

EN

LES
SYNTHÉTISTES
CONCERT & DOCTORATE
DEFENCE

Hauts-de-France Brass Band
&
Royal Band of the Belgian Air Force

Luc Vertommen

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B Koninklijk
Conservatorium
Brussel

Concert: 20/06/2023 - 20:00
Doctorate Defence: 21/06/2023 - 10:00

Context and musical modernism in the repertoire for wind band of Paul Gilson and Les Synthétistes during the fin de siècle and interwar period in Brussels.

Promotor: prof. Dr. Kristine Van den Buys

Artistic promotor: Norbert Nozy

Jury: Katia Segers, Matthias Heyman, Jan Dewilde & Alex Schillings



Programme

Hauts-de-France Brass Band

Marcel Poot (1901-1988)

*Trois fanfares à la mémoire d'Emile
Vandervelde (1939)*

Lent

Largo

Andante

Paul Gilson (1865-1942)

Valse symphonique nr. 1 (1892)

Nigel Clarke

Diary of a Madman (2023) (Belgian première)

PAUSE

Royal Band of the Belgian Air Force

Maurice Schoemaker (1890-1964)

Brueghel Suite (1928)

Prelude

Scherzo

March

Nocturno

Finale

René Bernier (1905-1984)
Épitaphe (1923)

Francis de Bourguignon (1890-1961)
Récitatif et Ronde (1951)
Soloist: Michaël Tambour, trumpet

Jules Strens (1893-1971)
Gil blas (1921)
Theme
Variation I
Variation II
Variation III
Variation IV
Variation V and Finale

Royal Band of the Belgian Air Force & Hauts-de-France Brass Band

Gaston Brenta (1902-1969)
In Memoriam Paul Gilson (1944)

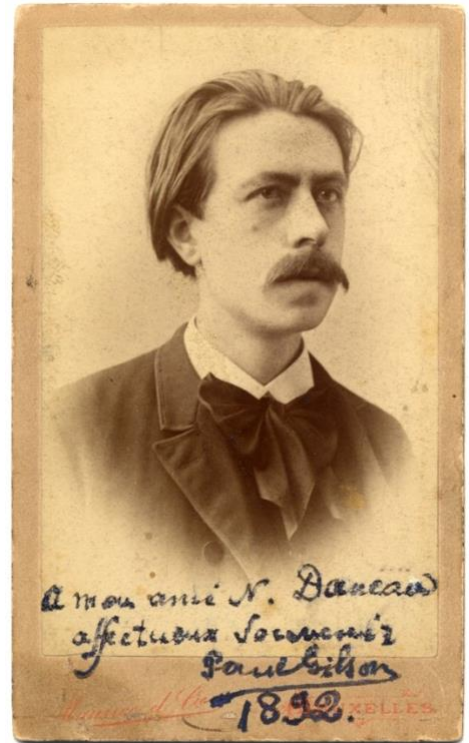
Théo Dejoncker (1894-1964)
Charles Stratton (1925)

Les Synthétistes

In September 1925, on the occasion of the 60th birthday of their 'master', seven students of Paul Gilson gather to form the first composers' collective in our Belgian music history. The members of *Les Synthétistes* (the Synthetists) are René Bernier, Francis de Bourguignon, Gaston Brenta, Théo Dejoncker, Marcel Poot, Maurice Schoemaker and Jules Strens.

Their intention is twofold, both theoretical and practical. Les Synthétistes aim to distinguish themselves as the 'Brussels Seven' by breaking away from the prevailing late-romantic currents of their time. Their theoretical aim is to synthesise the modern trends in music from 1925 onwards and connect with the 'achievements of contemporary music' and apply them within balanced and well-defined forms. Their practical goal, by uniting, is to more easily find a stage to perform their new symphonic music. At a time when no professional symphonic orchestra exists in our country, apart from opera orchestras, they compose and transcribe their original symphonic works for wind orchestra. To do so, they collaborate with Arthur Prevost and the Royal Band of the Belgian Guides, which grows into a model line-up of 85 musicians during the interwar period. Thanks to Prevost and the Guides, a unique collection of original, modern music for wind orchestra of the Synthetists can thus be heard on the Brussels concert stages during the interwar period. As only a few of this unique, forgotten collection of more than 75 works, were published, this unique canon remained largely unknown. Thanks to a historical source study by Luc Vertommen, these works for concert band are now being unlocked for the first time, a century after their creation.

