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## Looking back

### Servais 2009 Cello Competition

Francis Mourey from France, the Georgian Ketevan Roinishvili and the Belgian Romain Dhainaut were the prize-winners of the International Servais Cello Competition 2009, which took place in Halle and Ghent between 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> April. The competition was organized by Ghent Rotary Club and the Servais Society, and was open to young talented cellists on a master level who are studying or have studied in the Benelux countries. The members of the jury were Marcel Lequeux and Mircea Calin from Belgium, Gregor Horsch and Roger Regter from the Netherlands, Kerstin Feltz from Austria and Seeli Toivio from Finland, each of them outstanding musicians.

The first round took place at the Servais Academy, Halle on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> April. Each candidate had to play a composition of the Halle cello player François Servais, a part from one of Joseph Haydn's cello concertos and a work of their choice from the romantic or the present-day repertory. This first round was very well attended and appreciated very much. Cellist Philippe Van de Velde treated the audience to a special surprise : he played on his copy of 'Servais'Strad' from 1882, Servais' Stradivarius cello, now preserved in Washington. During the deliberation of the jury on Friday evening the public was given the chance to visit the permanent Servais exhibition in the museum proper. Then came the announcement of the names of the winners : Romain Dhainaut, Agnieszka Kolodziej, Francis Mourey and Ketevan Roinishvili were shortlisted for the finals in Ghent. To conclude the first round a reception was offered, looked after by "De Wijngezuizen" and the local Rotary Club.

For the finals at the Ghent Academy of Music on 18<sup>th</sup> April each of the selected candidates had to perform Tsjaikovski's Rococo Variations as well as two pieces of their own choice.

The first prize, "Prijs Rotary Club Gent & Symfonieorkest Vlaanderen", at the value of 2,500 euros, was awarded to Francis Mourey. He has already been engaged to play as a soloist two times with the 'Symfonieorkest Vlaanderen' in the Rococo Variations next September. The Servais Prize is

awarded for the best performance of a work by Servais and was granted by the Servais Society and Rotary Club Utrecht. Although Servais' music is said to be extremely difficult to play, most candidates gave a brilliant performance.



*Ketevan Roinishvili next to the bust of Servais*

The members of the jury unanimously decided that the Servais Prize should go to Ketevan Roinishvili for her performance of Servais' Opus 13, *Fantaisie sur deux Airs Russes*, which she played virtually without any fault, with great ease, much sympathy and with "présence". She will be given the opportunity to play in a concert both in Halle and Utrecht in the autumn of this year, and also during the European ESTA-Congress to be held in Bruges in May 2010, each time with work by Servais.

The third prize, "Prijs RC Tercoigne", worth 1,000 euros, went to Romain Dhainaut.



*Francis Mourey, Ketevan Roinishvili and Romain Dhainaut*

These three laureates performed during the gala concert on Sunday night, while the French Canadian pianist Jean Dubé, who had accompanied three of the candidates, treated the audience to three intermezzos.

This competition gave a number of promising cello players an opportunity to measure themselves with one another and proved that Europe can boast a lot of up-and-coming talent. Surely, the compositions of the Halle cellist Servais are safeguarded for the future : they are in good hands.



*Visiting the Servais Collection : Peter François with Kerstin Feltz, Roger Regter and Seeli Toivio*

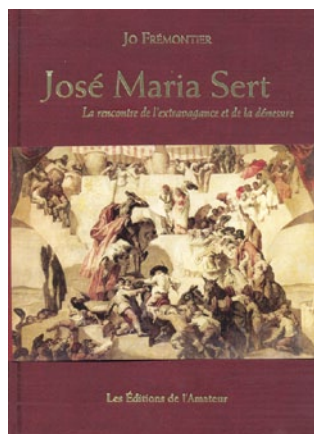
*Visit also [www.servais-vzw.org](http://www.servais-vzw.org) for two photo-reportages.*

## *In the Showcase*

### **José Maria Sert. La rencontre de l'extravagance et de la démesure**

The last husband of Servais' granddaughter Misia was the Spanish painter José Maria Sert (1876 - 1945). Sert once said : "Je ne veux pas peindre un tableau pour une pièce mais faire d'une pièce un tableau", which characterizes a great deal of his work. Indeed, he was famous for his extraordinary skillfulness to paint large surfaces. Jo Frémontier opens her book with a biography of Sert, in which as a matter of course Misia regularly comes to the fore. A following chapter is devoted to Sert's magnum opus, the wall paintings in Vic cathedral in the province of Barcelona. This commission resulted from Sert's demand addressed to bishop Torras y Bages : "Votre Excellence aurait-elle dans son diocèse une église aux murs nus (les plus grands possible ?" Hereafter he got assigned Vic cathedral, and a surface to be painted of more than a thousand square metres... The first version was largely lost because of a fire in 1936, so Sert continued the work until his death in 1945.

