

Roderik de Man is a unique figure in Dutch musical life. His abundant catalogue contains for the greater part mostly works in which he combines acoustical sounds with electronically generated ones. There are more composers who are occupied with this combination, think of the late Ton Bruynèl or the fully alive Michel van de Aa, but the range and reach of his oeuvre provide him a position in his own right, which reaches beyond the Netherlands and environs: His cd, *Touch-and-go* from 2004, was produced in the Mosfilm Studio in Moscow.

Roderik de Man was born in 1941 in Bandung, capital of West-Java. He did not live there long, when he was one year old he was put in an internment camp by the Japanese, together with his mother and brother. After the war the family took up residence in The Hague, where Roderik studied percussion at the Royal Conservatory, and later also theory of music and composition with Keest van Baaren. In Dick Raaymaker's electronic studio he learned to experiment with electronic sounds. Those were the days of strict serialism and oscillators. The synthesizer had yet to be invented. Serialism did not appeal to him very much, but the sound experiments in Raaymaker's studio all the more. As said by himself: by endlessly experimenting I taught myself how to develop very personal sounds using electronic means. Upon finishing his studies he became professor at the conservatory, first in theoretical subjects: from 1992 till 2007 also in composition.

Particular in Roderik de Man's working method is the consequent way in which he merges acoustical and electronic sounds, so that a total sound is created in which the character of the source can hardly be recognized. His sound structures guarantee an intriguing and often also overwhelming listening experience, through the unlimited possibilities of electronic sound production. Since the arrival of the computer the technique in that respect has gained momentum terrifically, even so that we consider it to be quite normal to see a musician also operating a laptop beside his instrument.

The works on this cd present a fascinating overview of the period 1999-2008. On the composer's website we can see sufficient material has appeared to again fill a new cd. The website by the way, contains a wealth of audio material, so do not forget to pay it a visit. Audio samples of this cd are also available there. On top of that the site is beautifully designed.

The way De Man gets into the character of the sound of the performer is remarkable, be it a single recorder player or a complete orchestra. Every time he manages to capture the essence of that sound-characteristic and to enlarge it perfectly into his electronic sound magic. The Radio Chamber Orchestra is surrounded, embraced and repulsed by an electronic sister orchestra, like the poles of a magnet.

Violoncello and piano in *Cordes Invisibles* are overpowered and captured with invisible chords by a monster cello and a super piano, to wrestle themselves free in the end. The *Insomnio* ensemble, with its characteristic of a band of soloists is confronted with quite a unruly soloist; the mandolin, which can be as strong and brilliant as the electronics permit it to be. Jorge Isaac is a virtuoso, not only on the recorder but also on percussion, and his virtuosity is breathtakingly amplified and amplified and amplified again. The stamping granite sounds of the Volharding are flung in the air, accompanied by surrounding sounds, obviously of a political character.

All works on this cd are "tailor made", resulting in optimal performances. The sounds coming from the speakers are frankly astonishing, and here it is even merely "ordinary" stereo.

Finally a word from Roderik de Man:

*“It seems my compositions are often experienced as suggesting images and associated with covering a trajectory or making a journey. As long as it concerns a journey of which the destination is unknown and at the beginning sense of exciting expectancy is generated, I have no objection at all to this comparison.”*