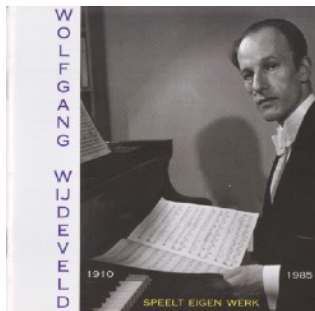


Ton Hartsuiker †



My first impression of Wolfgang Wijdeveld takes shape in a childhood memory, that reminds me at the same time of the first recital I was allowed to go to with my parents. It will surely be due to this fact that I can recall that night that well, though 55 years have passed ever since. The concert took place in the concert hall of the theatre "Odeon" in the town where we lived, Zwolle. There, Wijdeveld led the municipal school of music. It was at the end of worldwar two.

I was very much impressed by Wijdeveld's performance, his appearance and his passionate playing. I think he completely corresponded to my image of an artist. What I remember most in his program that night are the Mozart sonata in A with the variations, which my father had played for me before, and one of his own pieces, the Escapades, on which the ink must have been scarcely dried up.

Shortly after, my father sent me to the school of music in the "Bloemendalstraat" to

bring to Wijdeveld some pieces by Scriabine, that he had promised to him. In his big room in the old building, that he had brightened up by his sister Ruscha with colorful wallpaintings, he played the pieces in my presence and I immediately noticed his fantastic skill

in reading music. From that moment on the two families saw each other on a more regular base and I soon ended up being one of Wijdeveld's pupils. A short period of time for the rest, because my new teacher gave up his position in Zwolle to become a masterteacher at the conservatory of Utrecht.

Our contact continued though and became more outlined when I found myself in the "Militair Neurose Hospitaal" (Military Neurosis Hospital) in Austerlitz during my term of national service, started to correspond with him and he took the trouble to visit me in Austerlitz.

When I told him in march 1955 of my being discharged from military service, he sent me a small collection of piano pieces that he had called "loose thoughts", which have been inserted, later on, in the series

"Notitieboeken" (Notebooks), that have been partly recorded on this cd. On the original score he has written this dedication: "To Ton Hartsuiker as he reenters the 'sound' (!) society".

Despite the reciprocity of feeling, I have not announced myself in Utrecht, but I do have given him the opportunity, in my function as a director of the "Instituut de Concertzaal van het Gebouw voor Kunsten&Wetenschappen" (Institute the Concert hall of the Building for the Arts & Sciences) to play a recital, where he interpreted a.o. Bach's Chaconne in the Brahms - transcription for the left hand. This recital I will not forget easily either....

During the last years of his life, mostly dominated by a serious illness, Wijdeveld's playing became ever more beautiful and precise. When I payed him one of my last visits on his houseboat at the Billitonkade in Utrecht he called out to me from the doorstep : "Finally I know exactly what good piano playing is about !"

The cataract that had badly affected his sight urged him to make each note on the score visible with a magnifying glass and thus to fix it in his mind. The spontaneous and strongly instinctive nature of his playing found itself curbed that way, but never at the expense of the creative part.

You can listen to Wolfgang Wijdeveld on this cd as he plays a large number of his own compositions for piano.

As a composer, he has only been little known, although some succesful pieces have been executed by soloists of great name: his sonate for violin and piano from 1948 in the first place, for me one of the most beautiful and strongest contributions to the dutch violin literature.

From time to time one can hear the excellent songs on south-african lyrics (1940) too, while the sonate for 2 violins and piano (1954), though welcomed by Matthijs Vermeulen in "De Groene Amsterdammer" with a remarkably enthousiastic review, has not obtained the place it deserves.

For his own instrument Wijdeveld has written many short pieces, that give a clear view in a nutshell upon his creative personality. Pieces full of ideas, rich in fantasy, capricious and colorful, reflecting his emotional and lyrical nature.

Pieces showing all kinds of influences, Bartók's for example, yet breathing their own atmosphere.

Often I feel that Wijdeveld composed for his own instrument as if it were just "playtime" for him; the sharp characteristics and mobility of his music recall a many years' activity as a pianist/composer for ballet.

An explicite exception to this is to be made for the first piano sonate from 1940, a structurally elaborate piece of work. The way the opening motif continues to play its part all through the piece evokes associations with Willem Pijper's germ cell technique; Wokke studied under this composer for some time.

But Wouter Paap is right as he states, that "Wijdeveld is Willem Pijper's only pupil who has nothing to do with him".

Wokke proves his capacity of writing in large lines and reaching a profound expressivity most of all through his pieces for other instruments, to which he kept more distance (the middle part of the violin sonate !)

This cd is a striking document for those who have loved and understood Wolfgang Wijdeveld.

Others might be put by it to the tracks of a musician, who has taken quite a particular place in our music scene.

A next cd publishing of his other compositions would complete his image and give it the dimension he deserves.

19 - 3 - 2000

Translation Ton Hartsuiker