

Hendrik ANDRIESEN

PIANO MUSIC

PIANO SONATAS NOS. 1 AND 2
THE CONVEX LOOKING-GLASS
TWO FUGUES
PASSEPIED
SERENADE
BALLADE
MENUET
PAVANE

Jacob Nydegger

INCLUDES FIRST RECORDINGS

HENDRIK ANDRIESEN: PIANO MUSIC

by Leo Samama

Hendrik Andriessen (1892–1981) is known primarily as the composer of magnificent organ and choral music, including some innovative Masses for the Roman Catholic service. However, for many decades he was also a driving force in musical life in the Netherlands as a versatile composer, a performing musician and a much-loved teacher, as the author of articles and books on music, as the director of the Conservatoires of Utrecht and The Hague, and finally as a professor of musicology at the Catholic University in Nijmegen.

In the early 1920s his colleague Sem Dresden (himself a fine composer) wrote: 'His music, calm and serene, tends to contemplation, to adoration, and derives from an atmosphere of devotion, which he needs to live in'.¹ As a boy, Andriessen was trained by his father, the composer and organist Nico Andriessen (1845–1913), and later by the composer Bernhard Zweers (1854–1924) and the organist Jean Baptiste de Pauw (1852–1924) in Amsterdam. But the most important influences were the music of 'le père angélique' César Franck and of his own countryman Alphons Diepenbrock (1862–1921), both devoted Roman Catholic composers. The early organ works especially, such as the *Premier Choral* (1913) and *Deuxième Choral* (1916), show how much young Andriessen was indebted to the French organ school of his day, but the popular and brilliant Toccata (1917) is the work of an accomplished composer with a highly personal voice.

Another early marvel by Andriessen is his *Missa in honorem Ss. Cordis* (1918), the first of some twenty Masses. Unlike Diepenbrock, who in his impressive *Missa in die festo* (1890–91/92/94) tried to mix Palestrina's refined counterpoint with Wagner's exalted chromaticism, Andriessen preferred a more intimate music for the liturgy, a

¹ Sem Dresden, *Het muziekleven in Nederland sinds 1880*, I. De componisten, Elsevier, Amsterdam, 1923, p. 112.

music which – like Diepenbrock's strictly liturgical music – was likewise much indebted to Palestrina, and to the Renaissance in general, but at the same time it remained close to the simplicity of the lay practice of most church choirs of his days. Both Diepenbrock and Andriessen were responsible for a true renaissance of Roman Catholic church music between 1890 and 1925, and inspired many to follow their example.

From the 1930s onwards, Andriessen composed four brilliant symphonies (1930, 1937, 1946 and 1954), several concertos and many single-movement orchestral works, among them the popular *Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Johann Kuhnau* for string orchestra (1935) and the *Ricercare* (1949) and *Symphonic Étude* (1952) for symphony orchestra. Equally successful are his choral works, as (for example) *Due Madrigali* (1940), *Te Deum Laudamus* (1943) and *Omaggio a Gesualdo* (1965). The beautiful orchestral songs *Magna res est Amor* (1919) and *Miroir de peine* (1923), too, are often performed.

Andriessen had an impressive career in public positions. Between 1927 and 1948 he taught composition and music theory at the Amsterdam Conservatoire. From 1930 until 1949 he also taught the organ (including improvisation and the accompaniment of plainchant), composition and music theory at the school for Roman Catholic Church Music in Utrecht. In 1934 he was appointed as an organist at St Catherine's Cathedral in the same town, where he became the director of its local conservatoire in 1937. During the Second World War, Andriessen refused to co-operate with the occupying German forces and to join the local *Kulturkammer* and so, for five months in 1942, together with some 600 leading compatriots, he was imprisoned in Camp Sint Michielsgestel in the southern part of the Netherlands. After the war, Andriessen was appointed director of the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague in 1949 and professor of musicology at the Catholic University of Nijmegen in 1954. After his retirement, from The Hague in 1958 and Nijmegen in 1963, he continued composing until well into the 1970s.

