

LECTURE World Carillon Congress – Barcelona 20170704

« *Les Cloches de Corneville* »

A Practice-based Research on Carillon Transcriptions and Arrangements of Operas in the Nineteenth Century based on Historical Carillon Manuscripts and Re-pinning Arrangements

In recent years, the research into the historically-informed performance (HIP) of carillon music has predominantly focused on the seventeenth-and eighteenth-century repertoire.

This resulted in sometimes surprising new insights, such as the existence of a sophisticated intavolation practice performed by carillonneurs in the first half of the seventeenth century.

From the comparative study of eighteenth century carillon books and re-pinning manuscripts it appeared that performers departed from existing melodies in improvisatory interpretations (adding embellishments, variations on the melody and bass line, changes in the harmonization).

Largely absent within the research into this repertoire, and more specifically the performance practice, however, is the nineteenth century.¹ This can undoubtedly be explained by the widely held view of this century as the "dark century of carillon art" (Lehr 1991; Rombouts 2010). Reference is rightly made in this context to the disastrous state of the bell patrimony as a result of the massive destruction of bells during the French Revolution: many carillonneurs disappeared and automatic carillons were neglected and played the same melodies for many years. (Van Eyndhoven & Thieffry 2016) It is also assumed that the lack of dynamic expression of the carillon failed to satisfy the prevailing romantic taste.

Nevertheless, it appears from numerous re-pinning and carillon manuscripts that examples of a flourishing carillon practice in the nineteenth century do indeed exist.

Overview of the most important carillon and re-pinning manuscripts of the nineteenth century

1841	<i>Préludes Mélodiques</i> - Joannes Franciscus Volckerick (Antwerpen)
1842 - 1893	Versteken (250) - W.J.F. van Nieuwenhuisen en J. Wagenaar (Utrecht)
1861	<i>Compositien voor het klokkenspel 1861</i> (Utrecht)
s.d.	MS ' <i>Versmessen</i> ' (Oudenaarde)
1863	<i>Kerkmuziek</i> van Joseph Callaerts, 'Beijaardspeler der stad Antwerpen'
s.d.	(<i>Beiaardmuziek</i>) (120 pp), samengesteld door J. F. Volckerick (Antwerp)
1864	<i>Stadsmuziek</i> , (ca. 100 pp). compiled by J.F. Volckerick
1864-1904	<i>Arias van den Beijaard</i> (ca. 160 pp). Versteken -Joseph Callaerts & Gustaaf Brees (Antwerp).
1904	<i>Beyaard Muziek</i> -Gustaaf Brees (Antwerp)

The nineteenth-century collection music, known as the "Versmessen" collection - which came to the attention only in around 2010/11 - consists of manuscripts and prints from the nineteenth century. It includes parts for opera, which are

¹For research into the repertoire, see i.a. Halsted (2000), Kok (1994); Maassen (200, 2002, 2003); Stam (2006); Swager (2000)

sometimes stamped with "Société des Beaux-Arts Audenaerde" and a series of booklets with "keyboard music". Further research is required to determine the authorship of these writings. Another related question is whether the music in these booklets (422 pages in total) was written exclusively for carillon.

In general, it concerns music for carillon that, as in previous centuries, is very much in line with the prevailing musical trends and tastes. The repertoire largely consists of transcriptions, arrangements or *versteken* of popular operas, such as *Si J'étais Roi* (Adam 1858), *Guillaume Tell* (Rossini 1829), *I Puritani* (Bellini 1835). In his book *Moeurs Populaires de la Flandre Française*, (Lille, 1889), Alexandre Desrousseaux describes the repertoire that was played by automatic carillons in French Flanders during the nineteenth century. Here too, we find some melodies from the repertoire of the French *opéra comique*, including *La Fille the Madame Angot* (Charles Lecocq), *Dame Blanche* (François Boeildieu), *Les Noces de Jeannette* (Victor Massé) and the previously mentioned operas of Adam and Bellini.

The arrangements of operas for carillon are in line with the transcriptions and arrangements (variations, parodies, fantasies) of operas for piano solo, piano four hands, guitar, piano and clarinet, piano and violin ... which were very popular in the nineteenth century. Sometimes these were very virtuoso arrangements which were performed by the arranger himself (e.g. Franz Liszt's opera fantasies). In addition, there were more "simple" arrangements, mostly for piano, performed in more domestic settings. This made it possible to listen to music normally performed in the opera or concert hall.

