

S.C.ALLIANCE Inc., with Shen Kyomei RIBEIRO,
Gabriel LEVY, and Ari COLARES (Brazil)

“Sky Bridge”

First Report: Launch of Project

Author: MINAMIDE Kazuyo

Project Overview

The purpose of this project is the production and screening of *Sky Bridge*, a collaborative planetarium movie created by Japanese and Brazilian artists, with planning provided by S.C.ALLIANCE Inc. As every society in the world suffered from the COVID-19 pandemic, this project was developed around the theme of a starry sky based on a desire for people to look up at the sky and hope. In line with the starry sky theme, Brazil, a country whose national flag features a star-filled sky, was chosen as the counterpart nation for this collaborative international project. Of course, S.C.Alliance’s existing network served as the foundation for project selection.

The collaborative creation process was planned around four basic stages. In stage one, artists from Brazil and Japan discussed the work’s themes and composition several times via online conferencing, developing an overall image for the project. In stage two, the two countries’ artists added adjustments to the overall composition with a focus on bare-bones image storyboards and music created by the Japanese artists. Online communication tools were fully leveraged in stages one and two. In stage three, the project’s principal stage, artists from Brazil were supposed to be invited to Japan between July and September to lodge together and conduct recording sessions at Yamanakako. Finally, in the fourth stage, images and music recorded in stage three were combined with the aim of completing the work within 2021. In fact, however, during the period from July to September, the COVID-19 situation failed to improve, and the Brazilian artists were not able to come to Japan. As a result, it was decided that the collaborative work of stage three would also be conducted online. The creation process has been recorded at all times, and the project plan includes releasing a making-of movie online.

In this first report, I will report on the process involved from stage one to stage two (from project launch at the end of March up to September). As I took on the role of observer starting in September, this report is based on minutes and records of online meetings (held on March 26, March 29, and April 21) provided by S.C.Alliance to The Japan Foundation, as well as information obtained through online interviews conducted on September 24.

Project Members

Before entering into a detailed report, the following reviews the roles of the participating members (underline indicates meeting attendee).

- OTAKE Mayumi (S.C.Alliance): Sound designer and executive producer
- HASHIMOTO Daisuke (LIL): Movie director and art director
- IZUTSU Ryota (LIL): CG and movie production
- KOBAYASHI Yohei (FAIR WIND music): Music production and saxophone performance
- YASUDA Yuji (FAIR WIND music): Music production
- SATO Jun (FAIR WIND music): Office staff
- OSHIO Misato (S.C.Alliance): Production schedule
- TAKE Airi (S.C.Alliance): Operations management
- Shen Kyomei RIBEIRO (Sinos na Floresta): Brazilian team Producer, flute and shakuhachi performance

- Gabriel LEVY (Sinos na Floresta): Brazilian team music production and accordion performance
 - Fabiana COZZA: Brazilian team vocalist
 - SUZUMORI Shizuka: Brazilian team artist manager
- Support Group
- Sinos na Floresta: Music production
 - LIL Co. Ltd.: Video technology
 - FAIR WIND music: Music production
 - GOTO INC.: Dome theater technology support

The outline for the video and music was created in particular by Hashimoto and Kobayashi, respectively. Orchestration and additional arrangements were added along the way through repeated discussion between all of the members.

Stage One: Planning the Overall Composition

The first web meeting was held on March 26. After the Japanese and Brazilian participants met each other, there was a review of the general project outline and schedule. Thereafter, Hashimoto Daisuke presented two drafts (A and B) for the project’s theme (overall image). The length of the piece was expected to be 10 minutes.



Some images from Hashimoto’s draft A

Some images from Hashimoto’s draft B

The concept for draft A was the origins of humankind. The draft was inspired by *Sekai wo sasaeru ippon no ki* (“One Tree Supporting the World”; original work: *Lendas e mitos dos índios brasileiros* by Walde-Mar de Andrade e Silva), a picture book that conveys the myths and legends of the indigenous people of Brazil (Indios). The indigenous people of Brazil believe that animals, people, and spirits coexist. This is similar to the ancient beliefs of Japan, and this draft reinterprets indigenous Brazilian beliefs through a Japanese lens of imagery and sound. The draft’s overall image is magnificent. The draft frequently uses abstract imagery. As the story develops, it also uses imagery that connects with our modern society.

The concept for draft B was the “spirit(s) of the stars.” In the story for draft B, spirits born and raised in Japan and spirits born and raised in Brazil meet in a starry sky. They resonate with each other and combine their strength to create something unique. The spirits in the story are anthropomorphic.

After considering these two drafts, draft A was chosen during the second web meeting on March 29.

