

# ANNELIES VAN PARYS

## COMPOSER

**L**isten to Meditation (2005) by Annelies Van Parys and you will hear a distant bell sound in the opening bars hidden behind woodwinds and horns echoing a profoundly personal and human sound.

In this work, she takes her first steps towards spectralism. This is a musical voice learnt from her teacher at the Royal Conservatory of Ghent, Luc Brewaeys.

Other important sources of inspiration for her musical voice and whom she met during her further studies are: Jonathan Harvey, Thierry De Mey, Luca Francesconi, Judith Weir ...

### ANNELIES VAN PARYS

Annelies Van Parys (°1975) is one of Belgium's leading composers. She writes solo and chamber music works as well as large orchestral compositions with a great preference for music theatre. Since 2007, she is a resident composer of Muziektheater Transparant.

She received direct commissions from venues and performers as Belgian National Orchestra, Staatsoper unter den Linden Berlin, Folkoperan Stockholm, Biennale Musica di Venezia and Concertgebouw Orchestra Amsterdam and wrote for ensembles such as Recherche Freiburg, Ictus Ensemble, Asko/Schoenberg and Neue Vocalsolisten Stuttgart.

She was awarded numerous prizes (amongst them, the Fedora-Rolf Liebermann for Opera)

Annelies Van Parys is currently professor of composition at the Royal Conservatory department of the Brussels University College.

### ORCHESTRAL

In a sense, Van Parys's two symphonies are the sound-board for this compositional quest. Her first symphony Carillon (2006), premiered by the Royal Flemish Philharmonic under Sian Edwards, is based on the tonal spectrum of the Ghent Belfry.

The second symphony Les Ponts (2008) hangs more with the traditional symphonic form; it was premiered by the Symfonieorkest Vlaanderen with Otto Tausk. In 2012, this symphony opened the ISCM World Music Days in Brussels with Brussels Philharmonic.

In 2018, together with the famous German Playwright Dea Loher, she made A War Requiem for the Belgian National Orchestra and Collegium Vocale Gent with soloists Sophie

Karthäuser and Thomas Bauer.

This production, the official closure of the commemoration of the Armistice, was premièred in November 2018 conducted by Hugh Wolff. Press as well as public were equally impressed.

Eco... del vuoto the commission of Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra Amsterdam had a very succesful premiere in 2022 under the baton of Kristiina Poska. The piece features in the Horizon Recording series of the RCO.

In 2022 her concerto for Piano and orchestra was premièred by Jan Michiels and Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Martyn Brabbins.

May 2024, the European Union Youth Orchestra conducted by Alexandre Bloch premièred EUTOPIA, a commission of the EUYO and Bozar.

For Flanders Symphony Orchestra, she wrote a Fantasie on texts of the Belgian author Gaea Schoeters. The piece will be premiered in spring 2025 by Revue Blanche (with Lore Binon, soprano), Flanders Symphony Orchestra and the Ests Philharmonic Chamber Choir.

### NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL

In 2006, Annelies was a guest for the first time at the World Music Days with her chamber work Phrases V (2001): the piece, that winning the Flandres-Quebec prize, swept her to victory a few years earlier. Her chamber works have been much loved by many musicians ever since. Most Belgian ensembles regularly perform her work, and increasingly her music is also becoming a regular feature in the concert programs of foreign ensembles.

The New York New Music Ensemble premiered Fragrances (2008) in Leuven and is now in their NY repertory; Drifting Sand (2011) was premiered by Ensemble Recherche, in 2016 she wrote in the framework of MusMA for the Klara (radio) Festival Via Crucis for cello quartet, this was premiered by the Polish Cello Quartet. Performances followed in Poland, Turkey and Italy.

In 2016 she also wrote Come fiume incessante for the world famous Diotima Quartet, a piece dedicated to Luc

"...the perception is of a work that extraordinarily pervades all the senses, where you have the impression that, tonally, the ground is pulled from under your feet..."

Drifting Sand (Ensemble Recherche, Freiburg)  
- Alexander Dick, Badische Zeitung, 22 October 2012

Brewaey's who had passed away recently. A second string quartet, *Tsunami*, comes in 2023 as a commission of Bozar for the Sonoro Quartet who takes in on their European Tour to all famous concert halls in Europe.

In 2017 she writes *Chacun(e) sa Chaconne*, the obligatory work for the semi finals of the first session of the prestigious Queen Elisabeth Competition dedicated to cello.

The cello inspired her to write a solo for Séverine Ballon, *Shades of Light* (2022), in collaboration with Centre Henri Pousseur, performed the world première of *Shades of Light* for cello and electronics on Transit and Huddersfield Festival.

