel Ananda (GAB): Gabriel Ananda is my artist's name which also happens to be printed as such in my passport. That means that this project is inextricably connected with me, and is not just some concocted work. And, just as I try to grow and develop in my life, I also try to keep this project up-to-date. But ultimately, spirituality is at the center of the whole project, and dance music is the platform where that project is currently being conducted. Perhaps this platform will change at some point, who knows? – but the core of the project will likely remain the same.

AMK: You are an extremely multi-faceted person and musician. In terms of your music, for instance, I'm referring to your "non-supporting leg" called "Pankananda" and your "supporting leg" called "techno music." In addition, you are also a producer and founded the label "Karmarouge." And, in the midst of it all, you also see yourself as an artist.

GAB: I was never really conscious of that, but people like to categorize and everyone wants to fit in somewhere. I didn't really realize that I'm an artist until I met you.

AMK: Why do you think I've always seen you in a different light than most of your fellow musicians? And, how do you feel about that?

GAB: In being an artist?! One can also search for certain criteria, but the most important aspect is depth, or rather, the intensity with which one pursues something, and that one fundamentally questions both oneself and one's art on a regular basis. I think that attitude is what defines an artist. But what do you mean by that?

AMK: I think it is a person's attitude that makes him an artist: in other words, his or her individual, coherent take on reality, and how he or she approaches it. –

But I'd like to expand on your complex personality and get back to your diverse activities: You perform as a DJ and play live as a musician in clubs, and you do it with your own high expectations and standards, not just in wanting to get a groove or good vibe going on the dance floor. In the two years since we've known each other, I have also noticed that you

are committed to social justice—and I mean that in a very concrete sense, in everyday life, and you do not do it for the recognition. You're very modest about it. I think that should be mentioned with regard to our joint project "Stuffed Silence."

Other aspects of your personality include your thirst for knowledge and your curiosity, your dreaminess, your tendency to take on the world's woes and your drive to improve the world. It is also worth noting that you have a wide circle of friends, some of whom are artists—very different kinds of artists. You have also done projects with some of them, such as with Walter Dahn.

GAB: Right. I know a lot of musicians, such as the jazz pianist Clemens Ort, who is a very different person than I am. He approaches music very intellectually. But I've also made music with people from the electronic music scene, such as with Dominik Eulberg, a very good friend of mine, and also Walter Dahn, who comes from a completely different field – he's a visual artist.

AMK: How did you meet Walter Dahn?

GAB: I met Walter through Dieter Hoff, whom I also mention in this context. Dieter Hoff used to play percussion for "Purple Schulz" and wrote a couple of songs. Dieter was one of the first people to encourage me as an artist, and told me to stick to it. He gave me the feeling: "You can lead a good life as a musician; you can make it work and can make a living at it." That was at a time when I hadn't had much success as a musician, and was terrified of investing my entire energy in a project that would never bear any fruit, and that I would eventually be out on the street...Dieter just really encouraged me, and also set an example that it really can work. I am very grateful to him for that!

AMK: Have you met someone by whom you would say that meeting was the most important for your career?

GAB: It's always difficult to say "the most important meeting of my life" – for me, it wasn't a personal one, but a musical one: when I encountered Sven Vaeth (*laughs*) about 10 years ago.

AMK: Right. A lot of music magazines have written about that. –

How do you think you have become such a multi-faceted person? You have a very complex personality. How do you feel about that? What price do you pay for that? Organizing all of these activities must also be a feat.

GAB: How true! I would imagine that my complex personality comes about from my permanent dissatisfaction with things.

AMK: Dissatisfaction seems to me to be the source for every form of creativity.

GAB: Yes, exactly! Exactly. – The price for my diverse projects is of course that I need much more time in developing my music projects than other artists do. If I were to only work on one theme, then I would reach a particular point much more quickly. Had I worked like that until now, I would have developed a certain image much faster and people would have been able to categorize me much more easily. In other words, people who make music within a very tightly defined framework, who fulfil other people's expectations with an easily recognizable style, reap success much faster.

AMK: Do you regret the path you've taken?

GAB: Not at all! I couldn't do it any other way.

AMK: I can really relate to that! And can totally accept it. That probably has to do with our mutual past of Waldorf education [an alternative form developed by Rudolf Steiner which

focuses on developing creativity] – it was like an abbreviated form of communication that worked between us from the start. Based on their education, Waldorf kids turn out to be universalists, which has surely contributed to your complex way of thinking and living.

