



the complete musical works of  
**AGNES JAMA**

**Marcel Worms**

with a.o. **Irene Maessen** soprano

**Helena Rasker** alto/mezzo-soprano

**Soesja Citroen** singer/composer

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**Ivar Berix** clarinet

**Ursula Schoch** violin

**Daniel Esser** cello

**AGNES JAMA** (1911-1993)

**Sonatina for Piano** (1942)

[1] Grave sinistro **3:14**

[2] Poco allegro rubato **4:57**

**Three Songs for Voice and Piano** (1953, lyrics by Jil de la Rie)

[3] Musing **2:24**

[4] Song **1:56**

[5] Dance **2:02**

**Suite for Violin and Piano** (1952)

[6] Tempo rubato **5:35**

[7] Calmo assai **3:06**

[8] Allegro ritmico **5:08**

[9] **Vocatio for Mezzo-soprano, Clarinet and Piano** (1971) **14:46**

**Sonata for Cello and Piano** (±1957)

[10] Andante cantabile **4:19**

[11] Andante cantabile **3:20**

[12]  $\text{♩} = 75$  **5:04**

[13] **Song for Ma** (1997, music & lyrics Soesja Citroen) **7:10**  
tribute to her mother Agnes Jama

total time 63:04

## **Agnes Jama**

(1911 Dürnstein-1993 The Hague)

“The dark haired woman with horn rimmed glasses,” was how a fellow composer described her. You could also call her artistic, stubborn, spiritual, sharp and hospitable. But above all, she was a person driven by music. Whether it was her composing, her interest in classical Western music and ethnic music, giving piano lessons, writing about technique or giving private concerts, Agnes Jama lived for and through music.

As a pianist praised for her technique, she had already laid the basis for a book about piano technique in the 1950's. She worked on it till the very end. “I need to finish my book,” was one of her last sighs and it was finished because there came a point when she was no longer around to work on it.

She was open to music from all corners

of the globe, the intention being that the propagation of such music would lead to a new cosmopolitan style. She wasn't afraid to publicly express harsh criticism for the sterile music of the post-war era. She saw no value in atonality and, in direct opposition to the current fashion of the day, she composed her own melodic pieces in the style of romantic impressionism.

Not infrequently, reviews referred to her Slavic temperament. Her background was Slavic. She was born in Dürnstein on the Danube (in the former Austria-Hungary) from the union between Louise van Raders, a noble-born Dutch woman and painter and the Slovenian impressionist Matija Jama. They met each other at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century at the Azbe School of Painting in Munich and up until the First World War, they resided and exhibited in various places in Central Europe with the Dutch family supporting them both as painters. However, from the time.

Agnes was three, she was raised within the social circles of her mother in The Hague. When she was about ten-years-old, her father returned alone and permanently to his birthplace of Ljubljana. Contact with her father, with whom she spoke German and Dutch, continued via clearly affectionate correspondence that kept him informed of her musical progress.

Up until her 20's, when she became a naturalized Dutch citizen, she was registered as Yugoslavian, something that was reflected in her repertoire choices. Program booklets showed that she was a pianist who played from a mainly traditional and impressionistic repertoire, however every now and then she would play works of Yugoslavian composers. Bartók was dear to her, but Debussy, Messiaen, Chopin were no less so. Her piano teacher, pianist and composer Bernard van den Sigtenhorst Meyer, who prepared her for the National Piano Exams A and B after she

completed her *HBS-B diploma* (the former Dutch high school diploma), was undoubtedly an influence on her musical development and preferences.

Mainly in the 1950's, she composed four chamber music works. This is how a *Suite for Violin and Piano*, (for which she won the *incentive prize* from the Johan Wagenaar Foundation and which was presented by Theo Olof and Luctor Ponse at *Diligentia* in The Hague), a *Sonatina for Piano*, a *Sonata for Cello and Piano* and a cycle of *Three Songs for Voice and Piano* came into being. In reviews from 1960 for a concert she gave of her own compositions for the *Haagse Kunstkring* (The Hague Art Society), W. Lievense of the *Haagse Courant* described a "pensive melancholy" and "flowing and playful melodies" and Han Bos of the *Haagse Dagblad* described her music as having "Slavic influences in keys and rhythm." Her fifth, and last, composition clearly stands out in her small oeuvre, a piece

of work that she completed in 1970: *Vocatio for Mezzo-soprano, Clarinet and Piano*. Here, she showed that she didn't shy away from experimentation, as if the experimental era in which she lived and a course by composer Ton de Leeuw had clearly left their mark. In what would be her swansong, she created her own abstract-expressionistic vocals, after endlessly studying singing from all over the world.

