

RANS / PAUL RANS ENSEMBLE

Paul Rans, Philippe Malfeyt, Piet Stryckers and Paul Van Loey focus on the popular songs and instrumental music from the Low Countries, ranging from medieval times to the 18th century and now also to the 21st century. Their interpretations are characterised by an expressive, lively and often improvisatory approach.

Together they form *RANS*, founded in 1989 as the *Paul Rans Ensemble* - often also joined by violinist *An Van Laethem* - when they recorded their first CD with Flemish Nativity songs, *Mit desen nyewen iare*.

Their second CD, *Egidius waer bestu bleven*, was the first to be devoted to the Gruuthuse Ms, a 14th century collection of songs and poems from Bruges, well-known for their literary merits but seldom heard as they were intended to – as songs. This was followed in 1993 with another first, a CD with songs from the *Antwerp Songbook* of 1544.

According to reviewers at the time the spirited performances which characterise the recordings are further enhanced during live concerts thanks to the often very amusing but informed commentaries, an original combination of instruments and exciting improvisations.

In 1995 *RANS* produced an intercultural programme with the Moroccan trio *WESHM*. Both ensembles, *RANS & WESHM*, put together their individual past experiences and mixed them in new music with roots in Flanders and Morocco.

RANS & FLAGEL was a cooperation with the French singer and hurdy-gurdy player *Claude Flagel* in *De la Seine à l'Escaut / Van Antwerpen tot Parijs*, a meeting of Germanic and Latin cultures where traditional songs show the many links between Flanders and France. The CD was awarded a **CHOC!** by the leading French music magazine *Le Monde de la Musique*.

Stimulated by *Piet Chielens*, curator of the *In Flanders Fields Museum* in Ypres, they released the CD *Drie oorlogstaferelen / Trois tableaux de guerre / Three Scenes of War*: Flemish, French, German and English songs from the 16th century religious conflicts, the 18th century French-British wars and WW I.

A few years ago there was a first Anglo-Flemish cooperation with *Coope, Boyes & Simpson and Fi Fraser, Georgina Boyes and Jo Freya* in a series of Christmas concerts in Belgium where English carols and Flemish Christmas songs flowed into each other.

To mark the centenary of the first world war on August 4th for the *In Flanders Fields Museum* in Ieper (Ypres) it seemed natural to work again with *Coope, Boyes & Simpson*, not least because of their affinity with the war repertoire and the Flanders Fields area itself.

For their concert at *Kings Place, London* they were joined by the renowned author *Michael Morpurgo* who read poems about the war, including one by his Belgian grandfather *Emile Cammaerts*.

The Guardian published a four-star review of this concert:
'It will be hard for other centenary events to match this original and powerful blend of music and spoken word. This show deserves to be repeated.'

PAUL RANS, voice and lute: Rum, Islandsuite, Vive le Geus, Blame not My Lute, Paul Rans Ensemble, Rans & Weshm, Rans & Flagel, Camerata Trajectina, Ambrozijn, Radio 3, Klara, A la Rum ...

'Paul Rans is a marvellous singer' (Early Music)

'An agreeably forthright and unaffected way of singing and expert lute playing'
(Early Music, London)

'Paul Rans shows solid proficiency and musicianship' (Lute Society of America)

PHILIPPE MALFEYT, lutes, theorbo, hammered dulcimer, guitar: Il Fondamento, Ricercar Consort, La PAstorella, Romanesque, La Caccia, Millenarium, Zefiro Torna, Luthomania, Sheng, La Roza Enflorese, 100 cd's ...

'Performances that are almost always outstanding in every respect'
(Early Music)

PIET STRYCKERS, viols, medieval fiddle, cello, hurdy-gurdy: The Consort of Musicke, Currende, Ricercar Consort, Huelgas Ensemble, Le Salon de Madame Victoire, Internationale Nieuwe Scène, De Meijt op Solder, Capilla Flamenca, arrangements, compositions ...

'Wonderful arrangements ...' (Klara)

PAUL VAN LOEY, recorders, dulcian, transverse flute, tin whistles: Flanders Recorder Quartet, Musica Antiqua Köln, Collegium Vocale Ghent, La Petite Bande, Les musiciens du Louvre, Flanders Baroque Academy (conductor), Japan, Canada, USA, America Latina, Zuid-Afrika, Europa ...

'Dazzles with skill, speed and soul ...' (Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, USA)

AN VAN LAETHEM, medieval fiddle, violin. Huelgas Ensemble, Paul Van Nevel; Il Fondamento, Paul Dombrecht; Currende, Erik Van Nevel; Oltremontano, Wim Becu; La petite bande, Sigiswald Kuijken; B'Rock; Les Mufatti, Peter Van Heyghen; Brabants Volksorkest, De Meijt op Solder ...

Musicians in heart and soul (De Standaard, Brussels)