During the discussion process, it was decided that, while both drafts were interesting and draft B was very unique, because of movement restrictions, draft A seemed likely to be easier to create via remote collaboration. In addition, some members felt that the images Hashimoto shared were a “dive into the unknown” and “were emotionally moving but did not make people think (not intellectual).” Combining “not thinking” with concrete (indigenous) Brazilian motifs risked evoking stereotypical images in the mind of the audience. It was hoped that this problem could be avoided by using more abstract images and the concept of “the origins of humankind,” which was also connected to Japan.

Stage Two: Creating (and Arranging) the Content



Some of the storyboards created by Hashimoto

Hashimoto Daisuke created draft content based on the overall composition chosen in stage one. He then shared this during the third web meeting on April 21. His draft content was a story. “A world of traveling spirits from Japan and Brazil (Spiritua)” appears throughout the story. The story follows the Japanese four-part structure called “*kishotenketsu*” (introduction/*ki*, development/*sho*, twist/*ten*, and conclusion/*ketsu*). (The summaries provided for each part other than those of “*kishotenketsu*” are based on notes I took from meeting minutes.)

Introduction/*ki*: Japan and Brazil

- A world map appears on the dome, then disappears, leaving only Brazil and Japan. Traditional music from Brazil and that from Japan play and intermix (the plan is to have a fun and fantasy-inspired introduction).

Development/*sho*: Two spirits

- Two spirits appear. As they dance, they intermingle.
 - The imagery becomes more abstract and “mysterious patterns” appear.
- Development/*sho*: In a space-time of ancient memories and myths
- A plant emerges. Light shines from the plant and *Mawutzinin*¹ appears. The plant grows, and spirits appear on the ground.
 - Bubbles turn into a jungle and the jungle turns into a jaguar. *Mawutzinin*'s hands cup the jaguar.
 - Water spills from *Mawutzinin*'s hands and becomes Iguazu Falls.
 - The water level rises and the entire dome becomes an ocean. There are fish in the ocean. Indigenous Brazilians appear and begin fishing.
 - A fish is hit by the indigenous Brazilians' arrows. It sinks and becomes a mermaid. This represents a fusion of Brazilian and Japanese legends.
 - The mermaid splits the water's surface in two.
 - From this split, a starry sky appears.
 - In the starry sky, two spirits emerge.
 - The starry sky gathers around the two spirits.

Twist/*ten*: A cultural exchange party

- The starry sky becomes two capes for the spirits.
- The spirits change shape. They split up and increase in number.
- Colorful spirits cover the entire dome.
- The spirits begin to condense.
- The spirits jump and the capes stretch into cylinders. They become entangled and turn into a globe.

Conclusion/*ketsu*: Japan and Brazil floating in the same ocean

- The globe bursts and the sun emerges.
- (Modern-day) Japan and Brazil, sharing the same sun and ocean, appear on either side of the dome.
- The Japanese and Brazilian production staff credits are shown on either side, and the work ends.

All of the project members evaluated Hashimoto's draft content highly. In order to develop the project further based on this draft, they discussed several key points.

First, Ribeiro (Brazilian team producer and musician) reviewed the content. Because there was already a movie with the title *SPIRITUA*, they could not use that title. In addition, he felt that overall, the content was more Brazilian than Japanese. One specific issue was that the jaguar in the content was a different species from the Brazilian Jaguar, and that in Brazil, jaguars have a more friendly image. Similarly, in Brazil, people have a more friendly image of water gods. The final scene used symbols of modern Brazil and Japan (the Christ the Redeemer statue and Tokyo Skytree). However, based on the overall flow of the work, it was suggested that natural symbols (such as Iguazu Falls and Nachi Falls) might be better. In response, Hashimoto said that he wanted to use symbols that the audience would know were from Brazil and Japan at a glance. It was decided to reconsider possible natural symbols.

Otake discussed the work's starry sky theme—how much to use it in the work, and how to make the audience aware of it. She wanted to make use of the starry sky theme more because of the planetarium space the work would be shown in. There was an idea to contrast the northern and southern hemispheres by using the Southern Cross, which can be seen from Brazil, and the Big Dipper, which can be seen from Japan. By changing the point of view, it would also be possible to see both the Southern Cross and the Big Dipper at the same time, such as near the equator. Otake wondered if it would be possible to use this contrast.

The video to be shown in the planetarium (dome theater) was also discussed. 3D imagery using a lot of CG would look beautiful. However, it would be expensive. Also, CG is already common, and it would actually be difficult to create something novel and new with it. Instead of realistic imagery, the members agreed that it might be easier to create newness and abstractness by combining 3D and 2D. There was also a proposal from Ribeiro to use only music for the introduction and no imagery or video.