Many of Andriessen's chamber and piano works were composed for friends and members of his family. His elder brother Willem (1887–1964), who was an accomplished composer and a piano soloist of considerable renown, was the recipient of the *Ballade*

for piano (dated 5 April 1914) [11]. This magnificent and elaborate score is reminiscent of the piano music of Franck. It was performed by Hendrik Andriessen himself as part of his entrance exam at the Amsterdam Conservatoire in 1914. The two *Fugues a 4 voci*, in G minor [1] and in C sharp minor [14], were written at the end of the school year 1915–16, probably both in May 1916, undoubtedly as exercises in contrapuntal writing.

For the young pianist and choral conductor Felix de Nobel (1907–81) Andriessen composed his First Piano Sonata (dated 29 April 1934) [2]–[4]. It was premiered on 8 May 1934 in Paris at the concert hall of the *Revue musicale*. Two weeks later de Nobel performed it again, in a private salon in Amsterdam. The *Pavane* (1937) [7] was written for his eldest daughter Gesina (or ‘Gesientje’, as her diminutive name is given on the score; 1920–2011). The *Passepied* (1942) [5] is dedicated to Thea Diepenbrock (1907–95), the youngest daughter of Alphons Diepenbrock, one of Andriessen’s former mentors.

The charming *Menuet* (dated 8 September 1944) [6] bears the dedication ‘voor Caecilia van pappā’ (‘for Caecilia from daddy’): Caecilia Andriessen (born in 1931) became a composer, too, although her career was overshadowed by the international acclaim of her brothers Jurriaan (1925–96) and, especially, Louis (b. 1939). In the *Menuet* one can hear another influence, that of Ravel’s *Valses nobles et sentimentales*. It is quite probable that Ravel’s music was played by the Andriessen children; and it is known for certain that one of the first records Hendrik Andriessen bought was of the orchestral version of Ravel’s *Menuet antique*.

The *Serenade* (dated 9 February 1950) [10] is dedicated to Stijnne Koot and was incorporated into an *Album of Dutch Piano Music* published on the occasion of the centenary of C. C. Bender’s Piano and Organ Shop, together with music by, *inter alios*, Willem Andriessen, Anthon van der Horst, Henk Badings and Rudolf Escher. Again, the playful and light-weight music of the *Serenade* recalls Ravel, even Debussy. It is proof of the strong Francophile tendency among many Dutch composers during and immediately after the Second World War.

Finally, the Second Piano Sonata (April 1966) [11]–[13] was written for the pianist Erica Mackay (1916–2010), a friend of the family and a pupil of Andriessen during his years in Amsterdam. Several chamber works were composed for the children of his

daughter Heleen, who bear the family name Van der Grinten and were members of the Gemini Ensemble. Andriessen also wrote many educational pieces for two and three pianos for his children and pupils.

With his First Piano Sonata, Andriessen proved to the musical world that he was not only the composer of highly lyrical and contemplative music. The French touch in the manner of César Franck in his earlier works is still audible in his First Symphony (1930), which is much indebted to Albert Roussel and the Neo-Classical movement of those days. And the *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Johann Kuhnau* is mainly a mixture of conscientious craftsmanship and technical prowess (not least the brilliant double fugue that forms the finale). The 1934 Piano Sonata, by contrast, is powerful, harmonically quite modern and overall remarkably terse: three movements within a time-span of some ten minutes.

In line with the fashionable Dutch and German music of those days, with Willem Pijper and Paul Hindemith as the most important and internationally reputed representatives, Andriessen uses predominantly dissonant harmonies based on (natural and augmented) fourths and on fifths. At the same time, he has a certain predilection for bitonality and chromaticism. Soon after the first performances, by Felix de Nobel, the critics recognised Andriessen's new vigour and modern attitude. One of them reported



Andriessen with his wife
and their first four children, 1927
(Caecilia and Louis were not yet born)
(Andriessen family archive)

that ‘He shows himself not only to be a lyricist but also a masterful mathematician.’² The first movement, *Allegro* [2], is constructed as a condensed sonata form with two contrasting themes. The second, *Adagio molto espressivo* [3], consists of a long chromatic line twice interrupted, by sections marked *Poco più mosso* and *Poco capriccioso*. The final *Allegro* [4] is a toccata with short reminiscences of the first and second movements.

