



Newsletter

No. 22 – MARCH 2011

Forthcoming

Servais Master Classes

Between April 11th and 15th the Servais Society will be organizing cello master classes in the Halle Servais Academy for students and graduates from a conservatory and last-year students of a school of music who want to achieve greater professional proficiency. Ms. Viviane Spanoghe of the Royal Brussels Conservatory will be our master and Paul Hermsen will help as the piano accompanist. In addition there are various fringe activities, such as a sightseeing tour in the old town centre and a visit to the Servais rooms housed in the museum. At the end there is also a public performance in which each of the participants will have to perform. Everybody is very warmly welcome.

Practical information :

*Closing Concert Servais Master Classes,
Friday April 15, Servais Academy, Servaiszaal,
Kardinaal Cardijnstraat 7, 1500 Halle, at 7.30 p.m.
No entrance fee; no reservations*

*Any questions and queries should be addressed to
the Servais Society.*

11th Servais Concert on June 3, 2011

Romain Dhainaut was a student at the Conservatories of Brussels and The Hague and is now completing his music studies at the London Royal Academy of Music. In 2009 he was the one who won the third prize at the International Servais Cello Competition. Together with pianist Pierre Brunello they will pay tribute to Servais, precisely three days before his 204 birthday. On the occasion of the 'Liszt Year 2011' the programme will also feature works by Franz Liszt, the famous virtuoso with whom Servais gave some concerts.



Content :

Forthcoming

- > *Servais Master Classes*
- > *Servais Concert on June 3rd 2011*

Looking back

- > *The Servais Concert of November 26, 2010*
- > *The Amsterdam Cello Biennale*

Miscellaneous News

Concert Calendar

Focusing on a new acquisition

No doubt, this will be a highly enjoyable evening with pleasant romantic chamber music by Servais and his contemporaries.

Practical information :

*Friday June 3,
Council Chamber of the Halle, New Town Hall, at 8 p.m.*

*Tickets are available at the cc 't Vondel, Possozplein 40,
1500 Halle, (+32)(0)2 365 94 05 or online : www.vondel.be.*

Members of the Servais Society can buy two tickets at the special subscribers' rate via the Servais Society.

Any questions and queries should be addressed to the Servais Society.

Looking back

The Servais Concert of November 26, 2010

The repertory of the Finnish cello player Seeli Toivio includes no fewer than fifteen works by Servais. She was our guest in Halle for the 2007 Servais Festival and last November she visited Servais' native town once again, but this time in the company of two compatriots of hers : violinist Linda Hedlund and harpist Lily-Marlene Puusepp. These three musicians have already given a lot of international perfor-



mances and have numerous CD-recordings to their credit. That evening they played some duos and trios of Dutch and Finnish composers, as well as three works by Servais himself. Mainly Servais' *Fantaisie* for cello and harp was very much appreciated. It may well be the first time ever that this piece of music was performed in his native place since his death 144 years ago. He dedicated this work to the Halle musician Jean-Joseph Vandercammen. This 10th Servais Concert was for the Servais Society also an opportunity to celebrate their seventh anniversary. The day after the artists were given a private guided tour of the Servais rooms in the Museum while they could also have a backstage look at the Servais collection.



© JUNO fotografie

www.juno-fotografie.be

The Amsterdam Cello Biennale

"Maybe the greatest cello festival in Europe", so Louise Hopkins told me when I asked for her opinion on the third edition of the Amsterdam Cello Biennale, which took place between November 5 and 13 2010. Indeed, the number of the soloists, the level of the concerts, the atmosphere, simply everything could be called 'grand'. Let us count together : 42 concerts, twelve master classes and some ten other events as well. On top of this there was a high-ranking National Cello Concours, in three rounds. The list of contributing cello players can be read as a 'Who is Who' of the cello world : Anner Bijlsma, Christophe Coin, Valter Despalj, Dmitri Ferschtman, Alban Gerhardt, Natalia Gutman, Louise Hopkins, Anssi



Jury members of the Concours : Louise Hopkins, Michel Strauss, Harro Ruijsenaars, Raphael Walfisch, Richard Aaron and Valter Dešpalj
Photo : Arie Jan Verstraeten

Karttunen, Miklos Perenyi, Jean-Guihen Queyras, Giovanni Sollima, Raphael Walfisch, just to mention a few.

To say nothing about the ensembles and orchestras "in residence", such as "Amsterdam Sinfonietta", the "Orkest van de Achttiende Eeuw", the "Residentie Orkest", the "China Philharmonic Cellists" and "Die 12 Cellisten der Berliner Philharmoniker", who gave us moments of unforgettable bliss : Giovanni Sollima with Rossini's *Une Larme*, which the composer dedicated to Servais (!) (November 5), the "Mega Kinder Cello Orkest" (November 6), Christophe Coin with the Celloconcerto by Bernhard Romberg (November 6), Louise Hopkins in the Sonate of Rachmaninov (November 7), Doris Hochscheid in the world première of the Celloconcerto by Martijn Padding (November 11), Liza Ferschtman and Miklos Perenyi in Brahms' double concerto.