Paul Gilson (1865-1942) was born in central Brussels but shortly after birth the family moved to rural Ruisbroek. Of great importance for the young Gilson's musical development is his contact with the local fanfare band Sint-Cecilia. Without any formal training, he writes his first works for the local fanfare band. Through his keen powers of observation, he acquired the knowledge and skills to compose for wind band at a very young age. Returning to Brussels in 1882, he became acquainted with Wagner's music in 1883 and with the music of the Russian National School in 1887. There he also got to know the great Brussels fanfare bands and composed symphonic wind music for them.



His first contact with the symphonic orchestra was not until 1889, when he won the Prix de Rome composition competition with his cantata *Sinai*. His 273 works for band include both smaller works tailored to the amateur musician and some 50 works in larger forms. The first composer of international stature, Gilson composes original works for band that excel through their mastery of orchestration. Gilson is the teacher and mentor of a new generation of young Belgian composers including the Synthetists.

He orchestrated the *Valse symphonique no.1* in 1901 for the large instrumentation of the Royal Band of the Belgian Guides. The original version for 'fanfare pure', a fanfare band without saxophones, dates from 1892 and is dedicated to the fanfare band La Concorde from Gilly. Apart from his *Suite de Valses* or *Suite de valses à la Viennoise*, a youthful work in memory of the Viennese waltz king Joseph Lanner (1801-1843) in which he imitates the melodic, elegant style and perfect form of the Viennese waltz, Gilson does not often use the waltz form. In his two symphonic waltzes, Gilson uses the typical musical movements and fragments of waltz rhythms and melodies in an orchestral homage to this dance form.

The *Valse Symphonique no.1*, subtitled '*morceau de concours pour fanfare*' is a tormented and personal work, imposing itself from the very first bars through its short, penetrating, and hectic theme, which alternates with more singing secondary motifs and themes. Despite its penetrating and sometimes discrete lyricism, the waltz has a harsh and dark character. Due to its constant chromaticism, the *Valse Symphonique* resembles a sad waltz, without being reminiscent of Sibelius' famous *Valse triste*. In places, the style is more reminiscent of Liszt's *Mephistowaltz* and gives a premonition of Ravel's *La Valse*, which the French master would compose 28 years later. The difficulties of the *Valse Symphonique* are the constant accent shifts and rhythmic interruptions, the rapid octave leaps, constant changes of nuances and the unusual use of juxtaposed sound combinations and chords that should form a compact, homogeneous and harmonic whole. Moreover, the inner parts are generally as important as the first part and must sound balanced with it. Performing the *Valse symphonique* demands, according to the composer, a virtuoso orchestra making it seem almost unplayable for the amateur bands of the time. Even for the listener, the subtlety, ingenuity and rich craftsmanship is only apparent after listening to the work several times.



Marcel Poot (1901-1988) studies piano with Arthur De Greef at the Brussels conservatory and meets Gilson there, who encourages him to compose. In his first works for wind orchestra, which he is able to try out with the *Harmonie Royale* from his native Vilvoorde, Poot follows Gilson's examples. Poot retains a great admiration for the world of wind bands and brass bands, as his 34 original works for wind orchestra attest.

Trois fanfares à la mémoire d'Emile Vandervelde, are three occasional fanfares for large brass ensemble that he composed for the ceremony in memory of Vandervelde at the Palace of Fine Arts on 5 February 1939. Vandervelde was a great lover of music. At the ceremony, after an introduction at the organ by Charles Hens, the *Trois fanfares* were played by the brass ensemble of the National Orchestra of Belgium conducted by Désiré Defauw. This was followed by the *Pie Jesu* from Fauré's *Requiem*, Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* and the film *Le patron est mort*, a film by Henri Stock about the life and work of the socialist politician.

