Let me be your guide: 21st century choir music in Flanders

Flanders has a rich tradition of choir music. But what about the 21st century? Meet the composers in this who's who.
Alain De Ley

Alain De Ley (° 1961) gained his first musical experience as a singer of the Antwerp Cathedral Choir, while he was still behind the school desks in the Sint-Jan Berchmans College in Antwerp. He got a taste for it and a few years later studied flute with Remy De Roeck and piano with Patrick De Hooghe, Freddy Van der Koelen, Hedwig Vanvaerenbergh and Urbain Boodts). In 1979 he continued his studies at the Royal Music Conservatory in Antwerp. Only later did he take private composition lessons with Alain Craens. Alain De Ley prefers to write music for choir and smaller ensembles. As the artistic director of the Flemish Radio Choir, he is familiar with the possibilities and limitations of a singing voice. Since 2003 Alain De Ley is composer in residence for Ensemble Polyfoon that premiered a great number of his compositions and recorded a CD dedicated to his music, conducted by Lieven Deroo He also received various commissions from choirs like Musa Horti and Amarylca, Kalliope and from the Flanders Festival.

Alain De Ley’s music is mostly melodic, narrative, descriptive and reflective. Occasionally Alain De Ley combines the classical writing style with pop music. This is how the song Liquid Waltz was created in 2003 for choir, solo voice and pop group, sung by K’s Choice lead singer Sarah Bettens. He also regularly writes music for projects in which various art forms form a whole. In 2006 and 2007 he worked on the Sacred Places and Sibes projects, in which music, dance, puppet theater and visual arts came together.

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André Laporte

André Laporte was born on 12 July 1931 in Oplinter near the city of Tienen in Flemish Brabant. He was self-taught as a musician, quickly mastering the piano, clarinet and organ, while enthusiastically acquainting himself with modern music — as did his contemporary, Karel Goeyvaerts — through the radio programs of Paul Collaer, Louis De Meester, Vic Legley and David Van de Woestijne.

After completing secondary school he entered the Interdiocesan Higher Institute for Church Music (known as the Lemmens Institute) in Mechelen, where he studied under Edgard de Laet, Flor Peeters (organ) and Marinus De Jong (piano, counterpoint, fugue). Between 1953 and 1957 he was also a student at the Catholic University of Leuven, where he studied modern philosophy and musicology. He completed his studies in musicology with a comparative study of Ludus Tonalis and the Unterweisung im Tonsatz by Paul Hindemith. In 1953 he became a teacher of musical education and aesthetics at the Secondary Normal School of the St Thomas Institute (Middelbare Normaalschool van het Sint-Thomasinstituut) in Brussels. In this same period he composed his first works, folksong arrangements along the lines of Hindemith and Bartok, as well as a piano sonata and works for organ.

Laporte became acquainted with the music of Schönberg, Stravinsky and Messiaen and was from 1960 to 1964 an annual participant at the Internationale Ferienkurse in Darmstadt, as well as the Kurse für Neue Musik in Cologne in 1964 and 1965. These courses gave him the opportunity to meet leading figures in the New Music movement (including Boulez, Maderna, Berio, Ligeti, Stockhausen, Kagel and Gielen). Like so many Belgian composers, he worked at the Belgian Radio (BRT, now VRT), first as a producer, later as a program coordinator, a production leader of the BRT Philharmonic Orchestra (1989) and ultimately as director of Artistic Ensembles (1993-1996), functions in which he was surrounded by such figures as D. Van de Woestijne, V. Legley, K. Goeyvaerts, L. De Meester, B. Buckinx, W. Westerlinck and L. Brewaeys. This position also gave him the chance to broadcast programs on “highlights of contemporary music” and “young Belgian performers”. Together with individuals from the Institute for Psycho-Acoustic and Electronic Music (IPEM), which had recently been set up by the BRT, he founded the SPECTRA work-group, which existed from 1963 to 1967.

Laporte also won his spurs in music education. As early as 1968 he taught the New Techniques course at the Royal Conservatory in Brussels; this teaching position took on more solid form with his appointment as a teacher of music analysis, theory of musical form, harmony and counterpoint-fugue. In 1988 he became a teacher of composition, a position to which was added an appointment as teacher of composition at the Queen Elisabeth Music School (Muziekkapel Koningin Elisabeth).
in Waterloo. Among his students may be mentioned Luc Brewaeys, Daniël Capelletti and Peter Swinnen.

In 1972, together with Herman Sabbe, he set up a new Belgian branch of the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM), of which he has remained the chairperson to this day.

André Laporte became a member of the Belgian Royal Academy for Sciences, Arts and Fine Art (1991), a member of the Flemish Music Board (Muziekraad voor Vlaanderen) and assistant chairperson of the Association of Belgian Composers (Unie van Belgische Componisten). He has won numerous prizes. Besides the Lemmens-Tinel prize, he won the Prix Italia in 1976 for his oratorio La vita non è sogno. The premiere of this work at the Flanders Festival in 1972 in Ghent attracted the attention of festival assistant Gerard Mortier, who as intendant at La Monnaie in Brussels would subsequently invite him to write an opera. His work has been performed both in Belgium and abroad; in particular, his Kafka opera, Das Schloss, was premiered at La Monnaie in 1986 and received its German premiere in the Saarländisches Staatstheater in Saarbrücken in 1991.

*Texts by Tom Wylin and Rebecca Diependaele*

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**More information**

Read discography, bibliography and work analysis at [MATRIX](#).
Annelies Van Parys

Annelies Van Parys (b. 1975) studied composition at the Royal Conservatory of Ghent with Luc Brewaeys. She has won the prizes for Flanders-Québec, Youth and Music and Gebroeders Darche. She was a laureate of the Tactus International Composition Seminar with Einklang for orchestra. Her works have been selected for ISCM World New Music Days and many of her works have been selected for ISCM-Flanders, her Second Symphony was selected for the “IAMIC Sounds of the Year” (2009) and An Oresteia (production Asko|Schoenberg, VocaalLAB and Muzeiktheater Transparant) for “de Ovatie” (2011) in The Netherlands. She was elected honorary ambassador of the 2011 Royal Conservatory of Ghent.

Her compositions have been performed by almost all Belgian leading ensembles (Spectra, Champ d’Action, Hermes, Ictus, Collegium Vocale Gent ...) and most orchestras, and increasingly abroad. “Ruhe”, a music theatre performance with music of Schubert and Van Parys in a concept of Josse De Pauw was produced by Muziektheater Transparant and performed by Collegium Vocale Ghent in festivals across Europe ranging from the Edinburgh International Festival to Sidney and from Rome to New York. Today her work is increasingly performed by foreign ensembles (ASKO|Schoenberg, Ensemble Recherche, VocaalLAB Netherlands ...) and conductors (Sian Edwards, Otto Tausk, Alejo Perez, Marit Strindlund ...)

Since 2007 she became artist in residence at Muziektheater Transparant, Antwerp. Productions include “An Index of Memories” with the Spectra Ensemble, conducted by Marit Strindlund VocaalLAB Netherlands, directed by Caroline Petrick, and also “An Oresteia” (music by Xenakis and Van Parys) with the Asko / Schoenberg Ensemble and conductor Alejo Pérez VocaalLAB Netherlands.

Currently, Annelies is working on a new work for Bl!ndman for chamber ensemble, an arrangement for chamber opera of Debussy’s Pelléas et Mélisande, and a work for the vocal consort Cinquecento. Increasingly in demand across Europe, Annelies Van Parys has been performed at major festival and venues such as Ars Musica, Kundenfestivaldesarts, Edinburgh International Festival, Festival van Vlaanderen, Rotterdam Operadagen, Saintes Abbey aux Dames, Rome and Singapore.

Annelies is currently working on, amongst others, a work for 4 quartets for the Flemish group BL!NDMAN, early music consort Cinquecento and a new production of Debussy’s Pelleas et Melisande. Annelies Van Parys also teaches music analysis and orchestration at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels and piano at the Conservatory of Bruges.
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Bert Van Herck

Bert Van Herck was born in Wilrijk on 11 November 1971. He studied at the Lemmens Institute in Leuven, earning laureate’s diplomas in piano and music history, as well as masters’ diplomas in chamber music and composition (with Luc Van Hove). He pursued more advanced studies in composition through private lessons with Luc Brewaeys and encountered a number of different composers during masterclasses and summer classes (including J. Harvey, W. Rihm, G. Grisey, H. Lachenmann, M. André and M. Stroppa). His works have been played in Belgium, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Austria and Hungary, by such ensembles as the Ensemble Intercontemporain, Spectra and Champ d’Action. Pursuing his interest in contemporary music theory, he took part in the “Orpheus Academy 2003” and gave lectures at the “Hull University Music Analysis Conference” and the “International Spectral Music Conference” in Istanbul. In September 2005 he temporarily gave up his position as a teacher of piano, harmony, practical harmony, chamber music and music history at the Mechelen conservatory to study with Chaya Chernowin and Magnus Lindberg at Harvard University in Cambridge (Massachusetts).