GAB: And I'm very grateful to Waldorf schools for that! Nothing better could have happened to me, I think, even if some other people think differently.

AMK: I'd have to agree: Although I have to add that it was only much later that I realized how much it's helped me. – At the same time, I also realized how it hasn't helped me.

(both laugh, then a pause follows)

Why did you become a musician rather than a scientist? You indulge yourself in reading scientific literature excessively.

GAB: I was just thinking about that a little while ago. I do have a scientist's curiosity, and I love discovering things. But to become a scientist, I would have had to have studied a lot of things that just don't interest me and which I would have seen as an accumulation of a lot of useless knowledge. I had the same problem in school: I didn't like having to learn useless stuff by heart. Besides, I was already making music back then.

But to answer your question: I could really imagine having become a physicist or mathematician, and to be honest, I can still imagine it. I'd had to repeat a lot of material from school, though, and I can't imagine doing that at all *(laughs)*.

AMK: There must have been a good reason to keep you from having to accumulate all sorts of "useless" knowledge. –That brings to mind the question: what goal do you associate with the wish to become a musician?

GAB: *(Sighs)* Well, to begin with, the journey is of course always the destination.–

I remember that when I started making music, I intended to always see an idea through – namely, that you can express emotions to people through a single sound, a note or a few chords; you can heal people or make them sick with sounds, or even bring them back to life. –That was my vision since sounds make the body vibrate and can trigger things there. And the notion that you can convey feelings through music or can evoke emotions – that's the theme that's always going on in the background.

AMK: I personally find that interesting and a nice idea, but surely people accuse you of being manipulative in that regard? How do you respond to that?

GAB: Every reality is manipulated in one way or another. And I don't force people to listen to my music.

AMK: I could have said the same thing myself. –You make music people can dance to, techno music. Have you always known that being a composer, a producer, a live performer and music label founder would all be a part of that?

GAB: It just happened that way. I never really thought much about it, at least, not in the sense of making plans that way. I have produced music in the studio from the start and it was there that I noticed that you can change things dramatically and spontaneously during that process. That was how I began developing my own personal style of making music more or less live. Then I took it on stage. DJ-ing was an expansion of that, and added a bit of diversity, but of course it also helped me make money. –But you can express a lot as a DJ, too.

AMK: I've been able to experience that several times now. I have to admit that I was amazed as to how much you can do merely with a record player and a DJ mixing board, let alone a professional soundboard. When someone asked us as teenagers in the mid-

1970s if we could play an instrument, we would always quip: "Yeah, a record player." – never would have thought back then that I would one day seriously consider a record player an instrument.

Have you ever heard of the artist and musician Claus van Bebber and the concerts or rather, performances, he gave with his records in the 70s?

GAB: No.

AMK: I didn't hear about him until much later either. He used all sorts of tape and plastic toys and whatnot to get record players to keep playing certain loops. Sometimes he used up to 10 different record players, which ended up creating a really intense sound, or sound improvisation. Interestingly enough, people in the techno scene never really took an interest in Claus, even though he tried to make contacts in Berlin in the mid-80s. I'd be interested to hear why you think people in that scene rejected or ignored him?

GAB: I can't really understand that either, especially since the people in that scene are some of the most open in the music world. Maybe he tried making contacts with the wrong people. But the people in the Berlin scene are a little elitist. People were reserved towards me in the beginning, too. There was this "what is *he* doing here?" attitude. I performed for the first time in Berlin at a "Newcomers' Night" in "Tresor" in 1998 –and believe me, I was glad when my hour was over (*laughs*).

AMK: Fela Kuti must have experienced something similar at the end of 60s, beginning of the 70s. The crowd back then, which relied on leftist theories and liked an Afrobeat, apparently made fun of Fela's political activities and put them down as naïve and idealistic. One reason for that might be that Fela Kuti's political stance, and his language, especially in his songs, is usually very concrete, but it appears in a poetic form composed of a unique synthesis of music and language. –That doesn't seem to be something that the "68 Generation" [political leftists of the late 1960s] could really relate to in Germany – a generation that even bogged down everyday life with ideology.

GAB: And a few years later, they all started sucking up to him?!

