

Claire Chevallier

Pianist Claire Chevallier (°1969) is much in demand across Europe for solo recitals, chamber music and concertos. This french pianist, who has found a new home in Brussels, displays the persuasiveness of a born go-getter, the creativity of a professional artist and the charm of a genuine Française when she speaks about her work as a pianist, as a creative-artist-musician and as a teacher. She likes to work long and hard, as evidenced by the string of projects to which she has dedicated herself in recent years and the plans that fill her diary at the moment.

Highly acclaimed for her concerts and award winning recordings, Claire specializes in period performance particularly from the classical to the French masters of the 20th Century. Claire also brings the unique sound world of her pianos to theatre productions and works closely with living composers, such as Flemish composer Kris Defoort, to develop new repertoire for the instrument.

As musician-researcher, she began her own collection of French historical keyboards, which has grown in the meantime to 6 instruments covering the time span 1842-1920.

Claire combined the study of the piano at the musical academies of Nancy, Strasbourg (Hélène Boschi) and Paris (Bruno Rigutto) with her traditional studies in mathematics and physics.

She then continued her musical education at the Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles with Jean-Claude Vanden Eynden and Guy Van Waas, where she was awarded first prize in piano and chamber music. She became fascinated with the fortepiano during her studies via a master class given by Jos van Immerseel. She began to concentrate on the historical background and the evolution in the "construction" of the fortepiano, and for a number of years studied the specific characteristics and maintenance requirements (tuning, strings, etc) of the instrument completely on her own. She thus developed extensive expertise in historical keyboards as fortepiano specialist and as pianist.

In 1996, Claire Chevallier was invited by the renowned dance company Rosas to work with the Anima Eterna Brugge orchestra in presenting the music for a dance and music performance around concert arias by Mozart. This production played in all the major European venues including London's Royal Festival Hall, La Monnaie in Brussels and the Dresden Staatsschauspiel.

Since then she has appeared regularly as soloist or chambriste in Europe and Japan including Cité de la Musique in Paris, Académies musicales de Saintes, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Vredenburg Utrecht, Netwerk Oude Muziek Utrecht, Musikfestspiele Potsdam Sanssouci, Brühl Schloss Konzerte, Musikfestspiele Bremen and Tokyo Ueno College. In Belgium, she was invited by among others BOZAR and Kaaitheater in Brussels, Concertgebouw Bruges, MA Festival Bruges, the Festival of Flanders Ghent, AMUZ and deSingel in Antwerp.

In 2008-2009, Concertgebouw Brugge makes her 'Friend in Music', and from the end of 2009, she will be in residence for three years by AMUZ Antwerp, a concert organization specialized in historical informed practice.

Since 2004, she has been teaching fortepiano at the Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles. She is also considered as an excellent tuner on historical keyboards. She gives regularly lectures too on the history and the technology of the piano: for example at CNSM Paris, Cité de la Musique Paris, EPTA Belgium.

For the 2007 and 2010 edition, she was member of the jury of the International Fortepiano Competition, organised by the Musica Antiqua Festival in Bruges.

In 2003, together with tenor Jan van Elsacker, she recorded a CD of Lieder and fortepiano solo work by Schumann in a Radio Klara production. The same year, the CD with work by Franck, Saint-Saëns, Poulenc and Infante appeared on the French label Zig-Zag Territoires, recorded as a duo with Jos van Immerseel on two original Erard pianos from Paris. This recording received universal acclaim and was awarded a 'Diapason d'Or'.

Followed in 2006 the applauded recording of Ravel's 'Concerto pour la main gauche' with Anima Eterna (under the direction of Jos van Immerseel) on her concert grand Erard 1905 (ZZT060901) and a new duo recording with Jos van Immerseel featuring Rachmaninov Suites for two pianos and four hands. Regular duo partners include Jos van Immerseel, cellist Sergei Istomin, violist Paul de Clerck and harmonium player Joris Verdin. Her last solo recording dedicated to the music of Erik Satie (Gymnopédies, Gnossiennes and 'Esotérique' music) received a FFFF from Télérama in France. This CD is also to find on the French label Zig-Zag Territoires.

Her most recent participation as a soloist was in the recording of the Poulenc's 'Concerto pour deux pianos' with Jos van Immerseel (second piano en conductor) and the orchestra Anima Eterna Brugge (to find by Outhere). This CD was again a sure fire-winner with the maximum points of Télérama and Diapason, and ended up to a successful tour (April-May 2011) in France.

In the mean time is she working now on a happening-recital Liszt together with stage director-actor Jan Decorte for the September 2011 edition of the Brussels Klara Festival. At that time there will be a CD release too for a new label Dolce Volta (Paris).

Her experience in and taste for interdisciplinary projects (dance, theatre, film) has led to various collaborations with fellow artists like Wayn Traub, Rudolph Mestdagh, Ann Teresa de Keersmaeker (Rosas), David Claerbout, Benoît Van Innis, Josse de Pauw. With this last two artists she recreated a fresh version of the Poulenc's 'Babar' together with the Satie's 'Fils des Etoiles' in 2010.

June 2011