

REINBERT DE LEEUW

Der nächtliche Wanderer / Abschied

Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra

Reinbert de Leeuw

Edo de Waart



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REINBERT DE LEEUW (1938-2020)

[1] **Der nächtliche Wanderer** (2013)

Conductor: Reinbert de Leeuw

On tape:

Bart Lelivelt - accordeon [Wagner: Elegie]

Steven Scharf - actor [Hölderlin: Der nächtliche Wanderer]

Radio Philharmonic Orchestra - strings

Jan Panis: sound design

[2] **Abschied** (1973)

Conductor: Edo de Waart

Total time 68:37

In memoriam Reinbert de Leeuw

46:02

The passing of the composer, conductor and pianist Reinbert de Leeuw on Friday 14 February 2020 affected myself and the other members of the Matinee team very deeply. I haven't counted the number of Saturday Matinee concerts he conducted, but it must run into dozens. As far back as 1966, he was already making fabulous appearances in the Matinee series as a pianist. And, along with my predecessor Jan Zekveld, Reinbert de Leeuw developed the most delightful programmes, often centred on unjustly forgotten composers. Or programmes that were devoted to music of living composers he had just discovered and was desperate to present to a wider audience as soon as he could. His total devotion in these efforts is legendary and unforgettable to anyone who attended one of his concerts.

22:32

Personally, my memories hark back mainly to that period when Reinbert de Leeuw was working on his great symphonic poem *Der nächtliche Wanderer*, for a commission from the NTR ZaterdagMatinee. In 1973, De Leeuw had written an orchestral piece entitled *Abschied* [Farewell], and there were good reasons for this. If there was any struggle in his mind, it was the question of whether, as a composer, he really had anything to add to the masterpieces by the great composers of musical history, whom he admired boundlessly. He used to call me almost daily, filled increasingly with doubts. "What am I getting myself into? It's no good", he would say half a dozen times, adding finally that composition did of course represent the highest ideal in art. Fortunately, Reinbert stuck to his task. The world premiere of

Der nächtliche Wanderer, which he conducted himself for the Matinee of 1 February 2014, turned into a triumph that was lauded lavishly at home and abroad (for instance in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung of 5 February 2014).

Three years later, on 21 January 2017, Edo de Waart conducted the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic in *Abschied*. Before that Matinee concert, Reinbert was looking frail and not especially healthy. What a change in him afterwards! He looked reborn, was very talkative, stressing more than once how there was really no better orchestra for new music than the Radio Philharmonic. Edo de Waart was visibly delighted with this.

Not long ago, on 26 October 2019, Arthur and Lucas Jussen played Messiaen's *Visions de l'amen* at the Matinee, at my request. In the period leading up to that performance, Arthur and Lucas had been working closely with Reinbert, who in turn had collaborated extensively with the French master and who was now clearly delighted to be able to share his knowledge in the role of adviser and mentor to the brothers. I'll never forget how warmly, and with such intense joy, he embraced Arthur and Lucas in the green room of the Concertgebouw after their dazzling performance.

For the Matinee of February 29, 2020, Reinbert de Leeuw should have conducted his beloved Asko|Schönberg in a Vivier programme, which was very close to his heart. But it was not to be. Alongside everyone with music in their hearts, we mourn the passing of a unique musician and composer. Reinbert de Leeuw will never

be forgotten. The fact is that his legacy, including the radio recordings of many unique Matinee concerts, is of lasting significance.

Kees Vlaardingerbroek

Artistic director NTR ZaterdagMatinee 2006-2023

Der nächtliche Wanderer (2013)

As a conductor and as a pianist, Reinbert de Leeuw introduced the world to music that might never otherwise have fallen under the spotlight (at least not with such excellent interpretations). Erik Satie, Louis Andriessen, Galina Ustvolskaja, Claude Vivier, Mauricio Kagel, György Kurtág and György Ligeti – the list of composers championed by De Leeuw in his roles both as pianist and conductor is endless.

Ligeti once made this telling comment about De Leeuw: "Reinbert is one of my best musician friends. Not just because of his human qualities, because I love the man, but mainly for his musical qualities. He's a wonderful pianist and a wonderful conductor. A musician to the core. I always regarded his work with the Schönberg and Asko Ensemble as being perfection. What I love most about Reinbert is his complete devotion to the art: he pours all his living energy into it."