The composers who influenced and inspired her emerge surprisingly in different works, without limiting her own personal style, exhibiting a stubborn and unruly side. The *Suite for Violin and Piano*, with its unpolished, authentic melodies where the ghost of Bartók wonders about, ends with a subdued finale with Messiaen-like harmonies. Also, the *Sonatina for Piano* invokes the atmosphere of the Balkans with its melodies and use of chords, but in a milder manner than in the *Suite*. In the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, the strict

counterpoint in the Fugue of the last section brings the music of Hindemith to mind. The Three Songs remind us of the fairytale magic of Ravel, while the *Vocatio* is more experimental in character and seems to be a synthesis of many non-Western musical styles that the composer had explored.

For me, she was a mother, musical through and through. I grew up with her beautiful piano playing, it would lull me to sleep without fail. She was a woman who was open to music, including the free jazz that I so diligently explored in my teenage years, as well as to the jazz musicians I brought home. She was a mother who was rather outspoken in her opinions, not afraid to proclaim an unpleasant judgment. Such judgment could be unshakable, which could sometimes be difficult for us, her three children Peter, Hans and Soesja.

She was a seeker and follower of

Eastern philosophy (from theosophy, originally, and Gurdjieff to transcendental meditation). "Ah, everything is love," she would sometimes say, hopefully. But how to reach it?

I saw her as a hospitable, class-conscious, but socially sensitive woman, who thought of herself as a Bohemian just like her artist parents. "It's all about *esprit*," was her motto, but she was hardly a carefree artist. She couldn't be as such while single-handedly raising three children from two short-lived, broken marriages, the latter being to Hans Citroen, the then secretary to conductor Willem van Otterloo.

With love, she was the nanny to her children, something that her own mother had warned her about, but it gnawed at her that she couldn't pursue her musical activities (giving concerts, composing, publishing her technique book) to the fullest. Where should she

go with her dreams, how to find the time, who will give you support, let alone financial support?

I see her once again as that life-loving, outdoorsy person who biked through wind and rain to give piano lessons from The Hague to Wassenaar and back, hardy and cheerful.

She had an admirable ability to open herself up to new situations and people. For example, when she was about 60, she inherited a centuries-old cottage on the hill in downtown Ljubljana. There, as the daughter of known painter Matija Jama, she plunged into a, to her, barely known Slovenian life. She learned to speak the language, via a course, as well as she could and made many new friends.

Not always an easy person, she was a fighter with soul who never lost sight of her own path.

A few years before her death, she asked me if the lovely theme from her *Sonata for Cello and Piano* was something that I would like to write and sing a text for. But I was not up to providing her piece of text; it was too sacred to me. After she was gone, when I missed her terribly and I was writing all sorts of musical pieces for a CD with my trio, I knew I wanted to do something with it. So I wrote *Song for Ma* in her memory. It is a jazz piece about the music and the warmth she gave me, with an introductory verse in which I refer to her cello theme. "I hear a faint melody, gentle and sweet. It's taking me back to the house of my mother..." On my CD *Song for Ma* (1998, CHR70056), it is in her honor that the title song is preceded by her cello theme; however, it is played by clarinet and piano. Thus, some of her music was on CD. Now this song, preceded by the cello theme that is actually played on cello and piano, concludes her CD.

It is a dream come true that her five chamber music works are now on this CD. Top musicians Marcel Worms, Ursula Schoch, Irene Maessen, Helena Rasker, Daniel Esser and Ivar Berix play them with great commitment and without the possibility to refer to earlier interpretations. It is all thanks to the selfless dedication of pianist Marcel Worms, who makes such great efforts to pull unknown composers from out of obscurity and who brought all these fantastic musicians together for this project. It is thanks to his initiative that the CD with her music has come out; the music that she wrote with her temperament, playfulness and spirituality during her quest in life.

*Soesja Citroen, March 2008*

*(thanks to Marcel Worms)*

**Irene Maessen (soprano)** studied with Cora Canne Meijer at the Amsterdam Conservatory. After that, she took lessons with Arleen Auger and was prize-winner at the International Elly Ameling competition. She was also honored with the *Zilveren Vriendenkrans* by the Friends of the Concertgebouw.

