

Julien Libeer

Piano

Born in 1987 near Brussels, Belgium, Julien Libeer's earliest musical memory was the famous documentary on the recording of *West Side Story* by Leonard Bernstein. The piano, which he took up at age six, quickly became the faithful companion for expressing a love of music that thrives as much on opera, orchestra, and chamber music as on the piano repertoire.

For five decisive years, French-Polish pedagogue Jean Fassina was the patient, demanding, wise teacher that any aspiring musician should have the chance to encounter. This experience was followed by the equally intense collaboration with Maria João Pires at the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel, whose advice and support strongly influenced Julien's views over the last few years.

Julien has performed at the Barbican Hall (London), Auditorio Nacional (Madrid), Palau de la Musica (Barcelona), Elbphilharmonie (Hamburg), and is a regular guest of the Palais des Beaux-Arts (Brussels) and Concertgebouw Amsterdam. In addition, other tours have taken him to Japan (Tokyo, Sumida Tryphony Hall), Lebanon (Beirut Chants festival), Turkey (Ankara Music Festival) and the US (Miami International Piano Festival). He is an artist in residence at Flagey.

He has performed with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Brussels Philharmonic, Belgian National Orchestra, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, Sinfonia Varsovia and New Japan Philharmonic; under conductors including Trevor Pinnock, Jun Märkl, Michel Tabachnik, Augustin Dumay, Hervé Niquet, Joshua Weilerstein and Enrique Mazzola. His dedication to the works of Dinu Lipatti have resulted in warm collaborations with the Bucarest Radio Orchestra, among others.

An accomplished chamber musician, he works on a regular basis with Augustin Dumay, Camille Thomas, Frank Braley, Maria João Pires and Lorenzo Gatto, with whom he has performed the complete Beethoven violin sonatas over several seasons (at venues including Wigmore Hall, Louvre and the Concertgebouw Amsterdam).

Highlights of last seasons have included invitations of the Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), Wigmore Hall, Flagey (Brussels) and the Steinway International Concert Series (Cardiff). He was a guest at the Enescu Festival, the Beirut Chants Festival, the Miami International Piano Festival and has performed chamber music concerts at De Doelen (Rotterdam), the Palais des Beaux-Arts (Charleroi) and the Théâtre des Abesses (Paris).

Other recent highlights include the completion of Julien's complete Beethoven *Violin Sonatas* recording with Lorenzo Gatto (Alpha Classics), which won the Diapason d'or de l'Année 2016; his debut concerto album featuring Lipatti's *Concertino for piano and orchestra* and Mozart's *Piano Concerto No. 27 in B-flat major, KV 595* (Les Métamorphoses Orchestra and conductor Raphaël Feye, on Evil Penguin Records). In addition, he was the recipient of an Echo Klassik Award in 2017 for his album with cellist Camille Thomas. Julien has then moved on to sign with Harmonia Mundi International, releasing an adventurous *Bach – Bartók* in 2020, followed in 2022 by *A Well-tempered Conversation*, a conceptual take on Bach's iconic Well-Tempered Keyboard.

Julien Libeer has studied with Daniel Blumenthal (Royal Conservatory of Brussels), Jean Fassina (Paris) and Maria João Pires, and is an associate artist of the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel, where he also specialized in chamber music with the members of the Artemis Quartet. Furthermore, he has received the advice of Dmitry Bashkirov, Alfred Brendel, Nelson Delle Vigne-Fabbri, Jura Margulis and Gerhard Schulz (Alban Berg Quartet).

Beyond concertizing, Julien is driven to initiate or collaborate in projects which are rooted in the idea that music, far beyond its esthetic value, can be a force of change for anyone willing to listen. Amongst these

projects was Julien hosting a Belgian TV series, that made a case for musical storytelling. He furthermore hosts the *Salon Libeer* concert series at the Bruges Concertgebouw, in which he joins a fellow musician and a speaker (e.g. philosopher, historian, author), as well as the lecture series *Dead or Alive*, a philosophical exploration of the shifts in classical music making (in collaboration with LUCA School of Arts and the Catholic University of Leuven).

As the artistic director of the *Singing Molenbeek* project, he supervises high level choir rehearsals in the primary schools of a Brussels suburb famous for all kinds of wrong reasons. It is Julien's hope that introducing these children to music, with all its demands and rewards, will help them grow personally and socially.

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