Further, the members discussed how easily understandable the work should be, and whether to consider the educational nature of Japanese planetariums (who should this work be made for?). Eventually, the members agreed that they wouldn't worry about the audience or distribution and instead try to create the work they wanted to make. That being said, because the work would be highly abstract, they would need to provide an overview of its content in advance. One proposal was to have a music-only introduction with a narrated overview of the work in multiple languages (Japanese, Portuguese, and English). A brochure would also be made to provide textual information.

View of the Project in Progress (September 24)

Unfortunately, there are no records of the time period from May to August, so this report cannot include information on the discussions and finalization of the storyboards after editing, the creation of the visual content, and the creation of the rough music drafts and their arrangement. However, I was able to observe a mid-production meeting on September 24. This was the first time I met the project's members. During the meeting, the members mainly discussed the meaning of the work, and remote collaboration during the COVID-19 pandemic.

First, regarding the meaning of the work, it would be based on a message of a “deep resonance” between Japan and Brazil, two countries “on opposite sides of the world.” In order to represent this, they would use the “the origin of humankind” and “the sky.” By making the work very abstract, they could provide viewers with the space to feel what they would freely. The project members also wanted to avoid pushing specific values onto viewers.

Looking at the societies of Japan and Brazil would make it easy to imag-

ine their strong diplomatic relations in modern history, as well as their histories and racial commonalities. However, this work would purposefully not look at their societies. Instead, it would focus on the spiritual world. In part, this decision was made because the Brazilian artists felt that there was potential to combine the two countries' cultures, particularly through music. This was a concept that no one else had really looked at before.

Engaging in remote collaboration during the COVID-19 pandemic was not difficult. In fact, it felt like it was creating new possibilities. Before COVID-19, the project's members were going to try to collaborate face to face during very short periods of time. Under COVID-19, however, connecting online became the new normal, and this actually made it possible to collaborate more closely than before. As they communicated with each other, the artists from the two countries worked hard to make the quality of the project consistent. In addition, if the members had worked together face to face, only some members would have been able to travel. Connecting online made it possible for more members to be directly involved in the production. With regard to the music, working online made it possible to connect together the spaces the musicians normally used. Because of this, they did not have to carry their instruments anywhere and were able to use the best spaces in each country. According to Brazilian artist Ribeiro, in Brazil, there is little educational support for the arts. Because of this, it is important for local artists to participate in artistic opportunities like this online. Accordingly, the Brazilian artists were very eager to collaborate online.

The movement restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have greatly changed the style of international collaboration/cooperation. Under the "new normal" of connecting online, people can connect to each other anytime, anywhere. At the same time, however, it has made it important to be aware of how much we are able to imagine sensations that can only be experienced in the offline world and the everyday we do not share online. This project will depict the spiritual world. I hope it will be a work that will make it possible for audiences to understand that we are all fundamentally connected, and that this will give people courage during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Japanese original text by Prof. Minamide,

English translation from the original text by the Japan Foundation

1 The "first person" according to the myths of the Brazilian Kamayurá tribe. Introduced in the picture book *Lendas e mitos dos índios brasileiros*. According to the Kamayurá's myths, *Mawutzinin's* daughter and a jaguar give birth to twins who become the sun and the moon.

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“Sky Bridge”

Second Report: Video Creation

Author: MINAMIDE Kazuyo

Goals of the Second Report

Sky Bridge is a planetarium theater work. A collaboration between Japanese and Brazilian artists, it was planned by S.C.ALLIANCE Inc. In my first report, I provided an overview of the entire project. I also reported on the development process up to the end of September 2021 based on interviews with participants. Content creation was mainly based on outlines for the video, primarily created by HASHIMOTO Daisuke; and for the music, primarily created by KOBAYASHI Yohei. OTAKE Mayumi from S.C.Alliance and Shen Kyomei RIBEIRO from the Brazilian team served as Executive Producers. The overall creation process has been a collaborative effort instead of specific people only working on specific parts of the project.

In this second report, I will report mainly on the video production process. On November 16, I conducted an online interview with the following members of the project’s video production team.

- Hashimoto Daisuke: Movie director and art director
- IZUTSU Ryota: CG and movie production
- KUBOTA Ayana: CG and image production
- HASHIMOTO Shinsaku: Animation production
- Camila GONDO: Brazilian team artist (closing scene key frame production)
(Otake Mayumi: Sound designer and executive producer)

Video Production Process

As I reported in my first report, in the first stage of production, Hashimoto Daisuke proposed two concept drafts. Of these, the project members chose to use his concept of “a world in which Japanese and Brazilian spirits travel (and meet)” as the overall image for the work. I also reported on the process of Director Hashimoto creating a story and draft storyboards¹ based on this. After these events, the production process moved forward as follows.

