VIRGINIA
A MUSICAL PORTRAIT

Clothworkers' Centenary Concert Hall

University of Leeds
17 June 2016, 8pm

Annelies Van Hijfte, soprano
Siân Cameron, mezzo-soprano
Marta Fontanals-Simmons, mezzo-soprano
Lana Bode, piano
Nicola Rose, piano

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PREFACE

Welcome to the second concert of the series 'Virginia Woolf & Music'. The series explores the role of music in Woolf's life and afterlives: it includes new commissions, world premieres and little-known music by women composers. Outreach activities and educational resources have been central to the project since its inception in 2015: these range from workshops with mental health reading groups to pre-school children, to online materials for scholars and schools. Concerts on Woolf and Bloomsbury more widely continue throughout 2016-17. The next – on Woolf and string quartets – takes place in Robinson College Chapel, Cambridge, on 3 November 2016 at 7.30pm, performed by the Kreutzer Quartet.

Woolf (1882-1941) was a knowledgeable, almost daily, listener to 'classical' music, fascinated by the cultural practice of music and by the relationships between music and writing. Towards the end of her life she famously remarked, 'I always think of my books as music before I write them'. Her writing continues to inspire composers who have set her words or responded more obliquely to her work.

This concert focuses on settings of Woolf's diaries and letters and includes three world premieres, two of which were commissioned for the event. Woolf's diaries and correspondence include many details about her public and domestic musical lives from her frequent attendance at the opera in her twenties to her taste for late Beethoven string quartets as she wrote *The Waves*. Her lifelong passion for music is apparent throughout: 'The only thing in this world is music – music and books and one or two pictures', she wrote in 1901, and 'its music I want; to stimulate & suggest' (1924). The letters and diaries also suggest the way in which music informed, and provided a vocabulary for her to reflect on, her own creative process: 'When I cant write of a morning', she notes in 1933, 'I try to tune myself on other books.' In 1924 she described her diary in musical terms: 'It strikes me that in this book I *practise* writing; do my scales; yes & work at certain effects'.

Woolf's private writings have been fertile sources for composers who have variously responded to their intimacy, playfulness and spontaneity. The concert includes an early setting of texts from her diaries by the American Domenick Argento, and two new settings of her letters (Richard Barnard) and diaries (Jan-Willem Van Herpen). Jeremy Thurlow's commission sets allusive, evocative text from Woolf's essay 'Street Haunting'. More information at http://virginiawoolfmusic.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk

- Emma Sutton & Lana Bode, Directors, *Virginia Woolf & Music*

The concert will be recorded.
Please turn off mobile phones and other electronic devices.

PROGRAMME

A London Street in Winter (2016) — JEREMY THURLOW (b. 1976)
WORLD PREMIERE

Annelies Van Hijfte, soprano
Lana Bode, piano

Woolf Letters (2016) — RICHARD BARNARD (b. 1977)
WORLD PREMIERE

Siân Cameron, mezzo-soprano
Nicola Rose, piano

INTERVAL

The Lonely Mind (2013) — JAN-WILLEM VAN HERPEN (b. 1974)
WORLD PREMIERE

Annelies Van Hijfte, soprano
Lana Bode, piano

From the Diary of Virginia Woolf (1975) — DOMINICK ARGENTO (b. 1927)

Marta Fontanals-Simmons, mezzo-soprano
Lana Bode, piano

A London Street in Winter

I'm fascinated by those passages in Woolf's writing which not only capture sights and sensations with uncanny sharpness, but also evoke the way the mind slides and swoops between these perceptions and spins among them webs of thought and daydream. For this song I found a beautiful passage from the essay 'Street haunting: a London adventure'. I tried to let the very distinctive and unusual cadence of Woolf's prose set the pace and tone, giving space for the language and imagery to resonate, and then let thought and fancy spin out from there.

- Jeremy Thurlow

Text from the essay 'Street Haunting: A London Adventure'

How beautiful a London street is in winter, with its islands of light, and its long groves of darkness, and on one side of it perhaps some tree-sprinkled, grass-grown space where night is folding herself to sleep naturally and, as one passes the iron railing, one hears those little cracklings and stirrings of leaf and twig which seem to suppose the silence of fields all round them, an owl hooting, and far away the rattle of a train in the valley. But this empty ground, which holds the country in it and its peace, is only a London square, set about by offices and houses, where at this hour fierce lights burn over maps, over documents; or more suffusedly the firelight wavers and the lamplight falls upon the privacy of some drawing room, its easy chairs, its papers, its china, its inlaid table, and the figure of a woman, measuring out the number of spoons which – She looks at the door as if she heard a ring downstairs and somebody asking, is she in?

