



# Newsletter

NO. 16 – MARCH 2009

## Forthcoming

### Servais 2009 Cello Competition

The second edition of the International Cello Competition Servais will take place next April, from 16th till 19th; it is organized by the Gent Rotary Club and the Servais Society itself.

This contest is open to all talented young cellists who are studying or have done so in the Benelux countries. The nationalities of the participants vary very much, ranging from Belgian to French, Polish, Portuguese, Georgian and Russian. A jury composed of internationally renowned cello players will evaluate the candidates.

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On Sunday evening, also in Gent, the Competition will be concluded with the Prize Awarding Ceremony and a performance of the winners.

Most recent info : [www.servais-vzw.org](http://www.servais-vzw.org)

## Looking back

### Servais concert on November 21, 2008

On November 21, Halle had the pleasure to host the world-famous Rastrelli Cello Quartet for the seventh Servais concert. The first part was in the classical tradition, with work by Tsjaikovsky, Popper and our Halle Servais. The quartet performed Servais' *Souvenir de St. Pétersbourg* and *Fantaisie sur deux Airs Russes*, really cut out for them. The latter work has become a regular part of their repertory. Servais actually got his inspiration for these two 'Russian' compositions from his first stay in Saint Petersburg and Moscow. Afterwards he returned to Russia at least thirteen times.



The first round is to take place at the Servais Academy in Halle on April 16 and 17, 2009. During this first session candidates have to play a work by Servais, part of one of Joseph Haydn's celloconcertos, and a work of their own choice from the romantic or contemporary repertory. Six cellists will then be admitted to the finals to be held at the Gent Conservatory on Saturday, 18th April. Each candidate is obliged to play Tsjaikovsky's wellknown Rococovariations as well as two freely elected works from the cello repertoire.



In the second half of the evening the Rastrelli Quartet gave a masterly example of their talents in the jazzy repertoire. Only then did it become really clear what the cello is able to achieve in terms of sonority: it sometimes seemed as if an entire orchestra were playing. These four Russians were obviously affected by the cello microbe! In any case, this was an original introduction to the potential of this instrument on all scores.

This concert was organized to celebrate the Fifth Anniversary of the Servais Society.



### Culture Month

The Servais Society was asked to add musical lustre to the opening ceremony of the Culture Month in the 'Old Post Office' on October 3. We went for the 'Verenigde Accordeonisten' from our town. Conducted by Patrick Bois d'Enghien, they performed work by two local composers: Simple Melody by Michel Charmant and the Vesuvius Suite by Francis Sablon.

Throughout the month of October there was a photo exhibition running in the 'foyer' of the New Town Hall, looking back on the festival year. In addition, on October 11, a CD and DVD with sound and images of the festivities were presented (see section 'In the show-case'). The Society was also present with a stand at the Cultural Festival held in the cultural centre.



### Servais Concerts outside Halle

In the past few months a number of interesting concerts were organized outside Halle featuring Servais' works. The Servais Society contributed to the concerts in Orbais, Lasne, Oudergem (Brussels), Antwerp and Mont-sur-Marchienne.

### Rosamunde and Didier Poskin

The Ensemble Rosamunde was invited in Orbais on November 18 and Lasne on December 14. Together with cel-

list Didier Poskin they played Servais' *Souvenir de la Suisse* and *Souvenir d'Anvers*. The former seems to have disappeared from the concert programmes for a long time, while the latter has presumably not been performed since Servais' death - it has only been preserved in a manuscript. Yet both compositions are worth performing. So we are very pleased that these two works have been recorded for their CD to be released in the course of next year.



### Servais at Oudergem Castle

In the magnificent setting of the Oudergem 'Chateau -Sainte-Anne' the Kryptos Quartet gave a charity concert with cello player Sarah Dupriez on 16th December. The programme was about the same as the one in Halle last year: Popper's *La danse des Elfes*, Tsjaikovsky's *Andante Cantabile*, the *Variations di bravura su temi del "mose"* by Paganini and Cassado's *Sérénade*. The first part ended with Servais' *O Cara memoria* and the second with *Souvenir de Spa*.

