


CELEBRATING  
25 YEARS  
OF A REMARKABLE  
CAREER

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# RODRIGO LEÃO



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

Pedro Almodóvar

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 Matthew.

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 Centre, 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”.

In 2015, the prestigious classical label Deutsche Grammophon released “O Retiro”, an orchestral project the Portuguese composer had looked forward to for a long time: a collaboration with Lisbon's acclaimed Gulbenkian Orchestra and Choir, a thoughtful, reflective, contemplative work. Rodrigo followed it by recording a whole album of songs with the New York-based singer-songwriter Scott Matthew. 2016's “Life Is Long” followed after the two men recorded together a couple of songs and they realised their sensibilities matched perfectly. “Life Is Long” has been acclaimed by the press and the public and has been performed live throughout the world during 2017.

For 2018, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of his solo career, Rodrigo is showing off the amazing versatility of his work, with three new recordings and stage concerts on the way. In March will be released “O Aniversário”, a double-CD retrospective of his greatest hits and favourite compositions, accompanied by a brand new stage production. At the same time, Rodrigo will be touring with a smaller band the “Instrumental - O Ensaio” show, focusing on instrumental compositions while testing before a live audience material that may appear on his next studio album due at the end of 2018. Finally, a third stage show under the title “Os Portugueses” collects all his material sung in Portuguese along with the instrumental material written for the TV documentary series *Portugal - A Social Portrait*.

“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**

“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**

## Collaborations:

Scott Matthew (2016)  
Orquestra and Choir Gulbenkian (2015)  
Ólafur Arnalds (2014)  
Scott Matthew (2011-2014)  
Thiago Pethit (2011)  
Neil Hannon (The Divine Comedy) (2009)  
Stuart Stapples (Tindersticks) (2009)  
Ludovico Einaudi (2006-2009)  
Beth Gibbons (Portishead) (2004)  
Ryuichi Sakamoto (2004)  
Rosa Passos (2004)  
Adriana Calcanhoto (2000)

## Discography:

2018 - New Album – Universal date TBC  
2018 - "Os Portugueses" – SONY Music  
2018 - "O Aniversario (Double CD Career compilation) – Universal  
2016 - Life is Long with Scott Matthew  
2015 - Florestas Submersas  
2015 - O Retiro with the Gulbenkian Choir and Orchestra  
2015 - A Vida Secreta das Máquinas  
2014 - O Espírito de um País (Live Album)  
2012 - Songs 2004-2012 (Compilation)  
2011 - A Montanha Mágica  
2009 - A Mãe  
2006 - O Mundo 1993-2006  
(Compilation with Re-recorded and Unreleased Material)  
2004 - Cinema  
2001 - Pasión (Live Album)  
2000 - Alma Mater  
1996 - Theatrum  
1995 - Mysterium  
1993 - Ave Mundi Luminar

## Soundtracks

2017 - No Intenso Agora - João Moreira Salles  
2016 - 100 Metros - Marcelo Barrera  
2013 - A Gaiola Dourada - Ruben Alves  
2013 - The Butler  
2013 - NJINGA, Rainha de Angola (OST) - Sérgio Graciano  
2013 - La Cage Dorée (OST) - Ruben Alves  
2013 - O Frágil Som do Meu Motor - Leonardo António  
2010 - Equador  
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"



## Links: *(click to watch the videos)*

"A Mãe" live at Casino do Estoril

"O Peregrino" with Gulbenkian Orchestra and Choir, feat Selma Uamusse

"AVE Mundi Luminar" feat Angela Silva

The Butler

As Ilhas dos Açores

A Vida Secreta das Máquinas

Florestas Submersas/ Underwater Forests

"Vida tão estranha" feat Ana Vieira

Thats Life, feat Scott Mathew

## Awards and Special Recognitions:

2017 - Réel Filme Festival Award for the Best Score for the Filme "No Intenso Agora" by Brazilian Director-João Moreira Salles  
2017 - Nomination for Fenix Prizes (Mexico)  
For the same score  
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 - Fantasporto, 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"