



Newsletter

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Festival News

Looking back on the festivities of November

Concerts of deFilharmonie – 8 & 9 November 2007



On 8 November Servais' first cello concerto was performed in Brussels at the "Paleis voor Schone Kunsten/Palais des Beaux Arts", by the Flemish Philharmonic and the Finnish cellist Seeli Toivio; Paul Watkins (Great Britain) was the conductor. The next evening this concerto was also performed at the Antwerp "Elisabethzaal". The soloist Seeli Toivio received a standing ovation from more than 1500 people present.

Symposium – 8 November 2007

Also on 8 November a symposium was held about Servais at the Brussels "Paleis der Academiën", the subject of which was 'A Travelling Cello Virtuoso and his Surroundings'. Seven speakers delivered interesting lectures on the cello, Servais' tours, the Villa Servais, and the composer's son Joseph and his granddaughter Misia. The participants included Minister of State Professor Mark Eyskens as well as a few members of the Servais family. To conclude the conference, Maksim Fernandez Samodaiev and Monica Florescu played some of Servais' own compositions. Among those present (over 75) were several musicians, scholars and music lovers both from Belgium and the Netherlands.

Closing concert – 25 November 2007

The renowned Chamber Orchestra of Wallonia - famous among others for their playing at the "Queen Elisabeth Music Contest" (Brussels) - gave two pieces by Servais for cello and an orchestra: *Souvenir de Bade*, opus 20 and *Le Barbier de Séville*, opus 6. The conductor was the Fleming Herman Engels, while the soloists were Didier Poskin, who played the cello, and Joris Verdin the harmonium. In addition, they also executed works by romantic contemporaries of Servais: Rossini's *Sonata nr.1 in G major*, the *Bagatelles for strings and harmonium* by Dvorak, and Grieg's *Holberg Suite*. At the end the musicians met with a standing ovation from the full concert hall. Afterwards a reception was offered by the City Council.



The Servais Society as a prizewinner



The Servais Society won two prizes recently. In October 2007 Peter François was given the “Cultuurduivel” by the local Cultural Council, biennially awarded to an organization or person for extraordinary achievements. In January 2008 the Servais Society won the “Persprijs Ivo Blijkers 2007”, awarded by the Halle Press Club, while Peter François was elected “Man of the Year 2007”.

Cultuurduivel (Cultural Council)



Press Prize Ivo Blijkers

Brochure ‘A Year under the Spell of Servais’

The Servais Society published a brochure looking back on the Festival “in words and images”. A must for anyone who was more or less closely involved.

Guido & Peter François, Een jaar in de ban van Servais. Terugblik op het Festival Servais 2007. Halle, Servais Society, 2008, 40 p. With supplement.

Available via the Servais Society or by downloading on www.servais-vzw.org.

Looking ahead

As a matter of course, the Servais Society will continue to devote themselves to the promotion of Servais’ music, including research into and dissemination of data about his life and work.

Join the Society!

A party of a few enthusiasts met in Halle in November 2003 to find out how Servais’ bicentenary anniversary could be celebrated. Some four years later we can now look back on an eventful year with tens of concerts, exhibitions, publications, a walk and a great number of interesting fringe activities. Hundreds of people joined in, thousands attended the organized activities, some tens of thousands visited our web sites. This unexpectedly huge response has stimulated us to continue with the same enthusiasm.

In the years to come the Servais Society will go on doing their very best to promote Servais’ music by means of concerts, CD recordings and the (re)publication of scores, research into his life and work and the propagation of it through exhibitions, lectures and publications, the further development of a Halle Servais collection, the safeguarding of his heritage in our town, and a lot of other things. More generally, it is our aim to boost the musical and cultural life in Halle and far beyond, focusing on the importance of the cello and the cello repertory, and to stimulate and support talented youngsters via a National Cello Contest.

Are you also getting enthusiastic while you are reading this? If so, you are cordially invited to become a sustaining member of our society. Your moral and financial support will enable us to realize our objectives.

How to join the Society?

If you contribute 10 Euros or more annually you are ‘Regular member’; if you are willing to contribute 50 Euros or more, ‘Patronizing member’.