1. Video storyboards were made based on Hashimoto’s storyboards. The video storyboards comprised the same number of still images as regular storyboards. These still images were arranged in a timeline and determined the overall length of the work. These were shared with the music team (Kobayashi Yohei and others). Based on the video storyboards, the music team began creating music for the work.
2. Compositions/blueprints (previsualizations) showing the placement of characters in the space for each scene were created. These were then previewed at a planetarium. This also made it possible to check for any differences in position or speed compared with how they looked on a computer.
This work continued up to the end of July. Based on the previsualizations, CG artists on the video team began creating the scenes and characters under the direction of Director Hashimoto.

The video team consists of 13 members in total. In addition to Director Hashimoto Daisuke and Producer Izutsu Ryota, who is in charge of production work chain of command, many artists were involved in CG

production. This includes people in charge of character CG creation and animation, people to create character models, people to create character movements, and a director to provide CG production technology support. In addition, there were very important staff members who coordinated the overall schedule and plan together with Izutsu. During this process, I interviewed Kubota Ayana, in charge of character CG production, and Hashimoto Shinsaku, in charge of animation.

The Experiences of the Artists in Charge of Scene and Character Production

1. Kubota Ayana

Kubota was in charge of CG production for characters appearing in the video. She was particularly involved in doing detailed work for Scene 1 (the birth of the world), Scene 2 (the birth of the Japanese spirit), and Scene 3 (the birth of the Brazilian spirit). She moved the characters according to the arrangements in the previsualizations, and created the animals and the galactic particle effects and simulations. She also coordinated the overall color pallet and materials. Her work was extensive. The scenes Kubota was directly involved in consisted of around 8,000 frames. While working, she coordinated with Director Hashimoto.

She said that she had heavily struggled with the work’s long single take. In order to render the entire section of the project of which she was in charge (about 10,000 frames), each session of rendering took a huge amount of time (more than three days). This made it impossible to quickly make small changes and have Director Hashimoto check them. Kubota says she learned how to solve this problem with the help of Izutsu Ryota.

Kubota has four years of experience as a 3D artist and had worked with Director Hashimoto before. However, this was her first planetarium project, and she had many new experiences working on the project. As described earlier, she had difficulties with the project’s long single take. However, through teamwork and Director Hashimoto’s detailed and helpful direction, she learned a lot. She says despite the difficulties, she felt very fulfilled.

2. Hashimoto Shinsaku

Next, I talked with Hashimoto Shinsaku, who was in charge of animation production. Hashimoto has 15 years of experience. He is also trusted as an animator by Director Hashimoto Daisuke and Producer Izutsu Ryota. Hashimoto Shinsaku is renowned for his animation skills, which “breathe life into the characters.” For this project, he was involved in animating the Japanese and Brazilian spirits, the work’s main characters. Director Hashimoto Daisuke directed the spirits’ design and movements. Because the project would be shown at planetariums, the movements needed to be 3D. However, Hashimoto Shinsaku says that Director Hashimoto Daisuke’s directing was clear, which made his work easier. For Hashimoto Shinsaku, as well, what was difficult was the project’s long single take.

Taking on the Challenge of Full-Dome Movie Production

This project would be Director Hashimoto Daisuke’s debut full-dome movie production. He says that during the production process, he realized that it was very different from making a regular flat-screen video. For him, it was very enjoyable to create a work that would fill up the entire dome screen. However, things such as the camera work and how to guide the audience’s focus were fundamentally different from those of a regular flat-screen video. Moreover, what was very different and even more difficult for Hashimoto was that the work was all a single take with no cuts.

This long single take was also part of the reason why rendering took a long time, a problem that all of the artists complained about.

From the planning stage, Director Hashimoto wanted to take on a new challenge with this full-dome movie project unlike anything anyone had done before. Accordingly, without any precedents, he had to build up an image for the project even while working on developing it. Director Hashimoto's role was very important in sharing this with the other members as the project took shape.

Taking on the Challenge of Online Work

Because of travel restrictions due to COVID-19, all of the work to date has been conducted online. Between the merits and demerits of online work, overall there have been more of the former than the latter. The biggest merit has been the ability for members to immediately connect to each other and check on each other's progress (online) on-site, right where they are. Before COVID-19, the plan had been for them to meet in person to check things and to work while looking at a monitor together. However, because of COVID-19, the members could not meet face to face and had to use online meeting systems such as Zoom. Because of this, the members actually checked on each other's work more frequently than they would have if meeting in person. This resulted in the members collaborating more closely than they otherwise would have. When a problem occurred, Kubota Ayana, in charge of CG production, was able to immediately contact Director Hashimoto. Sharing the same screen view, they were able to check and talk about the problem in detail. Izutsu Ryota said that doing things online significantly improved production efficiency and productivity.

