



NORTHSTAR
RECORDING
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SIMEON TEN HOLT



Canto Ostinato

Pianoduo Scholtes & Janssens

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SIMEON TEN HOLT (1923-2012)

Canto Ostinato (1973-1976)

- [1]** Section 1 - 16
- [2]** Section 17 - 40
- [3]** Section 41 - 73
- [4]** Section 74 (Theme 1) - 87
- [5]** Section 88 - 90
- [6]** Section 91 - 94
- [7]** Section 95 (Theme 2) - 106

Total time 61:23

9:29
8:08
7:15
6:32
14:36
7:07
8:12

We first encountered Simeon ten Holt's Canto Ostinato 17 years after forming our duo, in 2020. Maybe that sounds fairly late. In the intervening years, we had often been occupied with highly pianistic, virtuoso works and then, in the midst of the Covid lockdowns, what we really needed was a different focus. A focus on form, sound worlds and the creation of music "in the moment". We found this in Canto Ostinato; a fascinating world with significant input from the audience, the space and the ambience. When performing the piece, our main inspiration is the moment and the situation we find ourselves in, and we are so grateful that Ten Holt offered us and many other musicians this scope. That is why we opted for a live recording: what we feel is the most sincere and intimate way of recording this music.

Lestari and Gwylim
Pianoduo Scholtes & Janssens

Simeon ten Holt was born in 1923 in Bergen, a small town in North-Holland well known for its art and artists. He studied composition with Jakob van Domselaer, who imbued him with an uncompromising artistry. He headed to Paris in 1949 to take lessons in composition from Arthur Honegger and Darius Milhaud. Ten Holt never had any formal conservatoire training.

Once he returned to the Netherlands, he found a studio in the form of an old bunker in Bergen. This was where he wrote the tonal Bagatelles for piano in 1954, a work in which he attempted to create a larger structure from short elements. This turned out to be a form that was to occupy him for many years and in many works. The atonal *Cyclus aan de Waanzin* [Cycle to Madness], dating from 1961-62, is also structured as a series of miniatures. In the same period, Ten Holt wrote the important essay "Over het doen en het gedaan hebben" [On making and having made], in which he explained his own working method. He felt that music started off like a nebula and that, once he had drawn something from the mists, his work as a composer was to produce what was already there in completed form, inside the nebula. In 1963, he wrote in his diary that he had it in mind that a concert should be an ongoing performance, with visitors wandering in and out at will. Ten Holt was also fascinated by social processes during these highly formative years. He became interested in time and space after starting to compose electronic music, following a period of serialism. This theme can be found in his piece *I am Sylvia*, for tape, and also manifested itself in a piece for four keyboards, at the time still entitled *Perpetuum*. He embarked on this on 19 January 1973, after a lengthy period of electronically processing some tonal improvisations for himself.

Perpetuum was completed in 1976 but was revised in the period 1976-79 with input from the composer Andries Hubers, and was then renamed *Canto Ostinato*. The work was not a final excursion into tonality, since he was also creating other serial works around the same time, including *Koorproject 1975* and *Centri-fuga* for orchestra. Even before the first performance of *Canto Ostinato*, there had been discussion about using instruments other than pianos. During rehearsals for the premiere, in April 1979, all of the themes that had been occupying Ten Holt seemed to coalesce: small elements that together made up a larger whole; a different form of concert; social processes arising from the freedom that the players had to decide on the number of repetitions; and time and space. Ten Holt never consciously went searching for this form, but when *Canto Ostinato* began to conquer the musical world it became clear that his solitary quest had drawn something universal from the mists, something that many listeners and musicians would recognise.