Several chamber music pieces like *Phrases V*, *Harp Trio* or *Blake Songs* are becoming repertoire for various chamber music ensembles.

## COMPOSING FOR VOICE

In addition to chamber music and orchestral works, Annelies shows a special talent for composing for voice. This is reflected in the voice solo *Poïèma* (2006), with Els Mondelaers performing this solo successfully a.o. in Amsterdam, Rome, Antwerp and the Musikfestspiele Sanssouci. *Ruhe* (2007) for male chorus, commissioned by Collegium Vocale Ghent, for the music-theatre work that bears the same name, and performed globally by them more than a hundred times, is perhaps her most successful vocal work to date - Joyce McMillan in *The Scotsman* wrote: "... until the end, when Schubert's rhythms give way to a magnificently deconstructed, questioning coda by contemporary Flemish composer Annelies Van Parys."

In 2018 she was commissioned a piece for the commemoration of the 100 years armistice by the famous French choir Accentus. *Shell Shock* premièred on 10 November 2018 in Rouen by Accentus, conducted by Marcus Creed.

For 2026 she will write a choir piece for the famous SWR Vocal Ensemble.

## MUSIC THEATRE

*Ruhe* was Annelies's first step toward the world of music-theatre. Once the interest in writing for the stage was aroused, she has focussed much on this field with opera, music theatre and installation works, with the drama of these complementing her chamber and orchestral writing. Notably works to date are: *An Index of Memories* (2009), *An Oresteia* (2010) and *Parcours* (2011).

In 2012, Annelies Van Parys was asked by Muziektheater Transparant, with whom she has had a close collaboration for many years, to arrange an abridged version of *Pelléas et Mélisande* by Debussy for ensemble Oxalys.

This was an instant hit and internationally acclaimed. In 2015 the arrangement was used for the production of the English Touring Opera in the UK. In 2018 the Wiener Kammer Oper choses her arrangement for a new production at the Wiener Kammeroper directed by Thomas Guggéis.

For the Klara Festival 2016, she wrote an introduction and finale for Bach's *Saint Johns Passion: And Thou Must Suffer* that was performed by B'Rock and Collegium Vocale Gent in a semi-staged version by Pierre Audi.

As a direct commission of Staatsoper Unter den Linden Berlin and Folkoperan Stockholm, Annelies Van Parys wrote *USHER* in 2018. Her idea to start from the unfinished opera *La chute de la maison Usher* by Debussy was welcomed with enthusiasm by both opera houses.

The libretto (Debussy/Poe) was edited/rewritten by Gaea Schoeters, the stage direction was by Philippe Quesne and the musical direction in the hands of Marit Strindlund. The première in October 2018 at Staatsoper unter den Linden received enthusiastic press reviews.

The Financial Times claims this opera deserves its place in the repertoire of the 21st century. Also in Stockholm, the opera sold out more than 10 times and in 2020 there was already a revival in Staatsoper Berlin and the opera was also (digitally during Covid) premièred in Operaballet Vlaanderen.

## RECENT WORK

During Covid, some small-scale works were created. Such as the atmospheric music theatre piece *Holle Haven* and *Medea* a 15' monodrama for soprano, clarinet and string quartet, a project of Wonderfeel Festival and Festival van Vlaanderen Mechelen that also has a version for organ and string quartet that was recorded by Bauwien van der Meer on the cd *La Lumière* (Etcetera).

2022 was a busy year again. Annelies Van Parys was granted a 9 weeks residency at TOKAS Tokyo where she wrote *Notwehr*, a music theatre production for the Biennale Musica di Venezia that was premièred the same year by Hermes Ensemble and soloists Els Mondelaers and Johanna Zimmer. The piece was applauded by public and critics for the music as well as for the libretto by Gaea Schoeters.

2024 the mini-opera *Rosalind*, written for Snaar Festival, was premièred by Bernadeta Astari and musicians of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, under the baton of Ed Spanjaard.

## RECOGNITIONS & AWARDS

Annelies Van Parys has won many awards for her work, such as Flandres-Québec, Jeunesses Musicales, Tactus, and Frere Darche and was awarded the prestigious Rolf Liebermann Prize for Opera (for the opera *Private View*).

*USHER* was selected for the International Opera Awards 2018 in the category World Premières.

In 2019 Annelies van Parys receives Klara Prizes for Composition and Music Personality of the year 2018 (Classical Music Awards).

Since 2008, Annelies Van Parys teaches at the Royal Conservatory department of the Brussels University College where she is now appointed as professor of composition.

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