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Boudewijn Buckinx

Boudewijn Buckinx was born in Lommel in 1945. He studied at the Antwerp conservatory at the Institute for Psycho-Acoustic and Electronic Music (IPEM) in Ghent. He studied composition with Lucien Goethals. From 1966 to 1974, Buckinx gave concerts with the work group WHAM (Work group for contemporary and actual music). In 1968 he studied with Karlheinz Stockhausen at the Kompositionsstudio in Darmstadt, working with the composer on the project entitled Musik für ein Haus.

Buckinx has also been strongly influenced by Mauricio Kagel and John Cage; in 1972 he wrote his final major paper at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven on Cage’s Variations. The intention of WHAM was to attract specialists from other disciplines, such as, for example, philosophers and painters. Amateurs who were involved with the music process also found a place in WHAM. Besides performing Cage, WHAM focused on the music of Christian Wolff and Cornelius Cardew. The final concert of the work group took place in 1974 with Buckinx’s composition Sinfonia a Quattro velocipedi.

After this followed a period of five years during which Buckinx composed but had none of his works performed. In 1988, he was the Belgian guest at the second edition of the Week for Contemporary Music in Ghent. A concert serving as a portrait of the composer was given in Kiel (Germany) in June 1991. Similar “Buckinx concerts” took place in the Espace Delvaux in Brussels and the Club Mineral in Ghent. His Negen onvoltooid symfonieën (Nine unfinished symphonies) were premiered as part of “Antwerp ’93, European Cultural Capital” by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of Flanders. In 1993 a nine-day-long Buckinx festival was held in De Rode Pomp in Ghent. In 1988, together with the composers Gerard Ammerlaan and Jacob ter Veldhuis, he was involved with the opera project Van alle tijden – van alle streken (From all times – from all places).

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More information

Read discography, bibliography and work analysis at MATRIX.
Claude Coppens (born 1936) studied with Marcel Maas at the Royal Conservatory in Brussels, where his diplomas included the higher diploma in piano. Later he went on to Paris for further study with Marguerite Long and Jacques Février. In 1960 he was awarded a doctoral degree in law from the Free University in Brussels. He was a laureate in the International Piano competition in Paris (1955), the Queen Elisabeth competition (1956) and the International Piano competition in Rio de Janeiro (1957). He premiered the first of Villa Lobos piano concertos, with the composer conducting. As a performing musician, he has specialised in the contemporary piano repertoire. During the 14-day-long festival of contemporary music at the Heizel in Brussels during Expo 58 he made his acquaintance with the protagonists of the musical avant-garde, and this completely changed his musical career. He is self-taught as a composer. Coppens teaches at the Royal Conservatory in Ghent, and is well known as an idiosyncratic musician and pedagogue.

More information

Read discography, bibliography and work analysis at MATRIX.
Dominique Pauwels studied piano at the Royal Conservatory in Ghent from 1985 to 1989, subsequently continuing his studies (from 1991) in Berklee Boston (Massachusetts), where he graduated with a diploma magna cum laude for both composition and film composition. In the following years he turned to computer technologies and software for compositions. He then entered the program of Algorithmic Composition and Composition with MAX (software developed at IRCAM) at the Sweelinck Conservatory Amsterdam (1991-1992). This was followed by courses at the IRCAM Académie d’été (Paris) entitled Interaction between composer, performer, scholar and new computer technologies (1993) and Working with Patchwork: Composition modelled on the frequencies of the harmonics of every instrument in the orchestra (1994).

He also attended Apple Multimedia Summer Courses at Huis ter Heide in Utrecht and a course offered by KISP (adult education) entitled Multimedia: Creation and Production (1995 and 1996-1997). Pauwels has received a number of prizes, including the Professional Writing Division Achievement Award Boston For Outstanding Musicianship (1991) and various prizes for television music, including the Golden Rose of Montreux for De Mol. He has been commissioned to compose for (music) theatre, film and commercials, and since 1991 has composed for the Belgian public broadcasting corporation. Since 2004 he has been the house composer for Het Muziek Lod, often working closely with choreographer and dancer Karine Ponties.

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Erika Budai

Erika Budai was born in Tienen on 12 August 1966. She studied piano at the Lemmens Institute in Leuven with Levente Kende and earned a first prize in solfège. From 1990 she studied at the Royal Conservatory in Brussels, where she received a first prize in harmony, a diploma in music education, solfège and music history, and a diploma for electronic and film music (with W.C. Rothe). She completed her education as a composer at the Lemmens Institute, studying counterpoint and fugue with Ludo Claesen and composition with Piet Swerts. A grant awarded by the A. Töpfer-Stiftung enabled her to meet leading composers in Darmstadt, including Karlheinz Stockhausen and Wolfgang Rihm. In both 1992 and 1993, she was a prize winner in the “Young Composers” composition competition. At present she has some 120 compositions to her name, most of which are for choir. She has already produced numerous works as commissions, for such organisations as the Flemish Radio Choir, the Flanders Festival and the Leuven University Choir. She has also written in lighter genres, providing songs and arrangements for such artists as Jo Lemaire and Johan Verminnen. Erika Budai is also active as a choral conductor, jury member and teacher of harmony and elementary composition at the Municipal Conservatory in Leuven.

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Filip Rathé was born in Oudenaarde on 21 November 1966. At the Royal Music Conservatory of Ghent, he obtained First Prizes for piano, chamber music and choir conducting. He pursued further studies as a conductor with László Heltay and Pierre Cao and obtained a master’s degree in art history/musicology at Ghent University with professor Herman Sabbe. He took a number of composition courses with Lucien Goethals and currently teaches music analysis, contemporary music repertoire and chamber music/ensemble at the Royal Conservatory of Ghent and music theory at the Royal Flemish Conservatory of Antwerp.

From 1992 to 2001, Filip Rathé conducted the choir De Tweede Adem, specializing in performances of contemporary music. Since 1993, he has been the artistic director of the Spectra Ensemble. He has performed in Europe and South-America and realised numerous CD recordings and radio broadcasts. As a guest conductor, he has worked with the Flanders Symphony Orchestra, the Flemish Radio Choir, Collegium Instrumentale Brugense, Aquarius Ensemble, Hermes Ensemble and I Solisti del Vento. He also contributed to more than 150 CD recordings for several labels as a sound director. His received commissions from vocal ensemble Ex Tempore, Collegium Instrumentale Brugense, the TRANSIT Festival and November Music.

He is currently composing a new piece for het Dutch ensemble De Volharding. Performers such as Ex Tempore, the Flemish Radio Choir, ASKO, Spectra Ensemble, Collegium Instrumentale Brugense and Neue Vokalsolisten Stuttgart have sung or played his music.

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Frank Nuyts

Frank Nuyts was born on 3 February 1957 in Ostend. He received his musical education at the Royal Conservatory in Ghent, where he earned higher diplomas in percussion and chamber music. After submitting several compositions written during his studies, Nuyts was invited by the composer Lucien Goethals to study composition and analysis of 20th-century music. The study of Goethals’ own music, together with that of Webern and other modernists had a particularly profound influence on Nuyts. The first official compositions produced in this period were thus composed in a post-serial idiom. A further source of inspiration was found by the composer in contemporary literature, which would be a constant throughout his career. In addition, his involvement in the reception of Chilean refugees led to the writing of various works in which the composer emerged as a politically committed artist, and in which the influence of Latin-American music is clearly evident. In this period, Nuyts applied his talents as a percussionist, premiering several works especially composed for him by such composers as Buckinx, Goethals and Goeyvaerts. In 1977 he met his future wife, the pianist Iris De Blaere, who would subsequently premiere many of his works.

In the period from 1979 to 1985, Nuyts began to enjoy recognition on the new music scene, winning several prizes including the Belgian Radio and Television’s Tenuto Prize for Composition in 1979 for Alsof de hand nooit meer weggaat (As If the Hand Never Parts Again) and an award for the soundtrack (the composition Bombos del Sol for the abstract animated film Kosmogonia at the Brussels Film Festival. He undertook a concert tour to Hungary in 1982 and also premiered works for a number of important occasions (including Philtre at the Gaudeamus Festival for New Music in Amsterdam in 1984 and Squib to conclude a conference on neo-tonal music in Seoul in 1985). In 1985, Nuyts was appointed a teacher of composition and percussion at the conservatory in Ghent.