That being said, right now, work is continuing to be done online. When the members are again able to meet in-person, they may realize that there are some things that weren't feasible online. Director Hashimoto told me, "There are many merits to working online, but the amount of information you get by actually meeting face to face is completely different." This information includes nonverbal communication such as each member's mood, attitude, and atmosphere. With regard to things like this, it is true that doing things online can be lacking.

The Fusion of Japan and Brazil in the Production of the Closing Scene

The video's closing scene consists of symbols of Japan and Brazil. Japanese-Brazilian artist Camila Gondo worked on this scene. I asked Director Hashimoto about how Gondo was put in charge of this scene. He told me that the purpose of this project was to be a collaboration between Japanese and Brazilian artists. This was being achieved in the music production. However, the video was mainly being created by Japanese artists. All of the Brazilian elements had come from Japanese artists looking at picture books, etc., and with the input of Music Producer Shen Kyomei Ribeiro. Director Hashimoto wanted to add Brazilian sensibilities to the video, too. He asked for help from SASAO Gaku from the Japan Foundation's Brazilian office. Sasao introduced Hashimoto to several candidate artists. One of the artists was Gondo. Her work was extremely interesting to Director Hashimoto, and he decided to ask her to do the key frames for the closing scene. Hashimoto says he felt a love of Japanese culture in Gondo's works, and Japanese influences in her style and use of color. He decided that she would be perfect for creating the fusion of Japan and Brazil in the closing scene.

I interviewed Gondo and asked her about her use of Japanese symbolism in her works.

Gondo is a third-generation Japanese descendent; her grandparents were Japanese migrants. From the age of 1, she lived in Japan for five years, and went to a Japanese preschool. The first language she acquired was Japanese, and even now, she can mostly understand spoken Japanese. She has a strong identity as someone of Japanese descent. She told me that when she returned to Brazil from Japan, it was hard for her to adapt. When she studied abroad in Portugal, she identified more as a Japanese (Japanese descendent) than as a Brazilian. In order to express her double background and identity, Gondo chose to learn art, and her roots are reflected in her art. For this reason, participating in this collaborative Japanese-Brazilian project is very meaningful for Gondo.



The closing scene focuses on the Christ the Redeemer statue as a symbol of Brazil and Mt. Fuji as a symbol of Japan. This was partly Director Hashimoto's idea, but Gondo also agreed with it and thought about their positions. In the scene, origami cranes are shown next to Mt. Fuji. Origami cranes are also used as a symbol of Japan in Brazil, and in Japan to express the spirit of Japan. In response to the cranes, Brazilian birds (parrots) are shown on the Brazilian side. Mt. Fuji, the cranes, the Christ the Redeemer statue, and the parrots are surrounded by flowers. The flowers on the Japanese side are chrysanthemums and cherry blossoms. Tropical flowers are shown on the Brazilian side. The Japanese side uses red colors, while the Brazilian side uses green colors. The contrasts create a balance.

Brazil and Japan are located on opposite sides of the Earth, and Gondo wanted her design to depict the two countries reverberating with each other. In addition, the sun in the center of the design shines on both countries. Brazil is home to the largest population of Japanese people (Japanese descendants) outside of Japan. There are also many Japa-



nese-Brazilians living in Japan. Gondo's design hints at the fact that Japanese-Brazilians are a bridge between the two societies.

Gondo's designs are different from the rest of the video. Director Hashimoto told me that by using them for the closing scene, it adds diversity to the work. Hashimoto's goal was to create something new and novel, and he felt Gondo's work was a good match for the highlight of the video.

View of the Video Production Process

As of November 16, the video was 60% to 70% finished. The completed work is scheduled to be released by December 23. Before then, the plan is to complete the video, coordinate it with the music, and add sound effects.

The hardest part of making the video is the technical aspects, particularly how to handle the gigabytes of data. I have learned about the evolution of digital technologies, and the demands and challenges of the parallel evolution of digital technology environments. COVID-19 has brought about restrictions on our mobility. We now conduct almost all of our communications and collaborative work online, but we are still figuring out how to continue doing the things we did before COVID-19. We are still looking for a "new normal." The core of this project is international exchange as well as cooperation and collaboration in and outside Japan. *Sky Bridge* is taking on the challenge of finding out how much of this can be achieved online. Director Hashimoto feels that working online has increased productivity and resulted in closer cooperation, but that there's also something "lacking." This sentiment highlights the difficulties of this challenge.

