



## Press release

### The Contius organ's first year in Leuven

17 November 2022

The Contius organ's first season came to a close at the end of October.

During this first season, the Contius Foundation organised 42 concerts and received more than 3,500 spectators at the St. Michael's Church of Peace in Leuven.

In addition to Wim Winters, the Contius titular organist, and David Burn, Parish titular organist, Laurens de Man (NL) is the first (young) Contius Organist in Residence until July 2023.

Alexander Pott's (UK) Bach concert on 18 October in a packed church was the last of six Bach concerts given by some of the best young European organists from the Netherlands, France, England and Germany. This **Contius Bach Cycle** will present the complete works of J. S. Bach for organ in 18 concerts held over three seasons.

A free **Contius Lunch Concert** took place every Thursday afternoon from the end of April to the end of October. Well-known organists, as well as young, rising Belgian talents performed at these concerts: in addition to Wim Winters, David Burn and Laurens de Man, these also featured: Bernard Foccroulle, Luc Ponet, Benoît Mernier, Maria Vekilova, Francesca Ajossa, Damien Leurquin, Pascale Dossogne, Salomé Gamot, amongst others.

The first edition of the **Contius-Bach Festival and Academy** took place in July. A number of prominent organists and ensembles took part in this for eight days. These included *a nocte temporis* (conducted by Reinoud van Mechelen), *InAlto* (together with Bernard Foccroulle), the organists Pieter van Dijk (NL), Benjamin Alard (FR), Annette Richards (US) & David Yearsley (US), and Wim Winters (on the clavichord).

The Opening concert on July 1<sup>st</sup> (Richards and Yearsley) and the second concert on July 2<sup>nd</sup> (*a nocte temporis*) were both broadcast live on radio by KLARA.

The Contius Foundation has also launched a number of activities involving **schools**, including the St. John's primary school (in Leuven), where two classes are currently involved in an ambitious project with composer Bart Verheyen and writer Winny Ang on a theme of 'Peace'. This creation is due to be performed at the beginning of June 2023. The **Clari Cantulus** children's choir and the **Clari Cantus** youth choir will also participate in this production.

An **Open Day for the Music Academies** was held on October 8<sup>th</sup>: from 1 o' clock until 5 pm, twenty students of roughly 10 different teachers, comprising all ages, came to explore the range of possibilities and sounds of the Contius organ, under the expert guidance of Wim Winters. Pleasure and emotion were written on all of their faces!

In 2023, the Contius Foundation will return again with ambitious plans: '24 Hours of Organ for the Climate' (in the context of the City of Leuven's 'Warm Alarm' Festival); a World Creation by Bart Verheyen for children and organ; the second edition of the Contius-Bach Festival and Academy; and about 50 more concerts.

Organ music is alive and kicking in Leuven, together with Bach, the promise of youth and our collective thirst for discovery!

**For contact and information:**

Geert Robberechts, [info@contiusfoundation.org](mailto:info@contiusfoundation.org) - +32-475-477192