In 1986, after a period of reflection, Nuys’ interest in non-classical music and his friendship with the composer Boudewijn Buckinx took him in a new direction, as he became – together with Buckinx – one of the most important representatives of postmodernism in Flanders. His first important postmodern works, Rastapasta and Woodnotes, were premiered in 1987 together with several works by Buckinx in a controversial concert in Ghent. In 1989, the group Hardscore was founded, in order to ensure appropriate and accurate performances of his works. Nuyts wished in this
way to build a bridge between more commercial music and contemporary classical music. Further important facts from the period from 1986 to 1995 were the collaboration with the Vooruit art centre in Ghent (premières of B-Side Art, Music to Raise Hell, Ga.n and Le concert impromptu), the contacts with the composer-conductor Dirk Brossé (premières of When the Tombs of Brass Are Spent and the Second Symphony), several concert tours to Glasgow and Vienna and in 1992 the Prix de la musique contemporaine de Québec for his complete chamber music oeuvre. In 1995 Frank Nuyts received the city of Ghent’s five-yearly culture prize.

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Frederik Neyrinck

Frederik Neyrinck (°1985) studied piano with Piet Kuijken in Stuttgart and Graz and composition with Jan Van Landeghem, Marco Stroppa and Clemens Gadenstätter in Brussels. He has worked with various ensembles and soloists in Belgium and abroad.

Neyrinck is the resident composer and one of the founding members of the Odysseia Ensemble, a Belgian chamber music ensemble. As a pianist, he is member of the Platypus Ensemble, an ensemble for contemporary music in Vienna, where he is currently living and working.

Together with flute player Doris Nicoletti, he recently founded Duo FredDo, with whom he won a NASOM-bursary and performed in a.o. Kazakhstan and Italy. He also collaborates with Franziska Fleischanderl (dulcimer) and Nikolaus Feinig (double bass). Upcoming composition projects include collaborations with Brussels Philharmonic (Ars Musica), Ensemble Reconsil, Ensemble L’Itinéraire, ENOA, TRANSIT (Katelijne Lanneau/Thomas List), Sarah Hoemske/Isabelle Kranabetter and Teresa Doblinger.
Hans Helsen

Hans Helsen (*1989) is a Belgian composer, singer and music pedagogue. Choral music is what drives him and is present in all of his work. Hans composes for a variety of ensembles, but over time has developed a special affinity working with and writing for young choirs. He recently worked as a researcher at the KU Leuven on The Singing Sofa, a VOICE-project to help create awareness of Vocal Health in Young Choirs. Currently, Hans teaches composition at the Music Academies of Lier and Roeselare. As an educator, Hans develops and teaches several workshops for Concertgebouw Brugge to introduce all ages into the world of classical music and sound art. In 2015 he was awarded the European Award for Choral Composers

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Jacqueline Fontyn was born in Antwerp, where, at the age of five, her parents entrusted her to the wonderful Russian piano teacher Ignace Bolotine. She had lessons daily, and Bolotine encouraged her to develop her taste for improvisation. At the age of fifteen, she decided to become a composer. She received her grounding in the techniques of composition from Marcel Quinet in Brussels. She continued her musical education in Paris with Max Deutsch, a fervent disciple of Schoenberg.

In 1956 she attended Hans Swarowsky’s conducting class at the Akademie für Musik und Darsteliende Kunst in Vienna.

From 1963 to 1970 she was Professor of Music Theory at the Royal Conservatory of Antwerp. From 1970 to 1990 she taught Composition at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels.

She is a regular guest of universities and conservatoires in Europe (Germany, France, Hungary, The Netherlands, Poland and Switzerland), the United States, Israël, Egypt, Asia (China, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan) and New Zealand.

She has received many awards, most notably the Spanish Oscar Espla Prize and the Prix Arthur Honegger from the “Fondation de France”. She was asked to write the set piece, a Violin Concerto, for the finals of the 1976 Reine Elisabeth International Music Competition, and has twice undertaken commissions from the Koussevitsky Music Foundation in the Library of Congress, Washington.

Since 2006 most of her manuscripts are hosted in the music division of the library of Congress in Washington. in 2014, the Royal Library of Belgium acquired most of the manuscripts left in the country.

Jacqueline Fontyn is a member of the Belgian Royal Academy and in 1993 the King of Belgium granted her the title of baroness in recognition of her artistic merit.

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Jan Van Landeghem was born in Temse in 1954. He began his musical studies at the City Music Academy of Sint-Niklaas. He subsequently attended the conservatories of Brussels and Maastricht, earning first prizes in composition (magna cum laude) under Peter Cabus and André Laporte in Brussels and a solo diploma in organ under Kamiel D’hooghe in Maastricht. He attended courses in improvisation, organ, composition, and choral and orchestral conduction in France (with Iannis Xenakis, among others), Germany and the Netherlands. He was also regularly in contact with Karel Goeyvaerts in the last years of that composer’s life. Van Landeghem has appeared as a performer in most European countries, in the Far East and in the United States. He has recorded for both the Belgian and Dutch Radio. Selected as Fulbright Scholar for Belgium in 1985, he taught and performed at Georgia State University and at the University of Krakow (Poland). As conductor of the In Dulci Jubilo boys choir he has conducted concerts throughout Europe. He subsequently became conductor of the Concinentes chamber choir. At present he is director of the Music Academy in Bornem and teaches notation and composition at the Royal Music Conservatory in Brussels.

Jan Van Landeghem has won first prize in a number of composition competitions, including the national competition Wendungen of the Flanders Festival, for his work Epitaffio for Symphony Orchestra (1993) and the international Prize for Contemporary Music Flanders-Québec 1995 in Montreal for his string quartet Silent Scream. In 2000 he was chosen Composer of the Year 2000 at the Ramsgate Spring Festival for his piano quartet Marcatissimo.

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Jean Lambrechts (1936) studied at the conservatories of Brussels and Paris where André Jolivet was his primary teacher. He studied conducting with Hans Swarowsky. As a performing artist, he achieves in many different ways. Jean Lambrechts lives and works in Maastricht and regularly moves his work to his French home in Périgard. Jean taught at the Royal Flemish Conservatory in Antwerp and at the University College Maastricht (nowadays Hogeschool Zuyd) and he was a music critic for years on end.
Jef Callebaut

Jef Callebaut is a percussionist, a composer, a performer and a music educator. He studied classical percussion with Koen Wilmaers and Carlo Willems at the conservatory in Antwerp where he earned his master degree in 2018. Between 2013 and 2016, he took composition courses with Wim Henderickx. As a composer and artist, he is always searching for ways to express his observations of the world around him. In may 2015, people could hear his first composition Quals, for saxophone trio, cello and drumset. He wrote the music for theater play Streep in september 2015, for clarinet alto and tenor saxophone, drumset and vibraphone. Jef also wrote music for dance, film, chamber music setting, and wrote three pieces for his own graduating exam in 2018, Children’s Play for two percussionists, In time for drumset and piano accompaniment and Pyrhula for vibraphone, viola and piano.

In 2018 Jef got interested in choir and he wrote De Bijen (the bees) to a text of Rudof Steiner in 2017, for choir, electric bass and percussion. In 2018, he made a version of the piece for choir only, De Bijen II. In 2019 his latest composition for choir, Een modern ridderverhaal, (a modern knight’s tale) will be premiered at Lunalia festival in Mechelen.
Joachim Brackx was born in Oostende in 1975. He studied composition at the Royal Conservatory in Ghent under Godfried-Willem Raes, concentrating on experimental music and making use of electronics and computers. During his studies he took part in a project with Hervé Thys involving new-music pedagogy based on free improvisation. Numerous works by this composer have been commissioned by such ensembles and institutes as the Verenigde Cultuurfabriken, the Goeyvaerts Consort, Champ d’Action, Spectra Ensemble and the recorder quartet Carré.

Brackx is active in various internationally renowned choirs such as the Capella Currende (E. Van Nevel) and Collegium Vocale (P. Herreweghe). He is also a founding member of the Goeyvaerts Consort, a young vocal ensemble specialising in contemporary vocal music in all its forms.

Since 1998, the year in which he earned his masters degree in composition, he has taught composition at the Hogeschool Gent in the Department of Music and Drama. There he introduces the students to electronic and electro-acoustic composition.