- › As a member you will regularly receive an issue of the **Newsletter** (preferably via e-mail, but we will be pleased to let you have a printed copy in case you have no access to the internet).
- › You are also **invited** to all the cultural activities of the Servais Society. Members can order two tickets at the subscription rate for every concert that the Society organizes.
- › Membership’s **discount** of ca. 10 % on publications (books and compact discs) published by the Servais Society (if directly bought or ordered through the Society)
- › We can provide associated musicians and other persons interested with copies of **scores** at cost price. You can always call on us to help you with any queries about the composer’s life and work.
- › Members whose 2008 contribution amounts to at least 20 Euros will be sent, if desired, a copy of the **brochure** ‘Een jaar in de ban van Servais. Terugblik op het Festival Servais’, a splendidly illustrated publication of 40 pages.

You can become a member via the web site :
www.servais-vzw.org.

Obviously you can always get in touch with us if you need any further information. We look forward to hearing from you, and very sincerely thank you for your support !

Concerts

Most recent info : www.servais-vzw.org

February 10 – Rauma Music Festival

Seeli Toivio (cello) & Risto-Matti Marin (piano)
Work by Servais : Fantaisie Burlesque ou le Carnaval de Venise, opus 9
Raahe (Finland), Raahasali

February 10 – Podium-Konzert

Kian Soltani (cello) & Paul Faderny (piano)
Work by Servais : Souvenir de Spa, opus 2
Vaduz (Liechtenstein), Rathausaal, 11 AM

February 21

Viviane Spanoghe, cello
with a.o. Souvenir de l'Île de Koch by Peter Swinnen, dedicated to Servais
Waterloo, 12.15 PM

February 24 – Fantasia e virtuosismi d'opera

Johann Sebastian Paetsch (cello) & Roberto Arosio (piano)
Work by Servais : Souvenir de Spa, opus 2
Mendrisio, Riva san vitale teatro unione, 5 PM

February 24

Luc Tooten (cello) & Stéphane de May (piano)
Work by Servais & Grégoir : Fra Diavolo. 2me duo brillant
Dresden, Dreikönigskirche/Haus der Kirche, 3 PM

March 1 – Cellissimo – Souvenir de Spa

Stefan Giglberger (cello) & Kammerorchester Berlin dir. Katrin Scholz
Work by Servais : Souvenir de Spa, opus 2
Berlin (Germany), Philharmonie Berlin, Kammermusiksaal, 8 PM
> www.artesystem.net

March 2 – Lecture-Recital 'Cellist-Composers in the 19th Century'

Seeli Toivio (cello) & Lily-Marlene Puusepp (harp)
Work by Servais : Fantaisie pour le Violoncelle, opus 1
Helsinki (Finland), Cygnaeus Art Gallery, 2 PM

March 13

Stefan Giglberger (cello) & Kammerorchester Berlin dir. Katrin Scholz
Work by Servais : Souvenir de Spa, opus 2
Terrassa (Spain), Centre Cultural de Caixa Terrassa, Auditori "Alfons Vallhonrat", 9 PM
> www.fundacet.com

April 1 – Celli Obligati

Dmitri Ferschtman (cello) & Gavriel Lipkind (cello)
Work by Servais : Caprice from Six Caprices, opus 11
Amsterdam (The Netherlands), Concertgebouw, Kleine Zaal, 8.15 PM
> www.kamconcerten.nl

April 14

Ruiko Matsumoto (cello) & Kanako Matsumoto (violin)
Work by Servais & Ghys : Variations Brillantes sur "God

Save the King"
Tokyo, Karura Hall, 7 PM

May 8

Ruiko Matsumoto (cello) & Kanako Matsumoto (violin)
Work by Servais & Ghys : Variations Brillantes sur "God Save the King"
Sapporo, Sapporo Concert Hall, Kitara, 7 PM

May 16 – Eugène Ysaÿe 1858-2008

Eliot Lawson (violin) & Jill Lawson (piano)
Work by Franz Servais (1846-1901) : Contemplation
Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België (Royal Library), Arthur De Greef hall, 12.30 PM
> www.kbr.be

May 25

Luc Tooten (cello) & Stéphane de May (piano)
Work by Servais & Grégoir : Fra Diavolo. 2me duo brillant
Obernkirchen, Stift Obernkirchen
> <http://www.treff-im-stift-obernkirchen.de>

May 30 – Klassik im Schloss "God Save the King"

Wen Sinn Yang (cello) & Rudens Turku (violin)
Work by Servais & Ghys : Variations brillantes et concertantes sur God Save the King
Pattensen (Germany), Schloss Marienburg, 8 PM
> www.schloss-marienburg.de

June 6 – Servais Concert

Sarah Dupriez (cello) & Kryptos Quartet
Work by Servais : O Cara Memoria, opus 17 ; Souvenir de Spa, opus 2
Halle, cc 't Vondel, 8 PM
> www.servais-vzw.org

Sarah Dupriez is a promising young talent. Her record is already impressive. She graduated with distinction at the Brussels Conservatory and is now studying in Helsinki. She regularly gives concerts with chamber ensembles or as a soloist. In October 2007 she toured the United States. In April 2007 Sarah Dupriez won the Servais Prize at the National Cello Competition in Ghent.