During his youth, **René Bernier** (1905-1984) was taught by Gilson, who taught him the basics of composition and initiated him into the great repertoire. When Bernier joined the Synthetists, he was the youngest of the group and the one whose musical language and aesthetics were most personal and different from those of his teacher. Bernier has been described as the "most French composer" of his generation, composing in the vein of Debussy, Ravel and Poulenc. His music is characterised by elegance and charm, attention to subtle nuances and great, inner lyricism. Bernier composed *Epitaphe* in 1923 as incidental music for the



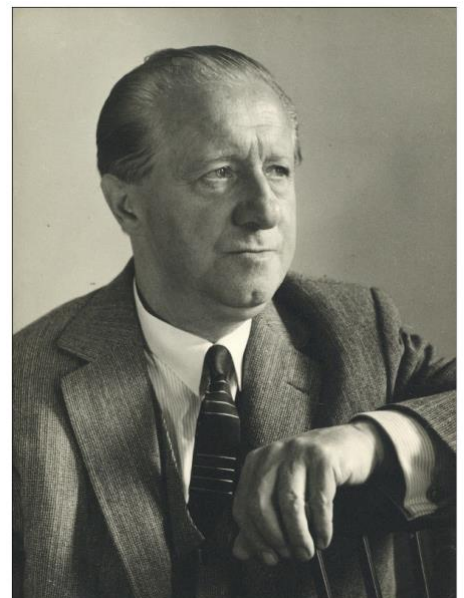
unveiling of a monument to honour the war dead in the cemetery of his native Saint-Gilles, originally titled *Prélude élégiaque*. The version for wind orchestra of *Epitaphe* was first played by the Royal Band of the Belgian Guides conducted by Prevost on 29 July 1923. In the version for symphonic orchestra, Bernier dedicates his *Epitaphe symphonique* to his late father. *Epitaphe* is a summary, melancholic lament imbued with harsh, emotional touches and contrasts. The dark death march in the muted brass and small drum is commented on by the unusual, deep sounds of the contrabassoon, bass saxophone and double bass. In the second, poetic section, the woodwinds play musical phrases one would rather expect in sophisticated impressionist vocal music and chamber music with enchanting lyricism and intimacy.



Gaston Brenta (1902-1969) receives fringe training at the conservatoire. He receives full training as a private pupil of Gilson but never achieves any prizes or scholarships. His early works including *Zo'har* (1928) remain largely tonal, with the use of rich chromaticism. In this often narrative music that displays a classical, clear structure, melodic richness and colourful orchestration, we can clearly hear his Gilsonian origins. In his preface to the score of *In Memoriam Paul Gilson*, Brenta mentions that "the work was written in memory of Gilson and contains some of the master's themes, melodic lines and processes after which, naturally, an

original melody appears in the style of an elegy always played more or less en dehors. A short interlude with the character of a funeral march in the middle of the work embraces some Gilson quotations. The impressionistic mood creation works very touchingly as a worthy tribute from a pupil to his 'master'. Brenta repeatedly quotes motifs and themes by Gilson from *La Mer*, the *Variations Symphoniques* and the opera *Prinses Zonneschijn*.

Jules Strens (1893-1971) studied violin at the Brussels Conservatory from 1910. Self-taught, he already composed several works. When in need of a sounding board, he turned to Gilson, who taught him the rules of orchestration. His 1921 *Gil Blas*, opus 2, dates from his study period with Gilson. With this work, Strens won the composition competition of the *Concerts Ysaÿe* in 1922 and immediately attracted the attention of the Belgian music world. His symphonic variations based on the novel by Alain-René Lesage (1668-1747) are infused with elements of Spanish folklore.



