

vlaams
RADIOKOOR



Rachmaninov & Mazzoli

VESPERS

A New
Dark Age

VOCAL FABRIC

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PROGRAMME

“God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.” (Genesis 1:5)

20:15 CONCERT ABDIJ TERKAMEREN

(without intermission - end +/- 21:45)

Sergei Rachmaninov - All-Night Vigil, Op. 37, "Vespers":

Arise! Master, bless!

(solo: Andrés Soler Castaño)

Glory to the Holy

(solo: Michiel Haspeslagh)

1. Beginning Song. Come Let Us Worship

2. Bless the Lord O my Soul

(solo: Eva Goudie – Falckenbach)

3. Blessed Is the Man

Missy Mazzoli - Vespers for a New Dark Age:

I. Wayward Free Radical Dreams

Sergei Rachmaninov - All-Night Vigil, Op.

37, "Vespers":

4. Gladsome Night

5. Lord, Now Lettest Thou

6. Rejoice O Virgin

Missy Mazzoli - Vespers for a New Dark Age:

II. Hello Lord

Sergei Rachmaninov - All-Night Vigil, Op.

37, "Vespers":

7. The Six Psalms

8. Praise the Name of the Lord

Missy Mazzoli - Vespers for a New Dark Age:

IV. Come On All You

Sergei Rachmaninov - All-Night Vigil, Op.

37, "Vespers":

9. Blessed are Thou My Lord

(solo: Ivan Goossens)

10. Having Beheld the Resurrection

Missy Mazzoli - Vespers for a New Dark Age:

V. New Dark Age

Sergei Rachmaninov - All-Night Vigil, Op.

37, "Vespers":

12. The Great Doxology

Missy Mazzoli - Vespers for a New Dark Age:

VII. Machine

Sergei Rachmaninov - All-Night Vigil, Op.

37, "Vespers":

13. Today Salvation Has Come

14. Thou Didst Rise From the Tomb

15. To Thee, the Victorious Leader

ARTISTS

* Sergei Rachmaninov ** Missy Mazzoli

Bart Van Reyn (conductor)*

Vlaams Radiokoor*

(soprano) Sarah Abrams, Jolien De Gendt, Karen Lemaire, Kristien Nijs, Valeriia Pieters, Kelly Poukens, Evi Roelants, Veerle Van Roosbroeck

(alto) Helen Cassano, Rob Cuppens, Victorina Eeckeloo, Maria Gil Munoz, Eva Goudie-Falckenbach, Lieve Mertens, Noëlle Schepens, Ellen Wils

(tenor) William Branston, Gunter Claessens, Paul Foubert, Ivan Goossens, Michiel Haspeslagh, Paul Schils, Mathis Van Cleynenbreugel, Roel Willems

(bass) Conor Biggs, Jean Manuel Candenot, François Héraud, Alberto Martinez, Paul Mertens, Samuel Namotte, Andrés Soler Castano, Jan Van der Crabben

Katrien Baerts (soprano)**

Annelies Van Gramberen (soprano)**

Bauwien van der Meer (mezzo soprano)**

Soloists Brussels Philharmonic**

Gudrun Vercampt (violin)

Geert Baeckelandt (clarinet)

Jan Buysschaert (double bass)

Koenraad Sterckx (keyboard)

Frederik Martens (keyboard)

Ruben Martinez Orio (percussion)

PROGRAMME NOTES

A NEW DARK AGE

Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943) is best known to audiences for his virtuoso piano concertos. But his religious composition *Vsenoshchnoe Bdenie* – translated as *All-night vigil*, or also known by its shorter name, *Vespers*, is at least as impressive. The work, composed in 1915, is considered one of the high points of the Russian choral style. At the same time, it marks the end of Russian Orthodox church music, which had been completely side-lined after the Russian Revolution of October 1917. With *Vespers for a New Dark Age*, the American composer Missy Mazzoli (1980) transposed the traditional vespers for today and stripped it of

its religious function. “A distorted, wild, blasphemous take’, as she describes her work.