> www.sarahdupriez.com

The **Kryptos Quartet** was founded in 2002 and consists of Hanna Drzewiecka (1st violin), Elisabeth Wybou (2nd violin), Vincent Hepp (viola) and Anthony Gröger (cello). The quartet gives concerts in the most prestigious halls of Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Finland, Poland and Russia.

> www.kryptosquartet.be

In Halle, they will play romantic music by Servais and contemporaries.

In the showcase

Servais on YouTube

On the popular video web site YouTube you can spot a recording of Servais' *Souvenir de Spa*, played by Johann Paetsch and the Orpheus Quartet on 10 August 2007 in Raahe (Finland).
› www.youtube.com/user/jsp007

Servais in the "National Biographical Dictionary"

Last year the eighteenth volume of the "National Biographical Dictionary" came out, which is a reference work in Dutch containing comprehensive articles about praiseworthy compatriots. No fewer than eight of the persons dealt with are linked with Halle, either because they were born here or spent a large part of their lives in our town. In this very Servais year Adrien François Servais and his two musically gifted sons Franz and Joseph Servais have been included. It was Peter François who wrote the three Servais items.

The "National Biographical Dictionary" is a publication (in Dutch) of the "Koninklijke Academiën van België" (further information on www.kvab.be).

A new recording of "God Save the King"

On 28 January 2008 a new CD was released that contains one of Servais' compositions. Violinist Rudens Turku and cellist Wen-Sinn Yang play the *Duo for violin and cello*, opus 7 by Zoltán Kodály, the *Duo for violin and cello*, opus 124 by Justus Johann Friedrich Dotzauer, *Huit morceaux*, opus 39, numbers 1, 3, 4 and 7 by Reinhold Glière, the *Duetto No. 1 for violin and cello* by Niccolò Paganini and *Variations brillantes on "God Save the King"* by Servais and Joseph Ghys.

Rudens Turku & Wen-Sinn Yang, Duos for Violin and Cello. Londen, Avie Records, 2008, AV 2124

› www.avierecords.com - www.rudensturku.com

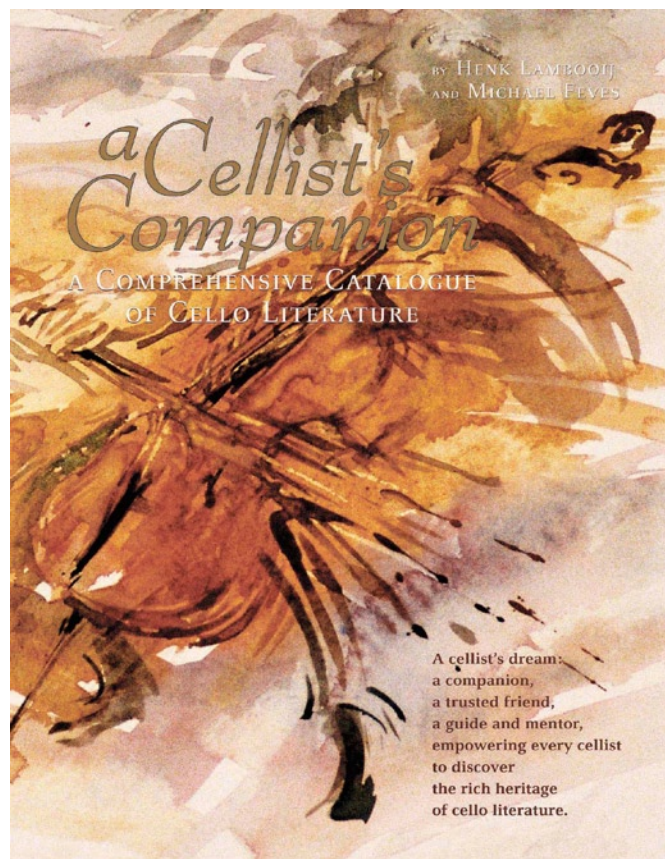


A Cellist's Companion

Cellists Henk Lambooij and Michael Feves have been toiling on their "magnum opus" for 35 years: this involves the most comprehensive survey ever of the cello repertory, with ca. 45,000 titles of some 15,000 composers. We can find, arranged in alphabetical order on the composers' names, works for cello only, cello and piano, cello accompanied by an orchestra, duos, works written for an orchestra, works for a cello ensemble, works for two or more soloists with an orchestra, for cello and song, methods and studies. As the text on the back flap says: "it's a reference work that will immediately become every cellist's companion". Evidently, also most of Servais' compositions are mentioned.

