

H A L O

Anemoon tot wolk: haiku for piccolo and piano

Piet-Jan van Rossum, 2014-15

The last cocktail...

Allan Segall, 2015

- I. Homage to Gershwin*
- II. Homage to Nancarrow*
- III. Homage to Messiaen*

Halo

Bart Spaan, 2014

Sonata for piccolo and piano

Jan Vriend, 2016-18

- I.*
- II.*
- III.*
- IV.*

Rickshaw Zip

Ned McGowan, 2015

Meccanica

Jan-Peter de Graaff, 2019

exclusively on digital download card

Mission Statement

I am convinced that the piccolo has entered a new era. After years of being perceived as *just a colour* in the orchestra, the time has come for this beautiful little instrument to conquer the stage on its own merit. Despite its negligible size, the piccolo harbours a surprisingly rich palette of sounds. Its powers of expression and outspoken character offer endless opportunities to elevate it into the ranks of *solo instruments*, equal to the flute, the violin, the piano and so on.

With that in mind, I founded the Dutch Piccolo Project. Its aim is to actively promote the piccolo as an autonomous solo instrument and create a repertoire. Close collaboration with a number of Dutch composers has so far resulted in an eclectic collection of new compositions for the piccolo as a solo instrument and in combination with other instruments such as the piano, the harp and percussion. In doing so, its repertoire has expanded substantially.

For this album, I chose six compositions written for the 'classical' combination of piccolo and piano, highlighting the piccolo in a wide variety of different guises. It whispers, sings, cries and even screams at times. One moment it revels in virtuoso acrobatics, the next it moans in hushed undertones. The whole gamut of its expressive potential is explored.

The compositions on this recording also demonstrate the variety and remarkable standard of contemporary music in The Netherlands. I therefore carefully selected composers who not only show affinity with the piccolo, but also speak with a unique voice, each showcasing the diversity of musical creativity in my home country.

This album is the beginning of an exciting journey, which definitely will take me to places I haven't been before. It raises expectations for the future of the instrument I so dearly love.

Ilonka Kolthof | Amsterdam, 2019

www.dutchpiccolo-project.com

Notes

Anemoon tot wolk: ("Anemone to cloud: ") is a small haiku for piccolo and piano. Between the mystical notes, composer Piet-Jan van Rossum wonders what kind of life the piccolo leads when not on stage.

Composer Piet-Jan van Rossum: *"The piccolo, this Pulcinella, always joyful: I would like to remove his make-up, have a look at him when he washes himself, eats dinner, tells a bed-time story to his kid, takes a train to the suburbs to visit his grandfather to listen to stories on how he used to drive a Delage with white tires and saw an oracle once who said 'love the woman, you know who, and walk on and on and on...'"*

In **The Last Cocktail...**, Allan Segall wrote three homages to three contrasting 20th-Century Masters whom inspired him — Gershwin, Nancarrow and Messiaen; composers who might appear at first glance to be rather mismatched, but come together in this surrealist work. Each movement evokes a completely different atmosphere, shining light on the many-faceted characteristics of the piccolo sound world.

Composer Allan Segall: *"I was amazed at the palette of colours both Ilonka and Ralph were able to create. One would not normally imagine the piccolo and the piano going together per-se,*

but working with these musicians, it seemed to me that this seemingly unorthodox combination proved in fact as long established as, say, the string quartet!"

In **Halo**, that hazy circle of white or coloured light around the sun, moon, or other luminous body, caused by refraction through ice crystals in the atmosphere, the piccolo colours the reverberation of the ongoing piano arpeggios with a variety of mostly soft, sometimes inaudible noises.

Composer Bart Spaan: *"The whispering piccolo creates a diffused glow of light — a halo — around the reverb in the piano. Thus the piccolo and piano create a fictional third instrument: a kind of prepared piano or, at times, a prepared piccolo. In this nebula of sounds eventually — albeit briefly — the sun breaks through, the piccolo enters its comfort zone: its radiant, highest register."*

The **Sonata for piccolo and piano** was composed by Jan Vriend in response to Ilonka's quest for new and substantial piccolo repertoire. The Sonata aims to make the instrument shine in all its aspects and elevate it onto a symphonic level. To that end the choice of the sonata format, however outmoded, provided an opportunity to undertake large-scale musical and instrumental exploration.

Composer Jan Vriend: *"Both instruments are on an equal footing and no compromise has been conferred on either player: both are engaged in a relentless endeavour of technical and musical concentration. The result is a journey in four movements through landscapes of constantly changing scenery in all its naked, complex and unpredictable radiance."*

Rickshaw Zip by Ned McGowan refers to those three-wheeled taxis in India, which zip you from one place to another along crowded city roads. This harrowing fizz in the music is divided in two by a different moment in big city traffic: around 4 am there is peace in the streets. Mystical silence is punctuated by the occasional dog bark or the night-blooming Brahma Kamal flower. It may not sound like it, but the music is quite Indian in essence, using a common Carnatic meter and a Raga approach to the pitches.