ALL-NIGHT VIGIL

‘There was evening and there was morning – the first day”. (Gen. 1:5)

According to the Christian conception of time, one day runs from one sundown to the next. The daily cycle is accompanied in both the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox tradition by a liturgy of the hours that starts with the vespers of the previous evening. For his All-Night Vigil, Rachmaninov combined texts from three different prayer services: vespers, mattins and prime. These are sung, in the Russian Orthodox tradition, on the eve of important feast days, and they bridge the evening as well as the night. Although Rachmaninov was not religious himself,

Orthodox music served as an important source of inspiration through his entire oeuvre: “I took less interest in God and religious worship than in the singing, which was of unrivalled beauty.” Thus, a number of religious melodies found their place in his First Symphony and the Symphonic Dances.

In 1915, Rachmaninov drew up the plan for a religiously inspired choral work, inspired among other things by revival of the traditional church songs by composers like Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov. As prescribed by the orthodox liturgy, he used no instrumental accompaniment and kept the texts in Old Church Slavonic. He also reached back to the typical chant formulas and simple melodies of ancient church music. Of his fifteen-part Vespers, five parts were based on the centuries-old ‘znamenny’ chants (comparable to the first Gregorian chants in

western Christendom), and four parts evoke the more recent Greek and Kyiv tradition. The six remaining parts were entirely new compositions, and were closely aligned with traditional songs that Rachmaninov referred to them as 'deliberate falsifications'.

Despite the homorhythmic writing, Rachmaninov succeeded in creating a sober and contemplative but at the same time expressive composition. He combined the voices in endlessly varied ways until he achieved the desired tonal colour, and also played with the texture and tessitura at key structural moments of the work. Depending on the contents of the texts, the voices rise towards the heavens or dive down into the depths, sometimes going to extremes. The bass line in the fifth movement, for example, descends to a low B-flat, a technically difficult note to sing. Nikolai Dalinin, the conductor

who would lead the première, was not prepared for this: “Where in God’s name will I find such basses? They are as rare as asparagus at Christmas!” But Rachmaninov knew how deep the voices of his compatriots could stretch and stood firm. The basses were found, and the work had its première in Moscow the same year Moscow. It was such a success that it had to be repeated up to five times. Rachmaninov did not conceal his satisfaction: “My favourite number in the work, which I love as much as *The Bells*, is the fifth: ‘Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace’. I should like this sung at my funeral.”

VESPERS FOR A NEW DARK AGE

Missy Mazzoli is sometimes referred to as “Brooklyn’s post-millennial Mozart”, and the music critic Alex Ross has praised her “apocalyptic imagination”. She made good use

of that inventiveness in *Vespers for a New Dark Age* in order to explore whether there is still room in our technologically-dominated society for the supernatural. Can spirituality and technology go together, and what happens at the intersection of the two? She does this by means of the poetry of the American poet Matthew Zapruder (1956): “His poems are beautiful, haunting and very much of our time: they explore the way we confront technology, ghosts, death, doubt and God in our ‘new dark age’. These fragmented, secular texts are juxtaposed with the rigid structure of a musical church service, complete with all its ritual repetition and call and response.”

Mazzoli’s hybrid writing style is difficult to describe. Her music is equally indebted to Beethoven as to contemporary composers like John Luther Adams and David Lang, and maintains a middle way between classical,

minimalism, jazz and electronic music. The last thing she wants is to be confined to one corner. In an interview, she indicated that an ideal listener is one who preferably knows nothing about her music, so that they have no preconceived notions about how her music would sound based on predetermined labels.

In *Vespers for a New Dark Age*, structured as a five-part suite, elements of liturgical choral music, avant-garde electronic music and new age come together. To the human-made sounds, Mazzoli adds an electronic layer: ethereal song lines float above indie-like synthesizer and violin parts, and at times pop rhythms. The work had its première on 22 February 2014 at Carnegie Hall, during the Ecstatic Music Festival, with Mazzoli's own and exclusively female ensemble, Victoire, percussionist Glenn Kotche (drummer with the Wilco band) and singers Mellissa Hughes,

Martha Cluver and Virginia Warnken (members of the Grammy award-winning vocal ensemble Roomful of Teeth). “Both ravishing and unsettling”, according to The New York Times.