AMK: No, not at all! Even if a lot of people didn't really begin paying attention to him and his music until after his death in 1997, Fela still had a small, but loyal international following – in Germany, too. But that interest wasn't present much in the media, probably also because the music label people and radio broadcasters were mainly interested in Pop Music and Rock. As far as I can remember, it wasn't until the mid-80s that people started to gradually become interested in "black music" – when we started to see pop icons like Michael Jackson and Prince emerge, and the whole development of HipHop, Rap and House got going. Fela surely benefitted from that development.–

Fela Anikulapo Kuti reminds me of Joseph Beuys to a certain extent. Each of them created a very unique artistic cosmos with major utopian potential, which extended far beyond the artistic and into the social and political. And their genius wasn't discovered until much later in their lives. Your normal "John Q Public" often doesn't understand what someone is really focusing on, especially if it's being presented in a form unfamiliar to him – but also, because he seems to not have the time to muse over it. But to really understand something, you actually have to dwell on it for awhile.

But the insecurity and frustration people feel over not being able to really understand the content fed to them, nor the people feeding it to them, unfortunately tends to be expressed derogatorily.

GAB: That's right.

MUSIC

AMK: It's to your advantage that in addition to taking this serious approach to music, you also create cool grooves. Pavlov's dog takes a bite, so to speak, and the people are happy! People in the scene are trained to react to grooves and, surely, hardly anyone on the dance floor understands that you are also interested in a profound and serious examination of music. – Today, success is defined by the masses.

GAB: Sadly, that's true. – You have to make use of that.

AMK: So let's at least try to delve here together somewhat deeper into your music: I believe I have recognized that you develop your musical compositions from rhythmic ideas. Even when melodies do arise, these always have a decisive rhythmic function in addition to their specific mood. Can you elaborate on that?

GAB: Well, first of all, I can reduce it to the fact that most of my compositions are dance music. – Dancing is basically an upward and downward movement of the body according to the rhythm. And of course, it is also possible to represent an upward and downward movement rhythmically.

Depending on what I want to express with the rhythm, whether it's an upward or downward movement, a pounding or driving, I use a different emphasis or phrasing or, how shall I explain this? –

In dancing, psychomotoric stimulation plays a fundamental role. Within the field of electronic dance music, such a stimulus is called a groove. And in my opinion, a groove functions through successfully repeating rhythmic changes between compressed passages and empty spaces. In this process, compression always feels like acceleration, and this is the way it is with dancing, too: When you make a downward movement while dancing, gravity alone already causes you to accelerate. Viewed from the point of composing, that's the reason you should always accelerate on the offbeat, namely because then, one is pulled upward emotionally.

Thus, the following is important for a good dance rhythm: First of all, there's the bass. It shouldn't be too hectic. It is the foundation and has to carry the piece and give it soft movements. In the mid-ranges is where you should get groovy – in other words, if it's the bass that gets the body moving, then it's the mid-ranges that move the arms. The high frequencies are then, perhaps, only for the mind; these are, namely, so fast that you can't dance to them. They drive the body to continue dancing via the mind. In short, there's this gradation from slow bass, groovy mid-ranges and driving highs.

AMK: You have concentrated intensively on Steve Reich and Bach, among others, but also on Afro-American polyrhythms. With regard to your own music, what do you find interesting about these subjects?

GAB: Bach's fugues always have a melody suitable for a canon as their basic theme. Their layered form, which seems almost mathematical, leads to a very pronounced rhythmization of the melody. – And this is where I see a connection to Steve Reich. This phenomena also plays a role in his work, albeit in a much more complex way. Steve Reich works mainly with phase-shifting, and he layers themes of various lengths and meters upon one another. These processes then lead to those wandering rhythms, or rhythms shifting against one another, but which always come together again after a specific number of measures.

AMK: Can you explain that a bit more precisely?

GAB: For instance, you can construct a very short rhythm pattern: for example, placing one phrase in 3/4 against another in 4/4. And just like that, you've already crafted a three-beat pattern without having to program three individual rhythms.

AMK: It surprises me that that works on the dance floor ...

GAB: That certainly has got something to do with what people are used to hearing ...

AMK: But why does it work?

