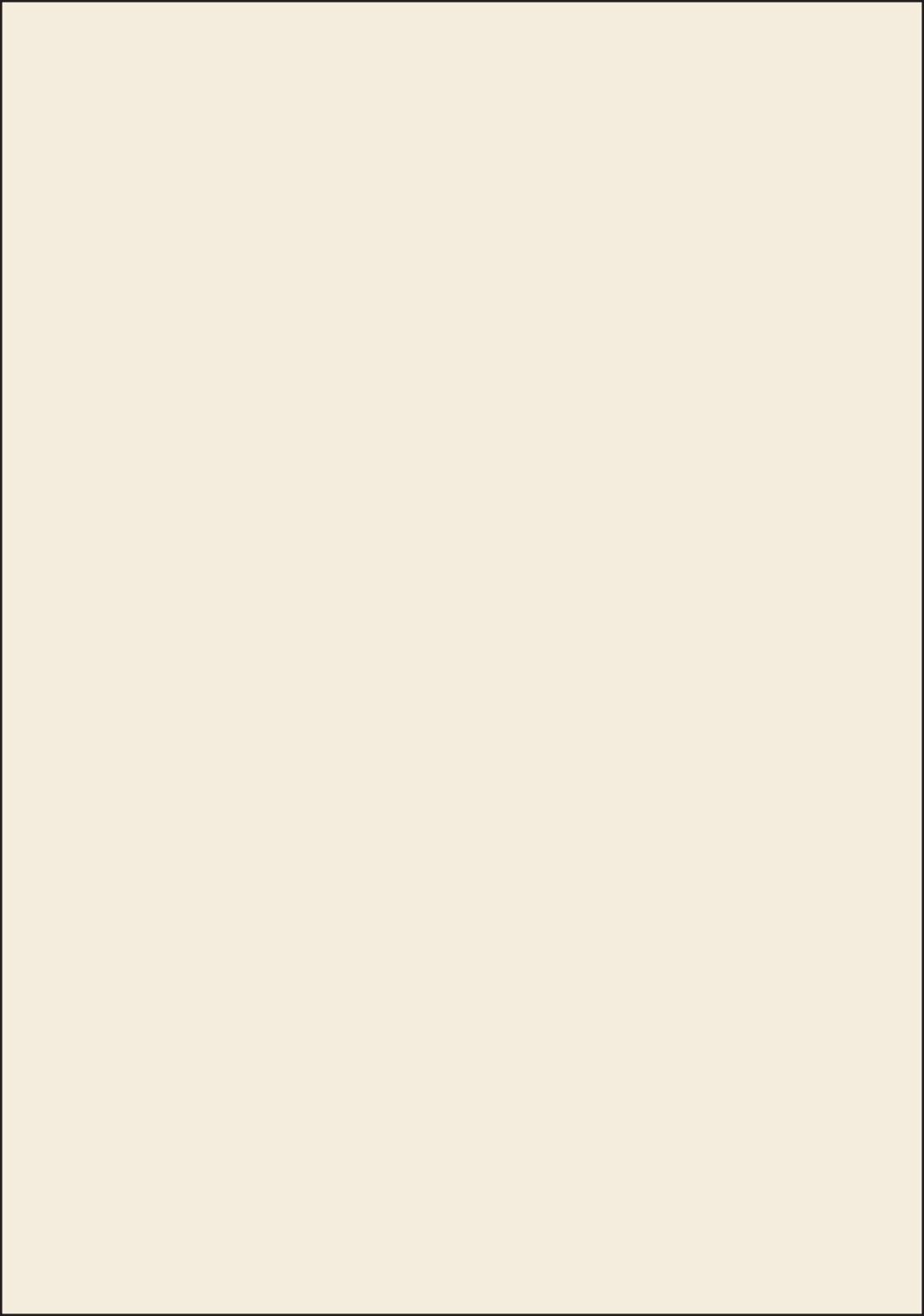


The hidden story
of a small region



Final Bachelor Recital

Sonja Oberkofler



Programme

Robert Schumann
(1810 - 1856)

Drei Romanzen Op. 94 (1849)
I. Nicht schnell
II. Einfach und innig

Giacinto Scelsi
(1905 - 1988)

Tre Pezzi (1956)
I.
II.
III.