De Leeuw may have started out as a composer, but that aspect receded into the background in the 1970s. He became more and more a performer of music

of the major composers of our own era. “While I stopped composing long ago, I did set out as a composer at one point,” said De Leeuw. “With the likes of Louis Andriessen and Peter Schat, I was one of the Nutcrackers in the ‘60s. The process of composition has always helped me as a performer and conductor. I feel close to a composer and his score; I know what’s going on from the inside.”

In 1974, he seemed to give up composing altogether: the title of his compact, stormy orchestral work *Abschied*, from 1973, says what needs to be said on that front. But blood proved thicker than water. De Leeuw wrote a number of works after this, not least the opera *Axel*, for instance, along with Jan van Vlijmen. And, in 2003, he wrote romantic lieder in *Im wunderschönen Monat Mai* (‘three times seven songs after Schumann and Schubert’), a cycle for actress Barbara Sukowa that gained international fame and recognition.

After four decades, *Der nächtliche Wanderer* was the first orchestral work by De Leeuw since *Abschied*. The stormy, compact nature of his first orchestral work gave way here to an enormous, dramatic structure, suffused with resonant memories. The resources that De Leeuw called for were uncommon: apart from a massively scored symphony orchestra, there was also an off-stage orchestra and sound recordings (with a pre-recorded string orchestra, accordion and declamatory voice).

Der nächtliche Wanderer is named after the short poem of the same title by Friedrich Hölderlin, which pervades the work like an *idée fixe*:

Hu! der Kauz! wie er heult,
Wie sein Furchtgeschrei krächt.
Erwürge— ha! du hungerst nach erwürgtem Aas,
Du naher Würger, komme, komme.

Sieh! er lauscht, schnaubend Tod—
Ringsum schnarchet der Hauf,
Des Mordes Hauf, er hörts, er hörts, im Traume hört’ ers,
Ich ihre, Würger, schlafe, schlafe.

De Leeuw commented: “I’ve thought long and hard about *Der nächtliche Wanderer*. I’ve always composed a lot in my head, but I thought I had to try and see once again whether I should stop for good. I’ll just start writing something down. Because dreaming something up in your mind and then not doing it is no longer possible. Also, I didn’t want to write a ‘nice’ sounding piece of a few minutes’ duration that would end up hidden away on a shelf after one performance.”

“*Der nächtliche Wanderer* crosses every boundary of pretention: over 50 minutes of music in a single movement, for large orchestra with another orchestra off-stage plus played and spoken fragments on tape. Something bothers me when I look back: what had inspired me to think I could suddenly write a piece for orchestra lasting almost an hour? When I look at the score, I swing back and forth between disgust and euphoria. Because I also think it’s wonderful that the piece is actually there now. In any case, I’ve tried to produce something that wasn’t there before.”

Der nächtliche Wanderer is an extreme work in every respect. Its structure and language are complex, but so is its orchestration: with musicians who play in the wings (in a *fernorchester*, à la Mahler) and with recordings that sound like shreds of recollection over the orchestra.

The orchestral work is based on two musical foundations and a single literary one. Hölderlin's poem plays a significant part in the structure of *Der nächtliche Wanderer*. "Hölderlin's texts are music already, in fact," said De Leeuw. "You can never precisely describe what it is or what's happening in his poems: there's always an enigmatic layer, an option for a different meaning." De Leeuw used the text as the basis for rhythm in his orchestral work, without the audience actually being able to detect this. Towards the end, the poem reappears literally, as an actor declaims it 'on tape' via loudspeakers.

Apart from Hölderlin's poem, Wagner's final piano piece is another important source of inspiration in *Der nächtliche Wanderer*. De Leeuw arranged a final sketch found on Wagner's piano shortly after his death, an elegy. Wagner's harmony was a starting point, albeit the Wagnerian sound world plays no part in the piece. Right at the end of the work, the elegy is heard from the loudspeakers, then arranged for accordion. "It reaches us, as it were, from afar, with the orchestra faltering around it."

The third source of inspiration is the Violin Sonata by Galina Ustvolskaja. It is referenced, for example, in the viola solo at the start of *Der nächtliche Wanderer*. And the Violin Sonata is then quoted literally, in an orchestral instrumentation, having already lurked obliquely through much of the music.