The book also surveys a number of momentous assignments, such as Sir Philip Sassoon's countryhouse (London), the castle of Robert de Rothschild (Chantilly), Maurice and Andrée de Wendel's house in Paris, Joshua Cosden's residence (Florida), New York's Waldorf Astoria Hotel, the building of



the United Nations in Geneva and the New York Rockefeller Center. Besides a detailed description of the works, the author each time deals with the history of their construction and what happened to them afterwards. This is a lavishly illustrated book : a work of exceptional value about a very talented artist.

Frémontier's book also briefly highlights Sert's activities as a photographer and an art collector. The latter activity was a focus of public attention a few weeks ago : at an auction of Yves Saint Laurent's and Pierre Bergé's art collection two small statues which had been in Sert's possession were offered for sale, which provoked a controversy because the French had made off with them from the Summer Palace of the Emperor of China in 1860. Their value may well have contributed to the argument. Indeed, the images were each of them auctioned for the amount of 15.7 million euros... And the highest bidder was a Chinese citizen commissioned by the Chinese authorities, who refuse to pay. This controversy got into the world press.

*Jo Frémontier, José Maria Sert. La rencontre de l'extravagance et de la démesure. Parjs, Les Editions de l'Amateur, 2008, ISBN : 978-2-85917-488-0 (192 p).*

### **The origin of the Order of Leopold**

On the occasion of the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Belgian Order of Leopold Eric Tripnaux wrote a voluminous book devoted to the genesis of this Order. We learn that the awarding of the Order of Leopold was not so streamlined in the first years of Leopold's reign as is the case these days. Various designs of the decoration were in circulation while it was not always clear who decided in these matters. It is also worth pointing out that fewer awards were granted than afterwards.

Between 1832 and 1840 no fewer than 1466 awards were granted. One of the very first 'Knights of the Order of Leopold' was François Servais, who was given the decoration as early as 18 April 1835 (see Peter François, 'Adrien François Servais, solocellist van Koning Leopold I', in Museum Dynasticum, vol. 20, n° 1, 2008, pp. 3-12). Tripnaux's book allows us to place this award in the proper context.

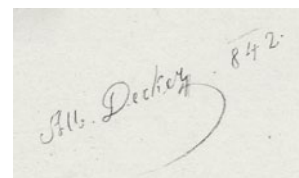
*Eric Tripnaux, L'origine de l'ordre de Léopold. De oorsprong van de Leopoldsorde. Elsene, De Vereniging van de Leopoldsorde vzw, 2008, ISBN 978-9-0812772-1-1 (258 p.)*

### *Unknown portrait of Servais discovered*

#### **Peter François**

In Servais' life-time photography was still in its "infancy" ; only celebrities could afford to have their portrait made in some other way. So the discovery of a picture of Servais is a big event each time.

Recently an unknown portrait of Servais turned up in New York. It is a lithograph with a drawing by Albert Decker. As a child this artist, born in Colmar in France on June 18<sup>th</sup> 1817, settled in Vienna together with his father Johann Stephan Decker - an artist as well - and his brothers Georg and Gabriel. He took lessons from his father and in 1839 he organized his first exhibition. He became an actor in 1844 in the "Theater an der Wien", while he kept drawing and painting. Albert Decker died in Vienna on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 1871. The portrait





involved dates from 1842, the very year Servais was visiting the Austrian capital. He arrived round about January 22, 1842 and stayed there until April 22. Servais gave at least twelve public concerts and mid-March he made an excursion to Brno in the Czeck Republic for another three performances.

During Servais' stay in Vienna still another lithograph representing a drawing by Josef Kriehuber came onto the market; thanks to advertisements in the *Wiener Zeitung* we know that this litho was available as early as March 14<sup>th</sup>.