The main theme in the oboe typifies the engaging and carefree character of *Gil Blas* who is born into misery as a stable boy. In the first variation, we hear the young *Gil Blas* set off carefree, heading for the university of Salamanca with 'a poor mule and forty good ducats'. In the second variation, *Gil Blas* is seized by bandits who oblige him to help a robber which lands him in jail. In the third variation, we hear the imprisoned *Gil Blas* adapting to the situation thanks to his empathy and humour. In the fourth variation, *Gil Blas* regains his freedom and appears with the famous doctor Sangrado. *Gil Blas* helps him with his experiments and together they kill all the customers. In the fifth variation and the finale, we hear *Gil Blas* at the royal court. He becomes the king's favourite, becomes rich and retreats to a castle to enjoy his fortune and love.



Francis de Bourguignon (1890-1961)

began his studies at the conservatoire of Brussels as a ten-year-old in Arthur De Greef's piano class. He also takes harmony classes in Gilson's class but initially concentrates entirely on his career as a piano virtuoso. When he is wounded the outbreak of World War I, he is evacuated to England where he recovers in Exeter. Head over heels, he decides to travel to Australia where he becomes the regular accompanist of the famous singer Nellie Melba. From 1915 to 1920, they travelled the world together and until 1925 de Bourguignon continued to travel alone as a concert pianist

until he settled permanently in Brussels in 1925. Having not composed for ten years, he retrains his technical baggage, Gilson teaches him the principles of orchestration, and joins the Synthetists. During his travels across Europe, he gets to know the most striking works of modern music and shows an interest in its achievements. Not afraid of the use of polytonality and dissonant harmonies, he quickly evolved his own contemporary tone. Witness his characteristic, descriptive and impressionistic *Concertino opus 25* for piano and wind orchestra from 1927. After a period of impressionistically inspired descriptive music, de Bourguignon resolutely opts for the style of neo-classicism.

de Bourguignon interweaves classical forms with melodic twists and dissonances. In his *Récitatif et Ronde* opus 94, in the recitative de Bourguignon showcases the lyrical qualities of the trumpet throughout its full tessitura in a contemporary, matter-of-fact style reminiscent of that of Paul Hindemith. In the rondo, the trumpet dialogues with the orchestra in a spirited style reminiscent in the refrain of the 'dance of the ballerina' from Stravinsky's *Petrouchka*. In the stanzas, orchestra and soloist alternate long melodic lines in a rather impressionistic style.

Théo Dejoncker (1894-1964) became a student at the Brussels conservatory in Gilson's written harmony class in 1907. From 1916 to 1919, he also took private lessons in composition and orchestration with Gilson. Dejoncker began his career as a conductor in several theatres, conducting operettas at the Brussels *Alhambra* and at the *Folies Bergère*. From 1935, he conducted at the NIR as second conductor of the Grand Symphony Orchestra alongside Franz André. As a composer, he only gained some fame when he joined the Synthetists in 1925. Dejoncker's works display originality



and move on the borders of chromaticism and expressionism. He often uses vague, mysterious harmony and melodic lines with unstable and changing rhythms with an impulsive character. During the interwar period, cinema becomes the democratic cultural medium par excellence. In the golden years of Brussels cinema, major cinemas employ a small symphony orchestra to accompany silent films.

When Brussels publishers notice this outlet for cinema music, they commission arrangers and composers to compose both more serious and light multipurpose passe-partout music as accompaniment for the silent film for a small orchestra of ten to 14 musicians. A dozen of these genre pieces by Dejoncker are published by Joseph Buyst including the humorous tale *Charles Stratton*, which also became famous in the version

for wind band. Although it is a musical joke and belongs to the descriptive genre, this work is perfectly balanced and tightly constructed and displays abundant and varied rhythmic inventiveness.