GAB: Because when you program such a rhythm pattern well, it just grooves like nobody's business. It's got a pulling quality; it pulls you forward. 3/4 time always ends one beat before the 4/4 ends and then repeats itself again. You're dancing and the melody overtakes you again and again; naturally, that drives a person forward and pushes him to keep dancing. Then, you also have the 5/4 with the 4/4. At first, that sounds as if it has the opposite effect, but in the end, this pattern drives you as well. By the way, you can find this handling of melody and rhythm in many of my musical compositions.

And for the dancer, this simple form of polyrhythmics works because it is still relatively transparent, and in the end, one finds his way into it very quickly.

AMK: Twenty years ago, the idea of people dancing wildly to such rhythms would have been less conceivable ...

GAB: That's right. Twenty years ago, people weren't playing it yet for the dance floor.

AMK: Are there particular pieces by Steve Reich that you regard as significant for you?

GAB: For me, the most significant piece is his "Music for 18 Musicians." It simply has an unbelievably beautiful springtime atmosphere (*short pause*).

You see, I also always experience music as a mood in a very extreme way. In this case, it is, above all, the percussion-based elements that create this unbelievable atmosphere – it simply has something natural, carefree and sunny about it. Above all sunny. I see a fresh green. It simply expresses something like what you feel when you experience nature in all its beauty ...

AMK: ...or when you feel at one with nature, without a clearly defined border between the inner and outer world.

GAB: That is exactly what music can achieve! It enters you directly, without you analyzing it beforehand.

AMK: Initially, that's how I experience music, too. But if it touches me deeply in my soul, sooner or later I usually want to know what it was that touched me and why. That doesn't take away from my ability to feel the music. Often, it's the opposite. But really, it is also quite similar with you. While you may not give priority to your thirst for knowledge, you do indeed analyze works that interest you quite precisely?!

GAB: Of course!

I have to admit, however: In the beginning, I made music completely by instinct. And some very beautiful things came about as a result. But unfortunately, on the whole, I didn't find them coherent and powerful. Then, as I began to rationalize, the music initially lost some of its spontaneity and light-heartedness ...

AMK: But the goal of your music is to create feelings and moods, isn't it?

GAB: Absolutely. Absolutely! Really: That's what it's about.

AMK: So you create tonal reflections or representations of these kinds of feelings and moods. But of course, emotion is one thing and musical representation is another, and they are not identical. I'd be interested in knowing what, in your view, really occurs in this case: Do you represent emotions through your music? Or do you induce emotions? Or is it both?

GAB: That is a difficult question. I can't even answer it properly.

AMK: Phrased another way: I listen to a lot of music myself and sometimes ask myself: What about this music puts me in a good mood? Or why does listening to music put me in a particular mood?

GAB: That is a question about the essence of music. Why in fact does music trigger emotion?

AMK: It triggers emotions. – So that means it isn't a representation?

GAB: Well, actually it is, in a way. When making music, it's like this: I experience a particular feeling or mood, for example – call it what you will. And then, I simply make music. In the process, I, in effect, align the music I'm making with whatever it is I'm feeling inside. If I realize that the music I'm currently making resonates together with my soul, then that particular feeling intensifies and soars upward into a wave – it grows.

So in reality, I do create a representation of my inner feelings with the goal of uniting action and sensation on an oscillation plane.

AMK: Do your feelings change while making music, or do they remain the same?

GAB: I do indeed look at making music as a process involving dialogue. In the course of this process, one's feelings are also permitted to change somewhat. Still, the dialogue mustn't cause one to wind up dealing with a totally different theme. That's where the time factor comes in, i.e. the period of time in which a piece of music is created. Since I cannot maintain the same feeling for three days, this time period is usually very short. I'd say there is only a period of about two hours in which the feeling is present for me in total clarity. Within this time, the essential elements of the piece have to have surfaced and taken on a sketchy form. That's because I can still physically feel the resonance of this emotion for that length of time. So the quicker I come to the point, the better.

(Long pause)

AMK: We have spoken about emotions and moods and about your musical 'fathers' – but there are also a number of other influences in your life. For example, you enjoy watching episodes of "Star Trek."

GAB: Yes!

AMK: And you are also interested in philosophical and scientific issues and the like. Have these interests also influenced your composing? And if so, in what way?

GAB: The influence is indirect. More than anything, these interests influence me as a person. In this way, they also influence me as an artist and influence my music. Looking at it the other way round, my music expresses my attitude as a person and artist and is, consequently, also the product of all the influences I am exposed to, or more accurately, those that are important to me.