Japanese original text by Prof. Minamide,

English translation from the original text by the Japan Foundation

1 The basic story told in Hashimoto's storyboards (as reported in my first report) was as follows:

Introduction/*ki*: Japan and Brazil appear.

Development/*sho*: Two spirits (Japan and Brazil) are born. Japan and Brazil combine in the world of myths and legends.

Twist/*ten*: The spirits have a cultural exchange party.

Conclusion/*ketsu*: The sun and Japan and Brazil, floating in the ocean.

S.C.ALLIANCE Inc., with Shen Kyomei RIBEIRO,
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“Sky Bridge”

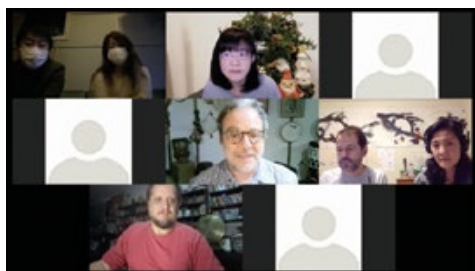
Third Report: Music Creation

Author: MINAMIDE Kazuyo

Goals of the Third Report

Production work by Japanese and Brazilian artists on *Sky Bridge*, a full-dome movie production project by S.C.ALLIANCE Inc., is close to being completed. According to the project proposal at the time of application, artists from Brazil would be invited to Japan to lodge together and conduct recording sessions. However, COVID-19 restricted their travels. Accordingly, the artists have been fully utilizing online systems. Their tireless efforts are resulting in high-quality work. In addition, the merits of online collaboration are leading the artists to new possibilities.

In my second report, I focused on the video team's production process. In this third report, I will report on the production activities of the music production team. I interviewed the Japanese and Brazilian artists online on December 6. I also observed online a recording studio session conducted in Tokyo on October 31. The Brazilian artists also participated online during the recording, and I was able to see how their collaborative production was proceeding.



December 6 interview participants

- OTAKE Mayumi: Sound designer and executive producer
- KOBAYASHI Yohei: Japanese team music production and saxophone performance
- Shen Kyomei RIBEIRO: Brazilian team music producer, flute and Shaku-hachi performance
- Ari COLARES: Brazilian team music production and percussion performance
- Gabriel LEVY: Brazilian team music production and accordion performance
- SUZUMORI Shizuka: Brazilian team artist manager (SASAO Gaku: The Japan Foundation, São Paulo)

Here I would like to give a brief introduction of some of the artists on the Brazilian music production team.

Ari Colares: In addition to being a performing musician, Colares teaches music at various schools in Brazil. He has taught at universities and other institutions, and has also held music workshops for poor children as part of a government assistance program. He is participating in *Sky Bridge* because he knows Brazilian team music producer Shen Kyomei Ribeiro. He has never been to Japan but has a good image of the country. He has also previously incorporated *taiko* drums and other Japanese percussion

instruments into his performances.

Gabriel Levy: Levy comes from a family of musicians famous in São Paulo. Composer Alexandre LEVY was his granduncle. His mother is a pianist, and from a young age, he was taught the piano with a focus on classical music. As he learned more and more about music, his interests expanded to include indigenous Brazilian cultures, and he has explored a variety of musical fusions. Regarding Japanese music, he was influenced by KI-TAHARA Tamie, who traveled to Brazil and spread Japanese music, and is learning the shamisen. He has traveled to Japan three times.

Music Production Process

As I explained in my second report, the video production team headed by Director HASHIMOTO Daisuke created video storyboards with which the music team created an overall image for the music in accordance with the video timing. In accordance with the original concept, KOBAYASHI Yohei and Ribeiro further developed the project's image and worked to create a concrete story.

The length of the work will be around 10 minutes, and its composition will be as follows.

Introduction/*ki*: Japan and Brazil appear.

Development/*sho*: Two spirits (Japan and Brazil) are born. Japan and Brazil combine in the world of myths and legends.

Twist/*ten*: The spirits have a cultural exchange party.

Conclusion/*ketsu*: Japan and Brazil appear illuminated by the sun and floating in the ocean.

Of the above, only for the starting introduction/*ki* section (around 1-1.5 minutes) are the Brazilian and Japanese teams each in charge of specific, different parts. The rest of the work is all created collaboratively. Ribeiro was the leader for the Brazilian part, and Kobayashi was the leader for the Japanese part. They both attended recordings of each other's musical performances online and exchanged opinions as production moved forward. In addition, both teams worked together to adjust any discrepancies between the two countries' musical parts when they were joined together for the video.