Composer Ned McGowan: *"If you pay careful attention to the constant near misses in the traffic you might wind up with a heart attack, so better to focus on the people, houses and cows along the way."*

Inspired by both the kinetic sculptures of Jean Tinguely as well as the so-called "Strandbeesten" by Dutch artist Theo Jansen, **Meccanica*** is a musical game of transferring musical "kinetic energy", from "linear" to "circular" rhythmic and melodic movements. But, just as the sculptures by Jansen, never in a direct straight line. The piece sometimes stops, turns and feels clunky. Both the piccolo and piano can sometimes sound as one instrument in unison or sound like two or even more separate instruments using different colours and articulations in counterpoint. The poetry is to be found inside the "mechanics" of the piece, when linear and circular movements together sound strikingly emotional.

Composer Jan-Peter de Graaff: *"As the subject of the piece has a lot to do with rhythmical movement, tone colour and sudden changes of mood and direction, there could not be a better combination of players and instruments to let the concept behind this piece really shine beside all the melodic lines and rhythmic twists and turns."*

**Meccanica is exclusively available on the included Digital Download Card.*

Ilonka Kolthof

"Musicians like Ilonka Kolthof are what keep the music world so fascinating." (Ned McGowan, composer and flutist)

Falling in love with the smallest, loneliest and slightly conceited member of the symphony orchestra... It happened to Dutch flutist Ilonka Kolthof, who was left no other choice than to devote her musical career to the piccolo. A tireless promoter of her instrument, Ilonka initiated the Dutch Piccolo Project, with the aim to actively raise the status of the piccolo to the level of an autonomous solo instrument. It has resulted in the creation of many new compositions for the piccolo, forging collaborations with internationally acclaimed musicians and drawing strong media attention.

Also a passionate flute player, Ilonka travels the world to play solo concerts, her suitcase usually stuffed with both flute and piccolo music from Vivaldi to Takemitsu, from Debussy to Castiglioni. On top of this she is a regular guest player in first-class orchestras at home and abroad such as the Dutch Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège and the Norrköping Symphony Orchestra.

Ilonka studied flute at the Conservatory of Amsterdam. She subsequently completed a piccolo specialization at the Royal Conservatory of Antwerp, honoured with "greatest distinction". Already during her studies, Ilonka won prizes in several acclaimed international piccolo competitions such as the International Walfrid Kujala Piccolo Competition (Second Prize, 2017) and the NFA Piccolo Artist Competition Chicago (Third Prize, 2014).

www.ilonkakolthof.com

Ralph van Raat

"Given the choice to hear him again live, I would run, not walk" (Musical America)

Ralph van Raat has been fascinated by classical music of the twentieth century since the age of 14. Although his repertoire ranges from Bach to Boulez, his primary focus has always been on composers from Debussy, Bartók and Ives to the present day masters. His aim is to convince his audiences of the immense beauty and diversity of our own time through solo recitals, lecture-recitals, concerto performances, CD-releases and special projects.

Van Raat helps audiences identify with modern day composers by adhering to a classical approach: he firmly believes that a strong sense of classical structure as well as a refinement of tone is essential in conveying the logic and poetry of any music. This did not go unrecognized: recipient of a substantial number of national and international awards, many composers wrote solo works for him, and he performed over fifty piano concertos with orchestras worldwide such as the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Van Raat has recorded over forty CDs.

Van Raat is a frequent speaker and performer on radio and television shows, and teaches at the Conservatory of Amsterdam in his spare time between concerts. He was named "Steinway Artist" in 2003, joining an exclusive club of internationally renowned artists.

www.ralphvanraat.com - Ralph van Raat performs courtesy of Naxos Records.

Recording Data

This album was recorded at Jurriaanse Zaal of De Doelen in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, from August 20 to 22 2019.

Piccolo: **Lillian Burkart Elite Model**

Piano: **Steinway Model D Concert Grand**

About TRPTK

TRPTK proudly uses DPA microphones, KEF loudspeakers, Hegel amplification, Merging Technologies AD/DA converters, Furutech cabling and power conditioning, and JCAT network equipment at their recording and mastering facilities, carefully optimized by Acoustic Matters.

All recordings are done in DXD (352.8 kHz 32 bits) in immersive 5.1-channel surround sound, and all masters are generated from the original DXD Studio Master, without any dynamic compression or limiting of the signal. In both stereo and surround sound, our aim is to create a truly immersive experience.

Equipment

Microphones

DPA d:dicare 4006A

DPA d:dicare 4015A

AD/DA converters

Merging Technologies HAPI

Merging Technologies Anubis

Monitoring

KEF Blade Two loudspeakers

Hegel H30 amplifiers

Sennheiser HD800s headphones

Cabling

Furutech custom microphone cables

Furutech custom loudspeaker cables

Furutech custom power cables

Furutech LineFlux XLR

Furutech NanoFlux NCF

Power Conditioning

Furutech Daytona 303E

Misc.

Furutech NCF Boosters

CAD Ground Control GC1

RTFS Acoustics

JCAT M12 Switch Gold

JCAT NET Card FEMTO



Credits

Recording & Mastering
Brendon Heinst

Assistant Engineering
Hans Erblisch

Liner Notes
Ilonka Kolthof

Piano Tuning
Gerben Bisschop

Photography & Artwork
Brendon Heinst

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