But let us be content with surfaces only – the glossy brilliance of the motor-omnibuses; the carnal brilliance of the butchers' shops with their yellow flanks and their purple steaks; the blue and red bunches of flowers burning so bravely through the plate glass of the florists' windows. For the eye has this strange property: it rests only on beauty; like a butterfly it seeks out colour and basks in warmth.

Jeremy Thurlow is a composer, musicologist and pianist, and is Fellow and Lecturer in Music at Robinson College, University of Cambridge. His music has been performed by the BBC Philharmonic, the Fitzwilliam Quartet, Schubert Ensemble, Aronowitz Ensemble, BBC Singers, Sequenza and Peter Sheppard Skaerved, among many others, and was awarded the George Butterworth Prize. Current projects include string quartets for the Schubert Ensemble and for the Kreutzer Quartet, a character portrait of John Keats for bassoon and strings written for Mr McFall's Chamber, a celebration of the Orfordness Lighthouse past and future, for soprano and chamber orchestra, and a trumpet concerto. His writings include a monograph on Henri Dutilleux and a study of Messiaen's *Catalogue d'Oiseaux*. He broadcasts on BBC Radio 3, and also performs as a pianist, especially in chamber music.

Woolf Letters

Woolf Letters is a song cycle for mezzo soprano and piano, written for Siân Cameron and Nicola Rose. The song texts are excerpts from Virginia Woolf's letters to her sister Vanessa Bell. The work was commissioned by *Virginia Woolf & Music*, with support from Arts Council Wales and a Francis Chagrin Award from Sound and Music.

- Richard Barnard

Text from Virginia Woolf's letters to Vanessa Bell (adapted by Richard Barnard)

I: Vanessa's Engagement
(1907)

Dear Mistress,

We wish to make known to you our great grief and joy at the news that you intend to marry.
We hear that you have found a new Red Ape of a kind not known before who is better than all other apes because he can both talk and marry you:
from which we are debarred.

We have examined his fur and find it of fine quality, red and golden at the tips, with an undergrowth of soft down, excellent for winter.
We find him clean, merry, and sagacious, a wasteful eater and fond of fossils.
His teeth are sharp, and we advise that you keep him on Bones.

We have been your humble Beasts since we first left our Isles, which is before we can remember, and during that time we have wooed you and sung many songs of winter and summer and autumn in the hope that thus enchanted you would condescend one day to marry us.

But as we no longer expect this honour we entreat that you keep us still for your lovers, should you have need of such, and in that capacity we promise to abide well content always adoring you now as before.

II: Intensify Atoms
(1909/10)

How do you manage to see only one thing at a time?
Without any of those reflections that distract me so much
I suppose you are the most complete human being of us all; and your simplicity is really that you take in much more than I do, who intensify atoms.

I have been out in the garden for 2 hours; and feel quite normal.
I feel my brains, like a pear, to see if it's ripe;
it will be exquisite by September.

III: Nessa and Duncan
(1927)

Dearest,

No letter from you – But I see how it is –
Scene: after dinner: Nessa sewing: Duncan doing absolutely nothing.

Nessa (throwing down her work) Christ! There's The Lighthouse! I've only got to page 86 and I see there are 320. Now I can't write to Virginia because she'll expect me to tell her what I think of it.

Duncan Well, I should just tell her that you think it a masterpiece.

Nessa But she's sure to find out – They always do.

Duncan Well Nessa, I'm afraid I can't help you, because I've only read 5 pages so far.

Now isn't this word for word the truth?

IV: A Dancing Light
(1937)

Why is it I never stop thinking of you,
even walking in the marsh this afternoon
and seeing a great snake like a sea serpent gliding through the grass?

And now I must play bowls, be beaten once more, and then have out the scope
and see if I can pry into your bedroom.
If you notice a dancing light on the water, that's me.
The light kisses your nose, then your eyes, and you can't rub it off.