The progress in music printing strengthened the connection between music heard in concert or opera-houses and domestic music making. The mere fact that it was possible for a much larger group of people, the growing bourgeoisie and lower middle class, to play music in general, necessitated the development of all kinds of music for the amateur. Transcriptions became a vast part of the music publishing industry, and were economically advantageous to both composer-arranger and publisher.

Transcriptions, such as four hands piano arrangements of opera overtures or symphonies, at all levels of pianistic proficiency, were distributed on a very large scale. These transcriptions were to 19th century culture what recordings are to 20th century culture: they transport music out of the concert hall, opera house or church into the living room.

Liszt, for example, was a reputed pianist in the field of the opera paraphrase. But also his opponent Sigismund Thalberg (1812 - 1871), who wrote about 60 opera fantasias, was extremely famous, mainly because of a technical novelty called the "three-hand effect". Carl Friedrich Weitzmann wrote in his "Geschichte des Klavierspiels" in 1879 "His bravura pieces, fantasies on melodies from Rossini's *Moses* and *La donna del lago*, on motifs from Bellini's *Norma* (...), became extraordinarily popular through his own, brilliant execution; however, they treat their subjects always in one and the same way, namely to let the tones of a melody be played in the medium octave of the keyboard now by the thumb of the right, now of the left hand, while the rest of the fingers are executing arpeggios filling the whole range of the keyboard. The public sensation caused by this technical feat prompted Thalberg to edit "**L'art du chant appliqué au piano** (opus 70)", published in 1853 by Heugel, a first collection of 12 opera transcriptions with the apparent aim to share his pianistic secret with his admirers.

The basic pedagogical, social and virtuosic "reasons of being" of the transcription are expanded and philosophically backed by their insights and output as writers. In his "Sketch of a new esthetic of music" from 1911, Busoni fiercely defends **the transcription as a new work of art, with the same value as an original composition.**

The research distinguishes between transcription and adaptation.

A transcription is the arrangement (copying and/or rescoring) of a composition for one particular instrument for another instrument. In the transcription, the original composition (structure, content) is maintained and the technical possibilities and musical sound of the instrument for which the transcription is made are taken into account. In concrete terms, this concerns for example the transcription of a piano reduction of an opera overture for carillon (see *Si J'étais Roi*).

In the case of an arrangement, a 'new composition' is created on the basis of the original composition (opera): the arranger makes choices (melodies, themes) and creates a structure that has its own logic and whose parts he for instance connects with one another by means of his own additions. (cf. *Les Huguenots*).

Already at the end of the eighteenth century we find in, among others, the carillon books of Frans De Prins (Leuven 1781) and especially André Dupont (Saint Omer 1780 – 85) a higher number of well-known opera melodies, taken from the repertoire of the French (Parisian) opéra-comique. Both De Prins and Dupont copy the melody to which they sometimes add a bass line and, rather rarely, a limited harmonization (chords). These formed the starting point (just as in the Gruyters' carillon book, Antwerp 1741) for a more elaborate version (Van Eyndhoven 2008). Also in the collection of Frederik Berghuys (1762-1835) - book 44 from the Berghuys collection, recorded between 1771 and 1816 for the carillon of Delft - the opera repertoire is significant: 46 of the 116 pieces are taken from operas by de Boismortier, Grétry, Monsigny, Martini, ... Some of these operas are also to be found in the carillon book of Dupont (e.g. *Monsigny's La belle Arsène*). The booklet was compiled in around 1800. The music is notated on one staff with the occasional indications for embellishments. Below the staff, there are letters that refer to bass notes (pedal notes) or chords (harmony).

In contrast, the (majority of the) nineteenth-century carillon manuscripts present sophisticated arrangements and/or transcriptions. These arrangements and transcriptions are based on editions of piano reductions and/or transcriptions.

The research analyzes and compares the original score (of the opera) with the reduction and/or the transcription for piano and the carillon arrangement and transcription. This analysis clarifies, among other things, to what extent certain parameters (musical, technical, performance, idiom of the instrument, context) have been decisive in the transcription and arrangement. In addition, it presents a comparative analysis of re-pinning and carillon transcriptions. Here, the focus lies on the idiomatic aspects of carillon transcriptions versus re-pinnings (e.g. tremolos, arpeggios, chromaticism, ...).

Two examples demonstrate which aspects are discussed in the comparative analysis between the piano reduction and a transcription and arrangement for the carillon respectively.

They are the transcription for carillon by J. Callaerts of the overture of the opera *Si j'étais Roi* by A. Adam, and the arrangement for carillon by W.J.F. Nieuwenhuyzen of the opera *Les Huguenots* by G. Meyerbeer.