AMK: Often, your music reminds me of other forms of music: carnival music, folk music, pop, etc. Do you quote these forms?

GAB: Yes. In principle, everyone does this anyway, because you can't re-invent everything every day. In other words: I put the things that mean something to me into my music.

AMK: I feel that your music has been greatly influenced by hip-hop and ambient music, but also by various styles of African and Latin-American music. With regard to this context, perhaps you could again provide us with a classification – how do you view their relationship to your musical development and production?

GAB: A simple way of summarizing the African and hip-hop influence would be: Hip-hop simply has the downbeat, which is essentially made up of bass–snare, bass–snare. Of course, the downbeat already existed before hip-hop, but it's especially groovy in hip-hop. African and Latin-American music possess that which takes place in between the downbeats – meaning all the layers of percussion, a driving quality and above all, the trance-like quality.

AMK: That's right. I remember certain types of salsa music that allowed me to experience this trance-like effect: For example, when percussion, a piano or guitar and a wind instrument become so concentrated that an almost supernaturally beautiful rhythm builds up, and there is literally no way left of escaping the music because one's self becomes totally wrapped up in it – maybe that is why I'm only aware of such a rhythm occurring at the end of a piece of music, which allows the resolution to occur via fadeout.

GAB: Yes, I believe that in such moments, rationality dissolves completely and one's own self is also no longer important, because it has become one with the music. In this case, it's something like a spiritual test run. It is not really spiritual growth, but it's a case of external influences giving you a foreshadowing of how one can imagine being after a phase of spiritual growth. And so, this is also the spiritual aspect of techno, because with techno, people can also experience other modes of perception – i.e. that you needn't always dissect everything rationally, and that you can also become one with that which surrounds you.

AMK: I have never been to Africa or the Caribbean, but I have heard that something similar applies in the case of the magic rituals of medicine men and voodoo masters. And I did once borrow a record of voodoo chants and voodoo rhythms. And my experiences of this music correspond to what you just said about techno music.

GAB: I'd like to hear that sometime.

THE 'STUFFED SILENCE' PROJECT

AMK: That's not a problem as long as I find a copy of the tape. In connection with trance-like moments in music, I would like to ask you why, at the beginning of our collaboration on the "Stuffed Silence" project, you had such major difficulties opening yourself to the music of Fela Kuti? What was the problem?

GAB: I can really relate directly to the "African element" – i.e. the percussive and trance-like qualities of the music. Fela Kuti himself probably wasn't at all the reason for my difficulties, but rather, the fact that at the time I was unhappy with my personal situation. I felt exhausted and stressed. –So I wasn't really able to concentrate on anything new, not to mention it wasn't immediately clear to me where this journey was headed.

AMK: Nevertheless, the process of our collaboration that I found very interesting was: I had insisted upon working with Fela's song "No Agreement" because it has become an extremely important piece of music in my life. But the attempt to create a remix of it got bogged down at the very beginning. But I had the feeling that your listlessness and lack of energy wasn't the only reason the remix failed – or am I wrong?

GAB: Well, I'm generally not a big fan of sampling other songs. It's just not my thing. –To me, it always feels as if you've got a stone inside your shoe: It simply doesn't belong there. I have only a very small number of samples in my sound archive, and those are drum samples.

AMK: But by now you have a very comprehensive sound archive, don't you?!

GAB: It's okay. I have actually assembled almost all of the sounds I use myself, meaning I've created or modified them using different synthesizers. That's the reason I don't want to simply cut out a section of the song "No Agreement" and put it into another context. But as I hinted to earlier, I wasn't feeling very motivated in general, because for quite a long time, I haven't really been able to create anything myself.

AMK: As a result, the attempt to collaborate on a project was put to rest for a while. What do you remember about the circumstances that then led us to finally succeed in realizing a project that was extremely satisfying for both of us? Or to put it another way: When did your motivation return?

GAB: We had programmed a few rhythms in the style of "No Agreement" with the drum computer. Do you still remember that? In any case, I liked those rhythms very much, even though the results of our attempt at remixing Fela had, all in all, been rather miserable and dissatisfying. Nevertheless, subliminally, I had already grooved a little to the piece and to its mood. A few days later, I created another piece of music out of what was going on inside of me, and as it turned out, it was still influenced very strongly by that which we had begun working on.