The First Piano Sonata was considered quite modern in the 1930s and retains its powerful expression and energetic drive. But Andriessen was never interested in modernity for its own sake. In 1940 he said in an interview:

I do not want to propagate modern music for being ‘modern’, but only when I consider it beautiful; and that is my opinion for all music. I compose such and such (do I know how?) because I can’t do it differently – that’s all.³

Once, in a letter to the poet Pierre Kemp he exclaimed:

You should never be worried about an audience or such matters. We have to deal with pure beauty and nothing else, purely with writing down along our inspiration.⁴

And, much later, asked what efforts a composer should make, he admitted:

I have never made any particular effort for anything. Not even for writing ‘new’ church music, although that is what one says I did. [...] I have always done everything because I liked it. Whether it worked out well, well, that has to be proved; I am no judge of that.⁵

The *Pavane*, the *Passepied*, the *Menuet*, the *Serenade* and *The Convex Looking-Glass* figure among the many shorter pieces Andriessen wrote between his busy schedules as an organist, teacher, general manager and professor. The first three are the fruits of his lifelong love for music from the eighteenth century. The slow dance of the *Pavane* (somewhat in the same vein as Ravel’s famous *Pavane pour une infante défunte*) [7]

² *De Tijd*, 26 May 1934.

³ Andriessen in a letter to Annie van Os, 20 March 1940, quoted in *Duizend Kleuren van Muziek – Leven en werk van Hendrik Andriessen*, ed. Anton de Jager, Paul Op de Coul and Leo Samama, Walburg Pers, Zutphen, 1992, p. 89.

⁴ In *Im de Vroomen, De doler en het kind van God. Brieven en documenten van de samenwerking tussen Hendrik Andriessen en Pierre Kemp in de jaren 1917–1921*, Uitgeverij De Prom, Baarn, 1987, p. 19.

⁵ Quote from a NCRV radio interview on 10 October 1963 with the composer Jaap Geraedts.

recalls the slow movement of the First Piano Sonata, although the general character is less austere and more nostalgic, partly because each phrase ends with a melodious major triad. The structure is ABA, with a lighter section (*Poco più mosso*) in the middle followed by a *Da capo al fine*.

The *Passepied* [5] was written during the Second World War, while Andriessen was interned at Camp St Michielsgestel. The dedication to Thea Diepenbrock is evidence of a long-lasting friendship (Andriessen knew both of Diepenbrock's daughters from their childhood) and the support the two of them gave him by letter during his imprisonment. After the war Andriessen shared the stage for lecture concerts with both sisters (Joanna was a singer and reciter, Thea a pianist). Nothing in the lightweight *Passepied* (*Allegretto con spirito*) reveals the deprivations of war. By the time he wrote the *Menuet* for his daughter, Andriessen was back home again.

The *Convex Looking-Glass* [8] was the result of a commission by *Elsevier's Weekly Magazine* and published on 12 June 1954. In the previous years, Andriessen acquired a taste for twelve-tone melodies, although he never composed using the Schoenbergian twelve-tone technique. In the *Symphonic Étude* (1952) and Fourth Symphony (1954) he had extensively explored the possibilities of such highly chromatic melodic procedures. In this short piano piece, inspired by Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass*, Andriessen used not only a twelve-tone melody (F sharp–F–C–B–G–B flat–E–A flat–D–C sharp–A–D sharp) but also its mirror and retrograde in order to achieve the image of Alice climbing through the convex looking-glass and being able to read the reversed printing of the Jabberwocky poetry with the help of the (reversed) mirror.

The Second Piano Sonata is in a certain sense the companion piece of the First Sonata, written over thirty years earlier. In contrast to many scores of the 1950s, the later sonata has no signs of twelve-tone melodies but still continues to be highly chromatic and full of contrasts. The combination of triadic harmonies and bitonality is somewhat reminiscent of the later music of the Swiss composer Frank Martin (1890–1974), who lived in the Netherlands after the Second World War. Moreover, Andriessen's music, with its full sound, rich harmonic colours and polyphonic ingenuity, reveals his abilities as a brilliant organist.