De Leeuw constructed this orchestral edifice with prime numbers, divisible by 1 and by the numbers themselves alone, which govern the music from the overall form down to the very smallest details. An example is the ritualistic nature of the percussion parts. "This pulse of prime numbers is ever-present. When the percussionists play, it's always 23 times, or 11. This determined the structure of the work."

De Leeuw described *Der nächtliche Wanderer* as a theatrical work. "It's a substantial piece. Nothing in it is *pleasing*. This concerns me from one perspective. On the other hand, I feel that the work was born out of necessity: and that is often the best approach. I love pieces that change one's perception of music."

Anthony Fiumara

Translation: Bruce Gordon/Muse Translations

Abschied (1973) Symphonische Dichtung für großes Orchester

Towards the end of his career, Reinbert de Leeuw caused a furore with his idiosyncratic interpretations of Bach's *St Matthew* and *St John Passions*, but he was among the foremost advocates for modern music over many decades. From the very start of his career, he championed avant-garde composers such as Karlheinz Stockhausen and Pierre Boulez, as well as mavericks including Charles Ives and Erik Satie. As director of the Schönberg Ensemble, he programmed the music of the Second Viennese School, around Arnold Schönberg, and built up intense relationships with living

innovators such as György Ligeti, Galina Ustvolskaja, Mauricio Kagel and Sofia Gubaidulina.

Initially, De Leeuw also made his presence felt strongly as a composer, sampling all the fashionable compositional styles of the day. During the 1964 Gaudeamus Music Week, he won a prize with his serial string quartet *Quartetto per archi* and, a year later, incorporated some random elements, à la John Cage, into his orchestral work *Interplay*. With Louis Andriessen, Misha Mengelberg, Jan van Vlijmen and Peter Schat, he composed the 'anti-American' opera *Reconstructie*, an ode to the revolutionary Che Guevara, in 1969. The music was played by ensembles – the symphony orchestra at the time had been discarded as ultra-conservative – and the music was a wondrous pastiche of avant-garde, electronics, jazz and pop, with even a snippet of 'Mozart'.

Gradually, though, De Leeuw found composition ever more difficult, not just because his work as a pianist, conductor and teacher at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague was soaking up more of his time, but also because of his personal uncertainty. "There's something in my nature that's certainly not conducive to being personally creative: my tendency to reverence", he said on this in the biography *Reinbert de Leeuw: Mens of Melodie*. "That's fine, it's fantastic! But you have to be able to shut yourself off as a composer and just concentrate on your own thing."

Nonetheless, he completed the orchestral work *Abschied* in 1973, after three years of toil. It seems surprising, at first sight, that De Leeuw spent so long on a work for the symphony orchestra, which he had so publicly renounced. On closer examination, however, it fits in completely with his fascination for the transitional period between the 19th and 20th centuries. "That's the fountainhead I've been drinking from for my entire life" is how he described it. "That obsession started when I was about 20 and it will never leave me. *Abschied* is my way of confronting it."

The title refers to the typical romantic genre of the symphonic poem. In his own notes on the work, we see that *Abschied* "is constantly bursting at the seams". It is a "permanent sort of madness", at "an extraordinarily high tempo" – the piece must be performed within eighteen minutes. At the first performance on 11 May 1974 in the de Doelen venue in Rotterdam, Edo de Waart and the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra whisked the swirling score to a close in nineteen minutes and twenty seconds, over a minute more. One reviewer commented on the "stormy cheering" that followed, while another described the audience response as "partly tepid, partly fanatically hysterical".

Abschied does indeed burst at the seams, simply in its orchestration. As well as a full string section with harps and piano, there is also a huge contingent of wind instruments: four flutes, four oboes, four clarinets with bass clarinet, five bassoons and contrabassoon, two saxophones, eight horns, five trumpets, four trombones and two bass tubas. Apart from the normal timpani and cymbals, the percussion section includes twigs and a tam-tam (a large

Chinese gong), with typical pop instruments such as snare drum, bass drum and tom-toms.

Abschied opens with a fast, rising staccato figure on horns and trombones, instantly setting the tone for what follows. For just under 20 minutes, the brass play as if possessed and pepper us with short motifs like pistol shots. These become embedded in an extremely dense fabric of dissonant, dark harmony in the strings and woodwind, slashed by whip-like outbursts from the percussion.