*The recently discovered portrait of François Servais by Albert Decker, Vienna, 1842 © vzw Servais*

What strikes us in this portrait is Servais' wealth of hair as this also appears on other pictures. However, in the portrait by Albert Decker Servais has no moustache and less hair. There is only one logical explanation for this: Servais must have paid a visit to a local barber shortly after he had sat to Kriehuber.

Albert Decker's lithograph, which turned up just now, belonged for a long time to the collection of the London instrument makers and sellers W.E. Hill and Sons, who - by sheer coincidence or not - had "treated" the Servais Strad twice. Afterwards this collection came into the possession of the reputable antique dealer Wurlitzer-Bruck in New York. The Servais Society was able to purchase the portrait for their Halle Servais Collection. It is quite remarkable that no second copy is known in the whole world and that it has never been published anywhere. By contrast, the Kriehuber lithograph is much better known: at least five copies have been preserved and there must be some more undoubtedly; it is also this portrait that has been regularly used in publications.

So far no fewer than thirty-three different pictures of Servais have been discovered: two paintings, two engravings, nine drawings and water colors, eight lithographs and twelve photographs. Who will be the finder of the thirty-fourth picture?



*The better known portrait of François Servais by Josef Kriehuber, Vienna, 1842 © Museum Halle*

[3176] Anfündigung Nr. 1402. [2]

Im Verlage der f. f. Hof- u. priv. Kunst- und Musikalienhandlung  
**des Tobias Haslinger**  
 in Wien, Anfangs des Kohlmarkts Nr. 281, Hauptansicht auf dem Graben,  
 ist neu erschienen und zu haben:  
**Das wohlgetroffene Porträt**  
 des ersten Violoncellisten und Solospieler Sr. Majestät des Königs von Belgien,  
**F. Servais.**  
 Nach der Natur gezeichnet von **Jos. Kriehuber.**  
 Preis auf schönem Basler Velinpapier . . . . . 1 fl. — kr. 6. W.  
 — „ Chinesischem Papier . . . . . 1 fl. 30 kr. 6. W.

*Advertisement for Kriehuber's lithograph in the Wiener Zeitung of March 14<sup>th</sup>, 1842*

Sources:

- 'Decker, Albert', in Ulrich Thieme, *Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, Leipzig, Verlag von E.A. Seemann, 1913, vol. 8, p. 520
- 'Decker, Albert', in Saur, *Allgemeines Künstler-Lexikon. Die Bildenden Künstler aller Zeiten und Völker*, München/Leipzig, K.G. Saur, 2000, vol. 5, p. 122-123
- 'Decker, Albert', in Emmanuel Bénézit, *Dictionary of Artists*, Paris, Gründ, 2006, vol. 4, p. 550
- W. Henry Hill, Arthur F. Hill & Alfred E. Hill, *Antonio Stradivari. His Life & Works (1644-1737)*, New York, Dover Publications, 1962<sup>2</sup> (1902<sup>1</sup>)
- Peter François, *Ah! Le métier de donneur de concerts! Adrien François Servais (1807-1866) als rondreizend cel-lovirtuoos*, Halle, Servais Society, 2007, p. 67-71
- Marianne Wurlitzer, July 2008.

## News flashes

- » On 25 May 2009 cellist **Seeli Toivio** played Servais' Concerto in a minor, together with the CELEB Orchestra. The performance was warmly acclaimed by the audience. Further information about this concert will be given in the next Newsletter.
- » The news that Maurice Ravel may often have referred to **Misia Sert** in his work (see the March Newsletter of this year) reached the world press at the end of March, which was due to a BBC interview with musicologist David Lamaze, the author of the book "Le Cœur de l'Horloge".
- » Up-to-the-minute news: the Belgian violinist Lorenzo Gatto was able to get into this year's finals of the renowned Queen Elisabeth Competition and even won the second Prize. What few people know is that he took violin classes at the Halle Servais Academy during two years. In the 1996-1997 school year he was a pupil in the fourth year of the lower level. At the final examination his mark was 98/100. Afterwards he attended classes in the first year of the highest level, thus skipping three years of the intermediate programme. At his finals he played the first part from the violin concerto by Henry Vieuxtemps and the first part of Mozart's fifth violin concerto. This time he "only" got 97/100 marks. Shortly afterwards Lorenzo – then not 12 years old – went to the Conservatoire Royal de Musique in Brussels, where Véronique Bogaerts was his tutor, a finalist in the 1980 Queen Elisabeth Competition.