Originally, Kobayashi created the overall flow for the collaborative parts from the development/*sho* section onward. However, it was felt that the result was overly produced. As a result, after discussion and trial music production, it was decided to start over and re-do everything collaboratively. According to Kobayashi, they repeatedly created, discussed, and revised their work.

The mixing of the recorded sound (audio) was conducted in Japan. However, Brazilian team artist Ribeiro also took part in the process online, and the mixing was conducted in discussion with him.

The video and music were created in parallel at the same time. When the music was completed, the project members worked to combine it with the video. During this process, both the video and the music were revised and adjusted to match each other. Another task during this process was adding sound effects as necessary. For this project, it was decided to use fewer sound effects than normal, and to use them only where they would be most effective.

Music Recording

The music was recorded in Japan over two days and in Brazil over two days. For the performances, Kobayashi prepared sheet music to serve as

a basis for performances. However, the music had to be performed while watching the video. As the artists played, they would check if it matched the video and adjust their performance. It was almost like improvising the music on the spot. The Japanese recording sessions were conducted in a studio in Tokyo. In Brazil, they were conducted in Colares' home/studio. Both teams attended the other's recording sessions online. Although they couldn't perform at the same time, they participated by picturing the overall mix. I attended the recording in Japan online and also conducted interviews about each country's recording sessions, including what I observed online in Japan.

1. The Japanese Team's Recording Sessions

The Japanese recording sessions were conducted in a studio in Tokyo on October 31 and November 3. The instruments used were a string quartet (two violins, a viola, and a cello), a trombone, a trumpet, and a *shinobue* bamboo flute. There was also a vocalist. During recordings, the musicians performed while watching video shown on a screen in the recording room (Photo 1). Staff in the control room also listened to the musicians perform while checking the video on a screen (Photo 2). Both rooms were also connected to Zoom (a separate audio feed ensured that there would be no sound lag), and Ribeiro from the Brazilian team observed online. When a performance was finished, it was replayed in the control room to check it. The members discussed various points to adjust and recorded another performance. This process was repeated over and over again (Photo 3) in order to create the music for each scene.

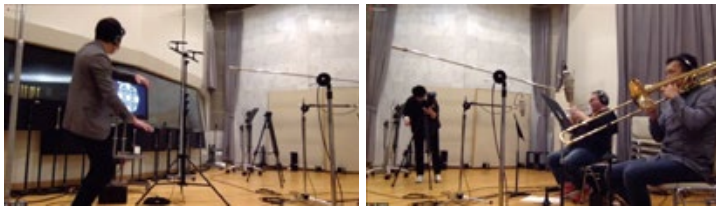


Photo 1: Performing in the recording studio.

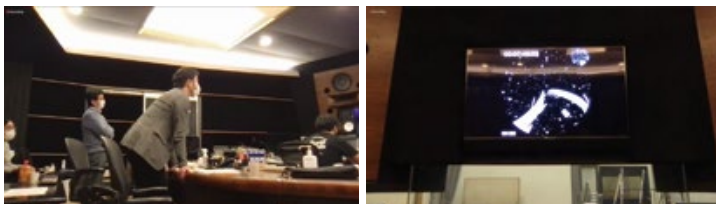


Photo 2: Monitoring everything in the control room.

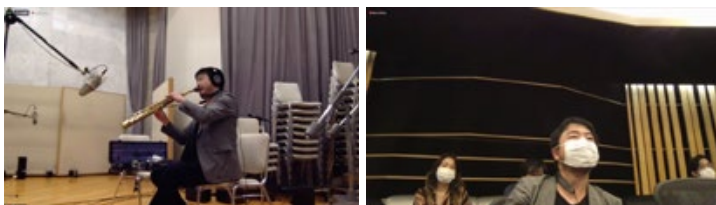


Photo 3: Kobayashi repeatedly performed the music, checked how things matched, and adjusted the music, over and over again.

2. The Brazilian Team's Recording Sessions

I was unable to observe the Brazilian team's recording sessions, so the following report is based on their interviews.

The recordings were conducted over two days in São Paulo, Brazil, in Ari Colares' home/studio. Colares is a percussion musician and has many different kinds of percussion instruments in his home. Accordingly, the Brazilian team recordings made maximum use of this environment. This would not have been possible under the original plan, which was to bring only a small selection of instruments to Japan for recordings. There was

sheet music to be used as a base and an image of what instruments were to be used. However, Colares brought out a huge variety of percussion instruments that were used as deemed necessary for each part.