Over time, she has built up a very broad repertoire of songs. Her affinity for the French impressionists' repertoire is striking and has led to outstanding performances. At the same time, she has saved a lot of unknown Dutch music from oblivion. She gives vocal recitals together with Marja Bon, Rudolf Jansen, Roger Braun, Kelvin Grout and Marcel Worms.

As an opera singer, Irene Maessen has interpreted many roles, in particular in the operas of Mozart. She has worked in the opera houses of Innsbruck and Salzburg and has been a guest singer with the National Travel Opera.

Irene Maessen has performed with the most important Dutch orchestras under direction of prominent conductors and is a much requested chamber music singer.

As a soloist, she has performed with the Schönberg Ensemble, Ensemble Wendingen, Nieuw Ensemble, Netherlands Wind Ensemble, Doelen Ensemble, Gaudier Ensemble, Combattimento Consort, Calefax Reed Quintet, Leo Smit Ensemble and the Mondriaan Quartet.

She has taken part in the Holland Festival, de KRO concert series, the VARA matinee, the Gergiev Festival, the Asian Contemporary Music Festival in Seoul, the *Festival van Vlaanderen* and the Robeco concerts in the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. She also applies herself to modern music and has premiered several new works, including songs and operas that were especially composed for her.

She has done many radio recordings and has worked on various CD productions.

She gives master classes for duos with pianist Marja Bon and since the beginning of the 2007/2008 season, she has been working at the Arnhem Conservatory as teacher of classical voice in the musical theater department.

**Helena Rasker (alto/mezzo-soprano)** graduated cum laude in 1994 from the Royal Conservatory of The Hague and continued her studies at the Tanglewood Music Center in the United States. Currently she is coached by Diane Forlano in London.

Her repertoire covers many areas. Thus, she sang *Tsvetajeva Lieder* by Shostakovich with the Schönberg Ensemble under Reinbert de Leeuw in the series *Tijdgenoten* in the Concertgebouw. She also sang *Kinder-totenlieder* by Mahler, the Henze ver-

sion of *Wesendonklieder* by Wagner and *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* by Mahler at the Gergiev Festival.

In the area of chamber music, Helena Rasker interpreted *Liebesliederwalzer* by Brahms and presented, with Johannette Zomer and Reinild Mees, a staged recital of French songs. She also interpreted *Pierrot Lunaire* by Schönberg with members of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra.

In addition, she is a much-requested soloist in the oratorio sector. Under the direction of Jaap van Zweden, she sang in Mozart's *Requiem*, in Bach's *Hohe Messe* at the Festival La Chaise-Dieu and under Peter Neumann, she interpreted the role of Irene in Handel's *Theodora*.

Helena Rasker worked with the Dutch Opera on the production and CD recording of *Moses und Aron* by Schönberg under the direction of

Pierre Boulez in a co-production of the *Salzburger Festspiele*. Also, she took part in the DNO production *Rêves d'un Marco Polo* by Claude Vivier under Reinbert de Leeuw.

During the *Salzburger Festspiele*, she contributed to a live CD recording of *Prometheo* by Luigi Nono under the direction of Ingo Metzmacher. Dawn Upshaw asked her to come up on stage and sing alongside her during one of her *Carte Blanche* concerts at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. Further, Helena Rasker can add to her list of accomplishments, the title role of Gluck's *L'Orfeo* in a performance with the Dutch Chamber Orchestra under Christian Zacharias. She has also been on tour to Southern Europe with the *Ensemble Vocal de Lausanne* under Michel Corboz and sang Dvorak's *Stabat Mater* with the *Residentieorkest* under Gennadi Rozhdeztvensky.

**Soesja Citroen (singer/composer)** has brought her music to Dutch and international stages for over 25 years. In recent years, she has been singing her own compositions with pianist Berend van den Berg and bassist Ruud Ouwehand.

She was born in The Hague, was raised with classical music and as a teenager started to sing jazz. After completing her Master's in social psychology, she opted for jazz and took voice and piano lessons.

She has performed in many European countries, played at the Yatra Jazz Festival in India, sung in New York and toured though Indonesia.

After making three LP's with, among others, Nedly Elstak, Willem Breuker and Nico Bunink, she recorded her album *Soesja Citroen sings Thelonious Monk* in 1983 with Cees Slinger. On

this CD, she herself supplied the texts for five Monk compositions.

Between 1984 and 1989 she recorded three albums with the Metropole Orchestra under the direction of Rogier van Otterloo and Robert Farnon. Fifteen of these pieces appear on the compilation CD *Yesterdays* (1998, CHR70049).