As a specialist in live-electronics, he works together with various ensembles for contemporary music such as Champ d’Action. Joachim Brackx was Young Composer in Residence with this ensemble in 2000, after winning a composition competition under the direction of Klaus Huber. Until 1 March 2001 Brackx worked at the Stichting Logos, a concert organisation for contemporary and experimental music, where he was in charge of public relations, publicity and the design and maintenance of the website. He was also a member of the Logos Ensemble and the Logos Trio. As a singer he has performed with this trio in Poland, Germany, Indonesia and the United States. From 2001-2003 he was junior fellow at K.U.Leuven’s musicology department, involving teaching and composition.

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More information

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Kristiaan Van Ingelgem

Kristiaan Van Ingelgem was born in Sint-Gillis (Dendermonde) on 9 June 1944. His talent for the keyboard, nurtured at home and developed at school by Rev. Marcel Weemaes, led to post-secondary studies in music at the Lemmens Institute in Mechelen and Leuven. There he won the Lemmens-Tinel prize for organ under Kamiel D’Hooghe in 1969. In 1972 he earned a diploma as Performing Musician in Organ and Improvisation at the Maastricht Conservatory. In 2004 he graduated from the Jef Denyn Royal Carillon School in Mechelen as a certified carilloneur. Since 1999 he has been the city carilloneur of Aalst, a position he had previously held from 1972 to 1977.

His experience with the carillon started with studies at the Mechelen carillon school, where he taught practical harmony from 1969 to 1974. He now teaches that subject, as well as an improvisation course (organ and piano) at the Royal Conservatory in Antwerp. He is also the organist at St Martin’s Church in Aalst and an organ teacher at the municipal academy in Etterbeek. Kristiaan Van Ingelgem plays both as a soloist and in ensembles. Flemish and French composers hold a prominent place in his repertoire, and as an organist he is known as a talented improviser. His collaborations with ensembles, orchestras and choirs, often made up of young musicians (including Cantate Domino Aalst, Camerata Aetas Nova Leuven and De tweede adem, conducted by his son Maarten), have kept him abreast of the latest tendencies in music-making. His instrumental, orchestral and especially vocal work is often the result of a specific invitation from the music world or a commission by an organisation.

Van Ingelgem’s feel for today’s concert world is kept active by the stimulating proximity of his talented family. He has passed on his love of music, which he says he inherited from his father, to his own children Maarten (piano, organ and choir), Pieter (piano and organ) and Tineke (solo song, flute, piano and organ). The family frequently plays together in various formations, often the occasion for specific compositions.

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More information

Read discography, bibliography and work analysis at MATRIX.
Koben Sprengers

Koben came into contact with music from a very early age onward through his father, a choir conductor. As a result, Koben received his first piano lessons from the age of five. However, he harboured a great curiosity and started playing many different instruments along the way, such as drums, guitar, bass guitar and the double bass. At the age of 14 he was accepted in the youth department of the Lemmens Institute for classical percussion, where he first came into contact with symphonic music.

However, his curiosity remained at large and on his 18th he decided to study jazz double bass at the same institute, in addition to an MA in Western Literature at the Catholic University of Leuven. Ever since, Koben has performed a great deal of concerts with his double bass, both in jazz ensembles and symphonic orchestras. But his greatest passion was yet to reveal itself: composing. During his years of studying, he had already written several smaller pieces, but upon graduating, he decided to spend more time on composing, and soon after he received a first assignment, resulting in the composition Exsultate, dedicated to the eponymous choir, which premiered in December 2017. As a member of the new music ensemble Het Incident, he had the great opportunity to write a piece for their collaboration with the Ghent choir 2De Adem, conducted by Maarten Van Ingelgem. The composition Koben wrote for this occasion, titled Vreemd Fruit, is a modern rendition of the famous protest song Strange Fruit, and it premiered in May 2018 in the historical St. Baafs Abbey in Ghent. Furthermore, Koben received the assignment to write a composition for a mass memorial of The Great War. The work, written for extended choir and symphonic orchestra, is based on seven letters of army soldiers of various nations written on the battlefield and sent home to their loved ones, and is appropriately titled Letters from the Other Side. It premiered on the 11th of November 2018, 100 years to the day of the ceasefire.
Kurt Bikkembergs

Kurt Bikkembergs was born on 5 August 1963 in Hasselt, and took his first steps in the music world in the early 1970s. He studied solfège, piano, harmony and trumpet at the conservatory in Hasselt. In 1978 he continued his secondary school education at the Lemmens Institute in Leuven, where his interest in composition grew. At this same school, Bikkembergs specialised in music education, composition (with Luc Van Hove), choral conducting (with Erik Van Nevel) and orchestral conducting (with Edmond Saveniers). In 1990 he earned his higher diploma in choral conducting (cum laude).

At present, Kurt Bikkembergs is choir director and assistant in notation, composition and choral conducting at the Lemmens Institute, and conductor of the Capella di Voce. He is also a regular guest conductor with the Flemish Radio Choir. Since 2002, Bikkembergs has been artistic director of the chorus of the Flemish Opera and together with Willem Ceuleers has shared the function of choirmaster at the cathedral in Brussels. He regularly leads productions and courses for such organisations as Muzikamp, the Flemish choral federations, the St Gregory Society (the Netherlands), the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven and the Belarusian University of Culture in Minsk. His compositions have won numerous prizes, including the Mayor P. Meyers Prize (Hasselt, 1991), the Cera Youth and Music Prize for Composition (1993), the Waregem Vocal Composition Prize (1994) and the Gulden Spoor (2003).

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More information

Read discography, bibliography and work analysis at MATRIX.
Lente Verelst started her first composition lessons with Stefan Van Puymbroeck at the academy for music, drama and dance in Mortsel. Afterwards, she started her professional education at the royal conservatory of Antwerp. Here, she followed classical contemporary composition with Wim Henderickx and Luc van Hove. After obtaining the undergraduate diplomas of music theory and composition, she was granted a place at the Royal College of Music in London for a master in Composition for screen in 2016, where she followed classes with Vasco Hexel. Here she graduated in 2018.

During her studies, Lente wrote music for a diverse range of projects. She often works together with other art forms. In these collaborations she wrote music for dance performances, short films, animations, opera...Her most recent project has been the Music for the short film ‘Dance of the Porcelain Demons’ by Cat Watson. Future projects include writing the music for a musical parcours for 0-5 year olds. Her interest expands to a general interest in stories with a lot of imagination that embrace the absurdities of life.

Contact

Listen on Soundcloud
Luc Van Hove

Luc Van Hove (Wilrijk, 3 February 1957) studied at the Royal Flemish Music Conservatory in Antwerp, where he earned his first prize in solfege, piano, chamber music, music history, counterpoint, fugue and composition, as well as diplomas in transposition, music analysis and musical form. He received instruction in composition from Willem Kersters. He subsequently pursued advanced studies at the Mozarteum in Salzburg and at the University of Surrey (Guildford, U.K.). He has been awarded numerous distinctions, such as the Albert de Vleeshouwer composition prize (1984), the Annie Rutzky prize, crowning the end of his studies (1984) and the Belgian Artistic Promotion prize from SABAM (Association of Belgian Authors) (1990). In 1991 he was guest composer of the Week for Contemporary Music in Ghent, in 1994 composer in residence of the Flanders Festival and in 1997 of I Fiamminghi in Campo. Luc Van Hove teaches composition and analysis at the Lemmens Institute in Leuven and at the Royal Flemish Music Conservatory in Antwerp.

More information

Read discography, bibliography and work analysis at MATRIX.
Lucien Goethals

Lucien Goethals was born on 26 June 1931 in Ghent. His spent his most important formative years in Argentina, where he studied at the Dima Conservatory of Buenos Aires (1933-1946). When he returned to Belgium, he continued his studies at the Royal Conservatory in Ghent until 1956. Here he earned his first prize in organ, music history, counterpoint and fugue. Despite the conservative climate of the Flemish musical landscape, Goethals’ musical interest turned increasingly to the new international developments (serialism, electronic music, aleatory music).

This interest was further stimulated by Norbert Rosseau, who introduced him to dodecaphonic techniques, although Goethals was largely self-taught in his evolution towards and thinking through of total serialism. As a composer and a producer for the Belgian radio, he was, like Louis de Meester, associated with the Institute for Psycho-Acoustic and Electronic Music (IPEM) in Ghent, from its founding in 1963. This offered him the opportunity to experiment with tape and electronic sound generators. He continued to work there until 1987. His many years of commitment to the IPEM explains the large share of electro-acoustic compositions in his oeuvre. Together with other young composers and musicologists, he was part of the SPECTRA work group (1963-1967).

