

Belgian Brass

Manu Mellaerts

The Belgian Brass Ensemble was founded in 2004 by Manu Mellaerts, solo trumpet of La Monnaie Symphony Orchestra (Belgian National Opera House) and Professor at the Royal Conservatory in Brussels. As the artistic director, he launched the idea of bringing together a large, all-round group of ten brass players and two percussionist. Because of the similar artistic approach of all members and thanks to an unlimited enthusiastic dynamism, Belgian Brass presents a very interesting and exceptional repertoire.

Concept

The experience of playing together in the orchestra for many years gives the ensemble a very homogeneous sound. The orchestral approach and the presence of a rhythm section creates the particular character and sound of Belgian Brass, who perform a large range of musical genres and styles.

A concert programme is more than just collecting a number of pieces from the repertoire; the audience should feel that it is being pulled into a musical adventure, an interactive 'story', connected with programmatic themes that run throughout each concert, from the beginning until the end.

Each programme entails a refined and balanced mix, from pure symphonic, to original contemporary, through avant-garde, into big band and jazzy music. This is probably the reason why Belgian Brass has the reputation of being a very flexible and all-round ensemble, appreciated by any kind of audience. Programmes such as 'Pushing The Limits', 'Summon The Heroes'



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and 'From Io to Dandi' are examples of this concept.

Another very important part of the vision is experimenting with new combinations with brass in order to find new musical ideas and challenges.... for example 'Entrata Imperiale', a 'Renaissance' programme, but arranged for brass, percussion and 'Carillon'. The première, played in open air at the Carillon-Tower in Bruges, was a completely new experience for the public.

Also Robert Groslot's cantata *Tristesse d'une Etoile*, world première in May 2015, is a very renewing project. It is a marvellous composition for brass, percussion, harp, double bass and synthesizer, featuring two solo voices: soprano and baritone. This one hour contemporary piece was composed as a tribute to the surrealist poets of the Great War.

Recordings and Belgian Brass Series Sheet Music

In its 11 years of existence, the ensemble has given concerts in many parts of the world and currently has released five CDs:

'Pushing the Limits' A programme that spans more than four centuries of music history, a musical east-west journey across Europe.

'Russian Heritage' An invitation to walk through the Russian musical landscape. It features some of the finest works of Russian composers, arranged by the members of Belgian Brass.

'From Io to Dandi' Four prominent Flemish composers (Jan van Landeghem, Jan Van der Roost, Dirk Brossé and Wim Henderickx) wrote original music dedicated to Belgian Brass.

'Entrata Imperiale' Early Music for Brass, Percussion & Bells, a journey through the beautiful repertoire of the Renaissance, but in combination with Carillon, played by the famous Frank Deleu.

'Pushing the Limits - The Show' The second release of the debut CD, but as BB plays it 'live' in concert.

To order the 'Belgian Brass Series' sheet music, from trio, over quintet to large brass ensemble, one can surf to www.goldenrivermusic.be or www.belgianbrass.be

IBBA

Every two years, Belgian Brass organizes the International Belgian Brass Academy. Becoming one of today's most prestigious European brass festivals and located in Harelbeke (Flanders, Belgium), IBBA now receives students from all over the world, offering them a very large and interesting



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menu. Around Easter, one full week of great concerts and master classes are given by the world's finest international brass soloists and ensembles. The festival has hosted ensembles such as Canadian Brass, German Brass, Mnozil Brass and Spanish Brass, and soloists such as Ian Bousfield, Reinhold Friederich, Michel Becquet, Fred Mills, Øystein Baadsvik, Alan Vizutti, Frøydis Ree Wekre, Rex Richardson and many others.

The combination of famous musicians and a high-level artistic profile has turned this festival into an impressive and unique international event. The next festival will take place in 2017.

Yamaha Educational Days

Belgian Brass plays exclusively on YAMAHA brass and percussion instruments. Since most of the members are also teachers in several Belgian Royal Conservatories, Belgian Brass has worked out a special pedagogic formula for young talented brass players. Called YED, it offers one full day's combination of master classes and a concert, supported by Yamaha.



Yamaha Educational Day.

Musicians

Trumpet

Manu Mellaerts - La Monnaie Symphony Orchestra
 Steven Devolder - La Monnaie Symphony Orchestra
 Simon Van Hoecke - Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg
 Frankie De Kuyffer - Conservatory, Leuven

French Horn

Rik Vercruysse - Royal Conservatory, Antwerp
 Marc Peremans - Royal Band of the Belgian Guides

Trombone

Jan Smets - La Monnaie Symphony Orchestra
 Tom Verschoore - Royal Band of the Belgian Guides
 Geert De Vos - La Monnaie Symphony Orchestra

Tuba

Stephan Vanaenrode - La Monnaie Symphony Orchestra

Percussion

Luk Artois - La Monnaie Symphony Orchestra
 Gaetan La Mela - Ensemble 'Hermes'

Info & Bookings:

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