Commentary by Aurélie Walschaert

BART VAN REYN conductor

[**www.bartvanreyn.com**](http://www.bartvanreyn.com)

Since the 19-20 season, Bart Van Reyn is music director of the Vlaams Radiokoor. His dynamic approach, thorough knowledge of the repertoire and great passion for the métier is fully in keeping with the distinctive DNA of the Radiokoor. Together they will work today on the history of tomorrow, as guardians of the rich vocal heritage.

One of Belgium's most sought-after conductors of the new generation, Bart Van Reyn is at home in a wide repertoire: from baroque to contemporary, both in oratorio, opera and symphonic repertoire as well as a cappella music – with the voice at the heart of it. Bart was music director of the Danish National Radio Choir between 2016 and 2022, and principal guest conductor of Anima Aeterna since season 21-22. He is regularly

invited for productions with internationally renowned choirs such as Cappella Amsterdam, Netherlands Radio Choir, Netherlands Chamber Choir, MDR Rundfunkchor Leipzig, SWR Vokalensemble Stuttgart, NDR Chor Hamburg, Rundfunkchor Berlin, DR Vokalensemble, The Netherlands Bach Society, Collegium Vocale Gent and the BBC Singers.

Bart is founder of Octopus, a chamber choir and a symphony chorus, and of Le Concert d'Anvers, a period instrument orchestra with a focus on 18th and early 19th century repertoire. Their first Haydn album released by Fuga Libera received critical acclaim. He also co-founded the touring opera company The Ministry of Operatic Affairs, known for their successful productions of Don Giovanni, Orfeo ed Euridice, Così fan tutte, Dido & Aeneas, and Acis & Galatea.

Alongside the many varied vocal projects, Bart Van Reyn is frequently invited by instrumental ensembles at home and abroad, including Brussels Philharmonic, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, B'Rock, Casco Phil, Il Gardellino, NDR Radiophilharmonie, Brandenburger Symphoniker, the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra, the Danish National Symphony Orchestra and the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra. His passionate approach and expertise make Bart the ideal match for contemporary composers, resulting in his collaborations with Steve Reich, Tan Dun, James MacMillan and Kaija Saariaho.

VLAAMS RADIOKOOR

www.vlaamsradiokoor.be

The Vlaams Radiokoor (Flemish Radio Choir) was founded in 1937 by the Belgian public broadcaster of the day. Today, the Vlaams Radiokoor is renowned for vocal music in Flanders and Europe, and is counted among the top ensembles both at home and abroad.

The young Belgian conductor Bart Van Reyn is the musical director of the Radiokoor. A shared passion for baroque and contemporary repertoire, the belief that the voice is the ultimate interpreter of our emotions, and the commitment to make our vocal heritage accessible to singers and audiences alike are what binds the ensemble together.

The Vlaams Radiokoor is an institution of the Flemish Community.

TEXTS

SERGEI RACHMANINOV

"VESPERS": ARISE! MASTER, BLESS!

Arise! Master, bless!

**SERGEI RACHMANINOV - "VESPERS"
GLORY TO THE HOLY**

Glory to the Holy,
Consubstantial,
Life-creating,
and Undivided Trinity,
now and ever,
and unto ages of ages!

SERGEI RACHMANINOV - "VESPERS"

1. BEGINNING SONG. COME LET US WORSHIP

Amen. Come, let us worship God, our King.
Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ,
our King and our God.

Come, let us worship and fall down before the very Christ, our King and our God.

Come, let us worship and fall down before Him.

SERGEI RACHMANINOV - "VESPERS"

2. BLESS THE LORD O MY SOUL

Bless the Lord, O my soul, blessed art Thou, O Lord.

O Lord my God, Thou art very great. Blessed art Thou, O Lord.

Thou art clothed with honor and majesty.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord.

The waters stand upon the mountains.

Marvelous are Thy works, O Lord.

The waters flow between the hills.

Marvelous are Thy works, O Lord.

In wisdom hast Thou made all things.

Glory to Thee, O Lord, who hast created all!