### Souvenir d'Anvers

The Antwerp Lunch Concerts had invited Nicolas Deletaille and Jean-Michel Dayez on 9th January. Nicolas Deletaille is a Belgian cellist, but now lives in North Cyprus, where he teaches the cello at the Eastern Mediterranean University. Together with the French pianist Jean-Michel Dayez he played works by Beethoven, Henri Pousseur and Servais. Servais' work completely suited the occasion: *Souvenir d'Anvers*. First Nicolas had to make the manuscript of this composition playable by editing it in a modern form. The cello part was also used by Didier Poskin in his performances with the Rosamunde Ensemble.

*More about Nicolas Deletaille: [www.nicolasdeletaille.com](http://www.nicolasdeletaille.com)*





## Ablaze

On January 17, the audience could enjoy a performance of Sarah Dupriez, Vincent Hepp and Lorenzo Gatto at the Mont-sur-Marchienne Cultural Centre organized by the Friends of the local school of music.



That concert will indelibly remain printed in the memory of the concertgoers, not only thanks to the musical quality of the concert, but also due to a totally unexpected event. Sarah and Vincent had not even reached the middle of Servais' Grand duo de concert when the fire alarm went off. The porter summoned everybody to leave the hall and a few seconds later we found ourselves standing on the street (literally). The fire brigade arrived driving up with might and main. It was said to be a small gas leak in the central heating boiler. Fortunately, the concert could be continued after some 20 minutes ; Servais' duo was resumed from the very beginning.

Director Bernard Carlier said in his closing speech : "Servais' work has set ablaze the whole audience..." Anyway, Servais' work was met with a lot of enthusiasm and interest, which was also borne out by the response of numerous people who approached us during the reception.

## Servais Society

### New year Card

This year our Society's "Season's Greetings" card was exclusive on two scores ; it was only sent to our members and represents a really unique photograph of Servais, probably taken a few months before his death. Actually this is the only known copy in the world and it has never been printed or reproduced before. The Servais Society managed to buy it from a private collector in Rome.

### In search of potential members !

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.

*More info on [www.servais-vzw.org](http://www.servais-vzw.org)*

**New for 2009 :** *cello students who want to join the Society are exempt from paying the obligatory contribution or can pay a modest amount at their discretion.*

## Servais Collection

### Recent acquisitions

The Halle Servais collection continues to extend considerably. In France we were able to buy three letters from Servais' children : two of them from Joseph Servais and one from Augusta. We also bought a nearly 100-year-old 78 record containing the arrangement by Servais of Chopin's *Nocturne*, opus 9 no.2, played by Joseph Hollman.



Thanks to Gaston Cools the recording is now available in a digitalized form and can be listened to and enjoyed on our website.



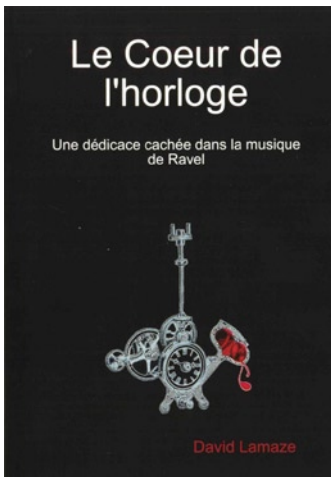
An old impression of Anton Rubinstein's *Sonate pour Piano et Violoncelle*, opus 18, dedicated to Servais, also constitutes a valuable acquisition. Besides, numerous scores, photos and books have recently supplemented the collection. Mainly the collection of editions of Servais' compositions -

at present as many as 119 impressions from 1844 to 2007 - is beginning to gain the status of a showpiece as well as an excellent starting point and source of information to promote the study of the spread of Servais' oeuvre.