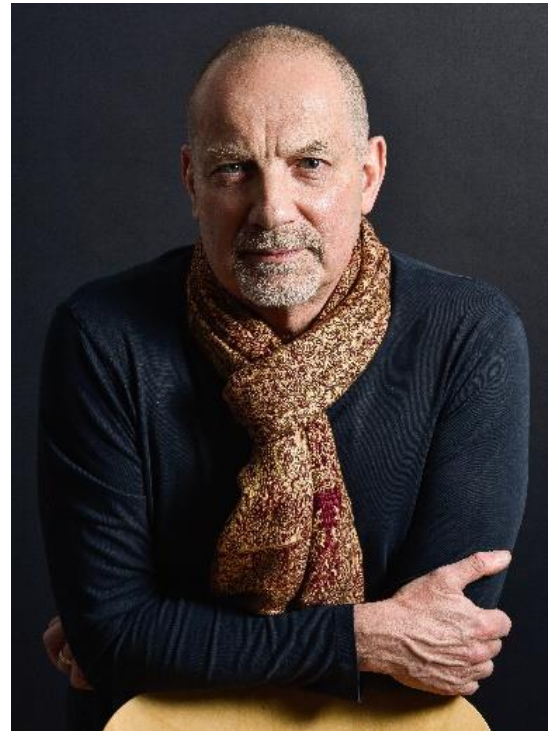
Maurice Schoemaker (1890-1964) was largely self-taught but takes private lessons in orchestration and composition with Gilson. He had already composed a number of works before World War I and was the oldest in the group in 1925 when he joined the Synthetists. Staying true to his own style, he composed his first works in a conservative, traditionally late-romantic style that referred to that of his teacher. Schoemaker enriches Gilson's language with additional sonorous bursts, and rich, lush orchestration, as in his *Feu d'Artifice* (1922). The first sketches of his ballet music to *Le Roi Boit* (1928) date from 1920 but were not

completed until 1928 and first performed at the Monnaie Theatre in Brussels in 1929. *Le Roi Boit* was revived in 1930 at the World Fair in Antwerp under the title *Evocations flamandes*. Schoemaker reworked the ballet music as a suite for symphonic orchestra entitled *Variations symphoniques* and for wind orchestra entitled *Brueghel Suite*. His *Brueghel Suite* is not a setting or musical representation of Bruegel's paintings like Moussorgsky in his *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Schoemaker devises a musical poem in which he expresses the emotions the paintings evoke in him. Typical in his orchestral music and also in the *Brueghel Suite* are its programmatic, descriptive character and subtle lyricism. The English horn prelude and main theme, in the style of a folk song, forms the basic theme on which four *symphonic variations* are based. The prelude gradually drives the believing crowd to a sense of sighing and eventually glorification as in *The Carrying of the Cross*. The scherzo illustrates spirited life as in *The Fair of Hoboken* with round dances, shawms and bagpipes. The march illustrates the procession of guilds, chambers of rhetoricians, minstrels, hand and crossbowmen, as Brueghel sees them pass by on Brussels' Kapelleplein.

In an idyllic nocturno, we hear the tender feelings of a couple in love who are totally taken by passion and leave the crowds indifferent. The colourful and boisterous finale, with its dance rhythms and its syncopation, refers to the dancing crowd, a favourite theme of the painter.

Nigel Clarke

Brussels-based British composer Nigel Clarke grew up in the seaside town of Margate in the UK and developed a lifelong love of music at an early age when he learned to play a brass instrument at school. As a 16-year-old, he joined the *Royal Marines* and then the *Band of the Royal Army Medical Corps* and eventually *the Band of the Irish Guards*. His desire to compose music was encouraged at the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall. He studied composition at the Royal Academy of Music in London with Paul Patterson. During his professional career, Clarke was lecturer in composition and contemporary music at the Royal Academy of Music and head of composition at the London College of Music and Media.



His many national and international residencies and associations include positions with the Young Concert Artist Trust, The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, Black Dyke Band, Brass Band Buizingen, Grimethorpe Colliery Band, Middle Tennessee State University and Brussels Muzieque. Clarke's longest musical collaboration was with violinist Peter Sheppard-Skærved and with conductor Luc Vertommen. Clarke is known for his virtuoso writing style in an uncompromising contemporary language that appeals to audiences. He has a penchant for storytelling, and his work brims with rhythmic drive and bravura orchestration.