SERGEI RACHMANINOV - "VESPERS"

3. BLESSED IS THE MAN

Blessed is the man, who walks not in the counsel of the wicked.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Alleluia...

Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice in Him with trembling.

Alleluia...

Blessed are all who take refuge in Him.

Alleluia...

Arise, O Lord! Save me, O my God!

Alleluia...

Salvation belongs to the Lord, and Thy blessing be upon Thy people.

Alleluia...

Glory to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Glory to Thee, O God!

MISSY MAZZOLI - VESPERS FOR A NEW DARK AGE: I. WAYWARD FREE RADICAL DREAMS

If the heart makes the sound of two violins
Sleeping in a baby carriage, then new
technologies cannot make us both more loyal
More loyal and free

Wayward free radical dreams want to be loyal
I say it once into the darkness
Come on Come on Come on

Come on Come on Come on
Come on
Come on all you ghosts, come on

Try to makes me forget you
Come on all you ghosts
Try to make me forget you

SERGEI RACHMANINOV - "VESPERS"

4. GLADSOME NIGHT

Gladsome Light of the holy glory of the Immortal One — the Heavenly Father, holy and blessed — O Jesus Christ!

Now that we have come to the setting of the sun, and behold the light of evening, we praise the ather, Son, and Holy Spirit—God.

Thou art worthy at every moment to be praised in hymns by reverent voices.

O Son of God, Thou art the Giver of Life; therefore all the world glorifies Thee.

SERGEI RACHMANINOV - "VESPERS"

5. LORD, NOW LETTEST THOU

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word.

For mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people: a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of Thy people Israel.

SERGEI RACHMANINOV - "VESPERS"

6. REJOICE O VIRGIN

Rejoice, O Virgin Mother of God, Mary full of grace, the Lord is with Thee.

Blessed art Thee among women, and blessed is the Fruit of Thy womb, for Thou hast borne the Savior of our souls.

MISSY MAZZOLI - VESPERS FOR A NEW DARK AGE: II. HELLO LORD

Hello Lord

Hello Lord

Are you sorry you woke me with your tree, your birds, and wind

Were you lonely

Was your wife not beside you slowly breathing

Were you lonely

Was your wife not beside you slowly breathing

Did she get up and go off

Did she, did she

Did she get up and go off with night like everything

Did she get up and go off with night like everything you made?

SERGEI RACHMANINOV - "VESPERS"

7. THE SIX PSALMS

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men.

O Lord, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim Thy praise.

SERGEI RACHMANINOV - "VESPERS"

8. PRAISE THE NAME OF THE LORD

Praise the name of the Lord. Alleluia.

Praise the Lord, O you His servants. Alleluia.

Blessed be the Lord from Zion, He who dwells in Jerusalem. Alleluia.

O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, Alleluia.

For His mercy endures forever. Alleluia.

O give thanks unto the God of Heaven. Alleluia.
for His mercy endures forever. Alleluia.

MISSY MAZZOLI - VESPERS FOR A NEW DARK AGE: IV. COME ON ALL YOU

Come on all you ghosts
Come on all you, all you ghosts
We need you
We need you
Winter is not through with us
And the sea seems more than a little angry

Come on all you ghosts
Come on all you, all you, all you
Sometimes I hear the crystal factory whirring
Are those your hands
Are you those your hands on the switches
ghosts?

As if I were being carried in the hand of a great
being
Who insisted he was still
But I could feel
I could feel the motion

SERGEI RACHMANINOV - "VESPERS"

9. BLESSED ARE THOU MY LORD

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes. The angelic host was filled with awe, when it saw Thee among the dead. By destroying the power of death, O Savior, Thou didst raise Adam, and save all men from hell! Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes.

“Why do you women mingle myrrh with your tears?” cried the radiant angel in the tomb to the myrrhbearers. Behold the tomb and understand! The Savior is risen from the dead!”

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes. Very early in the morning the myrrhbearers ran with sorrow to Thy tomb, but an Angel came to them and said: “The time for sorrow has come to an end!

Do not weep; announce the resurrection to the apostles!”