Goethals’ intensive involvement with the musical avant-garde of the 1960s was also evident in his participation in courses in Darmstadt and Bilthoven. Besides studies with Gottfried Michael Koenig, he furthered his studies in Utrecht (Instituut voor Sonologie) as well as in the use of the computer as a compositional medium. From 1971 he taught music analysis at the conservatory in Ghent. His students have included such composers as Filip Rathé, Petra Vermote and Frank Nuyts. In 1996 the Lucien Goethals Society was founded. This society concentrates both on the dissemination of the music of Goethals and his generation, and on the promotion of contemporary music in general. Goethals has already been awarded numerous prizes, most recently the ANV-Visser Neerlandiaprijs (1999). Lucien Goethals died in Ghent on 12 December 2006.

More information

Read discography, bibliography and work analysis at MATRIX.
Lucien Posman was born on 22 March 1952 in Eeklo. He completed his higher music studies at the Royal Conservatories of Ghent and Antwerp. In Ghent he earned first prizes in solfège, harmony, music history and composition (under Roland Coryn), as well as a teaching certificate for solfège (first and second cycle). In Antwerp he received a first prize for fugue and counterpoint in the class of Nini Bulterys. He also studied music analysis, piano and voice. Posman works at the Hogeschool Gent as president of the educational board and as teacher composition and teacher training theory. He was co-founder, in 1993, of the cultural organisations De Verenigde Cultuurfabrieken and De Rode Pomp, where he is the artistic director. At present, Lucien Posman is artistic director of De Rode Pomp. He was also involved in setting up the ECG (European Composers’ Collective, Ghent region). In addition, he is on the editorial board of the periodical, Nieuwe Vlaamse Muziekrevue. As an assistant on the Musical Days of Flanders, he organises and programs small festivals abroad (St Peters burg, New York, Bratislava) which aim to confront Belgian works with compositions from the repertoire of other lands.

Posman’s compositions have been performed in such festivals as De Week van de Hedendaagse Muziek in Ghent, the Belgian-Dutch Music Days in Maastricht, Muzicii Contemporane Belgiene in Bucharest, Ars Musica, the Flanders Festival, and the Musica Nova Festival in Sao Paulo. Various of his compositions have been recorded for CD, and several programmes have been devoted to him and his works on such radio networks as VRT Radio 3 (the Flemish classical music programme, now Klara), Radio Moscow, and the Dutch, Brazilian (Sao Paulo) and Romanian services. For his song cycle, Songs of Experience (five songs on poems by William Blake, for middle voice and piano) Lucien Posman received the Muizelhuis Prize for chamber music in 1988.

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More information

Read discography, bibliography and work analysis at MATRIX.
Ludo Claesen was born on 22 March 1956 in Genk. He studied music at the Lemmens Institute in Leuven and at the Royal Conservatory in Antwerp, taking percussion, notation, pedagogy, composition, and choral and orchestral conducting. At present, Claesen teaches notation and orchestral playing at the Lemmens Institute and choral conducting and choral singing at the Maastricht Conservatory. He is a versatile guest conductor with orchestras and choirs in Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and Ukraine, and is the permanent conductor of ensembles in Hasselt, Eupen, Maastricht and Kerkrade. He has received numerous awards for his work as a composer. In recognition of his endeavours and his accomplishments in the cultural sphere he received the 1995 Gulden Spoor prize from the province of Limburg, the Bisschoppelijke onderscheiding (Episcopal distinction, 2002) and the Silberne Kulturehrennnadel of the Government of the German Community of Belgium (2003).

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Maarten Van Ingelgem

While studying piano and composition at the conservatories of Brussels and Antwerp, Maarten Van Ingelgem (b. 1976) caught the choir bug. In 2001, he started conducting the Ghent-based chamber choir for contemporary music *De 2de Adem* (The Second Wind). So far, he has performed 34 premieres with them. Furthermore, he is one of the bass singers in *Aquarius* and is regularly invited to conduct or reinforce the bass section of ensembles such as the Brussels Chamber Choir and the Flemish Radio Choir.

Maarten has accumulated years of experience compiling programs and organizing concerts for organizations like Jeunesses Musicales. He is Artistic Director of the World Choir Games that are coming to Flanders in 2020.

His oeuvre as a composer ranges from solo work to string quartets, from a chamber opera to a piano concerto – for which he was awarded the Contemporary Music Prize of the Province of East Flanders. The Belgian author society Sabam honored him with a Golden Poppy for his choral oeuvre, and, twice, he became laureate of the European Award for Choral Composers. He shares his passion for creativity in his role as Professor of Composition at LUCA School of Arts, Leuven.

He has written compulsory songs for the European Music Festival for Young People in Neerpelt and for the International Choir Contest of Flanders-Maasmechelen. His choral works are sung in Belgium and abroad, and are published by Euprint and Schott Music.

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Marc Michael De Smet

Conductor and cellist Marc Michael De Smet (°1948) studied at the Conservatories of Music in Ghent, Brussels, The Hague and Maastricht. He received his training as a conductor from Lucas Vis. He also attended master classes with Franco Ferrara in Sienna (IT), and with Laszlo Heltay. De Smet took composition lessons with Norbert Rousseau (BE) and Louis Andriessen (NL). He has written music for theatre and more than 150 songs for voice and cello.

In 1983, De Smet founded De Nieuwe Muziekgroep, a larger instrumental ensemble which he led for seven years. In 1989, he conducted the premiere series of Karel Goeyvaerts’s opera for chamber orchestra ‘Aquarius’ with the Dutch Aquarius Ensemble, and in 1995, he founded the Goeyvaerts Consort, which in 2007 was transformed in Aquarius, a chamber choir specialising in contemporary vocal music.

De Smet also teaches choir, choir conducting, vocal ensemble and chamber music at the Ghent Conservatory.
Martin Slootmaekers

Martin Slootmaekers, born in Genk on 27 January 1968, studied Latin and Greek in secondary school and began his musical studies at the municipal music academy in Lanaken, where he earned final diplomas in solfège, harmony and piano. He also received the ‘regeringsmedaille’ for piano. After secondary school, he went on to the Lemmens Institute in Leuven, where he was awarded the ‘laureaatdiploma’ for composition and music education, with first prizes for solfège, harmony, practical harmony, counterpoint and fugue. He also gained a first prize and the ‘meesterdiploma’ in choral conducting under Erik Van Nevel.

In 1995 his composition Splinters (for clarinet and piano) was chosen as the compulsory work for the final round for clarinet, saxophone and bassoon at the Gemeentekrediet (a bank) National Competition for Music and Word, now better known as Axion-Classics, an initiative of Dexia Bank. In 1997, the organisers again chose a work by Slootmaekers: (Im)mobile (for oboe and piano) was the compulsory work for oboe and bassoon. In 1998, Martin Slootmaekers submitted his composition Nunc Dimittis (for mixed choir and organ) to the Alphons Diepenbrock Composition Competition in the Netherlands and won fourth prize.

In recent years he has received a number of subsidised commissions from Flemish choirs, including Capella di Voce (conducted by Kurt Bikkembergs), Capella Beatae Mariae ad Lacum (conducted by Dieter Staelens), and from the Flemish Choral Federation. His children’s and young people’s cantatas, Web International and Knuffeltijd (Cuddle time), have been performed by several ensembles, each time to great acclaim. Among his other compositions are works for solo instruments, ensembles, songs and choral works, as well as several works for symphony orchestra or concert band. Martin Slootmaekers is mainly active as a choral conductor and composer. Choral music thus takes a central place within his oeuvre.

At present, Martin Slootmaekers teaches General Musical Education, Music Theory, and choir and vocal ensemble at several music academies. This has led to the composition of a number of pedagogical compositions, including a complete cycle for General Musical Education (4 parts). In his other compositions, Slootmaekers explores newer techniques such as controlled aleatory music (inspired by Lutosławski) with self-generated melodies, and the creation of a harmonic spectrum.
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More information

Read discography, bibliography and work analysis at MATRIX.
My name is Natalie Goossens. I’m a conductor and composer. Until December 31, 2009 I lived in the center of Brussels, where I worked as an educator at the Metropolitan Public Library. Besides my work in the library I was conductor of several choirs (women’s choir Cantoremus, vocal ensemble Gaudeamus), singer in a chamber choir for contemporary music (Aquarius) and student composition in Antwerp. In recent years I obtained Master Degrees in Music Theory (1999), Harmony-Counterpoint-Fugue (1999) and Clarinet (2001), a certificate to the Library School (2007) and a Master in Composition (2009). In 2012 I also obtained a Bachelor Degree in Choir Conducting. End of 2010, I started with the NTI training Financial Assistant, consisting of the modules BKC (Basic Calculation) and BCB (Basic Accounting). In 2013 I obtained the PDB (Practice Book Keeping). After having lived in Zeist for two years, I now live in Duiven with my family (since late 2011). As a choir conductor I lead the choral rehearsals and performances of three choirs: the chamber choir Velps Kleinkoor in Velp, the vocal ensemble Avoce in Winterswijk and the mixed choir MoorSound in Veenendaal. Besides my job as a conductor, I arrange and compose new choral works.