The mood is rushed and threatening, with sudden silences, persistently rising and falling dynamics and jittery, shattering outbursts. It's as if the Grim Reaper is on our heels. There is nothing flirtatious or 'romantic' about the music; there's no holding back for a lovely solo passage or an appealing harmony; the music is essentially static. It's a single explosion of sound, ending as abruptly as it started. After its premiere in 1974, one reviewer even said it followed the path of "an orgasm to the death".

Many people, including De Leeuw himself, felt that this piece was his farewell not just to the Romantic era but to composition as a whole. However, in 2003, he surprised both friend and foe with his cycle *Im wunderschönen Monat Mai*, inspired by Schubert and Schumann. Ten years later, he composed the orchestral work *Der nächtliche Wanderer* for the NTR ZaterdagMatinee series, elaborating on the themes of *Abschied*.

Thea Derks

Translation: Bruce Gordon/Muse Translations



Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra

The Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, founded in 1945, plays a vital role in Dutch musical life. Besides major symphonic repertoire, it performs – more than any other Dutch symphony orchestra – the music of today, often including premieres of works specially commissioned for the NTR ZaterdagMatinee and AVROTROS Friday Concerts broadcasting series.

Innovative programme concepts such as Pieces of Tomorrow and Out of the Blue reach out to a conspicuously young audience. Almost all concerts are broadcast live on NPO Klassiek (formerly NPO Radio 4), naturally implying that the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra performs for a live audience dozens of times larger than any concert hall could ever accommodate.

The American conductor Karina Canellakis started her position as chief conductor of the orchestra in September 2019, being the first female chief conductor of a Dutch symphony orchestra. The French Stéphane Denève will follow up her fellow American James Gaffigan, principal guest conductor since 2011, in 2023.

Markus Stenz has been chief conductor of the orchestra from 2012 to 2019. His illustrious predecessors include Bernard Haitink, Edo de Waart (honorary conductor), Jaap van Zweden (honorary chief conductor), Jean Fournet and Hans Vonk. Guest conductors have included Leopold Stokowski, Kirill Kondrashin, Antal Doráti, Charles Dutoit, Valery Gergiev, Mariss Jansons, Michael Tilson Thomas, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, Peter Eötvös, John Adams, Christoph Eschenbach, Vasily Petrenko, Vladimir Jurowski and Pablo Heras-Casado.

The Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra was awarded an Edison Classical Award in 2014 for its contribution to the musical life of the Netherlands, and in 2017 it was awarded the Concertgebouw Prize (with the Netherlands Radio Choir).

www.radiofilharmonischorkest.nl



Reinbert de Leeuw (1938-2020)

Conductor, pianist and composer Reinbert de Leeuw was the co-founder of the Schönberg Ensemble (now Askō|Schönberg) in 1974, remaining as chief conductor of that ensemble until his death in on 14 February 2020.

He was born in Amsterdam and studied piano and music theory at the Amsterdam Conservatory, as well as composition with Kees van Baaren at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague. He conducted many ensembles and symphony orchestras at home and abroad, including the Royal Concertgebouw, the Rotterdam Philharmonic and the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestras. For the 1995/96 season, the Concertgebouw devoted its Carte Blanche season entirely to him. For De Nederlandse Opera in Amsterdam and the National Touring Opera in Enschede, he conducted performances including Stravinsky (*The Rake's Progress*), Andriessen (*Rosa, a Horse Drama, Writing to Vermeer, La Commedia*) and Vivier (*Rêves d'un Marco Polo*), while in the NTR Saturday Matinee series he conducted works by the likes of Gubaidulina, Zuidam, Widmann, Reich, Adams and Dallapiccola, as well as his own compositions.

Reinbert de Leeuw had an association with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra over three seasons as artistic director for their series of modern and contemporary music. He was artistic director at the Aldeburgh Festival in 1992 and from 1994 until 1998 he held a similar position at the Tanglewood Festival for Contemporary Music in the USA. He was artistic director of the NJO Summer Academy until 2011. As a pianist, De Leeuw is best remembered for his outlandish interpretations of the works of Satie. He also taught at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague for 50 years.