V: As a Writer
(1938)

As a writer, I feel the beauty,
which is almost entirely colour,
very subtle, very changeable,
running over my pen,
as if you poured a large jug of champagne over a hairpin.

VI: Divine Loneliness
(1938)

We get snatches of divine loneliness here; a day or two;
I said to L. as we strolled through the mushroom fields - why not stay here for ever and ever, enjoying this immortal rhythm, in which both eye and soul are at rest?
and for once L said; You're not such a fool as you seem.

We were so sane; so happy;
I went in; put the kettle on; ran up the stairs looked at the room, almost done; fireplace lovely; wood wrong stained; but still felt floating on the wings of peace.
Made tea; got out a new loaf; and honey and was about to call in L from the

ladder on the high tree – where he looked so beautiful my heart stood still with pride that he ever married me; and then…
A face at the window. A voice.
May we come in, Virginia?
A jersey; trousers; bright red cheeks; glassy blue eyes.
Barbara.
An interval of sheer horror; of unmitigated despair; my life crashed; my soul broke; my tongue faltered;
and there was Nick.

VII: The Art of Painting
(1938)

I think the art of painting is the art for ones old age.
I respect it more and more.
I adore its severity; its bareness from impurity.
All books are now rank with the slimy seaweed of politics;
mouldy and mildewed.
I wish I could settle to pure fiction;
Indeed had to rush headlong into a novel; as a relief.

VIII: The Last Letter
(1941)

Dearest,

You can't think how I loved your letter.
But I feel that I have gone too far this time to come back again.
I can hardly think clearly any more.

If I could I would tell you what you and the children have meant to me.
I think you know.

I have fought against it, but I can't any longer.

Richard Barnard is a composer based in Bristol. He studied at Guildhall School of Music and Drama and University of Birmingham. He has written operas, songs and choral works for Welsh National Opera, Opera North, BBC Singers, Concanenda, Bristol Ensemble and others. He has composed music for dance and theatre and his chamber pieces have been performed internationally by groups including Delta Saxophone Ensemble, Juice Vocal Ensemble and Kungsbacka Trio. Richard curated the acclaimed new music series *Elektrostatic* at Bristol's Colston Hall and Arnolfini for five years. He has taught orchestration and composition at University of Bristol and is one of the UK's foremost composition workshop leaders, having worked with WNO, London Sinfonietta, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Philharmonia Orchestra and Eighth Blackbird. Forthcoming projects in 2016 include a production of his opera *The Hidden Valley* at St George's Bristol and a new song cycle *Early Stroll Songs* with poet Ian McMillan. More information at www.richardbarnard.com

The Lonely Mind

The English writer Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) kept a diary from 1915 until four days before her death. She used her diary not only to record daily events, but also to contemplate life, her often shifting mental state and her creative writing process.

The Lonely Mind is a collection of 13 settings of small fragments from Virginia Woolf's diary. All diary fragments are taken from the 1920-1930 period and are arranged in a non-linear manner. The settings function as musical vignettes: snapshots in words and music which focus on one moment or mood, and show glimpses of both dark and lighter aspects of Woolf's identity.

In the composition, an intimate and melancholic portrait is gradually revealed. *The Lonely Mind* may be considered an attempt to capture and crystallize parts of an inner landscape. A piece about the oddity of life, loneliness, writing and time's passing.

- Jan-Willem van Herpen

Text from Virginia Woolf's diaries

Image 1
I shall pass like a cloud on the waves.

Image 2
Rain has come – what I mind much more is the black sky: so ugly.

Image 3
What image can I reach to convey what I mean? Really there is none I think. Life is the oddest affair.

Image 4
- but Lord, the difficulty of digging oneself in there. Yesterday I had conviction; it has gone today.

Image 5
…there is loneliness to be considered too. One person one must have, like air to breathe; but - as for the rest?

Image 6
A fortnight already gone. If only one could sip slowly and relish every grain of every hour!

Image 7
…and the mood for writing has left me, only just brushed me and left me.

Image 8
Here I am chained to my rock: forced to do nothing; doomed to let every worry scratch and claw and come again.

Image 9
No; it's not physical silence; it's some inner loneliness. If I could catch the feeling, I would.

Image 10
Really I am going to let myself slacken in social ways. I shall aim at haphazard meetings; ease, slippers, smoke, buns, chocolate.