Objectives

This research (which is funded for three years) aims to acquire new knowledge on the practice of transcribing and arranging operas for the carillon and the automatic carillon in the nineteenth century and the performance practice associated therewith. The aim is to significantly broaden the repertoire of contemporary carillonneurs, to gain new insights on the performance of this repertoire and to provide tools that may inspire composers to create transcriptions and arrangements of nineteenth-century music.

The ensuing objectives include:

- (1) Extending the repertoire of contemporary performers by providing a critical edition of nineteenth-century transcriptions and arrangements.
- (2) Acquiring new insights in the performance practice of the nineteenth-century carillon repertoire and the Flemish romantic style that emerged from it.
- (3) The development of tools for performers with which they themselves can make arrangements and transcriptions of nineteenth-century music.

The (re) discovery of this impressive nineteenth-century carillon repertoire from the perspective of the carillonneur as both an adapter and performer, also raises interesting questions as to the origin of the "Flemish-romantic" carillon style that especially flourished in the first half of the twentieth century under the impetus of Jef Denyn (Lehr 1991).

The image of the 'renewal' that accompanied compositions in this style must be critically evaluated from the perspective of the evolution of carillon music in the nineteenth century (Rombouts 2010).

Bibliography

Colton, Glenn David, *The Art of Piano Transcription as Critical Commentary*, (thesis), McMaster University, 1992

Desrousseaux, Alexandre, *Moeurs Populaires de la Frande Française*, Lille, 1889

Halsted, Margo, "The Two Books of Carillon Music by Jan Frans Volckerick in the Anton bree Library, Lake Wales, Florida", in *Proceedings of the 11th World Carillon Congress 1998*, Mechelen-Leuven, 2000, 113 – 115

Kok, Gijsbert, *De versteken van J.A.H. Wagenaar I (1869-1893) voor de Domtoren in Utrecht* (onuitgegeven scriptie) Nederlandse Beiaardschool, Amersfoort, 1994.

Kregor, Jonathan Sanvi, *Franz Liszt and the vocabulaires of transcription, 1833-1865*, (PhD diss.), Harvard University, 2007

Lehr, André, *Beiaardkunst in de Lage Landen*, Tielt, 1991

Maasen, Jacques, "Netherlands Automatic Carillon Music in the 19th Century", in *Proceedings of the 11th World Carillon Congress 1998*, Mechelen-Leuven, 2000, 104 – 112

Maassen, Jacques, "Automatische beiaardmuziek (deel 4). De collectie Doesburg: 1845-1945", in *Klok en Klepel*, 79 (2002): 26-28.

Maassen, Jacques, "Automatische beiaardmuziek (deel 6). De Kamper versteken (1805-1870): een eerste muzikale analyse", in *Klok en Klepel*, 82 (2003): 11-14.

Rombouts, Luc, *Zingend Brons. 500 jaar beiaardmuziek in de Lage Landen en de Nieuwe Wereld*, Leuven, 2010.

Stam, Jasper, *Een periode van diep verval? Het Utrechts beiaardrepertoire tussen 1861 en 1954*, (doctoraal scriptie), Utrecht, 2006.

Suttoni, Charles, *Piano and Opera: a Study of the Piano Fantasies written on Opera Themes in the Romantic Era*, (PhD diss.), New York University, 1973

Swager, Brian, "The Antwerp Carillon Repertory of Gustaaf Brees", in *Proceedings of the 11th World Carillon Congress 1998*, Mechelen-Leuven, 2000, 116 – 125

Van der Meyden, Klaas Jaap, "Een merkwaardige collectie", *Magazine Vlaamse Beiaard Vereniging*, 17(2011)2:26-29.

Van Eyndhoven, Carl, "Versuch über die wahre Art das Carillon zu spielen. Over de uitvoeringspraktijk van beiaardiers in de achttiende eeuw", in Carl Van Eyndhoven en Peter Strauven (red.), *Trillers, mordanten en schielijke loopen... Een artistieke reconstructie van de beiaardmuziek in de achttiende eeuw*, Cahiers van het IvOK nr.7, Leuven, 2008, 7-32.

Van Eyndhoven, Carl en Sandrine Thieffry, "Un autre son de cloches en Hainaut au XIXe siècle" in C. Cavicchi e.a.(red.), *Renaissances musicales dans le Hainaut XVe – XVIe siècles – XIXe siècle*, Brepols, Turnhout, (publication of 2016).

Yi, Chi-Hsin, *Virtuoso Piano Arrangements based on Opera, Song and Waltz*, (diss.), 2008