It is this language of contrasts and colour, alternating wild musical outbursts with moments of sheer transcendental beauty, that draws audiences into his sound world. Clarke's works list includes works for symphony orchestra, brass band and wind band and chamber music. His music for concert hall and film has been nominated for numerous awards and his works have been recorded on many prestigious labels and are performed worldwide.

Diary of a Madman (Twenty-Fourth February) is his latest work for brass band, which he composed for the Hauts-de-France Brass Band. From the beginning of history, warlords and dictators have risen, some benign but most a scourge on humanity. Names that resonate to this day are Caligula, Genghis Khan, Ivan The Terrible, Attila the Hun, Vlad Dracula, Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, all of whom were responsible for wanton destruction and the torture and death of millions of victims, either citizens of invaded countries and territories or their own people. We can hope that these dark times are over, but a new tyrant can always emerge when we least expect it and introduce yet another predatory and evil regime. *Diary of a Madman (Twenty-Fourth February)* depicts a savage and cruel world, the same story of human nature that has resonated through the ages. *Diary of a Madman* celebrates resistance and opposition to unjust authority and despotism. As indicated in the score, *Diary of a Madman* requires a performance full of contrast, often harsh in tone that evokes unadulterated violence, but the savage and wild moments are interspersed with moments of sublime beauty. *Diary of a Madman* is an 1812 overture-like work of our time. Although real life does not always mirror art, Nigel Clarke has chosen, like Tchaikovsky, to end on a victorious note.

Hauts de France Brass Band

In 1992, a group of friends with a passion for brass instruments founded the *Ensemble de Cuivres Nord Pas-de-Calais* under the direction of Philippe Lorthios. At the time, it was a 'French-style' brass band but after several concerts and the discovery of the British brass band movement, the musicians decided to adapt their instrumentation to the nomenclature of English brass bands. The sound was thus transformed towards greater homogeneity while maintaining virtuosity. Thus, the *Nord Pas-de-Calais Brass Ensemble* became the *Nord Pas-de-Calais Brass Band*. The orchestra celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2017. In 2016, the Nord Pas-de-Calais region merged with the Picardy region to form the Hauts-de-France region. Very attached to the values of its territory, the orchestra joined this new dynamic and changed its name to the *Hauts-de-France Brass Band*. The orchestra won the title of European Champion in the first division (2002), won eight French championship titles (2009, 2010, 2011, 2017, 2019 and 2020, 2022 and 2023), a first prize at the International contest in Amboise in 2015 and two titles at the Open Flemish Brass Band Championships (2018 and 2022). The Hauts-de-France Brass Band has also had the honour of representing France at the European Championships in Montreux (2001), Brussels (2002), Linz (2010), Rotterdam (2012), Utrecht (2018), Birmingham (2022), Malmö (2023) and Palanga (2024). The band continues to develop by working with internationally renowned conductors such as: Frank Renton (England), Russell Gray (Scotland) and its current conductor Luc Vertommen (Belgium).



Royal Band of the Belgian Air Force



The Royal Band of the Belgian Air Force consists of a symphonic wind orchestra of 60 rigorously selected professional musicians and, throughout its history, it has grown into an orchestra that currently ranks among the absolute best in the world. Its primary task is to musically complete and support military ceremonies and international state visits. It also fulfils a representative function as a signboard for defence in general. Thanks to creativity and innovation, the Royal Band of the Belgian Air Force has developed into a modern formation with an extremely versatile and varied repertoire. The combination of tradition, artistic excellence and entertainment ensures that its performances and various activities are enjoyed and respected worldwide.