The Biennale attracted over 21.000 visitors, almost as international as the performing artists themselves. The venue of this musical event was the brand-new "Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ", which boasts a magnificent view on the river IJ but above all some halls with outstanding acoustics. Each day consisted of a number of returning ingredients : so the day began at 8.45 a.m. with 'Bach and Breakfast' – breakfast followed by a Bach suite –, then one could attend master classes, a panel discussion with Anner Bijlsma – senior of the top soloists present – as chairman, in the afternoon chamber music concerts and workshops and a great concert in the evening.



Peter François and Arie Jan Verstraeten at the Servais Stand
Photo : Fred Van de Biezen

Also Servais was prominently present at this Biennale, though not (yet) in the concert hall, but in the reception hall : for nine days on end the Servais Society was allowed to "man" a stand, with due thanks to our Dutch friends Arie Jan Verstraeten, Michael Feves and Henk Lambooij for their indispensable assistance. From early morning till evening numbers of cellists and cello lovers visited our stand : to many Servais was a

sheer discovery, while some others availed themselves of this opportunity to extend and deepen their knowledge about the Halle composer. In fact, it was also an ideal occasion to talk to people I had not met for years and to establish new contacts with interested music lovers, students and cello celebrities, such as Valter Despalj, Louise Hopkins, Richard Aaron and Pieter Wispelwey. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, these great cello players were very get-at-able, which contributed to the pleasant and amicable atmosphere. In general, cellists tend to be very kind and amiable persons, which once again was proven at this Biennale.

And last but not least, Anner Bijlsma joined in with the Servais stand ; so he came along almost each day for an informal talk. On Thursday November 11 he even invited me on to the stage for a talk on Servais, and so all at once I found myself in the company of great musicians such as Michel Strauss, Anssi Karttunen and Monique Bartels.

Anyone who attended this Biennale will no doubt have noted the date for the next edition : from October 26 through November 3, 2012. You are also warmly invited to register as a 'Friend' of the Biennale ; in so doing you will not only give moral support but also help the organizers financially. Indeed, finding sufficient resources proves to be getting increasingly difficult to stage an event like this. To conclude, our sincere congratulations go to artistic curator Maarten Mostert, manager Johan Dorrestein and their impressive team of enthusiast cooperators !

Miscellaneous News

» On October 22, 2010 Didier Poskin played Servais' *Concerto* in b minor, Opus 5, accompanied by the "Ensemble Orchestral de Bruxelles" and conducted by Jacques Vanherenthals at the Concert Hall of the Brussels Royal Conservatory. We were also the privileged audience to listen to the première of the second cello concerto by the Belgian composer Robert Janssens.

» Photographer JUNO availed himself of the opportunity of Seeli Toivio's stay in Halle to make a portrait photo of this Finnish musician. Actually, he is working on a portrait series of various artists who have a link with the town of Halle or are its cultural ambassadors. As you know, Seeli has already considerably contributed to the promotion of Servais' music and so she fits in with this project very well. The photo shot took place at a very special place : the villa Servais, and so she was portrayed at the very place where Servais used to play with the greatest contemporary musicians. The exhibition featuring these portraits – amongst others also Hubert 'Witse' Damen and city poet Geert Vanhassel – will be on display in the autumn of this year.

www.juno-fotografie.be

» On October 3, 30 and 31 and November 7, 8 and 9 2010, cellist Yutaka Hayashi and pianist Kazue Kojima played Servais' *Morceau de Concert*, Opus 14 at various places in Japan. The Servais Society was very pleased to provide visual material for the programme. Interestingly, last January Yutaka was given the "National Arts Festival New Award" by the Agency for Cultural Affairs on the occasion of this 'Composer-Collection Concert Series'.

Concert Calendar

Servais Society

April 11 to 15, 2011 - Servais Master Classes 2011

Halle, Servaisacademie

Friday April 15 at 7.30 p.m. : Closing Concert.

Everybody is welcome ! No entrance fee.

www.servais-vzw.org

June 3, 2011 - 11th Servais Concert

Romain Dhainaut (cello) & Pierre Brunello (piano)

Work by Servais : Andante cantabile et Rondo à la Mazurka sur un Air de Balfe, opus 7; Tannhäuser de R. Wagner. Duo brilliant

Halle, New Town Hall, at 8 p.m.