## Concert Calendar

### Servais Society

#### Friday November 20, 2009 - Servais Concert 8

Ketevan Roinishvili (cello) & Jean Dubé (piano)

Work by Servais : to be determined

Halle, Raadzaal Nieuw Stadhuis, 8 PM

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

### Other initiatives

#### Wednesday July 1, 2009

Seeli Toivio (cello) & Lily-Marlene Puusepp (harp)

Work by Servais : Fantaisie pour le Violoncelle, opus 1

Helsinki, Aino Ackté's House

[www.seelitoivio.com](http://www.seelitoivio.com) and [www.harppu.fi](http://www.harppu.fi)

#### Sunday July 19, 2009

Eric-Maria Couturier (cello) & Lyonel Schmit (violin)

Work by Servais & Ghys : *Variations brillantes et concertantes sur God Save the King*

Le Beausset (France), Eglise, 6.30 PM

#### Saturday August 8, 2009 – Menuhin Festival Gstaad

Sol Gabetta (cello) & Dejan Lazic (piano)

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

Gstaad (Switzerland), Kirche Saanen, 8 PM

[www.menuhinfestivalgstaad.com](http://www.menuhinfestivalgstaad.com)

#### August 11 - 18, 2009

Seeli Toivio (cello) & Lily-Marlene Puusepp (harp)

Work by Servais : *Fantaisie pour le Violoncelle*, opus 1

- Aug. 11 : Pudasjärvi (Finland), Pudasjärvi Church
- Aug. 12 : Kuusamo (Finland), Kuusamo Church
- Aug. 13 : Salla (Finland)
- Aug. 14 : Posio (Finland), Posio Church
- Aug. 16 : Kuhmo (Finland), Kuhmo Church
- Aug. 17 : Suomussalmi (Finland), Suomussalmi Church
- Aug. 18 : Jyväskylä (Finland), Jyväskylä Church

[www.seelitoivio.com](http://www.seelitoivio.com) and [www.harppu.fi](http://www.harppu.fi)

#### August 23, 2009 – Festival d'été mosan

Sarah Dupriez (cello)

Work by Servais: to be determined

Hemptonne (Fernelmont, Belgium), Ferme du Sanglier, 5 PM

[www.sarahdupriez.com](http://www.sarahdupriez.com) - [www.etemosan.be](http://www.etemosan.be)

#### September 4 & 6, 2009 – Rococo

Francis Mourey (cello) & Symfonieorkest Vlaanderen conducted by Martin Yates

Francis Mourey, winner of the International Cello Competition Servais 2009 will play the solo part in the *Rococo Variations* by Tsjaikovski. Also on the program : *Classical Symphony* - Sergei Prokofiev ; *Quatro Danzas del Ballet* - Alberto Ginastera ; *Polovtsian Dances* - Alexander Borodin.

- Sept. 4 : Concertgebouw Brugge, 8 PM
- Sept. 6 : De Singel, Antwerpen, 3 PM

[www.symfonieorkest.be](http://www.symfonieorkest.be)

#### September 21 - 27, 2009 – The Egersund Youth Chamber Music Festival

Cello-masterclass with Gavriel Lipkind

<http://www.eycmf.no>

#### October 25 - November 24, 2009

Seeli Toivio (cello) & Lily-Marlene Puusepp (harp)

Work by Servais : *Fantaisie pour le Violoncelle*, opus 1

- Oct. 25 : Kittilä (Finland), Särestöniemi Museum
- Oct. 28 : Sodankylä (Finland), Sodankylä Hall
- Oct. 29 : Kajaani (Finland), Kouta Concert Hall
- Nov. 1 : Kemijärvi (Finland), Kemijärvi Music Center
- Nov. 5 : Nurmes (Finland), Hannikainen Concert Hall
- Nov. 8 : Lieksa (Finland), Lieksa Church
- Nov. 9 : Riihimäki (Finland), Riihimäki Music School
- Nov. 12 : Forssa (Finland), Forssa Church
- Nov. 24 : Espoo (Finland), Tapiola Concert Hall

[www.seelitoivio.com](http://www.seelitoivio.com) and [www.harppu.fi](http://www.harppu.fi)

*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)*

