



## ***The Genesis of BodΨnvocations©***

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***BodΨnvocations©*** were born in a dream that woke me up in the middle of the night just in time to grab my notebook and jot down words and sketches. When I found my notes in the morning, I knew this was no ordinary dream, but rather a whole program that wanted to bring to life. It was the Fall of 2010.

At the time of this dream, I had been pondering for a few weeks about the presentation I wished to propose to the planning committee for the 4th International SoulCollage® Facilitators Conference, and the deadline was rapidly approaching. After that night, it became obvious that the sequences of graceful basic movements shown in the dream were the heart of my presentation. Now my task was to understand and “dress” them with words and understanding so they could be shared.

### **Introducing movement into workshops**

The idea of creating a CD and asking my friend Miriam Goldberg to compose the music came later. At first I was only trying to grasp the relevance these movements could have for the SoulCollage® Facilitators attending the Conference. Having facilitated SoulCollage® for years, I was well aware that participants often express the desire to incorporate more movement into the hours of focused creativity required in card-making and in listening to each other during sharing times. There is indeed a lot of sitting in SoulCollage®, and not all Facilitators are comfortable in introducing movement during their workshops, especially if they do not have any specific training. These 16 sequences are easy and adaptable; they can be “collaged” depending on the mood one wishes to create, and they fit very well with the SoulCollage® philosophy. The more I practiced them and listened to the language of each movement, the more this idea made sense. So I crafted my proposal for the Conference to offer these “Dances of the Soul”, as I then called them, as an adjunctive teaching tool and a fun personal practice of integration between imagination, intention, and movement.

### ***BodΨnvocations© evolves***

This had become exciting enough for me, but ***BodΨnvocations©*** were not content to remain confined to this “teaching application.” More and more information came pouring in, and the idea of music and a CD took shape. This project was becoming much larger than I had initially imagined. Yet I felt guided throughout each step, learning as I went. The text of the first CD went through several metamorphosis and eventually it became all about joy – so the title, ***BodΨnvocations© for the Joy of Being.***

## **The inspiration of the *Orixas***

The dream had shown me sixteen movements, and even before I finished reading my scribbled notes I knew that these movements were related to the sixteen *Orixas* of the *Xire*, although it took me time and practice to find out the exact correlations.

For several years I have been “absorbing” with reverence the wisdom of the *Xire* as a lay person, a psychotherapist, and until recently, as a working medium of a branch of [Templo Guaracy](#)\* do Brazil (TGB). Its founder Babalorixa Carlos Bubi has developed a superb mandala-like wheel to depict the elaborate dance of creation and manifestation. The *Xire* is divided in sixteen parts, each representing a specific force of Nature also called an *Orixa*. The Yoruba word *Orixa* means “selected head” and refers to a pantheon of divine ancestors and personified aspects of the natural world worshipped to this day in large areas of West Africa. The word, along with the mythic personifications and the rituals associated with it, has migrated along the slavery routes to the Caribbean and South America where it forms the core concept of the multifaceted Afro-Brazilian religious syncretism.

When in 2004 I first learned of the *Xire* at a professional encounter facilitated by Tina de Souza, a senior Ialorixa (Mother of the Orixas) at TGB and a psychologist, I perceived in it a breadth of inclusiveness resonant with my most profound beliefs and sacred experiences. The *Xire* is a cosmogony based on Nature; it depicts simultaneously the unique vibration of each quality and the dynamic organization that perennially holds all of creation together, alive and evolving. Each one of the sixteen *Orixas* is actually a microcosm in itself and resonates with innumerable aspects of the human experience. In this dream they came to me as basic movements related to an experience of being, and more specifically, evoking a particular quality of joy. Among other purposes, I wish for ***BodΨnvocations***© to bring the *Xire* to a wider audience, and I plan to write more about the connection between these movements and the qualities of Nature.

## **My first meeting with the Four Elements**

My connection with the Four Elements dates far back to my late adolescent years. I remember walking with a group of friends through the empty streets of Venice, Italy one late autumn night. The light was dim and we were wandering in awe of the familiar beauty and listening to the echo of our steps on the ancient pavement. I was suddenly distracted from our conversation by an attractive small shop window. A small poster full of verses was pasted on the glass. I was transfixed in reading its song to the alchemical four Elements of Earth, Water, Fire and Air. My brain was computing something. The words were very familiar and yet I felt as if I had never known their true meaning. I was reading something obvious and yet totally unknown. When I tore myself away from that window, I felt a change in my “seeing,” and a world of possibilities opened around me. Although my friends

and I had all studied Plato and the western philosophers that followed, and we loved to lose ourselves in philosophical debates, I didn't really find anyone to talk to about the Four Elements until a couple of years later when I started studying the Baghavad Gita, the Upanishads, and the Vedas, coincidentally in Venice at Casa Cini. In these scriptures and in the rituals associated to them, the Elements are living entities worshipped with chants and prayers.