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes. The myrrhbearers were sorrowful as they neared Thy tomb, but the Angel said to them: “Why do

you number the living among the dead? Since He is God, He is risen from the tomb!" Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. We worship the Father, and His Son, and the Holy Spirit: the Holy Trinity, one in essence! We cry with the Seraphim: "Holy, Holy, Holy art Thou, O Lord!" Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen. Since Thou didst give birth to the Giver of Life, O Virgin, Thou didst deliver Adam from his sin! Thou gavest joy to Eve instead of sadness! The God-man who was born of Thee has restored to life those who had fallen from it! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! Glory to Thee, O God!

SERGEI RACHMANINOV - "VESPERS"

10. HAVING BEHELD THE RESURRECTION

Having beheld the resurrection of Christ, let us worship the holy Lord Jesus, the only Sinless One.

We venerate Thy Cross, O Christ, and we hymn and glorify Thy holy resurrection, for Thou art our

God, and we know no other than Thee; we call on Thy name.

Come, all you faithful, let us venerate Christ's holy resurrection.

For, behold, through the cross joy has come into all the world.

Ever blessing the Lord, let us praise His resurrection, for by enduring the cross for us, He has destroyed death by death.

MISSY MAZZOLI - VESPERS FOR A NEW DARK AGE: V. NEW DARK AGE

Hello Lord

I'm sorry I woke you

Because my plans are important to me

And I need things no one can buy

And don't even know what they are

I know I belong in this new dark age

I know I belong in this new dark age

I know I belong, I know I belong

I know I belong in this new dark age
And I need things no one can buy and don't even
know what they are

SERGEI RACHMANINOV - "VESPERS"

12. THE GREAT DOXOLOGY

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace,
Good will toward men.

We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship
Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee
for Thy great glory.

O Lord, Heavenly King, God the Father almighty.
O Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ and
the Holy Spirit.

O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, who
takest away the sin of the world have mercy on
us.

Thou who takest away the sin of the world, hear
our prayer.

Thou who sits at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For Thou alone art holy, Thou alone art the Lord,
Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father.

Amen.

Every day I will bless Thee and praise Thy name
forever and ever.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without
sin.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, God of our fathers, and
praised and glorified is Thy name forever. Amen.

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, as we have
set our hope on Thee.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes.
(3x)

Lord, Thou has been our refuge from generation
to generation. I said: Lord, have mercy on me,
heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.

Lord, I flee to Thee, teach me to do Thy will, for
Thou art my God; for with Thee is the fountain of
life,

and in Thy light we shall see light.

Continue Thy mercy on those who know Thee.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (3x)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

MISSY MAZZOLI - VESPERS FOR A NEW DARK AGE: VII. MACHINE

I know

I know you can hear me

I know

I know, I know you are here

I have heard you cough and sigh when I pretend I do not believe

I have to say something important

Probably no one will die of anything I say

Probably no one will live even a second longer

Is that true?

Is that true?

Come on, come on, come on
Come on come on all you ghosts
You can tell me now
I have seen one of you becoming
I am no longer afraid
Ghosts if I must join you
You and I know I have done my best to leave
behind this machine anyone with a
mind who cares can enter

SERGEI RACHMANINOV - "VESPERS"

13. TODAY SALVATION HAS COME

Today salvation has come to the world.
Let us sing to Him who rose from the dead, the
Author of our life.
Having destroyed death by death, He has given
us the victory and great mercy.

SERGEI RACHMANINOV - "VESPERS"

14. THOU DIDST RISE FROM THE TOMB

Thou didst rise from the tomb, bursting the
bonds of Hades.

Thou didst destroy the condemnation of death, O Lord, releasing all from the snares of the enemy. Thou didst show Thyself to Thine Apostles, and didst send them forth to proclaim Thee; and through them didst grant Thy peace to the world, O Thou Who art plenteous in mercy!

SERGEI RACHMANINOV - "VESPERS"

15. TO THEE, THE VICTORIOUS LEADER

To Thee, the victorious Leader of triumphant hosts, we Thy servants, delivered from evil, offer hymns of thanksgiving, O Theotokos!

Since Thou dost possess invincible might, set us free from all calamities, so that we may cry to Thee:

“Rejoice, O unwedded Bride!”