### In the Showcase

#### Le Cœur de l'horloge

Two years ago 'Le Cygne de Ravel' was published, a novel by David Lamaze about the influence of Servais' granddaughter Misia Sert on Maurice Ravel's works. And just now 'Le Cœur de l'horloge. Une dédicace cachée dans la musique de Ravel' appeared, also by the same author. In this book Lamaze provides a scholarly underpinning of the hypothesis which he had suggested before in his novel. More particularly, he discovered that a specific set of notes was omnipresent in Ravel's compositions. Transliterated, the notes 'sol', 're', 'mi', 'si' and 'la' can be read as G, D, E, B and A, five letters that happen to occur in Misia's girl's name: Godebska...



In addition, the notes 'mi', 'si' and 'la' unmistakably refer to 'Misia'. The book also offers numerous examples and analyses from Ravel's works. The author digs deep into Ravel's and Misia's lives, including Misia's family members who are also brought up. A novel and pioneering musicological piece of work.

David Lamaze, *Le Cœur de l'horloge*, [thebookedition.com](http://thebookedition.com), 2008, ISBN : 978-2-7466-0524-4 (268 p.).

Also see [www.le-cygne-de-ravel.com](http://www.le-cygne-de-ravel.com).

#### DVD 'The Boccherini mystery'

Cellist Anner Bijlsma has a great predilection for baroque music, in particular for the compositions of the Italian cello player Luigi Boccherini (1743-1805), who was employed by the Spanish court of the brother of King Carlos III. These days his music is considerably less appreciated than it used to be. It is said that this is because the music conceals a secret, which is only known by a few people. This is Boccherini's secret. Anner went to the deserted palace where Boccherini composed his music to unravel the secret concerning this composer.

Carine Bijlsma, Anner's daughter, graduated from the 'Nederlandse Film en Televisie Academie' with this fascinating and utterly ingenious documentary. The film has already won two prizes: the 'wildcard' awarded by the 'Nederlands Film Fonds' and a documentary commissioned by the Prins Bernard Cultural Fund.

Carine Bijlsma, *Het geheim van Boccherini* (DVD), on her own account, 2008.

Also see [www.hetgeheimvanboccherini.nl](http://www.hetgeheimvanboccherini.nl).



Anner Bijlsma (at the right) talking to José Antonio Boccherini, one of Luigi Boccherini's offspring.

#### New Servais CD and DVD

##### 'Souvenir Festival Servais 2007'

A CD and a DVD have just come out to look back on the Festival Servais 2007. The CD is a collection of compositions by Servais which were performed during the three Servais concerts: *Fantaisie Burlesque (ou Le Carnaval de Venise)*, *La Romanesca*, *O Cara Memoria*, *Duo sur une mélodie de Dalayrac* and *Fantaisie sur l'opéra Lestocq*. The CD ends with *Souvenir de l'île de Koch*, a work that Peter Swinnen composed for the Servais Society to pay tribute to the composer.

The DVD shows numerous pictures of the anniversary concert in the Halle Basilica Church on 6 June 2007. So you can listen to *Souvenir de Spa*, *O Cara Memoria* and *Duo sur une mélodie de Dalayrac*, Franz Liszt's *Liebestraum*, the allegro moderato from Franz Schubert's *Arpeggione Sonata*, as well as an excerpt from the *Variations brillantes sur l'air God Save the King* by Servais and Joseph Ghys.

The academic ceremony - with speeches by Peter François, Anner Bijlsma, Dirk Pieters, Ernest Vanderlinden and Geert Bourgeois - and the popular festival on the same day are also extensively covered.

Both releases are available via the Society (telephone : +32 (0)2 360 14 88 or [peter@servais-vzw.org](mailto:peter@servais-vzw.org)) and also during any activity of the Servais Society. The price is only 10 Euros for the CD (9 for our members) and 15 Euros for the DVD (13,5 for members). Those who buy both of them only have to pay 20 Euros.