Jacques Charpentier
(1933 - 2017)

Gavambodi II (1969)

Thierry Escaich
(*1965)

Lutte (1994)

Marc Mellits
(*1966)

Black (2008)

Story *

Wij schrijven het jaar 1914, een kleine regio in het zuiden van Tirol, aan de grens met Italië en middenin het hart van de Alpen. Een jonge vrouw, Stefanie genaamd, woonde op deze plek omringt door de bergen. De Oostenrijkse Stefanie staat aan het begin van een eeuw vol oorlog en verandering. In het begin lijkt alles goed en mooi tot dat de eerste wereldoorlog begint, het eigen land uit elkaar wordt getrekt, Hitler en Mussolini aan de macht komen en drastische maatregelen gaan uitvoeren.

Brixen, Juli 1914

Liebes Tagebuch,

Der Krieg fängt bald an. Wir freuen uns alle schon darauf und bereiten ein großes Fest vor, denn mein Mann Josef und all die anderen Männer werden bald als Soldaten in den Krieg ziehen. Wir Frauen bleiben Zuhause, um die Arbeit der Männer fortzusetzen und um uns um das Vieh, die älteren Menschen und Kinder zu kümmern. Es wird ein fröhliches Fest mit traditionellem Essen, Musik und Tanz.

Deine Stefanie

Brixen, November 1918

Lief dagboek,

De oorlog was niet zoals we ons hadden voorgesteld. Veel mensen stierven en keerden nooit meer terug naar hun vaderland. Elke dag was een nieuwe dag vol angst. Mijn nachten gevuld met nachtmerries en de angst dat Josef niet zal terugkeren. Voor ons Zuid-Tirolers is een nieuwe tijd aangebroken. Na het verdrag tussen Oostenrijk-Hongarije en Italië behoort onze mooie regio nu tot het land Italië. Niemand weet precies wat ons te wachten staat...

Liefs, Stefanie

** Drama based on real life*

Translation

We write the year 1914, a small region in the south of Tyrol, on the border with Italy and in the heart of the Alps. A young woman named Stefanie lived here surrounded by mountains. The Austrian Stefanie stands at the beginning of a century full of war and change. In the beginning everything seems good and beautiful until the first world war begins, the own country is pulled apart, Hitler and Mussolini come to power and take drastic measures.

Brixen, July 1914

Dear diary,

The war is about to start. We are all looking forward to it and are preparing a big celebration, because my husband Josef and all the other men will soon go to war as soldiers. We women will stay at home to continue the men's work and to look after the animals, elderly and children.

It will be a happy celebration with traditional food, music and dance.

Your Stefanie

Brixen, November 1918

Dear diary,

The war was not as we had imagined. Many people died and never returned to their fatherland. Every day was a new day filled with fear. My nights filled with nightmares and fears that Josef won't return.

A new time has started for us South Tyroleans. After the treaty between Austro-Hungarian Empire and Italy, belongs our beautiful region now to the country of Italy.

Nobody knows exactly what is going to happen next...

Your Stefanie

Bressanone, Febbraio 1919

Caro diario,

Tutto é cambiato dalla fine della guerra. É stato proibito l'uso del tedesco e del nostro dialetto, il ,tirolersch'. Gli Italiani traducono tutti i nomi dal tedesco all' italiano. I nomi delle vie, dei paesi e pure i nomi delle persone. Sulla nuova carta d'identità, mi chiamo Stefania Hofer e mio marito ora si chiama Giuseppe. L'Italiano é una lingua bellissima però il regime fascista mi fa paura. E innanzitutto non capisco che cosa dicono. Sono pure stati insediate famiglie dal sud d'Italia per italianizzare la nostra bella regione tirolese.

Tua Stefania

Brixen, Juli 1939

Lief dagboek,

Hitler en Mussolini hebben een conventie gemaakt, genaamd „de optie“. Deze biedt ons de keuze tussen, blijf hier en pas je aan aan de Italianisering, of keer terug naar het Oostenrijks-Hongaarse Rijk. Daar beloven ze ons een huis en nieuw land om te bewerken. Giuseppe en ik hebben besloten om hier te blijven met onze zoon Antonio. Mijn man gelooft niet in de beloftes die worden gemaakt, maar veel andere mensen besluiten om met de opterende partijen mee te gaan. De mensen die besluiten terug te gaan, zien ons als verraders van het land. Ze zeggen ook, dat er weer een oorlog komt en dat maakt me bang. Ik heb al een oorlog meegemaakt, en ik weet wat me te wachten staat. Giuseppe moet zich weer aanmelden en ik wil hem niet verliezen.