Beginning in 1994, she made her two first CD's for Challenge Jazz with songs from the American songbook. With reference to the CD *Songs for Lovers and Losers* (1996, CHR70034), Alex Henderson of All Music Guide wrote, "very soulful phrasing" and "moving and personal interpretations of standards such as Angel Eyes and Lush Life."

The turning point of her career came when she began composing at the age of 48.

Her last three CD's, *Song for Ma* (1998, CHR70056), *Soesja sings Citroen* (2001, CHR70101) and *Don't Cry Baby* (2005, CHR70127) contain 40 of her own compositions, both music and text. She received a lot of feedback from the United States, the country whose song tradition Soesja elaborates on with her pieces.

In Jazz Times, she was called "absolutely sensational" and a "formidable composer." In the Penguin Guide to Jazz on CD from 2004, her Monk CD received 4 stars and her song *Song for Ma* was called "magnificent."

In the newly released book *Jazz Singers: The Top 500* by Scott Yanow she is described as one of the top five hundred vocalists in the world.

**Ivar Berix (clarinet)** studied clarinet with Bas de Jong and George Pieterse. In 1991, he earned a



diploma in Musical Performance with honors for musicality.

Since 1987, Ivar has been a part of the successful Calefax Reed Quintet. By receiving the Philip Morris *Kunstprijis* (1997), the *Kersjes van de Groenekan Prijs* (2001) and the *VSCD-prijis Klassieke Muziek* (2005), the quintet has earned three of the greatest honors in the Netherlands.

The CD *Ellington Suites* (JIM75219) on the label Jazz In Motion is a bit of a digression. "This is both a technically and artistically staggering CD." (NRC) "Both suites offer fantastic music that will suit any jazz or classical collection." (Luister).

Ivar can be heard on international concert stages and in various line-ups on CD's with the chamber music of John Cage, Hans Krassa, Maarten Ornstein, Elmer Schönberger, Leo Smit and

Joep Straesser, among others.

Through concert tours, in the Netherlands and abroad, and guest teaching at various conservatories, Ivar has honed his skills at giving master classes in the field of effective cooperation in chamber music.

Ivar plays Herbert Wurlitzer clarinets and uses a Viotto mouthpiece and no. 3 Van Dooren reeds.

**Ursula Schoch (violin)** received her first violin lessons at the age of four. In Trossingen, her teacher was G. Baynov and after high school she studied at the *Musikhochschule* in Cologne with professor Saschko Gawriloff. During her studies, she also took chamber music lessons with the Alban Berg String Quartet.

In 1987, Ursula and her trio took first prize at *Jugend Musiziert*,

the national music competition of Germany. In 1990 she repeated this achievement as solo violinist. In 1992 she won first prize at the *Deutsche Musikwettbewerb*. Following this, she played solo and chamber music concerts, including a recital with solo works of J.S. Bach with the *Ludwigsburger Schlossfestspiele* and as soloist during various tours within Europe and to Japan, Central Asia, America and Africa.

From 1998 to 2000, Ursula was a member of the Berlin Philharmonic. Since the 2000/2001 season, she has been the second leader of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam.

Ursula plays a J.B. Guadagnini violin.

**Daniel Esser (cello)** studied cello with Tibor de Machula and Jean Decroos and composition with Robert

Heppener at the *Muzieklyceum* in Amsterdam. In 1980, he took first prize at the International Piano Trio Competition in Colmar, France, after which followed many concert invitations from all over Europe.

Since 1979 he has been a part of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. He is also a part of the Robert Schumann Ensemble and since 1990 he has played in the Ebony Band.

Daniel Esser is co-programmer of the chamber music series of the Friends of the Concertgebouw and the Concertgebouw Orchestra and is an editor of the Anthology of the Concertgebouw Live, The Radio Recordings. He teaches orchestral studies at the Conservatory of Amsterdam.

**Marcel Worms (piano)** studied at the Sweelinck Conservatory of Amsterdam

with Hans Dercksen. At the same time, he also took lessons with pianist Youri Egorov and Alicia de Larrocha and specialized in chamber music with Hans Broekman and 20<sup>th</sup> century piano music with Alexandre Hrisanide.

He is active as a chamber music player and soloist, where he has a preference for thematic programs with music of mostly lesser-known composers.

