

Hans Huysen – curriculum vitae

Huysen began his professional career as Baroque cellist in the late eighties, touring and performing extensively with various Austrian and German period instrument ensembles. However his studies with Nikolaus Harnoncourt, one of the significant pioneers of the Early Music Movement, had equipped him to apply the 'appreciation of music in specific contexts' much more widely, thereby fostering a very personal approach towards composition – not succumbing to the avant-garde ideologies, but rather seeking to arrive at a form of naturally evolved and historically connected contemporary 'period music'.

Subsequent studies of early African musical traditions once again followed the same impulse in a quest to integrate the locally unique cultural aspects of his native country into an even broader perspective on early music and the translation thereof into relevant and currently appropriate artistic expression. Intensified research into this field prompted him to return to South Africa in 2000 after a prolonged European sojourn of 14 years.

His activities as composer, cellist and conductor have ever since been informed by the diverse poles of early, contemporary and African music - often in an attempt to assimilate essential qualities from all fields. His historically informed performances strive to be personally authentic and thereby modern, his own compositions owe their coherent articulation to his thorough insights into Baroque rhetoric, even in their structural use of African elements. He has time and again been labeled as an ambassador between two worlds.

He is co-founder and director of two period instrument groups, *Ensemble Refugium* and *così facciamo*, which have both extended their early music performances to venture into contemporary as well as African music, following the described research approach. Both groups have released CD's with interrelating intercultural compilations. Furthermore Huysen's ongoing work with the Munich based ensemble *così facciamo* gains growing recognition for its original, independently produced and fully staged Baroque opera performances, which – circumstances allowing – often reveal inevitable traits of African influences. He has additionally presented numerous lecture-performances in Europe, advocating the appreciation of typical features of African music.

As a student in Stellenbosch he received the Myra Chapman Bursary and the ATKV Composition Prize. Whilst furthering his studies in Munich he was the recipient of bursaries from the Steinbrenner-Foundation, Berlin, the Bavarian Ministry of Culture, a SAMRO Special Merit Award and a composition prize from the Ernst von Siemens Foundation.

From 1992 to 2005 Huysen worked as freelance composer. His compositional output consists of over 50 works to date, the majority having been written as commissions. All works have been performed publicly, many recurrently and internationally, amongst others by the the Mozarteum Orchestra, Münchener Symphoniker, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Münchener Kammerorchester, Dresdener Kreuzchor, the JPO, CTO, Chamber Orchestra of South Africa, SA National Youth Orchestra, Sontonga Quartet, Trio Hemanay, Ensemble Collage, *così facciamo* and the Toronto based Ensemble Noir. Several works have been published by Ries & Erler and the Verlag Neue Musik, Berlin. Besides numerous concert and studio recordings (Bayerische Rundfunk, Deutschlandradio, Deutsche Welle, ORF, SABC) a number of works were also released commercial CDs.

Aspects of his works have more recently been the subject of academic research as the following selection of articles may demonstrate:

VILJOEN, M. 2006. An Aesthetic of Redemption: Reading Masque as Public Culture. *Muziki* Vol 3(1): 114-133.

VILJOEN, M. Forthcoming in *South African Composer's Compendium* (Ed. Chris Walton):

'Of Roots and Routes': A Reflection on Hans Huysen's Oeuvre.

KING, G. 2006. CD Review: Drumming, Fynbos and Kuduorns. *Muziki* Vol 3(2): 75.

THEM, J. 2006. Befreiung der Masken: Hans Huysens Afrikanische Oper 'Masque' als Chance für Europa. *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 5/06: 28-31

Currently selected compositions are the subject of various Master's and Doctoral studies at the Music Departments of the Universities of Cape Town, Stellenbosch and Pretoria respectively. He is furthermore participating in a NRF-funded research project headed by Prof. Martina Viljoen at the University of the Free State titled 'South Africa as a pluralistic construct'.

Huysen is a member of both the South African and the German music rights societies SAMRO and GEMA, as well as the Bayerische Tonkünstlerverband. He has repeatedly been invited as competition adjudicator and is increasingly in demand as orchestral and choral conductor.

More information at: www.huysen.de