Contact

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Nicolas De Cock

Nicolas De Cock (°1979 – Ghent) has been fascinated by music from a very early age. He studied violin at the Ghent Royal Conservatory with M. Bezverkhny (1st prize Queen Elisabeth competition ’76) and graduated in 2002. About this time he composed his first classical works. It would become a passion that would remain a constant in his further career. He developed his composing skills in the class of Dirk Brossé, also at the Ghent Royal Conservatory. Nicolas obtained his master’s degree in 2005 with high honors and is mainly active as a composer, orchestrator and arranger. In recent years he has worked closely with Dirk Brossé. The arrangements and orchestrations that resulted from this collaboration were performed and/or recorded by Brussels Philharmonic Orchestra, Symfonieorkest Vlaanderen, De Filharmonie, The Belgian National Orchestra, Noord Nederlands Orkest, L’Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, The London Symphony Orchestra, The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, Prima La Musica, The London Voices, José Van Dam, Julia Migenes, Sinead O’Connor, Qilian Chen and many others. As a composer Nicolas De Cock feels at home in many different styles of music and he writes for a great variety of instruments. His oeuvre includes chamber music, orchestral music, music for choir, music for Wind Orchestra, a violin concerto,… Some of his more recent works include a Suite for String Orchestra, In Flanders Fields – a work for choir based on the poem by John McCrae – that was performed by The Flemish Radio Choir in Flagey (Brussels) and the song cycle “Gorgeous Nothings”, a cycle of 5 songs for string orchestra, soprano, choir and harp, dedicated to the world-renowned architect Paul Robbrecht. The works of Nicolas De Cock are published by Luytt Music Editions (www.luytt.com). Nicolas is also associated with the music academy of Deinze as a teacher of Music Theory, composition and orchestration.
Noor Sommereyns

Noor Sommereyns (°24/11/1982, Belgium), previously known as Gwendolyn Sommereyns, attended, besides the Greek-Latin section, several courses such as solfège, chorus, harmony, accompaniment and piano at the Municipal Music Academy of Woluwé-Saint-Pierre (Brussels). At the age of twelve she composed her first pieces for piano and was recognized by SABAM as composer on her fourteenth. A little bit later Gwendolyn was twice proclaimed laureate of the KBC Aquarius Youngsters Composition Project, in 1998 with ‘Sémira’ (for piano solo) and in 1999 with ‘Oh, fruscio del bel canneto’ (for soprano and piano). She finished her studies at the music academy with two municipal award medals, one for the music theory (high distinction) and for piano (highest distinction).

In 2000 Gwendolyn started her education at the Lemmensinstituut in Louvain where she was twice awarded laureate at the Muzizoeke Composition Contest, in 2002 with ‘Endeavour’ (for string quartet) and in 2003 with ‘Avalon’ (for mixed choir). In December 2003 she was awarded at the ISME – Composition Contest. With her piece ‘Cascade’ for harp solo she won the Second Award – Piet Vermeulen Award and the Special Award for the best composition for Harp or Piano. Also at the Provincial Prize for Music composition 2003 for Brass Band (Flemish-Brabant) she got a special mention for the piece ‘Phoenix’ and received the Encouragement Award. In 2004 she composed ‘Myst’ for harp solo, the imposed work at the Axion Classics Contest of Dexia Bank and wrote several choir arrangements for the European Youth Music Festival in Neerpelt. A year later her composition ‘Poor Corydon’ (for mixed choir) yielded her the First Prize at the National Choir Composition Contest of Capella di Voce/Euprint. In June 2005 she graduated from the Lemmensinstituut as Master in Music Composition with high distinction. She had been coached by Luc Van Hove, Jan Van der Roost and Kurt Bikkembergs. Meanwhile she has been commissioned by several ensembles and organizations, such as the SPECTRA ensemble, Jongart and the Emanon Ensemble.

In the autumn of 2007 she has made a successful concert tour in Japan with her composition ‘Kayano’ and in 2008 she was nominated for the Gouden Klaproos Award (Belgium), in the category of choir compositions. New commissions made her oeuvre grow continually. Since summer 2009 she is having a break from composing music. In August 2010 her first name has changed from Gwendolyn into Noor and she started working as a software engineer. Her compositions are available at a few music publishers, such as Euprint.
Norbert Rosseau was born on 11 December 1907 in Ghent, the son of two circus artists, Max Rosseau and the Italian Stella Lussie. From them (his mother studied piano at the Royal Conservatory in Ghent and his father was a violinist and musical clown) Norbert received his first music lessons. At the outbreak of the First World War, the family fled to Italy, where Rosseau took lessons from Piramo, a leading Roma violinist. A wunderkind (“il piccolo celebre violinista”), he travelled throughout Italy, giving recitals until after the war. He also received his formal musical training in Italy, studying composition with Giuseppe Mulè, organ with Fernando Germani and piano with Silvestri. After graduating from the conservatory in Rome, he completed his studies in composition with Ottorino Respighi. Around 1934, Rosseau studied psychology and philosophy in Ghent.

His career as a violin virtuoso came to a sudden end with an injury to his right hand, incurred during his military service. After the Second World War, Rosseau was introduced to concrete and electronic music, and took several courses in Darmstadt and at the IPEM (Institute for Psycho-acoustics and Electronic Music) in Ghent. Together with Louis De Meester, he was the first composer in Flanders to compose twelve-tone and electronic music (after the Second World War!). A number of Rosseau’s compositions won prizes, and his works have been frequently performed for the radio and in concert halls. In contrast to most composers, he never held a position at an institution such as a conservatory, orchestra or radio broadcaster.

More information

Read discography, bibliography and work analysis at MATRIX.
Paul Steegmans

Paul Steegmans was born on 3 July 1957 in Hasselt. In 1980 he earned a diploma in piano and music education at the Lemmens Institute in Leuven, and went on to receive a first prize in fugue in 1985. From 1981 he took advance courses in piano with André de Groote (Brussels), Jacques de Tiège (Antwerp) and Jean Franssen (Maastricht). He later studied with Willem Kersters at the Royal Conservatory in Antwerp, earning his first prize in composition there in 1993. Steegman was a prize winner at the Baron Flor Peeters Composition Competition (with Concertstuk for organ, 1983) and twice in the Cantabile Competition (with Dance and scherzo for piano). In 1989, his Sonata for clarinet and piano was awarded the Albert de Vleeschouwer Prize. Compositions by Steegmans have been performed in Japan, Finland, Costa Rica and Cuba.

Since 1980 the composer has taught piano and accompaniment at the Ghent Academy for Word and Dance and is guest teacher of practical harmony at the Lemmens Institute. Paul Steegmans is also well known as an accompanist of singers and choirs, and has given concerts both in Belgium and abroad (Germany, Sweden, England) as a soloist and improviser.

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More information

Read discography, bibliography and work analysis at MATRIX.
Petra Vermote

Petra Vermote was born in 1968 in Izegem where she studied guitar at the municipal music school with Diane Vermeersch. This was followed by studies at the Ghent conservatory, culminating in first prizes in solfège, guitar, chamber music, harmony, counterpoint and fugue, as well as the Higher Diploma in guitar under Baltazar Benitez. She studied composition with Frank Nuyts, Jan Rispens, Lucien Goethals and Roland Coryn. In 1999 she earned the “Meester in de muziek” diploma from the Antwerp conservatory, specialising in composition (under Luc Van Hove). Petra Vermote teaches guitar at the conservatory in Ghent as an assistant to Yves Storms. She also teaches courses in accompaniment and music education in the guitar department. Vermote gives guitar lessons at the music academy in Izegem and provides the musical programming for De Wekker, an organisation in Roeselare. As a composer, she has written works on commission for such groups as the Beethoven Academie, the Flanders Festival (Kortrijk), the Ictus Ensemble and Champ d’Action. In October 2001, she received the Youth and Music Prize for composition, a tri-annual award given to a composer under the age of 35.