Since then I have been guided to practice in different spiritual traditions. I have read the ancient Greeks, the medieval alchemical texts, Hindu and Buddhist scriptures, and I have found in the *Xire* a most complete and harmonious description of the dance of the Four Elements.

Since **BodΨnvocations**© came to me I have been "living" with them every day, listening to the *Orixas* through those movements. I look forward to sharing more of what they transmit. And now I let Miriam's beautiful written voice tell you more about how the words and music came together.

### ***BodΨnvocations***© through Miriam's musical eyes

*"First, great appreciation to Mariabruna for having steadfastly midwifed **BodΨnvocations**©. Her recognition of the gift, her commitment to it, and her relentless determination to bring it forth has itself been inspiring. I hope everyone has as much fun exploring **BodΨnvocations**© as have Mariabruna and I.*

***BodΨnvocations**© encourages a synergy of awareness, imagination, intention, emotion, sensation, movement, and breath, through 16 simple gestures which express 16 universal qualities of transformation and healing. Following the initial inspiration, Mariabruna explored each one through focused repetition, opening to their power and nuance. During those months, she discovered and shared with me the depth revealed in their simplicity. I explored my own experience of them, and as we continued to share, their essence seemed more and more available and distinct.*

*When Mariabruna invited me to "compose music" that would help her share the **BodΨnvocations**, a smile filled me. It seemed so obvious: tune to their vibratory essence and let music come through. A gift. A joy.*

*We both knew that the music would be an integral part of the experience, not background pieces. By the time her narrative was recorded, we had about 4 weeks to include the music. Several issues became clear. Most important, the music needed to carry the energy of each quality, to make each one more accessible, to carry a felt knowing that could be received by the sensate body and be a current of sound into which the body could lean and explore. It*

*needed to deepen the understanding and facilitate the absorption of each quality. It needed to support the poetic wisdom and cadence of Mariabruna's voice. And it needed to have its own integrity, to be a clean honoring, embodiment, and reminder of each quality, a BodYnvoation unto itself.*

*The music emerged organically from the felt experience of each BodYnvoation movement. I listened with my whole body to each quality's vibration, and then opened the attunement to flow through sound in its simplest forms, allowing the varied balance of intimacy and extension to manifest accordingly. As much as possible, I offered the musical inspiration through the basic sonics of the rattle, drum, flute, and bell, sounds which access and transmit primal knowing.*

*The music came through as a weaving of sound, rhythm and texture whose synergism expresses and facilitates an experience of each quality. The refined honing of the music with Devin's sound studio expertise, "patience, attentiveness, and great musical ear" was exciting and compelling. Together, we could shape subtle inflections to let each quality shine.*

*Each piece offers its individual wisdom and also reflects its place in the whole mandala of **BodΨnvoations**©. The simple, user friendly melodies and rhythms are easy to recall. If we find ourselves hearing a particular musical phrase, a melody, a rhythm, a feeling, we can recognize it as a message from our own inner wisdom calling us to re-collect in our body and being the particular quality that is being re-membered.*

*Neither the music nor the musical sequence at the end is to be used as short cut. Discover the adventure of practicing each one. Notice which ones bring you immediate joy, which ones are comfortable, which ones are challenging, and meet them all with curiosity and welcoming. The music is a doorway through which we can dive as deep as we dare. The more we allow and attune to the energetic experience in our body, when our awareness, our imagination and our body sing together with the movements, the deeper we meet, understand, and receive the healing flow of **BodΨnvoations**©. As we discover our own capacity, we can open into the silence from which it all comes, and hear our own vibrational field expressing the qualities through gesture, sound, and word, revealing the healing wisdom of our own being attuned to universal sources. May this offering serve you well.*

9/20/2011 - Miriam Goldberg

\*More information on Templo Guaracy's website: [www.templogaracy.org.br](http://www.templogaracy.org.br) and on the websites of its USA branches [www.tgdattera.org](http://www.tgdattera.org) and [www.tgwashington.org](http://www.tgwashington.org). See also [www.xire.org](http://www.xire.org), the website of artist Joao Makray.