Organized by : Servais Society and cc 't Vondel

www.servais-vzw.org

Other initiatives

March 27, 2011 – Concerts Astoria

Romain Dhainaut (cello) & Pierre Brunello (piano)

Work by Servais : Andante cantabile et Rondo à la Mazurka sur un Air de Balfe, opus 7

Brussels, Musical Instruments Museum, 11 a.m.

www.astoria-concerts.be

April 26, 2011 – Virtuose Cellonacht mit Orchester

Wen-Sinn Yang (cello) & Württembergische Philharmonie

Reutlingen conducted by Christoph Adt

Work by Servais : Souvenir de Spa, opus 2

Rutesheim (Germany)

www.cello-akademie-rutesheim.de

April 28 - May 2, 2011

Sol Gabetta (cello) & Henri Sigfridsson (piano)

Work by Servais : Fantaisie sur deux Airs russes, opus 13

April 28 : Catania (Italy)

May 2 : Imola (Italy)

www.solgabetta.com

May 17 to 20, 2011

Sol Gabetta (cello) & Bertrand Chamayou (piano)

Work by Servais : Fantaisie sur deux Airs russes, opus 13

May 17 : Schwetzingen (Germany)

May 18 : Goepfingen (Germany)

May 19 : Guetersloh (Germany)

May 20 : Hohenems (Austria)

www.solgabetta.com

Are you going to perform a composition by Servais in the near future or do you know about a performance ?

Please let us know !

Most recent info : www.servais-vzw.org

Focusing on a new acquisition : letter sent by Servais to Edouard Davelouis

Peter François

The Servais Society has recently acquired a letter sent by François Servais to Edouard Davelouis, concert organizer in 19th century Spa. This constitutes an interesting supplement to the available documents concerning Servais' concerts given in this Health Resort (a spa).

Edouard Davelouis (1798-after 1876), who was manager of the 'Jeux de Spa', was also responsible for the regular organization of summer concerts by well-known musicians and promising young talents.

In fact, Servais was a much appreciated guest in Spa. In 1861 - the year that the renovated 'Jeux de Spa' started anew - he gave some successful performances. Yet it was not until the 1865 summer that he returned to the resort. The correspondence between Servais and Davelouis suggests that it was a matter of financial problems. In the letters sent by Servais' wife Sophie Feygin in his name to Davelouis in 1861 a minimum fee of BEF 1.000 was asked, an amount which Davelouis actually paid in that year. That Servais was not invited again seems to indicate that Davelouis had coughed up this sum somewhat reluctantly. In 1864 he tried to engage Servais for a mere BEF 600, which elicited a fierce reaction from Sophie, who answered on behalf of her husband and had the letter signed by himself. This meant that Servais did not visit Spa at all. In early 1865 and via a go-between Mr. Chott, a friend of Servais', Davelouis inquired after his willingness to come to Spa that summer. On March 25 Sophie sent a reply to Mr. Chott to inform him that the minimum fee of BEF 1.000 was to be kept anyway.

We found all these facts in a small section of the Davelouis archives kept in Spa.¹ The letter, which turned up a short time ago, was a missing link in the survey of the year 1865. It was written by Sophie on behalf of her husband on May 4 1865. Apparently her letter of March 25 sent to Chott had so far elicited no response from the Davelouis' side², so she addressed him directly. Probably Sophie gathered from the fact she had received no answer at all that Davelouis stuck to his decision, seeing that the writing is now set in more friendly terms and seems to suggest she is willing to give in :

Je sais, mon cher monsieur Davelouis qu'il vous est vraiment difficile d'en sortir, que votre budget est très restreint aussi suis-je en ce moment disposé à faire un dernier sacrifice de 200 francs.³

This time there was a prompt response : on May 5 (!) Davelouis let know that BEF 800 was an acceptable sum, which he also noted explicitly on the letter. However, another three letters from Servais/Sophie and two from Davelouis were needed to eventually arrange all sorts of practical matters.

Servais' performance on August 7 1865 proved to be a big success, as we can read in the *Mémorial de Spa* :