Liefs Stefania

Bressanone, February 1919

Dear diary,

Everything has changed since the end of the war. The use of the German language and our dialect „tirolerisch“, has been prohibited. The Italians translate everything from German to Italian. The names of the streets, towns and even the name of the people. On the new identity card, my name is Stefania Hofer and my fiancé is now called Giuseppe. Italian is a beautiful language, but the fascist regime scares me. On top of that, I don't understand what they say. Families from southern Italy have been settled here to Italianize our beautiful Tyrolean region.

Your Stefania

Brixen, July 1939

Dear diary,

Hitler and Mussolini made a convention called „the option“. It offers the decision between staying here and adapting to Italianisation or returning to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. There they promise us a house and new land to cultivate.

Giuseppe and I have decided to stay here with our son Antonio. My husband doesn't believe in the promises that are made, but many other people decide to go with the opting parties.

The people who decide to go, see us as traitor of the country.

They say also that there's another war coming and that scares me. I've already survived one war, but I know what's waiting for me. Giuseppe has to serve again and I don't want to lose him.

Your Stefania

Tilburg, June 2020

Dear diary,

This story is still affecting my region and it's inhabitants. Having a different ID card than the „normal“ Italian inhabitants and them seeing us as „polentas“ or „austrians“ still often makes us feel like strangers.

Besides the pain and fights it has left, there are many positive aspects. We grow up learning two languages, because German and Italian have both become official languages. We combine the Italian culture with the tirolean one, just think about the amazing food, and are still an autonomous region.

Nowadays people everywhere around the world think about the past and are especially worried about the future. No one is really living in the present.

I think we should more appreciate the here and now, enjoy every moment as much as we can and be kind to each other.

We should all think about what makes us happy, be our true selves, open for change and leave room for magic.

The world would be a better place if we could make more peace than war, love more and fight less.

Life still goes on and it's often the little things that really count.

Yours truly Sonja

R. Schumann - *Drei Romanzen für Oboe und Klavier Op. 94*

The poetic and swarming romances for oboe and piano were written in december 1849 as a Christmas present for Schumanns wife Clara.

The melodic lines and playful accompaniment of the piano make it together a caressing dialog between the two instruments. The ballad meter of the first romance gives the oboe a story telling character with a dreamy refrain part, where the motive of the romances goes from one instrument to the other. The second romance has more the character of a song with a surged middle part. Later in his life, Schumann dealt with dementia and mental problems. Those health problems lead us back to the second romance, where Schumann wrote an abrupt middle part, which can let us feel the anxiety.

1849 was also the year of revolution in Germany, change was happening and the inhabitants wanted to create a nation with more freedom of speech.

G. Scelsi - *Tre Pezzi*

The mysterious Italian composer Scelsi was inspired by the surrealism, esotericism as also metaphysics. His pieces are written out improvisations with a landscape view but almost impossible to analyse.

The three pieces for solo soprano or tenor saxophone have been written in 1956. The first movement is very screaming and keeping the listener in the present. The second movement leads almost to a meditation and lends the audience a moment of peace and rest before the third movement comes with an even more screaming character and a lot of temperament.

The background of Scelsi and this composition can let you feel and hear the change happening in history. 1956 was also the Hungarian Revolution taking place between the Hungarian People's Republic and its Soviet-imposed policies. Everything started small with a student protest in Budapest.

J. Charpentier - *Gavambodi 2*

Gavambodi 2 was written in the late modernistic french stijl (1969) as a chamber music piece for saxophone and piano, dedicated to Georges Gourdet. Even if it belongs to the standard repertoire for the classical saxophone, it is not so much known as other pieces.

Charpentier wrote this piece after he lived more than a year studying the carnatic music in India. The composition is influenced by Indian music, based on the carnatic modus N.43 and remembers of the techniques used by his teacher Olivier Messiaen.

Gavambodi 2 can be distinguished in three parts a slow beginning, starting with a sounding improvisation solo from the saxophone, which quickly develops into a faster chromatic and technical section. The third part and finale is reminiscent of the beginning, ending with a soft unisono of the two instruments.