Marcel Worms has dedicated programs to The Second Viennese School, Leos Janáček and Jean Wiéner and has worked since 1996 on his project *New Blues for Piano*.

His program *Jazz Influences in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Piano Music* and music of Jean Wiéner appeared on CD in 1994.

On the occasion of Mondrian's memorial year in 1994, Marcel Worms performed a program under the

title, *Mondrian and the Music of his Time*. He took this program to St. Petersburg (Hermitage), Moscow (Pushkin Museum) and Washington D.C. (National Gallery of Art) and also recorded it on CD.

In connection with the Van Gogh exhibition in the United States, he made the CD *Pictures at a Van Gogh Exhibition* and for the Rotterdam *Kunsthall* he put together a Picasso program and CD.

In 2002, his CD *Tangos for Piano from Latin America and Europe* appeared.

Since 1996, Marcel Worms has been working on a blues project for which about 170 Dutch and non-Dutch composers have written contributions in the form of a blues-type piece. Currently, this music is available on four CD's. Between 1998 and 2008, Marcel Worms has performed this pro-

gram in many European countries and also in China, Indonesia, Russia, the Middle East, the United States, Africa, South America and Cuba. In 1999, he played at the North Sea Jazz Festival in The Hague. In 2007, publishing house Donemus put out an anthology of the sheet music of the Dutch contributions in two volumes, including CD's. In 2008, Peer in Hamburg will publish two volumes with a selection of the international contributions.

Since 2002, the pianist has been actively involved with the piano works of Frederico Mompou. In November 2007, he organized a three-day Mompou festival in Amsterdam.

## Mijmering

Drijvend als een blanke bloem  
Op roerloos avondwater.  
Komt een gedachte dromend aan,  
Vervolgt haar weg naar later.

Een even heldre zachte glans  
Gaat door gedachtenbeelden.  
Ik zie een zonverlichte tuin,  
Waar we als kind in speelden.

Een spinrag dunne godendraad  
Gaat van jeugd naar aarde.  
Het is geluk van ziel en zee,  
Van vruchtdoorgeurde gaarde.

## Musing

Floating like a flower white  
On quiet evening waters.  
A thought comes nearer like a dream,  
Finding its way to later.

And just as limped lustrous hues  
Dye my imagination.  
I see a sunlit garden bright,  
In which we played as children.

There is a frail thread, gossamer thin,  
Joining youth and earth.  
It's infinite and soulful joy,  
The perfumed fruit of my garden.

## Zang

Langs mijn kamer, langs mijn venster  
Gaat de neurie van de wind.  
Diepindringend, raadselzingend,  
Dat ik huiverheerlijk vind.

Zachtjes zoemt de zoete neurie  
Een vertelsel, o zo vaag!  
En ik luister naar die fluister  
Naar die bange windeklaag.

Door de avond, door de schemer  
Gaat de neurie van de wind.  
Droevig dromend, van ver komend.  
Waarvan mijmert toch die wind?

## Song

Past my room and past my window  
Hear the humming of the wind.  
Penetrating, enigmatic,  
And it deeply thrills my soul.

For this humming has a story,  
It is a story vague, subdued.  
And I listen to these whispers,  
To their timid litany.

In the evening in the twilight  
Listen to the humming wind.  
Mournful dreaming from a distance.  
What's the message that it brings?

## Dans

Een onweer van tweeduizend trommen  
dreunt door de nacht.

Een saterfluit schicht als een bliksem  
met volle kracht.

Daar hossen Pan en Corybanten in  
dronken stoet. lo.

En alle voet bij zoveel vreugd, die dan-  
sen moet.

Varens en grassen liggen vertrapt  
Onder maan met dode kraters en  
schimmenstad.

Hoor de Naiaden staarten klappen op  
wilde stroom.

Hoor vlakke handen pauken bonzen in  
lentedroom.

*Dutch lyrics by Jil de la Rie*

## Dance

The thunder of two thousand drums  
cuts trough the night.

The flute of a satyr flashes like light-  
ning so powerfully.

Pan and Corybantes are jigging in  
drunken train. lo.

No single foot, all seem to dance in  
savage joy.

Ferns and grasses lie trodden down  
Under moon with extinct craters and  
shadowy town.

Sound of the splashing waters as  
Naiads dive in the stream.

Clapping hands on kettledrums heard  
in a springlike dream.

*English translation by Agnes Jama*

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Mastered at NorthStar by Bert van der Wolf  
Production: Marcel Worms & Soesja Citroen  
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