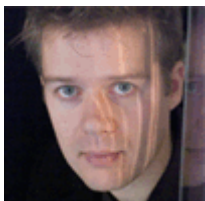


Michel van der Aa



Michel van der Aa 2007 © Marco Borggreve

CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Here [enclosed]

2003

17 min

for chamber orchestra and soundtrack

0.0.1.1-0.1.1.0-perc(1)-strings(6.6.6.4.2)-soundtrack(laptop, 1 player); theatrical object

"'Enclosed by the sound of noise'. Claustrophobia played a very intriguing role in the Matinee in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw. It was the subject of the new composition by Michel van der Aa... while the phrases expand and the cracking and hissing gets louder, the chamber orchestra is gradually enclosed by noises on the soundtrack. Van der Aa also shows a theatrical side. On stage is a plexiglass cabin raised like an upright coffin that reveals its contents at the end of the work. The ending is strong, as the solo violin, as if in fear of death, doesn't dare to play any further and keeps on repeating the same note." (Ernst Vermeulen, NRC Handelsblad, 13 Apr 2004)

"A special attraction was the new work of Michel van der Aa, Here [enclosed]." (Frits van der Waa, Volkskrant, 13 Apr 2004)

"During Here [enclosed] a black plexiglass monolith was placed on stage, as impeccable as Van der Aa's music; a stone guest with which the composer referred to the 'self' and the 'other', and to the divided sense of loneliness which pervades his whole oeuvre." (Anthony Fiumara, Trouw, 13 Apr 2004)

"Striking clarity and structure... Here [enclosed] is a model of Van der Aa's open-minded sense of sound." (Jos Ruiters, Noordhollands Dagblad, 13 Apr 2004)

World Premiere: 30 Mar 2004

Budapest, Hungary

Netherlands Radio Chamber Orchestra

Conductor: Peter Eötvös

Imprint

2005

14 min

for Baroque orchestra

2ob-hpd-strings(4.4.3.2.1); portative organ to be played by solo violinist; period instruments (415 Hz tuning) or modern instruments played in a Baroque way

"... a rhythmically taut, effective demonstration of collective virtuosity." (Max Nyffeler, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 29 Aug 2005)

"By far the most convincing work on the program ... Van der Aa was interested in more than sound colors, and transferred Baroque articulation, Baroque gestures, energy and virtuosity into a modern musical language." (sda, Der Zürcher Oberländer, 29 Aug 2005)

"In Imprint Michel van der Aa plays an obliquely humorous game with the sound material – in a way one seldom hears with Dutch composers. Refreshing, like a Baroque blueprint developed ever further, ultimately suggesting a parody of the idea of the basso continuo by laying metal rods on certain keys of the organ." (Thomas Meyer, Tages-Anzeiger, 29 Aug 2005)

"The shortest work of the evening, Michel van der Aa's fiery and brilliant Imprint, is surely the piece with the greatest chance of making its way into the repertoire. The Dutch composer dares as no other to not only exploit the languishing, sinewy and swelling tones of a Baroque string orchestra, but also to utilize the jagged contours and vitality of a robust, abrasive forte. Imprint is simply a pithy new interpretation of the standard Concerto Grosso, vigorously buffeted against dynamically craggy themes and woven into a net that sustains the piece." (Jörg Königsdorf, Süddeutsche Zeitung, 7 Sept 2005)

"By far the most gripping piece was Imprint by the young Dutch sensation Michel van der Aa – not least because it was the only work to confront directly the irony of a 21st-century composer meddling in 18th-century sonorities. Van der Aa's response was twofold. He gave the work the frenetically patterned feel of a Vivaldi concerto, with the leader (the excellent Gottfried von der Goltz) gradually infecting the whole band with manic figuration. But as the piece progressed another process was at work. More and more lead weights were placed on the keys of a chamber organ, building up a permanently sounded chord that glimmered through the strings. For Van der Aa, this represented 'the hand of a long-deceased Baroque composer': a neat metaphor and a clever musical device." (Richard Morrison, The Times, 22 Nov 2005)

World Premiere: 27 Aug 2005

Lukaskirche, Lucerne, Switzerland

Freiburger Barockorchester

Conductor: Gottfried von der Goltz