He received numerous prizes and distinctions for his ground-breaking work. These included an honorary doctorate from Utrecht University in 1994, as well as a professorial appointment at Leiden University in August 2004. For his enormous lifetime accomplishments and extraordinary services to music in the Netherlands, he was awarded the Edison Oeuvre Prize, Classical, in 2013. On his 70th birthday in 2008, he was honoured as a Knight of the Order of the Netherlands Lion. In 2018 on his 80th birthday he was awarded the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds Prize and the Silver Medal of the City of Amsterdam.

Edo de Waart (b. 1941)

Throughout his long and illustrious career, renowned Dutch conductor Edo de Waart has held a multitude of posts with orchestras around the world including Music Directorships with Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, the Minnesota Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Antwerp Symphony, New Zealand Symphony, and Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and a Chief Conductorship with De Nederlandse Opera and Santa Fe Opera. Edo de Waart is Principal Guest Conductor of San Diego Symphony, Conductor Laureate of both Antwerp Symphony Orchestra and Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra and Music Director Laureate of Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra.

Edo de Waart kicked off the 2022/23 season by returning to Sydney Symphony Orchestra with three performances in the newly renovated Sydney Opera House. Further engagements include Milwaukee, San Diego, Dallas, Fort Worth and Antwerp symphony orchestras.

As an opera conductor, Edo de Waart has enjoyed success in a large and varied repertoire in many of the world's greatest opera houses. He has conducted at Bayreuth, Salzburg Festival, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Grand Théâtre de Genève, Opéra Bastille, Santa Fe Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera. With the aim of bringing opera to broader audiences where concert halls prevent full staging, he has, as Music Director in Milwaukee, Antwerp and Hong Kong, often conducted semi-staged and opera in concert performances.

A renowned orchestral trainer, he has been involved with projects working with talented young players at the Juilliard and Colburn schools and the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara.

Edo de Waart's extensive catalogue encompasses releases for Philips, Virgin, EMI, Telarc and RCA. Recent recordings include Henderickx's Symphony No.1 and Oboe Concerto, Mahler's Symphony No.1 and *Elgar's Dream of Gerontius*, all with Royal Flemish Philharmonic.

Beginning his career as an Assistant Conductor to Leonard Bernstein at New York Philharmonic, Edo de Waart then returned to Holland where he was appointed Assistant Conductor to Bernard Haitink at the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra.

Edo de Waart has received a number of awards for his musical achievements, including becoming a Knight in the Order of the Netherlands Lion and an Honorary Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia. He is also an Honorary Fellow of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts.

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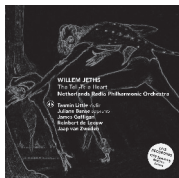
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Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra

Bernard Haitink conductor



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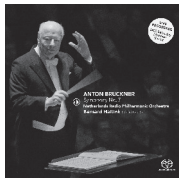
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Symphony No. 7

Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra

Bernard Haitink conductor



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Violin Concerto No. 1, Op. 77 | In tempus praesens

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Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra

James Gaffigan | Reinbert de Leeuw

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Der nächtliche Wanderer 2013 | world première

Commissioned by NTR ZaterdagMatinee, with support of Fonds Podiumkunsten

Producer NTR ZaterdagMatinee: Anita Wijnen

Artistic director NTR ZaterdagMatinee: Kees Vlaardingbroek

Recording location: Concertgebouw Amsterdam

Recording dates: NTR ZaterdagMatinee 1 February 2014 (live) - Der nächtliche Wanderer

NTR ZaterdagMatinee 21 January 2017 - Abschied (live)

Sound engineer: Jan Stellingwerff (Der nächtliche Wanderer) & Frank Mathijssen (Abschied)

Musical director: Ron Ford

Digital Audio Restoration: Northstar Recording Services

Editing and Re-Mastering: Bert van der Wolf-Oude Avenhuis

A&R Challenge Classics by Marcel Landman, Valentine Laout & Mario Moresse

Liner notes: Anthony Fiumara & Thea Derks

Translations: Bruce Gordon/Muse Translations

Cover & booklet photo: Hans van der Woerd

Product coordination & booklet editing: Boudewijn Hagemans

Graphic design: Natasja Wallenburg & Juan Carlos Villarroel

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