

Bram van Sambeek (1980) was the first bassoonist ever to receive the highest Dutch Cultural Award in 30 years: The Dutch Music Prize, handed out to him personally by Minister of Culture Ronald Plasterk in 2009. On this occasion, Bram played the bassoon concerto by Gubaidulina with the Rotterdam Philharmonic and chief conductor Seguin. *De Telegraaf* newspaper wrote about this performance: "He uses his instrument freely as a mouthpiece, conjures the finest timbres, and is technically capable of doing anything." In 2011 he won a Borletti Buitoni Trust Award, and he has been admitted to The Chamber Music Society Two programme of New York's Lincoln Center.

Bram van Sambeek performs regularly as a soloist with orchestras such as Sinfonia Rotterdam and the Lahti Symphony Orchestra. Recently, he played concertos by Villa Lobos, Mozart, Gubaidulina. Many composers, such as Vanessa Lann and Sebastian Fagerlund, have written concertos for him. Last season Bram expanded his soloist activities with many orchestras like The Gothenborg Symphony, the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, the Oulu Symphony, the South Netherlands Philharmonic and the Combattimento Consort.

From 2002 until 2011 Bram was Principal Bassoonist of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and since 2009 he has been teaching the bassoon at the Conservatories in Rotterdam and Amsterdam. Last season he started teaching exclusively at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague. Bram has taught masterclasses at universities like Bloomington, Indiana, the Royal College in London, and the Hochschule für Musik Köln.

He played regularly as a Guest Principal with (among others) the London Symphony Orchestra and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra. As a chamber musician he has worked regularly with Alexei Ogrintchouk, Jörg Widmann, Reto Bieri, Clara Andradas de la Calle, Hervé Joulain, Radovan Vlatkovich, Liza Ferschtman, Christoph Pregardien, Pekka Kuusisto, Nicolas Altstaedt and Rick Stotijn. In 2010 Bram was offered a Carte Blanche series in the Concertgebouw Amsterdam and in 2015 he received a "Wild Card" consisting of many adventurous concerts at the Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ, also in Amsterdam. He is a regular guest at festivals like the Delft Chamber Music Festival, Storioni Festival, Orlando Festival, West Cork Chamber Music Festival, Lockenhaus Chamber Music Festival and the Australian Festival of Chamber Music, and has investigated concert practice in cooperation with Radio Kootwijk Live, experimenting with innovations such as playing people to sleep.

Bram is very much interested in playing any style he likes, which leads him to work with rock musicians like Sven Figeo in Konzerthaus Berlin, Jazz musicians like Joris Roelofs at the famous North Sea Jazz Festival, and Arabic musicians like Kinan Azmeh in the Morgenland Festival, and improvisers like Ernst Glerum in the "Apples and Olives" festival in Zürich. Recently he has started his own festival "Liquid Music Festival" which is inspired by the water around the venue: Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ. The name receives its deeper meaning from fluently combining extremely different styles of music and creating a flow of one concert consisting of 17 parts with a three days duration, including the nights. It will take place from 7-9 July 2017.

Bram decided to start playing the bassoon when he was ten years old, beginning his studies with Fred Gaasterland and continuing later with Joep Terwey and Johan Steinmann at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague. After his graduation, he took private lessons with Gustavo Núñez. In addition, he has participated in masterclasses with Brian Pollard and two of the most important bassoon soloists in the world: Klaus Thunemann and Sergio Azzolini. Bram also plays on a very special bassoon, an instrument that used to belong to both of these men.

About working together with Bram, Yannick Nézet-Séguin remarked in a television interview available at www.bramvansambeek.com: "I think he is able to fall in love with many aspects of the music, and doesn't set himself too many boundaries." In another interview about Bram, Valery Gergiev remarked: "...all in all a combination of being

artistically involved, motivated and being gifted, being a very nice person, and also being a little bit unusual!”

On his debut cd with *Brilliant Classics*, called ‘Bassoon Concertos’, he presented a very accessible programme of bassoon concertos by Vivaldi, Du Puy, Villa Lobos, and Olthuis, receiving rave reviews like this remark in the Dutch music magazine *Luister*: “Judging by his playing, Mr van Sambeek awaits a golden future.” In march 2012, *Brilliant Classics* released his second cd “Bassoon-Kaleidoscope,” which includes different chamber music pieces, as well as a rock song. In 2015-2016 Bram has performed the two new bassoon concertos by Sebastian Fagerlund and Kalevi Aho and recorded them for the *BIS label* with whom he has an on-going cooperation.

Last year he was the spokesman of the “Save the bassoon” campaign set up by the Holland Festival. This lead to a lot of international attention and publicity for the instrument in *the London Times*, *the Guardian*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and played on many television shows.