The Second Piano Sonata consists of three thematically connected movements. The first, *Allegro moderato, poco maestoso* [11], can be considered as a set of variations on a chorale-like theme, with a prologue and epilogue. The second, *Adagio, ma non troppo* [12], resembles some of the airs Andriessen wrote at the same time for *De Spiegel van Venetië* ('The Mirror of Venice'), a chamber opera about the composer Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck. The final *Allegro vivace e capriccioso* [13] is rather whimsical, with several changes of mood and (as in the First Piano Sonata) references to the previous movements; even then the construction is quite strict and ingenious.

As Andriessen wrote in his essay *Muziek en muzikaliteit* ('Music and Musicality') on the necessity of structural order:

From the very first musical thought of the composer until the last sounding tone of the performer, music is ruled by the invisible but inevitable domination of the sense of order. For a real musician the recognition of this sense is never a point of dispute. Both the composer and the performer instinctively experience the natural destination of the demands of order. [...] The really musical professional understands the sportsmanship of discipline. [...] The work of art is a portrait of itself and of nothing else.⁶

Leo Samama is a composer, musicologist, educator and music administrator. He was artistic administrator of the Residentie Orkest in The Hague (1994–2003) and artistic and general manager of the Netherlands Chamber Choir (2003–10). He is one of the founders of the Netherlands String Quartet Academy and of the Tenso Network for European professional chamber choirs. He has written books on Dutch music in the twentieth century (Nederlandse muziek in de 20ste eeuw, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2006) and on the composer Alphons Diepenbrock (Amsterdam University Press, 2012), and also A Brief Overview of a Thousand Years of British Music (Amsterdam University Press, 2003) and, more recently, The Meaning of Music (Chicago University Press, Chicago, 2016). Since his first official opus in 1975, his compositions have been performed in the Netherlands and abroad, resulting in numerous recordings and commissions. In June 2010 Leo Samama was appointed an Officer in the Order of Orange-Nassau, in recognition of his service of and achievements for Dutch music.

⁶ Het Spectrum, Utrecht, 1952, p. 49.

Jacob Nydegger, a native of San Antonio, Texas, studied in his home city with Blanca Rodriguez, winning first prize at the seventeenth annual Petroff Piano Competition and receiving the Outstanding Performer award at Texas State Solo & Ensemble Contest in 2012 and 2013. Since then, he has studied under Seth Carlin at Washington University in St Louis, and he currently studies with Joseph Banowetz at the University of North Texas, where he has received the Larry Walz Piano Scholarship and the Outstanding Undergraduate in Piano Performance award. He has also worked with Roy Howat and Jon Nakamatsu. In 2016 he was a finalist for The American Prize in Solo Piano Performance. In 2017 he won the Colorado College Summer Music Festival Concerto Competition, performing the Grieg Concerto with the Festival Orchestra, and in 2018 he won the Kuleshov International Piano Competition, held in Oklahoma City. He also won distinction in two recent online competitions, as a second-prize winner in the 'Best Grieg Performance' and first-prize winner in the 'Art of Piano' sections in the Great Composers Competition, both in 2017. As a composer he has produced scores for a number of films shown during the Texas Union Film Festival. This recording of music by Hendrik Andriessen is his debut album.



Photo: Kaley Lokensgard



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HENDRIK ANDRIESEN Piano Music

[1] Fugue in G minor (1916)*	3:34
Piano Sonata No. 1 (1934)	8:58
[2] I <i>Allegro</i>	3:02
[3] II <i>Adagio molto espressivo</i>	2:41
[4] III <i>Allegro</i>	3:15
[5] Passepied (1942)	4:32
[6] Menuet (1944)	3:50
[7] Pavane (1937)	5:47
[8] The Convex Looking-Glass (1954)*	1:30
[9] Ballade (1916)*	8:33
[10] Serenade (1950)	3:39
Piano Sonata No. 2 (1966)*	14:22
[11] I <i>Allegro moderato, poco maestoso</i>	7:23
[12] II <i>Adagio, ma non troppo</i>	2:37
[13] III <i>Allegro vivace e capriccioso</i>	4:22
[14] Fugue in C sharp minor (1916)*	3:46

TT 58:33

Jacob Nydegger, piano

*FIRST RECORDINGS