Image 11
I rush at it, and at once scatter out two pages. Is it nonsense, is it brilliance? When I read a bit it seems spirited too.

Image 12
An odd thing the human mind! so capricious, faithless, infinitely shying at shadows.

Image 13
I need solitude. I need space. I need air. I need the empty fields around me; and my legs pounding along roads.

Jan-Willem van Herpen (The Netherlands, 1974) is a composer of vocal chamber music. He attempts to create intimate and poetic portraits of human solitude. Van Herpen combines text and music in fragmented structures and miniature forms. He explores the expressive qualities of sober gestures and static textures. Van Herpen holds a master's degree in musicology from Utrecht University. While studying musicology, he attended several courses at the Utrecht Conservatory (HKU): analysis of twentieth-century music with Jurrien Sligter and composition with Henk Alkema. He pursued his composition studies privately with Hans Koolmees and Rozalie Hirs.

From the Diary of Virginia Woolf

I The Diary
April, 1919

What sort of diary should I like mine to be? Something…so elastic that it will embrace anything, solemn, slight or beautiful that comes into my mind. I should like it to resemble some deep old desk…in which one flings a mass of odds and ends without looking them through. I should like to come back, after a year or two, and find that the collection had sorted itself and refined itself and coalesced, as such deposits so mysteriously do, into a mould, transparent enough to reflect the light of our life…

II Anxiety
October, 1920

Why is life so tragic; so like a little strip of pavement over an abyss. I look down; I feel giddy; I wonder how I am ever to walk to the end. But why do I feel this: Now that I say it I don't feel it. The fire burns; we are going to hear the Beggar's Opera. Only it lies all about me; I can't keep my eyes shut….And with it all how happy I am – if it weren't for my feeling that it's a strip of pavement over an abyss.

III Fancy
February, 1927

Why not invent a new kind of play; as for instance:
Woman thinks…
He does.
Organ plays.
She writes.
They say:
She sings.
Night speaks
They miss

IV Hardy's Funeral
January, 1928

Yesterday we went to Hardy's funeral. What did I think of? Of Max Beerbohm's letter…or a lecture…about women's writing. At intervals some emotion broke in. But I doubt the capacity of the human animal for being dignified in ceremony. One catches a bishop's frown and twitch; sees his polished shiny nose; suspects the rapt spectacled young priest, gazing at the cross he carries, of being a humbug…next here is the coffin, an overgrown one; like a stage coffin, covered with a white satin cloth; bearers elderly gentlemen rather red and stiff, holding to the corners; pigeons flying outside…procession to poets corner; dramatic "In sure and certain hope of immortality" perhaps melodramatic…Over all this broods for me some uneasy sense of change and mortality and how partings are deaths; and then a sense of my own fame…and a sense of the futility of it all.

V Rome
May, 1935

Rome: tea. Tea in café. Ladies in bright coats and white hats. Music. Look out and see people like movies…Ices. Old man who haunts the Greco…Fierce jowled old ladies… talking about Monaco. Talleyrand. Some very poor black wispy women. The effect of dowdiness produced by wispy hair. Sunday café…Very cold. The Prime Minister's letter offering to recommend me for the Companion of Honour. No.

VI War
June, 1940

This, I thought yesterday, may be my last walk…the war – our waiting while the knives sharpen for the operation – has taken away the outer wall of security. No echo comes back. I have no surroundings…Those familiar circumvolutions – those standards – which have for so many years given back an echo and so thickened my identity are all wide and wild as the desert now. I mean, there is no "autumn", no winter. We pour to the edge of a precipice…and then? I can't conceive that there will be a 27th June 1941.

VII Parents
December, 1940

How beautiful they were, those old people – I mean father and mother – how simple, how clear, how untroubled. I have been dipping into old letters and father's memoirs. He loved her: oh and was so candid and reasonable and transparent…How serene and gay even, their life reads to me: no mud; no whirlpools. And so human – with the children and the little hum and song of the nursery. But if I read as a contemporary I shall lose my child's vision and so must stop. Nothing turbulent; nothing involved; no introspection.