Henk Lambooij & Michael Feves, A Cellist's Companion. A Comprehensive Catalogue of Cello Literature, lulu.com, 2007 (ISBN: 978-1-8479900-5-1)

› www.cellocompanion.com



Cipa Godebski et les Apaches

In this article Malou Haine describes the environment of Cipa Godebski, the half-brother of Servais' granddaughter Misa Godebski. He was great friends with the Parisian society 'Les Apaches', which also included Maurice Ravel, Manuel de Falla and Igor Stravinsky. It was a kind of club consisting of united intellectuals from various disciplines. They were always given a warm-hearted welcome at the salon of Cipa and his wife Ida in Paris.

Malou Haine, 'Cipa Godebski et les Apaches', in Revue belge de musicologie, vol. LX, 2006, p. 221-266

A visit to Anner Bijlsma

Peter François

Anner Bijlsma : for sure, a great name in the cello world. He taught at the Amsterdam and The Hague conservatories for many years, and also briefly at Harvard. As a soloist he has performed all over Europe and Russia, the USA, Asia, and Australia during the last fifty years. Many renowned orchestras and groups, including L'Archibudelli and the Smithsonian Chamber Players, have accompanied him. His discography consists of several dozens of records and compact discs.

I went to visit the famous cellist at his home in Amsterdam. The Bijlsma mansion is a busy place with guests coming and going all the time. There was the piano tuner, there were pupils of Bijlsma's wife, violinist Vera Beths, and a famous double bass player performing at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw that evening.



The Servais Strad, magic and divine

A week earlier the American cellist Kenneth Slowik was a visitor here. Slowik is responsible for the 'Servais Strad', Stradivari's famous 1701 cello at the National Museum of American History, part of the Smithsonian Institute. The instrument was named after Adrien François Servais, the famous cellist from Halle, who played it during almost his entire career. This instrument is considered to be one of the finest cellos in the world. Its value is estimated at five million dollars. Anner Bijlsma is one of the few privileged people authorised to play this Strad.

Bijlsma vividly remembers his first "encounter" with the instrument. 'I was completely overwhelmed. You hold an instrument that not only gives you what you desired in your wildest dreams, it also offers you things you did not know of. I played all the pieces I knew, it was so terrific ! But I was sad as well, as I would never be able to take the instrument home with me. Imagine what I could have done if I had come across the instrument twenties years earlier !' (...) 'The bass of the instrument has a magic touch, with a ravishing tone. When you hear it you'll think it's impossible, something you can hear only in heaven. And then, the upper ranges. Every note you play has personality. If I play a rising scale, I hear no scale but individual ascending notes. When you play a glissando on the D string it has such an erotic power that you don't know what's happening.'

Ever since Bijlsma has regularly travelled to Washington to play the Servais Strad. He used the instrument in his recordings of works by Boccherini, Brahms, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Servais and Spohr, made between 1986 and 1995, usually with the Smithsonian Chamber Players.

'The first two recordings were made in the dead of night since the museum is located near an airport. It was a bit uncanny. All those figures in the museum collection staring at you with their dead eyes. Yet it sounded so fresh as if it was in the early morning hours.'

The following recording sessions took place in New York, at the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Quite an enterprise as all the valuable instruments had to be taken there as well. Two guards watched over the Servais Strad alone.

'Servais gave the cello a violin's charm'

The cellist took me to his study on the second floor of the house, where a large collection of scores can be found.

'In the sixties there were numerous small music shops in the Netherlands, hardly visited by anybody. When you walked in you were cordially welcomed. I would always walk out with dusty hands, and a pile of scores that seemed interesting enough to have a closer look at. Such shops closed when VAT was introduced.'

Among these scores are thirty works by Servais. Bijlsma has played nearly all, and recorded six of them.

'If you want to listen to this music, which is not the great Bach, Beethoven or Bruckner repertoire, it is much more important that you know more about the circumstances in which it was written. The more affinity you have with the early nineteenth century, the more you will enjoy it.'