The band also regularly accompanies top national and international soloists including: Eugène Rousseau (USA), Nathalie Choquette (Canada), François Daneels, Jean-Claude Van den Eynde, Toots Thielemans, Filip Jordens (B), Jo Lemaire (B), Jan Smets (B) and Simon Diricq, Glenn Van Looy (B), Steven Mead and Ian Bousfield (UK) The band is often asked to perform at international tattoos and Music Festivals including at Albertville and Nice (F), Mönchengladbach and Kaiserslautern (D), Bari, Rome and Bardonecchia (I), Alborg (Dk), Krakow (Pl), Halifax and Québec (Canada), Neuchâtel (CH), Minneapolis (US) and Veiliko Tarnovo (Bulgaria), Oslo (Norway) and Hamina (Finland).

The Royal Band of the Belgian Air Force also had the pleasure of making music under the direction of well-known conductors, such as: Roger Boutry (F), Simon Poulain (B), André Waignein (B), Dennis Layendecker (USA) and Bernador Adam Ferrero (E). Since 2010, **the band** has been under the direction of Commander Bandmaster Matty Cilissen.

Michaël Tambour



Michaël Tambour was born in Brussels on 8 October 1983. He entered the Royal Music Conservatory of Liege at the age of 16, where he immediately earned a first prize in music theory and a first prize in trumpet with great distinction. In 2004, he obtained a higher degree in trumpet with great distinction and a first prize in chamber music with great distinction. Michaël then went on to perfect himself among the greatest trumpet players and since the age of 12 has regularly been in demand in the orchestras of La Monnaie, the Flemish Opera, the O.R.W and the O.P.R.L. As a 17-year-old, he joined the trumpeter's corps of the Royal Band of the Belgian Guides and officially became a soloist in 2007. In 2012, he passed the trumpet audition for the Royal band of the Belgian Air Force where he became first soloist in 2013. Michael is known for the diversity of his playing, ranging from baroque to jazz to variety. Since 2011, he has been a member of the Ensemble de Cuivres de Belgique with which he toured in Japan and South Korea. Since 2016, he has taught trumpet at the Academy of Frameries. Since 2018, he has been Chief Warrant Officer, Head of Brass of the Royal Band of the Belgian Air Force. In 2021, he is the first trumpeter to be invited by Alain Duault to Ponant's musical cruises alongside Jodie Devos, Marie Hallynck, Eliane Reyes and Elsa De Lacerda.

Klaas Coulembier



Klaas Coulembier grew up in Ypres, where he studied trumpet, piano and music theory at the local music academy. At the Koninklijke Harmonie Ypriana, his interest in music grew into a great passion, and so in 2002 he went to Leuven to study musicology. In 2006, he earned his master's degree there with a thesis on Béla Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra*. He was then immediately able to start working as a scientific collaborator in the research project *The Polytopic Clockwork* led by Prof Mark Delaere. This research into how 20th-century composers dealt with the parameter 'time' led to a doctoral project from 2009 to 2013, in which he wrote a thesis entitled *'Multi-temporality. Analyzing*

simultaneous time layers in selected compositions by Elliott Carter and Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf. The results of this research were published in international professional journals and he presented at conferences in Belgium, the Netherlands, France, England, Estonia and Italy. From 2013 to 2018, he remained at the university as a postdoctoral researcher. He was also a guest lecturer in music analysis in the master's programme of LUCA School of Arts (Lemmens Institute) for three years. In December 2018, Klaas received the prestigious Mgr Lenaerts Prize from the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Science and the Arts. Since 2021, he has been a visiting professor at the Department of Musicology at KU Leuven.

Throughout his academic career, Klaas also devoted a lot of attention to lecturing and writing about music. He is regularly invited by the major cultural houses in Flanders (Concertgebouw Brugge, deSingel, Amuz, Bozar, ...), gives day courses for Davidsfonds and Amarant, and occasionally provides interpretation for radio station Klara. The intense studies of other composers' music also regularly fuelled the fire to compose himself. In 2003, 2006 and 2015, Klaas received several awards from the Province of West Flanders for his compositions.