VIII Last Entry
March, 1941

No: I intend no introspection. I mark Henry James' sentence: observe perpetually. Observe the oncome of age. Observe greed. Observe my own despondency. By that means it becomes serviceable. Or so I hope. I insist upon spending this time to the best advantage. I will go down with my colours flying…Occupation is essential. And now with some pleasure I find that it's seven; and must cook dinner. Haddock and sausage meat. I think it is true that one gains a certain hold on sausage and haddock by writing them down.

Dominick Argento, considered to be America's pre-eminent composer of lyric opera, was born in York, Pennsylvania in 1927. He earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees at Peabody Conservatory and his Ph.D. from the Eastman School of Music. Fulbright and Guggenheim Fellowships allowed him to study in Italy and following his Fulbright, Argento became music director of Hilltop Opera in Baltimore, and taught theory and composition at the Eastman School. In 1958, he joined the faculty of the Department of Music at the University of Minnesota, where he taught until 1997. He now holds the rank of Professor Emeritus.

During his years at Eastman, Argento composed his opera, *The Boor* (1957), of which John Rockwell of *The New York Times* stated: "[it] taps deep currents of sentiment and passion." Following his arrival in Minnesota, Argento accepted commissions from the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and the Civic Orchestra of Minneapolis.

Since the early 1970's Argento's operas have been heard with increasing frequency abroad. Among these are *The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe* (1976), *Dream of Valentino* (1993), and *Casanova's Homecoming* (1984) which Robert Jacobson of *Opera News* as "a masterpiece."

Dominick Argento received the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 1975 for his song cycle *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf*. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1979, and in 1997 was honored with the title of Composer Laureate to the Minnesota Orchestra, a lifetime appointment.

August 2012, Text reprinted by kind permission of Boosey & Hawkes

PERFORMERS

Pianist **Lana Bode** specialises in song and chamber music recitals. An American by birth, she trained at Indiana University Jacobs School of Music under the guidance of Edward Auer, graduating with a BMus (High Distinction) at the age of 20. Since that time, she has lived and worked in the UK, training specifically as a contemporary pianist and accompanist. She received an MMus with Distinction from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama under the guidance of Andrew West and Rolf Hind. Her training included song projects and masterclasses with Graham Johnson, Roger Vignoles, Malcolm Martineau, Iain Burnside, Julius Drake, Sarah Walker, Felicity Lott, Roderick Williams, Jane Manning and Martin Frost.

Lana has performed in nearly all of the major concert halls in London including Wigmore Hall, Barbican Hall, Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall and Cadogan Hall. Awards include the Paul Hamburger Prize for Song Accompaniment and the prestigious Concert Recital Diploma (GSMD). Lana is a Samling Artist, a Leverhulme Artist and an alumnus of the Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme. She is currently a fellow at the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance, and Artistic Director of the concert series *Virginia Woolf & Music*. She was recently named Viola Tunnard Young Artist for the 2016 calendar year in conjunction with the Aldeburgh Festival and Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme.

Mezzo-soprano **Siân Cameron** is a graduate of Dennis O'Neill's highly acclaimed Wales International Academy of Voice. Previously she was awarded a HRH Prince of Wales Award from the Arts Council of Wales to further her vocal training at the Royal Academy of Music. Siân was an artist for Yehudi Menuhin's scheme, Live Music Now for six years.

Operatic roles include, Sesto in *La Clemenza di Tito* for Teatru Manoel, Malta, Dorabella in *Cosi fan Tutte* for Dubrovnik Summer Opera, the title role in *Giulio Cesare* for The Cor (Bloomsbury Festival, London), Carmen for Riverside Opera, Jenny/The Creator in *My Perfect World* (Welsh National Opera), Olympia in workshops for *The Sandman* by Laura Bowler (ROH2 and Tete a tete), Tisbe in *Cenerentola* and Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* (OperaUpClose) and Carry-Ann in T*he Imposter* (Live Music Now Ireland).

Siân was the soloist with the Estonian ensemble, *Resonabilis* at the Vale of Glamorgan Festival in 2010 with further performances in Tallinn and Helsinki. In 2012 she was a semi-finalist in the International Baroque Opera Competition in Innsbruck. She has also sung alongside Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and Dennis O'Neill in an Opera Gala at the Wales Millennium Centre. This year she looks forward to singing Zweite Dame (*Die Zauberflöte*) in Orleans, France, Suzuki (*Madam Butterfly*) at Rhosygilwen, Wales and Cherubino (*Le Nozze di Figaro*) in Kristiansand, Norway.