In the eighteenth century an artist would perform for a king. The early nineteenth century brought a new audience of shopkeepers. They went to concerts for the first time, and were amazed by what they heard : “Say Marianne, how that man... that is a bass instrument, isn’t it, listen, but it sounds like a violin. How does he do it ?” Such pieces were often written to surprise the listener : “Oops, is that coming from a cello, flageolet tones and low notes, and sounds like a baritone’s voice, and then a sort of violin singing.”

The appreciation among people was very important. At a house concert Servais would rise his bow first to immediately lower it again. He would then say : “I have no rosin”. Then the lady of the house would quickly fetch him a glass of Bordeaux, and put it under his chair.

The music of those times used to be direct. That’s also the way to play it. I often notice that famous players perform such music with a sort of pretence of ‘a brilliant cellist plays a minor composer’. That will never work. Both the performer and his audience should enjoy the charm of this music. Servais’ most famous work is *Souvenir de Spa*. If you have an excellent taste, and you know Mahler’s repertoire, you may, of course, wonder what a ‘common’ tune this is. But then you have not quite understood the matter. That is not the way to play it either. *Souvenir de Spa* depicts one of those health resorts rich people would visit, or others who had been saving for their stay for years. Suppose you had been running a small business day in day out for five years. You and your wife were staying at Spa for a week. You might think : “Life’s too short. Another five years have passed. Your wrinkles are showing, and you are losing your hair. May we live long.” Such melancholy can be found in *Souvenir de Spa*. I appreciate it, I understand its charm.’

In his cello technique Servais strove for the depicting element. Actually, he was looking for pictures from life. Moreover, he was a teacher. Thus his pieces contain a lot of typical cello material. But his greatest achievement was that he gave the cello the charm of the violin, although he did very well in the lower range too. He was called the Paganini of the Cello for good reason. However, not the diabolical Paganini, as people had fabricated the artist afterwards. Paganini did also write lovely Italian opera style music.

The funny thing about the whole period is that everybody was so different. If you now listen to Tom, Dick and Harry on the radio, they all play the violin perfectly. But it is tricky to wager a penny on who is who. But if you heard a concerto in those days by Servais, Franchomme, Romberg, Dotzauer, Fitzenhagen or Piatti, you would hear a different performance each time. They were often self-taught. Of course Servais was Platel’s pupil, but he was already his teacher’s assistant after a year. I am not so keen on teachers. At least one famous teacher should be hanged in public every year. Nowadays, teachers want to be famous in their own right, rather than being an aid helping young musicians to find their own style of playing. On our TV screens nowadays we more and more see football coaches instead of players. Isn’t that strange ?’

Guest of Honour in Halle

Anner Bijlsma was a guest of honour at the Servais bicentennial festivities on 6 June 2007 in Halle, Servais’ native town, near Brussels. In a lecture at the official solemn ceremony he described Servais’ time and his own experiences with the Servais Strad. That evening he attended the birthday concert

at St. Martinus Church, where German and Finnish musicians performed works by Servais, Liszt, and Schubert. ‘I thought it was great. Such respect for a Belgian musician and tradition (...), the atmosphere was fine. I remember it with pleasure.’



Peter François and Anner Bijlsma in front of the Servais statue at the Grand Place in Halle, 6 June 2007 (photo Guido François)

Bibliography

All quotations : Anner Bijlsma's interview with Peter François, Amsterdam, 13 September 2007.

Supplementary sources :

- › William Monical & Gary Sturm, Violoncello (the "Servais") Antonio Stradivari, Cremona, 1701, 1995 (work document, Smithsonian Institute)
- › Bill Yardley, 'Moving Music', in : James Conaway, The Smithsonian. 150 Years of Adventure, Discovery, and Wonder. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1995, p. 318-319.
- › Anner Bijlsma, Bach, The Fencing Master, Bijlsma's Fencing Mail, Basel, 1998
- › De Arm van Bach – film featuring Anner Bijlsma, VPRO, 1999
- › Lecture by Anner Bijlsma, Halle, 6 June 2007
- › CD-booklets Anner Bijlsma's Servais recordings.

With many thanks to Anner Bijlsma for his warm hospitality, to Jacques Kleverlaan, who familiarized me with Amsterdam, Gary Sturm for additional information, the VPRO for a copy of the film 'De Arm van Bach' and the Smithsonian Institute and the Cutting Archives for a copy of the registration at the October 1985 concert.