Arie Vuyk

cabaret performer, author, biographer of Simeon ten Holt

Translation: Bruce Gordon/Muse Translations



Pianoduo Scholtes & Janssens

"If you listen to these two young people play music, you think that everything in the world will be all right" - Menahem Pressler, Beaux Arts Trio

Lestari Scholtes and Gwylim Janssens have been playing together as a piano duo since 2003 and are now recognised as one of the most promising piano duos of their generation. Their Carnegie Hall debut in May 2009 was praised in these terms: "they could have been playing with 25 or 30 fingers, so huge and perfectly blended was their sound. A sublime duo in top form". The duo is well known for its spellbinding sound, extremely high technical dexterity and intense and energetic performances. All of this has led to concert appearances for them throughout Europe and the United States, as well as in Dubai, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Georgia, Mongolia, Brunei, Singapore, Vietnam, China, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia, Japan, Korea, Myanmar, Chile and Bolivia. Their concerts have been broadcast on TV and radio at home and abroad, including on NPO Klassiek, BBC Radio 3, Kol Hamusica and Klara. They have also appeared as soloists with orchestras such as the Rotterdam Philharmonic, Noord-Nederlands Orchestra, Residentie Orchestra, Brabants Orchestra, Sinfonia Rotterdam and the Israel Symphony Orchestra. The duo has given performances at a number of festivals including the Bath Festival, Grachtenfestival Amsterdam, TonLagen-Dresdner Festival der zeitgenössischen Musik, Braunlage Maikonzerte, Basilica Festival of Flanders, Klevische Klaviersommer, Festival Classique, the International Piano Duo Festival Poland and Festiwal Muzyczny Duetomania.

The duo has won over a dozen national and international competitions, including the prestigious Vriendenkrans Competition of the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, the Concours Musical de France, the International Chamber Music Competition Almere 2009 and IBLA Grand Prize International Music Competition. They were hailed as Dutch Radio 4 Talent of the Year in 2010. Lestari and Gwylim regularly sit on juries at a range of national and international competitions. They have also given masterclasses at conservatoires across the globe.

The piano duo is founder and artistic director of the annual Pianoduo Festival Amsterdam, which held its inaugural edition in October 2013 and has now expanded into being one of the largest piano duo festivals in the world.

As a performing piano duo, they studied with the renowned piano duo of Gil Garburg and Sivan Silver at the Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien in Hanover. They have also participated in numerous masterclasses with the likes of Nikolai Petrov, Alexander Tamir, Victor Derevianko, Alon Goldstein, Peter Takács, Paul Lewis, Jean-Bernard Pommier and Menahem Pressler. Both of them started off their training with Ton Demmers in the Young Talent Class at the Brabant Conservatorium. Lestari took her Bachelor's and Master's degrees at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam with Jan Wijn, while Gwylim completed his Bachelor's degree with Ton Demmers at the Fontys Conservatorium and then took his Master's with Bart van de Roer at the Codarts Conservatorium.

Their debut CD, with works by Rachmaninov, Debussy and Ravel, appeared in 2010 on the QuattroLive label. Etcetera Records issued their second CD – "Paris!" – in 2014, featuring works by Stravinsky, Debussy and Ravel. The awards garnered by this recording included a Luister10 recommendation.

Their third CD of works by Mozart and Schubert came out on Challenge Records International in 2021, a CD about which BBC Music Magazine wrote: "They breathe together, agree on relative dynamics and tonal colour and understand the balance of the textures", before awarding the CD no fewer than 4**** stars.



We would like to thank a number of people and organisations for their support in the creation of this album:

- the people working at BIJ ANDREAS: Dorien, Christine and Brenda, who welcomed and supported us warmly and generously;
- piano technician Charles Rademaker, who raised the grand pianos to an altogether higher level with his expertise and devotion;
- producer and sound engineer Bert van der Wolf, who inspired us and gave us the extra push we needed just when we needed it;
- the team at Challenge Records: Mario, Valentine, Marcel, Sander, Carlos and Natasja, for their belief in us and the confidence they gave us;
- Ten Holt's biographer Arie Vuyk, for writing the liner notes and working so helpfully with us.

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Sonata for two pianos in D Major, K. 448/375a

Fantasie for piano four hands in F Minor, D. 940

Pianoduo Scholtes & Janssens

This Recording was Produced, Engineered and Edited using the 'High Quality Musical Mastering' principle with the use of Sonodore microphones, Avalon Acoustic & Musikelectronic Geithain monitoring, Siltech Mono-Crystal cabling and dCS - & Merging Technologies converters.



**NORTHSTAR
RECORDING**
by BERT VAN DER WOLF



www.northstarconsult.nl

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Producer, engineer, editing & mastering: Bert van der Wolf-Oude Avenhuis

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

Liner notes: Arie Vuyk

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