## News flashes

- » Violinist and viola player Vincent Hepp, who was our guest in Halle on 6th June last year as a member of the Kryptos Quartet, now has a website of his own : [www.vincenthepp.com](http://www.vincenthepp.com). There we can learn that Vincent was awarded the Pelemans Prize by SABAM in 2009 for his commitment to present-day Belgian music.
- » The Servais Concert that was scheduled for June 5, 2009 has had to be postponed till November 20 (date communicated with reservation).
- » Cello player Iza van Holen graduated from the University of Music and Dramatic Arts in Graz (Austria) last October. Her 'Magisterarbeit' is concerned with 'Belgische Kompositionen für Violoncello seit 1800 mit genauerer Betrachtung des Cellisten und Komponisten Adrien François Servais (1807-1866) und der Künstlerdynastie Servais'. On the one hand she offers a list of cello compositions by Belgian composers and on the other hand a survey of Servais' life and work, amongst others with an analysis of *Souvenir de Spa*.
- » In Halle the 'World Month' traditionally dominates cultural life in November. Servais' statue on the Halle Market Square was fitted with a globe on to which little toy men had been attached to represent the continents.
- » Last December the third edition of 'Sterren rond Servais' took place, i.e. the Christmas Market which was set up literally round Servais' statue.
- » On May 25, 2009 cellist **Seeli Toivio** will be performing her fifth and last concert as part of her doctorate studies at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki. The second 'Docmusconcert' featured a performance with an orchestra of Servais' Opus 16 and 17 ; for the concert to come she will be playing Servais' *Concerto en la mineur*. It has probably been decades since this work was executed with an orchestra.



Photos p. 1,2, 3 and 5 : Guido François, Peter François

## Concert Calendar

### Servais Society

**April 16-17, 2009**

#### First Round Servais 2009 Cello Competition

Work by Servais : each candidate performs a composition by Servais

Organized by Rotary Club Ghent and the Servais Society, with the Cultural Centre, the City of Halle and Rotary Club Halle

Free entrance

Halle, Servaiszaal Stedelijke Servaisacademie, K. Cardijnstraat 7

each day at 6 PM and 8 PM

[www.servais-vzw.org](http://www.servais-vzw.org)

### Other initiatives

**April 13, 2009**

Didier Poskin & pianist

Work by Servais : Souvenir de la Suisse, opus 10  
Seoul (Korea), Arts Center

**April 18, 2009**

#### Finals - Servais 2009 Cello Competition

Ghent, Koninklijk Conservatorium (Hoogpoort 64), 3.30 PM

**April 19, 2009**

#### Proclamation Concert - Servais 2009 Cello Competition

Ghent, Koninklijk Conservatorium, 8 PM

**May 24, 2009**

Walther-Michael Vollhardt (cello) & Clemens Flick (piano)

Work by Servais : Souvenir de Spa, opus 2

Freiburg, Theater, 11 AM

[www.theaterfreiburg.de](http://www.theaterfreiburg.de)

**May 25, 2009 - Concert 'Celebration'**

Seeli Toivio (cello) & KohoBeat Symphony Orchestra  
conducted by Sahsa Mäkilä

Work by Servais : Concerto in a minor

Helsinki, Temple Church

[www.kohobeat.com](http://www.kohobeat.com) - [www.seelitoivio.com](http://www.seelitoivio.com)

**August 8, 2009 - Menuhin Festival Gstaad**

Sol Gabetta (cello) & Dejan Lazic (piano)

Works by Mendelssohn, Liszt, Servais, Chopin, Piazzolla,...

Gstaad (Switzerland), Kirche Saanen, 8 PM

[www.menuhinfestivalgstaad.com](http://www.menuhinfestivalgstaad.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](http://www.servais-vzw.org)