Discography

Recordings by Anner Bijlsma of works by Adrien François Servais

Ca. 1970

Anner Bijlsma, cello ; Jacques Holtman & Richard Kilmer, violin ; Joke Vermeulen, viola ; Anthony Woodrow, double bass

Souvenir de Spa – opus 2 (15:44)

Released on :

- › 'Virtuose Gesellschaftsmusik der Frühromantik für Violoncello und Streicher' (lp), BASF, Ludwigshaven, MPS 25 208915-0 STEREO (ca. 1970)

- › 'Virtuoso Cello Music from the Early Romantic Period' (lp), Musical Heritage Society, Ocean, New Jersey, MHS 912120Z (1988)
- › 'Early Romantic Cello Music' (cassette), Musical Heritage Society, Ocean, New Jersey, MHC 312120X (1988)

1975

Anner Bijlsma, cello & Gérard van Blerk, piano
Quatre morceaux de salon, nr. 4 (4:20)

Released on :

- › 'Theo Olof presenteert. Geliefde Solo Instrumenten : Cello/Anner Bijlsma' (lp), Dutch Record Company, OM 555 027 (1975)

1986

Smithsonian Chamber Players (Anner Bijlsma, cello ; Vera Beths & Joseph Gatwood, violin ; Melissa Graybeal, viola ; Kenneth Slowik, 2nd cello ; Richard Myron, double bass & James Weaver, harmonium)

Souvenir de Bade. Grande Fantaisie – opus 20 (14:22)

Caprice 4 – opus 11 (3:55)

Caprice 2 – opus 11 (2:12)

Le Comte Ory. Caprice – opus 3 (9:06)

Grand Duo de Concert sur deux airs nationaux anglais (Servais & Léonard) (12:29)

Souvenir de Spa – opus 2 (16:26)

Released on :

- › 'Adrien-François Servais. Souvenirs & Caprices' (lp), EMI-Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, Freiburg, 067- 74900091 (1988)
- › 'Adrien-François Servais. Souvenirs & Caprices' (cd), EMI-Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, Freiburg, CDC 7 49009 2 (1988)
- › 'Servais. Souvenirs & Caprices', Deutsche Harmonia Mundi Editio Classica 77108-2-RG (1990)



Recordings with the Servais Strad

Eric Feldbusch, cello & James Weaver, piano

- › Live-recording in Washington during the inauguration concert of the Servais Strad on 2 October 1985, with Suite in G Major, BWV 1007 by J.S. Bach, Variations on a theme from Mozart's The Magic Flute by Ludwig van Beethoven, Mosaïque by Eric Feldbusch and Morceau de Concert, opus 14 by A. F. Servais, unedited (Smithsonian Institute Archives, Record Unit 591, Box 82)

Anner Bijlsma, cello

- › J. S. Bach : Suites for Violoncello Solo, Sony Classical, S2K 48 047 (1992)* **

Anner Bijlsma, cello & Smithsonian Chamber Players

- › Servais. Souvenirs & Caprices, EMI-Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, 067- 74900091 (LP) en CDC 7 49009 2 (CD) (1988) [reissue: Deutsche Harmonia Mundi Editio Classica 77108-2-RG (1990)]
- › Luigi Boccherini. Quintette/Quintets. Op. 11, 4-6, Freiburg, Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, RD77159 (1991)
- › Georges Onslow : String Quintets, Sony Classical, SK 64 308 (1995)

Anner Bijlsma, cello ; Vera Beths & Lisa Rautenberg, violin ; Steven Dann, viola ; Kenneth Slowik, cello

- › Schubert. Quintet in C, Sony Classical, SK 46 669 (1991)**

Anner Bijlsma, cello, L'Archibudelli & Smithsonian Chamber Players

- › Mendelssohn – Gade. Octets for Strings, Sony Classical, SK 48 307 (1992)*
- › Louis Spohr. Octet, Sextet, Quintet, Sony Classical, SK 53 370 (1993)
- › Friedrich Dotzauer, Sony Classical, SK 64 307 (1994)

Anner Bijlsma, cello, Lambert Orkis, piano, L'Archibudelli & Smithsonian Chamber Players

- › Franchomme/Chopin. Grand Duo Concertant, Sony Classical, SK 53 980 (1994)

Anner Bijlsma, cello & Lambert Orkis, piano

- › Brahms-Schumann, Sony Classical, SK 68 249 (1995)* **

* reissued in 2001 – Edition Anner Bylsma, Sony Classical

** reissued in 2004 – Anner Bijlsma 70 years – A Jubilee Edition, Sony Classical, 5173532

Almost every recording is present in the Servais collection of the Servais Society and the Zuidwestbrabants Museum Halle.

