

BRYGGEN - BRUGES STRINGS - BIOGRAPHY - 2024

From its home port of Bruges, string orchestra BRYGGEN boldly sets course for the North, along the routes of the Hanseatic League, all the way to Scandinavia and the Baltic. In search of new sounds and connection to the wide world around. With united/unified forces, now moving against the current, then harmoniously bathing in the tranquillity of immeasurably deep fjords.

BRYGGEN is a fresh and dynamic string orchestra for whom innovation is key, whether in terms of repertoire or performance. Every BRYGGEN concert is an experience, both for the audience and the performers. Founded by artistic director Jolente De Maeyer, the ensemble explores the soundscape of Scandinavia and the Baltic, complemented with keyworks from 20th and 21st century postmodern music.

BRYGGEN strongly believes in the power of the string orchestra and in the added value that playing music in a smaller group offers in terms of sound, interaction, communication and focus. The ensemble works without a conductor and makes every effort to bring contemporary music to the heart of the audience not only through their ears but also through their eyes. The symbiosis between text, music, image and performance is therefore in the DNA of the projects that BRYGGEN carefully develops alongside narrators, actors, writers, directors, choreographers, dancers, choir, performance artists and more. For BRYGGEN, the future is very diverse.

As a Bruges-based orchestra, BRYGGEN played its inaugural concert in 2020 at Concertgebouw Brugge. During the 2021-22 season, after the premiere at De Singel in Antwerp, the orchestra toured Flanders with the music theatre production *Zwanen* (Swans) and played at WE Festival in Ostend, *Iedereen Klassiek* in Bruges and Walden Festival in Brussels. At De Singel, BRYGGEN presented the Belgian premiere of Wu Tsang's *Moby Dick*, a collaboration with Zurich Schauspielhaus and De Singel. The orchestra also made its debut in the Netherlands with *Moby Dick*, at Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ during the Holland Festival.

During the 2022-23 season, BRYGGEN reprised *Zwanen* with eighteen performances across Flanders. The orchestra also performed at Concertgebouw Brugge, *Iedereen Klassiek*, *Musica Divina*, Antwerp Spring Festival and at the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel in Waterloo. For Mooov Film Festival, BRYGGEN performed Max Richter's score for Ari Folman's animated documentary *Waltz with Bashir* live at De Singel, De Warande Turnhout and Stadsschouwburg Brugge. In the 2023-24 season, concerts were played at festivals *Musica Divina*, B-Classic (Limburg), and *Wilde Westen Kortrijk*, and at De Spil (Roeselare). A concert series with cellist Pieter Wispelwey was on the agenda at Concertgebouw Brugge, the Abbey of Grimbergen, and CC Hasselt, followed by the multimedia music theatre production *Songs with roots*, which premiered in collaboration with Zonzo Compagnie and Concertgebouw Brugge. After that, the *Minerals* project - a new creation for BRYGGEN composed by Mathias Coppens - premiered at De Singel, incorporating artificial intelligence and live video animation.

Last but not least: im April 2024 gewann BRYGGEN den Ultima for Music, einen Kulturpreis der flämischen Regierung. Die Jury lobte das Orchester unter anderem mit den folgenden Worten: „Die besondere Qualität von BRYGGEN liegt in der durchdachten Art und Weise, in der das Orchester Innovation mit der großen Tradition der klassischen Musik verbindet. BRYGGEN ist ein Beispiel für ein Ensemble, das Grenzen überschreitet und den sozialen Gehalt einer Kunstform erweitert.“

* BRYGGEN played its inaugural concert in 2020 at Concertgebouw Brugge and that is no coincidence: after Het Kamerorkest Brugge, the orchestra is the second metamorphosis of Collegium Instrumentale Brugense, founded more than half a century ago.