Lundi dernier, le grand salon des Concerts ouvrait ses portes

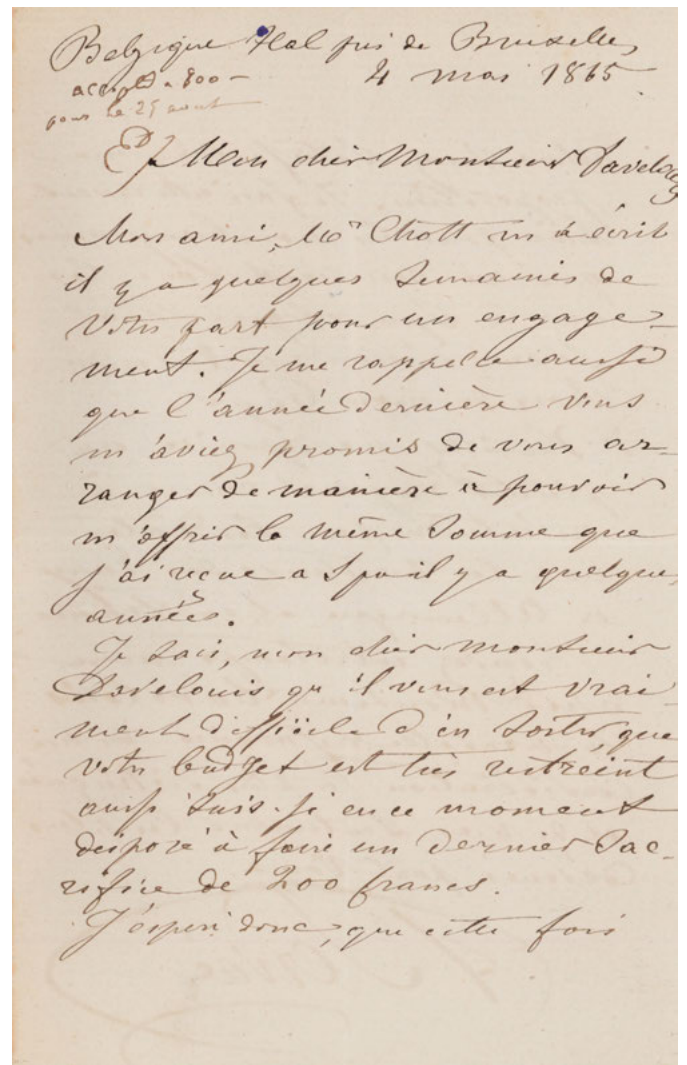
- 1 See Peter François, 'Ah ! le métier de donneur de concerts ! Adrien François Servais (1807-1866) as travelling cello virtuoso'. Halle, Servais Society, 2007 : pp.39-45 and 126-130.
- 2 Sophie's letter to Chott is kept in Spa together with the other documents that belonged to Davelouis, from which we can safely infer that he must have read this letter.
- 3 *Mémorial de Spa*, vol. 2, n°. 33, August 13 1865.

à une foule compacte, brillante et aristocratique, qui, dès sept heures du soir, se pressait dans la galerie des tableaux. (...) M. Servais était visiblement ému quand après l'exécution de sa "Fantaisie" il a reçu de la salle entière et pendant dix minutes les sympathies les plus vives de ce public d'élite. (...)

In her May 4 letter Sophie had also called attention to it that a great number of people would specially come to Spa to attend Servais' performance. This argument she had also invoked in a former letter to account for the high fee. A report on this performance in *L'Echo des Fontaines* indicates that Sophie was absolutely right in her assessment of this event :

Le nom de l'illustre violoncelliste Servais avait attiré non-seulement la foule des invités habituels de l'administration, mais encore un grand nombre de personnes accourues exprès à Spa pour venir entendre le grand virtuose.⁴

In a way it is thanks to the letter just discovered that Servais was willing to give his performance in Spa : indeed, but for his indulgence - or 'sacrifice' - as worded in this letter the concert would never have taken place.



François Servais to [Edouard] Davelouis, Halle, May 4, 1865 (p. 1)
© Servais Collection Halle

4 *L'Echo des Fontaines*, vol. 6, n°. 6, August 20 1865.

François Servais to (Edouard) Davelouis,

Halle, May 4 1865

[Hand-written by Sophie Feygin]

Diplomatic transcription

Belgique Hal près de Bruxelles 4 mai 1865

Mon cher Monsieur Davelouis

Mon ami Mr Chott m'a écrit il y a quelques semaines de votre part pour un engagement. Je me rappelle aussi que l'année dernière vous m'aviez promis de vous arranger de manière à pouvoir m'offrir la même somme que j'ai reçue à Spa il y a quelques années.

Je sais, mon cher monsieur Davelouis qu'il vous est vraiment difficile d'en sortir, que votre budget est très restreint aussi suis-je en ce moment disposé à faire un dernier sacrifice de 200 francs.

J'espère donc, que cette fois vous serez satisfait de ma proposition. Je fais cette concession pour les nombreux amis qui me convient [?] tous les ans à Spa et qui sont forcés d'aller m'entendre hors de mon Pays.

Veillez me répondre au plus tôt ayant encore à m'entendre pour les dates avec les Directeurs des Eaux en Allemagne et en France. Recevez entre temps, mon cher monsieur Davelouis la nouvelle assurance de ma considération la plus distinguée et de mes sentimens les plus dévoués pour Vous.

F. Servais

[Note by Edouard Davelouis at the top of page 1] :

accepté a 800-

pour le 25 aout

E/