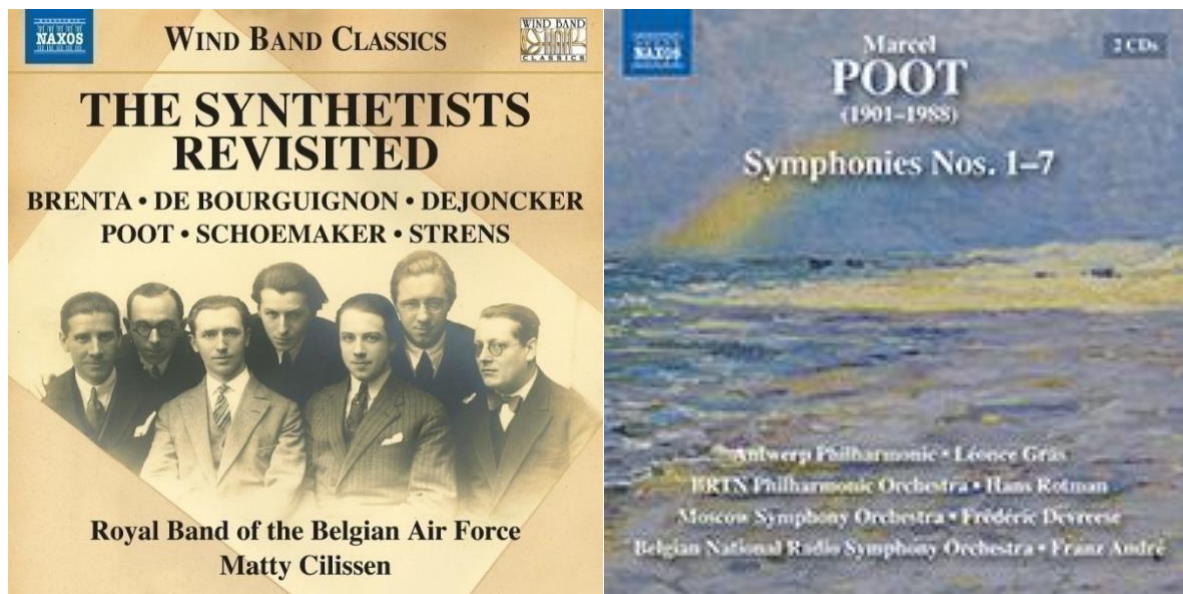
In 2014, he co-founded Ypress Digital Music Editions, a paperless music publisher with an emphasis on wind music and repertoire for part-time arts education. In 2018, at the request of Vlamo, he composed the test piece for the Vlamo Open Wind Band Championship on 17 March 2019. Meanwhile, he received several composition commissions and his music can regularly be heard on various stages in Flanders and abroad.

Luc Vertommen

Dr Luc Vertommen was born in Leest (Mechelen), where he was introduced to wind music through the local brass band. He studied cornet, solfège and piano at the music academies of Mechelen and Willebroek. His higher music studies at the Lemmens Institute in Leuven saw him awarded a triple laureate diploma for trumpet, music history and harmony and band conducting. He went on to earn a first prize in chamber music at the Royal Conservatory in Brussels and a master's



degree in conducting at the Lemmens Institute. He obtained his PhD at the University of Salford (Manchester) in 2011 in the class of David King and Peter Graham. After completing his education, he worked as a freelance trumpet player and was immersed full-time in the world of wind music, on the one hand as a teacher of brass and wind ensembles and as a teacher of band conducting. Since 2011, he has been director of the Arts Academy Deurne (Antwerp) and conductor of the Hauts-de-France Brass Band (FR) and Brassband Rijnmond (NL). He regularly conducts and judges all over Europe and in 2014 received the International *Buma Brass Award* for his international work within the world of wind music. He received the *Fuga Trophy* in 2001 for his commitment to Belgian music. He is responsible publisher for Traxon Music/Band Press and regularly makes arrangements for band which can be heard on numerous cds and was one of the finalists in the *1er Concours International d'Orchestration pour ensemble à vent* in France (2022).



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