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More information

Read discography, bibliography and work analysis at MATRIX.
Piet Swerts

Piet Swerts was born in Tongeren in 1960. He studied from 1974 to 1989 at the Lemmens Institute in Leuven, where he earned ten first prizes and studied piano with Robert Graslot and Alan Weiss. He was the first recipient from the Lemmens Institute of the Lemmens Tinel prize for composition and piano magna cum laude. Piet Swerts now teaches piano, analysis and composition at the same institute, positions he has held since 1982. From 1985 to 2005, he was the conductor of the Ensemble for New Music at the school. He is a much sought after jury member at composition contests.

As a composer, Swerts has won numerous prizes, including the Camille Huysmans Composition Prize in 1986 for his work Droombeelden (Dream images) and, in that same year, the Composition Prize of the Province of Limburg for his Capriccio for guitar and chamber orchestra. He received the Baron Flor Peeters Prize for his Apocalyps I for organ in 1983 and in 1985 he was awarded the prize for Belgian Artistic Promotion for his song Ardennes for soprano and piano. He won the SABAM Prize for his Rotations for piano and orchestra, the work that was chosen as the compulsory concerto for the final round of the International Queen Elisabeth Competition in 1987. The newspaper De Gazet van Antwerpen awarded him its prize for his Symphony no. 1 in 1989. In 1993 a choral work earned him the Composition Prize of the Province of Brabant, while in 1993 his violin concerto Zodiac was selected as the compulsory work for the finals of the International Queen Elisabeth Competition (with a jury that included Górecki). An important moment in his career was the premiere of his large-scale opera Les liaisons dangereuses in 1996 at the Flemish opera. In 2001 the Flemish Radio Orchestra created his Second Symphony ‘Morgenrot’.

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More information

Read discography, bibliography and work analysis at MATRIX.
Raoul De Smet was born on 27 October 1936 in Borgerhout. He studied the philology of Romance languages and music history at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. After this he took a year of specialisation on a study grant in Madrid and Salamanca. He then worked as a teacher for four years in Tunisia, after which he taught Spanish at the Katholieke Vlaamse Hogeschool in Antwerp. His gained his basic musical training (solfège, harmony, piano) at the Music Academy in Deurne. Apart from this training, he was self-taught as a musician until he undertook studies in 1966 with Lucien Goethals and Louis De Meester at the IPEM (Institute for Psychoacoustics and Electronic Music) in Ghent, with August Verbesselt in Antwerp and with Ton de Leeuw in Amsterdam. Through his own studies of theoretical works (Schönberg, Krenek, Koechlin, Messiaen and others) and of scores, and by listening to a wide variety of genres, he developed his own personal musical language.

In 1972 De Smet took part in the Ferienkurse für Neue Musik in Darmstadt, where two of his works were performed. He also participated in the Gaudeamus Days in Bilthoven. In 1976 he took part in the Seminar on Contemporary American Music in Salzburg. In 1977 he represented IPEM at the Colloquium Musica/Sintesi as part of the Biennale in Venice. From 1974 to 1994 Raoul De Smet organised the Orphische Avonden (Orphic Evenings) in Antwerp, featuring concerts of contemporary (mainly Flemish) chamber music in Antwerp. Between 1980 and 1984 he was a member of the board of the Centrum voor Muziek in Leuven. From 1983 to 1993, De Smet programmed concerts of contemporary music in the foyer of the Antwerp Stadsschouwburg (City theatre). In 1976, 1985 and 1990 he organised the Electronic Music Days at the ICC (International Cultural Centre) and the deSingel. In 1981 he began the E.M. series, an edition in facsimile of chamber music by Flemish composers. In 1987 he established the Orpheus Prize, a biennial international competition for the interpretation of contemporary chamber music. Since 1999 he has organised the Belgian Chocolates Festival.

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More information

Read discography, bibliography and work analysis at **MATRIX**.
Raymond Schroyens was born in Mechelen on 14 March 1933. As a 9-year-old choirboy in the famous St Rombaut’s Cathedral choir he came into contact with Jules Van Nuffel and Flor Peeters. In 1950 he entered the Lemmens Institute, then still located in Mechelen, studying with Staf Nees, Marinus de Jong and Jules Van Nuffel. After his military service he studied organ with Flor Peeters from 1954 at the Royal Conservatory in Antwerp. From 1958 to 1960 he was choirmaster at St Alphonse’s Cathedral in Dearborn, Michigan, and from 1960 to 1963 he was music teacher and choirmaster at the Scheppers Institute in Mechelen and at St Stanislas College in Berchem. In 1963 Raymond Schroyens began a 30-year administrative-cultural career at the classical radio broadcaster Radio 3 of the BRT. As a musician he was active as a harpsichordist from 1962 to 1972 in the Concertino J.B. Loeillet in Mechelen.

From 1970 to his retirement in 1993 he taught harpsichord at the Royal Conservatory in Brussels. In 1975 he became harpsichord teacher at the Municipal Conservatory in Mechelen, where he remained until 1988. Schroyens was also active as a member of the board of various organisations, including the Flanders Festival, where he was also music advisor (1983-2000), Ars Organi Mechelen (chairperson, 1994-1999) and the Flemish Federation for Youth Choirs in Ghent (chairperson, 1996-1997).

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More information

Read discography, bibliography and work analysis at MATRIX.
Roland Coryn

Roland Coryn, born on 21 December 1938 in Kortrijk, came into contact early with the artistic world. His brother sketched and painted, and his family maintained links with artistic circles. After his musical studies at the Municipal Music Academy in Harelbeke, he pursued further studies at the Royal Conservatory of Ghent. There he earned his Higher Diploma in viola and chamber music, while continuing to study in the theory department and subsequently receiving his First Prize in composition. As a teacher he held positions at the music academies of Harelbeke, Izegem and Oostende. In 1979 he was named director in Harelbeke. For many years he held an important function as a teacher of composition at the conservatory in Ghent. On 1 September 1997, he took early retirement in order to devote his full attention to composing.

In the period from 1960 to 1975, he was chiefly active as a performing musician. He played viola in the Belgian Chamber Orchestra, where he came into contact with modern music, and he was a founding member of the Flemish Piano Quartet, which focused on the works of well-known composers and Belgian masters. From 1986 to 1997 he was the leader of the Nieuw Conservatorium Ensemble in Ghent, with which he performed mainly contemporary works. This activity proved highly fruitful for his composition class. As a composer, Coryn has won numerous prizes, including the Tenuto Prize in 1973 (Quattro Movimenti), the Jef Van Hoof Prize in 1974 (Triptiek), the Koopal Prize in 1986 for his chamber music oeuvre, and the Visser-Neerlandia Prize in 1999 for his complete output. In 1993 he was elected a member of the Academy of Fine Arts, Letters and Sciences of Belgium.

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More information

Read discography, bibliography and work analysis at MATRIX.
Rudi Tas was born in Aalst in 1957. He earned a number of diplomas at the Royal Conservatories in Brussels and Ghent in both instrumental and theoretical subjects. His studies were rounded off with a final diploma in composition (magna cum laude) under Roland Coryn. To begin with, Rudi Tas was mainly active as a concert organist and a choral conductor but he subsequently concentrated on a career as a composer. At present, Rudi Tas combines his many composition commissions with his duties as a teacher of theory and organ in the music education system.

Various works by Rudi Tas have won prizes in both national and international composition competitions. In 1979, he was a prize-winner at the Nausikaä Composition Competition for vocal music, in 1988 he won the chamber-music prize of the Flemish Mediatheque, in 1989 the Flor Baron Peeters Prize for organ composition, in 1992 the Provincial Prize of East Flanders and in 1993 the B.A.P. prize awarded by Sabam (Belgian artists’ rights organisation). In 1992 his Symphonia da Requiem for soprano solo, speaker, solo choir, mixed choir and orchestra was nominated for the European AGEC prize, and in 1996 a Swiss jury awarded him this prestigious prize for his choral work Flowers of life. In May of 1998 he took first prize at the international composition competition in Tours for his La chanson d’Eve. Finally, his Sonata for violin and piano won the Jef Van Hoof Prize in 2001.

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Read discography, bibliography and work analysis at MATRIX.
Sebastiaan van Steenberge

Sebastiaan van Steenberge (°1974) attended the Lemmens Institute in Leuven, where he obtained a Master’s Diploma and a Specialisation Diploma for organ, studying under Peter Pieters. He also obtained a Master’s Diploma for composition under Luc Van Hove and in 2012 he obtained his Master for Orchestra Conducting under Prof. Edmond Saveniers. During his studies and training other musical mentors of van Steenberge included Reitze Smits (improvisation), Frans Geysen (analysis and serial techniques), Christian Vereecke (fugue) and Kurt Bikkembergs (choir conducting and choir composition).