In Brazil, the music was recorded using three kinds of drums (Japanese, Brazilian, and Thunder Drum), a shaker, piano, accordion, flute, Japanese *shakuhachi* flute, saxophone, and a car spring, among others. The Thunder Drum, in particular, was not part of the original plan, but I was told that it plays a very important role in creating the work's atmosphere. The Brazilian team also created their music while listening to playbacks and discussing them. There were four Brazilian musicians in the studio and Kobayashi also participated online.

Both Kobayashi, the music producer for the Japanese team, and Ribeiro, the music producer for the Brazilian team, emphasized more than anything that they got great satisfaction and enjoyment from being able to engage in collaborative work that was improvisational. They told me that the work was an extremely creative time filled with experimental approaches. The Japanese *taiko* and *shakuhachi* were also used for the Brazilian recordings, but their usage and performances were unique. I was told that in a completely natural way, these Japanese instruments ended up being used to represent Brazil. Kobayashi told me that it opened up new possibilities for musical activities for him.

At the beginning of the work, in the scene where the Japanese and Brazilian spirits meet, there is session music comprising Ribeiro on the *shakuhachi* and Kobayashi on the saxophone. They told me this fusion emphasizes the fun of cultural exchange and also expresses the fun they had recording the session. Normally in collaborative projects, the artists, who have each established themselves in the world, often end up clashing over the things they want to do. According to Kobayashi, however, there was none of that in this project. The musicians found each other's music and performances to be novel and fresh, and they were able to flexibly cooperate without being restricted by fixed ideas. He told me that this was the best part about working on this project for him. Both Kobayashi and Ribeiro told me that this was only possible because they respected each other and that they both came to really like each other. You could say that the most meaningful part of the production process was the artists' ability to embody and experience the purpose of international exchange (collaboration).

Taking on the Challenge of Online Work

In the project's original plan, the recording work while lodging together in Japan was to be one of the main activities. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was canceled. This was very disappointing to the musicians of both countries. It also forced them to take on a huge challenge: how to engage in international exchange under these conditions. Conversely, however, the pandemic resulted in online meeting systems quickly becoming common and used in all kinds of fields. Cultural activities were no exception.

As I have already stated, in this project, particularly the music production moved forward with constant online contact between Japan and Brazil. The biggest merit of doing the recording work online was that the musicians from both countries were able to try out all of the instruments that they owned. Because of this, Kobayashi emphasized that they were able to engage in approaches they had never tried before, and this resulted in a depth to the music that he never would have imagined. Right from the start, the members of this project intended to create a new kind of full-dome movie unlike anything seen before. The unique music the project's musicians created was a perfect match for this intent and also

helped the members feel that they were achieving this goal. There are still restrictions that limit face-to-face creation activities, and it is impossible not to wonder what other discoveries the musicians might have made if they had met in person. However, it is clear that they discovered the possibilities presented by going in a different direction.

The Unique and Shared Challenges of a Full-Dome Movie

The project's representative and Executive Producer Otake Mayumi has twenty years of experience working as a professional sound designer for entertainment spaces. She has also been involved in planetarium works from early on in her professional career. For Kobayashi Yohei, one of the project's Music Producers and musicians, this is the third planetarium project he has been involved in. Both told me that the sound aspect of planetarium projects is characterized by the difficulty of configuring the audio, including dealing with echoes, in a domed space. The problem is in accurately recreating music, created under the best conditions in a studio, in a domed space.

I asked about how the work will be shared after its completion. The completed work is scheduled to be shown soon in Japan (at Saitama City Space Theater) on December 23. The problem is then showing it in Brazil. There are no planetariums in São Paulo that can show digital videos like this project. The ones that can in larger Brazilian cities such as Rio de Janeiro are small in scale. As the video production team had told me regarding the video production process, the video hardware environment (video conversion, transmission, and projection) lags behind production software technology.

Ribeiro told me that the music alone was good enough to hold a suite concert, and he wanted to invite Kobayashi to Brazil to stage such a concert. He said that the music they created had become "our work."

View of the Music Production Process

Before COVID-19, many performing musicians likely felt that sharing a space and directly experiencing the music while performing it was one of the best things about music. For this project, one of the main activities was to be the recording work done together in person while also lodging together. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, this was not possible. In spite of this, the musicians connected to each other online, listened to each other's performances, and imagined performing together as they created the project's music. Technology was used to combine their individually recorded performances and turn them into a concert. I am very much looking forward to seeing how the music of this new kind of ensemble has been synchronized with the video and how it will be shown in a full dome. At the same time, a work like this, created by combining individual pieces, cannot be played on people's home computers and smartphones. This project can only be shown in a planetarium space where large numbers of people gather together. This fact has made me keenly aware that "gathering together" cannot be completely eliminated from cultural activities.

Japanese original text by Prof. Minamide,

English translation from the original text by the Japan Foundation