AMK: But that wasn't "Stuffed Silence." I still remember that quite precisely. "Stuffed Silence" came about only after we had spent another two nights playing music for one another. In any case, one of the CDs we listened to at the time was the album *Future Ju-Ju*, which was produced by Ashley Beedle and James Brown together with the Black Jazz Chronicles. The way I remember it, that is where the penny dropped, and you said: "I think I've figured something out now."

GAB: Wasn't that shortly after that?

AMK: No. At first, you put that rhythm aside, because I in no way wanted a piece of music from you that you wouldn't be able to identify with, even though it was somehow meant to show what your emotional techno music and Fela's afrobeat have in common. So we let all of that settle for a while first, and in the meantime, I produced a visual sketch of my visualization so that you could get an idea of what I had in mind, and then react to it.

In any case, after those two nights I mentioned, you seemed to be highly motivated, because in the days that followed, you retreated into the studio and began to compose in earnest again.

GAB: Right. Now I remember it. That's how it was!

AMK: Three days later, when I asked you if anything for our project had come out of it, you explained to me that for the past few days, you'd first had to work on your own again, because after our nightly get-togethers, you'd had more good ideas than you'd had in a long time. And then you asked me if you could play three new pieces for me. One of them

was the piece we later called "Stuffed Silence." When I heard it, I knew it was the one! It had everything in it, and in a surprisingly different way. And you'd done exactly as I had hoped in the ideal scenario: Except for certain common dramaturgical elements, the result was a piece of music that, in equal measure, displays something of Fela's musical annoyingness and aggressiveness while undoubtedly also bearing your trademark.

GAB: Yes. That is the best thing that could have happened. – In the end, each of us severed our intellectual connection to Fela Kuti, and then let our instincts take over.

AMK: And in doing so, the lack of sleep certainly played an active role as well.

GAB: That's right (*both laugh*).

AMK: In your view, did anything unexpected or surprising happen in the process of our cooperation or with respect to the results?

GAB: Of course. It was totally fascinating for me to see how, in the end, this piece functioned within the context of animation and its unusual spatial format. I hadn't expected that – and I must say, I was very much impressed!

AMK: Would you say then that through our collaboration, something extraordinary was created – i.e. something that would not have come about otherwise?

GAB: Yes, absolutely! Suddenly there was more to the music than just its suitability for the clubs.

AMK: Even though it is suitable for clubs.

GAB: Yes. But it went well beyond that. The piece expresses – and you have got to listen extremely closely for this – very subtle moods that have to do with discontentment, moods that develop. And that's exactly what I am concerned with here.

AMK: Do you mean, for example, the middle section with its sharp accents, which exudes an incredible aggressiveness? – That's the point in my choreography where the terms "Allah", "Yahweh" and the other gods are let loose upon one another.

GAB: Yes, that's one aspect. But these are all aspects that normally don't receive any attention at all. The results give me the feeling that, through this project, my music is really being taken seriously for once, and in a way that goes well beyond its functionality. That impressed me and makes me very happy! I simply feel I'm being respected completely!

Through the animation, aspects of my music unrelated to Fela Kuti were also brought up that had never been addressed before. And I felt that something important happened in the process that can also make a difference in the world; that it isn't merely something that I put together at home, but rather that it has its place in the world – what I want to say is, I sensed that music still can be political!

AMK: Naturally, I would like to refer back to Fela Kuti again in this context, because his records are selling better today, after his death, than ever before: As I said, in his lyrics, he often explains highly political interrelationships by using very ordinary examples. And, at least in my opinion, it is only through this superficial roughness and directness of the musical and linguistic forms that his lyrics attain their forcefulness and impact. – Perhaps our "Stuffed Silence" project derives its power from the fact that the word no longer sounds, but rather makes itself "heard" through a choreographed, dance-like gesture.

GAB: I also think that Fela Kuti has a topical resonance in our project, also and especially through our approach to the topic of human rights.

AMK: Is there anything that you want to accomplish musically, or have not accomplished yet?

GAB: I would like to get even closer to the essence of music; perhaps by reducing what I do even further, if that's possible. –I would therefore simply like to be able to increase the expressiveness of that which I have been trying to achieve musically all along.

AMK: Last question: What is most important to you in life and in art?

GAB: Spiritual growth – or maybe simply: continued development.