During his studies he attended various master classes in Belgium and abroad: Europaische Academie (Bonn), Royal Opera House (London), Bretton Hall University (Leeds) Since April 2000 Sebastiaan van Steenberge has been the Director of Music of the Cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp. He combines this job with that of composer, organist and music teacher at Onze-Lieve-Vrouwecollege in Antwerp.

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Vic Nees was born in Mechelen on 8 March 1936, the son of carillon composer Staf Nees. After a year of study in arts at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, he enrolled at the conservatory in Antwerp, where he earned first prizes in harmony, counterpoint, fugue and composition, studying with Marcel Andries and Flor Peeters, among others. In 1964 he was a laureate of the Meisterkurs für Chorleitung given by Kurt Thomas at the Hochschule für Musik in Hamburg. From 1961, Nees worked for the BRT (Belgian Radio and Television), first as a choral music producer and from 1970 as conductor of the radio choir. From 1961 to 1969 he led the Vokaal Ensemble Philippus de Monte in Mechelen and the Ter Kamerenkoor in Brussels. Nees has received numerous awards for his compositions: in 1973 he won the Eugène Baie Prize for his complete output of choral music, in 1990 the AGEC Prize (awarded by the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Europäischer Chorverbände) for Regina Coeli-Blue be it (1988) and in 1995 the Vondel Prize (from the Alfred Toepfer Stiftung in Hamburg). He is regularly asked to serve as a jury member for choral festivals (Arezzo, Cork, Tours, Neerpelt...) and through his courses in choral conducting, his contributions to periodicals and radio programmes and his editions of both contemporary and historical choral music, he has achieved an important position in the movement for innovative choral music.

Vic Nees passed away on March 14, 2013.

More information

Read discography, bibliography and work analysis at MATRIX.
Wim Henderickx

Wim Henderickx studied composition and percussion at the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp (BE). He took part in the ‘Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik’ in Darmstadt and attended sonology classes at Ircam in Paris and at the Conservatory of Music in The Hague. His scores are published by Norsk Musikforlag in Oslo. He teaches composition at the Conservatoires of Music in Antwerp and Amsterdam and is also the main teacher of the Summer Composition Course SoundMine for young composers. His oeuvre includes chamber music, opera and symphonic work and he was awarded for his work in Belgium and abroad. With Mysterium for ten wind instruments he won the International Composition Price Flanders-Québec in 1993. Since 1996 Henderickx is Composer in Residence for Muziektheater Transparant and in 2013 he joined the Royal Flemish Philharmonic (deFilharmonie) as Artist in Residence.

Following a trip in India and Nepal he wrote the Tantric Cycle (2004-2010), seven compositions with the Orient as a source of inspiration. Wim Henderickx was commissioned to write Canzone for voice and piano for the semi-finals of the 2008 Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition in Brussels. For the Orchestre National de Belgique he composed Symphony No.1, with premieres in Belgium and abroad by various orchestras. Visioni ed Estasi for mixed choirs and electronics premiered at the Flanders Festival Mechelen for TENSO Days 2015, with 200 singers conducted by James Wood. With HERMESensemble he produced the CDs Disappearing in Light and Triptych. The Royal Flemish Philharmonic recorded most of his orchestral works, the 3 Ragas were released in 1999, Tejas & other orchestral works in 2011 and a new double CD was released in March 2016 with Symphony No.1, Groove!! and the two versions of Empty Mind I.

Contact

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More information

Read discography, bibliography and work analysis at MATRIX.
Liesbeth Decrock (Ghent, 1990) holds a master’s degree in composition at the Royal Conservatory of Antwerp where she studied with Wim Henderickx and Luc van Hove. She participated several times in the SoundMine international composition masterclass organized by vzw Musica. A preference for chamber music and atypical line-ups appears in the compositions ‘De Eekhoorn’ (2015) for clarinet, harp and double bass; ‘Ik weet het niet en het kan me werkelijk niet schelen (roepnaam: Iwein)’ (2016) for double bass and triple percussion; and ‘Fruitsla voor het koor’ (2018), for mixed choir, bass guitar, vibraphone and fruit. Her selective style is further characterized by groovy rhythms, directness and the urge to please.

In 2017 she has set up Het Incident, a collective with which she works in varying collaborations with composers and performers to create a distinct energetic house style. In 2019, Klarafestival selects her as composer for MusMA; a cooperation between several European music festivals and radio broadcasters. Commissioned for this, she writes ‘I Am’, a work about identity for vocal quartet and actress. The composition is performed by singers of the Swedish Radio Choir and actress Stina Ekblad, at 5 different festivals in Europe.

Compositions of Liesbeth Decrock were performed by ensembles and performers such as deFilharmonie, deCompagnie, De 2de Adem, Matthias Coppens, Bram Fournier, Andrew Wise, Nikolaas Kende, and at festivals such as AlbaNova, Klarafestival en Wonderfeel.

**Contact**

[liesbethdecrock.be](http://liesbethdecrock.be)
Willem Ceuleers

Born in 1962 in Watermaal-Bosvoorde (Belgium), Willem Ceuleers studied written harmony (E. Geurickx), practical harmony (K. Van Ingelgem), counterpoint (N. Bultereys), recorder (B. Deerenberg), organ (H. Verschraegen), harpsichord (J. Van Immerseel) and chant (L. Jespers) at the Antwerp and Brussels conservatoires.

He has recorded dozens of CDs and performed in concert as singer, organist, and harpsichordist throughout Europe, and in Japan and the United States, with such groups as Currende (Belgium), the Huelgas Ensemble (Belgium), the Rheinische Kantorei (Germany), La Petite Bande, Il Fundamento (Belgium), the Ghent Collegium Vocale (Belgium), the Capilla Flamenca (Belgium), the Josquin Capella (Germany), La Caccia (Belgium), the Cappella Pratensis (Netherlands), the Egidius Kwartet (Netherlands) and the Grande Chapelle (Spain).

From 1992 to 2006, Willem Ceuleers was the incumbent organist at St Catherine’s in Sinaai, home of the romantic Vereecken organ (1876) on which he performed annual organ concerts. In 2003, for example, he played the complete works for organ by Charles-Marie Widor.

From 2004, he simultaneously covered as organist of the Saint Lambert church in Laeken (Van Bever organ, 1916) where he continued his artistic programme. In 2006, he was appointed as permanent organist there (incumbent at Saint Lambert, organist at Saint Claire, assistant at Notre-Dame). From 2011, cumulated with Laeken, organist of the protestant church, Lange Winkelstraat, in Antwerp.

In 2000, Willem assumed the musical direction of the Antwerp Collegium Musicum which brings together numerous musicians whose objective is to perform religious works as part-liturgy, part-concert. Dick Wursten takes part both as author and commentator.

From 2004 to 2006, he advised on the construction of a new organ (builder: Marc Nagels) in the protestant Christ Church in Antwerp. Willem Ceuleers enjoys a growing interest in his compositions, leading to commissions from the Dutch Chamber Choir, the Huelgas Ensemble, the VRT Klara, the town of Sint-Niklaas, the
Quatuor Egidius, the protestant Christ Church in Antwerp, the Vokaal Ensemble Polyfoon, and the American bass Joel Frederiksen, ensemble Cinquecento, Capilla Flamenca, Currende, the University of Oregon (USA) as well as numerous private commissions.

Most of his work is written from a religious perspective having recourse to ‘ancient’ styles. Several recordings of his work have been made by the Cathedral Choir of Brussels and by the Huelgas Ensemble.

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Yvan Vander Sanden

Yvan Vander Sanden was born in Neerpelt, Belgium in 1972. From 1990 until 1996, he studied music theory at the Lemmensinstitute in Leuven. He was also studying with Kurt Bikkembergs at that time.

After graduation, Yvan started teaching and was given an opportunity at his job to study information technology. During these years, he was very active in promoting the open source ideology in an educational environment.

In 2003, Yvan starts to combine his knowledge of I.T. and music, develops a strong interest in electronic music and writes two large works for choir and tape. In september 2004 he starts to study music again, this time taking composition classes with Godfried Willem Raes at the conservatory of Ghent.

His recent compositions have won several contests: ‘Boycot’ is one of the winning pieces in the Euprint composition contest 2005, ‘4’ is one of the winning compositions at the composition contest ‘Vlaams-Brabant’ 2005, and also at the Visser-Neerlandia composition contest. The latter was performed by the Flemish Radio Choir in 2006.

Yvan also sings with the Capella Di voce, conducted by Kurt Bikkembergs. And since 2001 he conducts the vocal group Markant in Leuven. Markant is already known in Belgium for its original concerts and focus on contemporary music.

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