1969 is an important year for the autonomy of South-Tyrol. The people's party voted for the second agreement of autonomy and internal self-determination, which in november 1969 got the majority and is existing till today.

T. Escaich - *Lutte*

The french organist and composer Thierry Escaich composed the solo piece for Alto saxophone in the end of 1994 for Claude Delangle. *Lutte* means "fight" in French, a fight between two inner voices.

It is a great incantatory piece where the memories of Gregorian chorals and rhythmic themes blend with each other. The piece consists of the progressive combination of these two opposite universes, where the saxophone is treated as a polyphonic instrument. Especially in the last part of the composition where you can hear a gregorian lyrical choral mixed with a persistent rhythmical bass line.

In 1994 the apartheid died in South-Africa and equality and right of vote for everyone started. The same year Nelson Mandela became president after being in jail for many years fighting for the rights of dark skinned people.

M. Mellits - *Black*

The piece was originally written for two amplified bass clarinets in 2008 and has later been arranged by the composer himself for two baritone saxophones. The two musicians weave tightly woven patterns together, creating a fabric of music that has completed integration. In this "integrated" world, the musicians are equals, complete each other's every move and sounding as it is played by one instrument. The music is always going and looking forward as also real live is.

In 2008 the world financial crisis started and Barack Obama became the first African American president of the USA. It was a year of change around the globe but life didn't stop.

Sonja Oberkofler (1996)

Sonja Oberkofler is a saxophonist from the Italian Alps with passion for classical and new music, electronics and interdisciplinary projects.

Her musical journey started in early years followed to play the saxophone at the age of eight and has since then never stopped. In 2015 she joined the saxophone class of Ties Mellema at the Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Tilburg (The Netherlands).

Additional studies have been an Exchange study at the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste (Switzerland) in the class of Lars Mlekusch, the Bad-Homburg Masterclass in Germany, Barcelona Modern Festival in Spain and more, with world-renowned saxophonists such as Claude Delangle, Arno Bornkamp, Jean-Denis Michat, Christian Wirth, Pawel Gusnar Simon Diricq, Ryo Noda among others.

Sonja's infectious passion for chamber music and interdisciplinary performances led her everywhere, from the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, National Opera Amsterdam, Tolhuistuin Amsterdam, „Bunker H“ Bolzano among other alternative venues of performance to playing at festivals like Bosch Parade, Oranjewoud Festival, Festival Classique, Theaterboulevard, Opera Forward Festival and Grachtenfestival.

Her professional attitude and drive have resulted in collaborations with different composers like Anthony Fiumara, Aart Strootman, Aura Bouw, Vlad Chlek, Steven Stoffels performing several world premieres and playing concerts with world-renowned artists such as the All-star ensemble Bang on a Can, Asko|Schönberg and TEMKO.

Sonja is a Newzik ambassador and nominee of the Jacques de Leeuw Price 2020.

Motivation Programme

During my bachelor recital I want to show that I play different styles of music. The pieces I have chosen therefore are pieces where I can find myself in them.

The whole programme is based on different influences of rhythms and keys; for example, „Tre Pezzi“ is actually a written out improvisation by Scelsi. Charpentier has studied Indian music and brings back the Indian rhythms. Lutte is a solo piece with two voices, a Gregorian chorale and a continuous bass rhythm, which together form one voice. In the three Romances by Schumann you can not only show musicality but also the different timbres of the soprano saxophone and that we as saxophonists can adapt to other instruments and play transcriptions.

My idea and concept behind the programme is to have one big line and story through the performance instead of „loose“ pieces after each other.

The story I want to tell comes from my own background and is about South Tyrol. The region South Tyrol, before the First World War was part of Austria and afterwards it became part of Italy. A lot of people don't know this and are often surprised that German is, next to Italian, an official language in our region. While telling this story, I will also use the different languages, which I speak myself, to make it a little more personal. The idea was also to work more with light and a dancer but due the circumstances this was not possible.

With the participation of:

Piano

Baritone Saxophone

Text

Martien Maas

Deborah Witteveen

Sonja Oberkofler

Thank you

First of all I want to thank my parents, without whom I wouldn't have been able to study in the Netherlands and Switzerland.

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