Mezzo-soprano **Marta Fontanals-Simmons** has completed Postgraduate and Opera Course training with Marilyn Rees at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. Marta recently won the 'Prix de Lied' at the Concours International de chant-piano Nadia et Lili Boulanger in Paris. This year, she was also awarded the Robert Hendra Prize for Excellence at the Emmy Destinn Competition and was joint winner of the 2015 Gold Medal at Barbican Hall. In addition, Marta was awarded the GSMD Principal's Prize in 2014 and was a Finalist in the 2014 Kathleen Ferrier Awards.

Since her 2014 Wigmore Hall recital debut, Marta has appeared with ensembles including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, London Mozart Players and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. She has also performed at the St Endellion Festival and the London Handel Festival, and has been broadcast on Radio-Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart and live on BBC Radio 3. Marta regularly performs New Music and enjoys collaborating with both composers and librettists. Most recently Marta had the pleasure of work-shopping the title role in a new Royal Opera House opera by Gavin Higgins and Francesca Simon, as well as her acclaimed performance of Ursula in the ROH / Glyndebourne co-production *Nothing*. Marta has also collaborated on, premiered and recorded two new songs cycles; *Damsel, Wife, Witch* by Lewis Murphy and *Letters from Home* by Benjamin Ellin.

Marta joined Glyndebourne Festival as a Jerwood Young Artist in 2015, performing in Carmen, Poliuto, Saul and covering Cat & Squirrel in *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*. Other recent operatic experience includes Mercedes & cover title role *Carmen*, Mid Wales Opera; Woodpecker & cover Fox *The Cunning Little Vixen*, Garsington Opera; title role *The Adventures of Pinocchio* Jonathan Dove; Paggio *Francesca di Foix* Donizetti; Kate Julian *Owen Wingrave*, GSMD and Banff Centre, Canada; Drummer *The Emperor of Atlantis*, Grimeborn Festival and Kate Pinkerton *Madama Butterfly,* Grange Park Opera.

Future engagements for 2016 include Verdi *Requiem* at the Royal Albert Hall, Vaughan Williams *Serenade to Music* at the Last Night of the Proms and Vivaldi *Gloria* at Royal Festival Hall as well as debuts with both Glyndebourne Festival Opera and Glyndebourne on Tour. More information at www.martafontanals.com

Nicola Rose gained a BMus (Hons) degree in piano accompaniment from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. She continued working at the college as a Junior Fellow in Accompaniment on the MA Opera Performance course for two years. In 2012 Nicola completed her studies as a trainee at the National Opera Studio in London. Nicola has a passion for education, outreach and community work and has worked as a pianist for the Welsh National Youth Opera and more recently for the Royal Opera House, Garsington and Opera Holland Park youth and community departments. Based between Wales and London, Nicola works as a freelance pianist, repetiteur and teacher.

Annelies Van Hijfte is a soprano from Ghent, Belgium. She completed her postgraduate training at the Ghent Conservatory with Mireille Capelle and Gidon Saks, and joined the postgraduate course as an Erasmus student at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama with Marilyn Rees. Since returning to Belgium, Annelies has studied with Welsh soprano Catrin Wyn-Davies. Annelies has also studied at the Flanders Opera Studio, where she worked with directors including Frédéric Dusenne, Ronny Lauwers, Vincent van den Elschout and Benoit de Leersnyder, and conductors including Filip Rathé and Ivo Venkov.

Recent performances include the role creation and premiere of *Tongval* by Frank Nuyts, Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Aspasia in *Mitridate*, the title role in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* and Despina in *Così fan tutte*. Last season included the role creation and premiere of *Babel* by Sam Vloemans (a co-production of Flemish Opera and Het Paleis) and Leonore in an adaptation of *Fidelio* for children (a co-production of Walpurgis and Het Paleis).

In 2014, Annelies won first prize at "Bell'arte" in Braine-l'alleud. She also won first prize in the 2012 New Tenuto competition, which led to performances with the Orkest van de Lage Landen. This concert is the second time Annelies has returned to the UK since her time as an Erasmus student, following a highly-acclaimed performance of Berg songs in the Oxford Lieder Festival (October 2015).

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