

Composer	Robin de Raaff (1968)
Title	Carmina Chromatico (2015)
Duration	11'20"
Performers	Gruppo Montebello
Conductor	Henk Guittart
Recordingdate & place	Academy of Music, Maastricht August 28th, 2015



Robin de Raaff (Breda, 1968) first studied composition with Geert van Keulen and later at the Amsterdam Conservatory with Theo Loevendie, graduating cum laude in 1997. In 1999 De Raaff had the special privilege of being invited to work as George Benjamin's only composition student at the Royal College of Music in London where he also studied with Julian Anderson.

In 2000 De Raaff was invited to the renowned Tanglewood Music Center as the 'Senior Composition Fellow' which was the beginning of an ongoing relationship resulting in a series of commissions (*Piano Concerto*, *Entangled Tales*) and performances of his septet *Ennea's Domein* and *Un Visage d'Emprunt*. In the summer of 2015 his *Fanfare* was premiered during the Anniversary year of TMC.

De Raaff finished his first opera *RAAFF* in 2004, which was commissioned by the Netherlands Opera in a co-production with the Holland Festival. His second opera in co-operation with De Nederlandse Opera resulted in *Waiting for Miss Monroe* (2012).

De Raaff's *Violin Concerto* (2008, written for Tasmin Little) was selected as the Best Orchestral Work of the year 2008 in the Dutch composition competition 'Toonzetters'. De Raaff's special interest in this genre led him to compose a *Cello Concerto* (2013, commissioned by Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra) and a *Percussion Concerto* (2014 commissioned by The Juilliard School). His first Symphony will be premiered during the 50'th anniversary of De Doelen in Rotterdam and Classical: NEXT in May 2016.

De Raaff is currently professor of composition and orchestration at the Composition Department at Codarts (former Rotterdam Conservatory of Music).

Notes on Robin de Raaff's *Carmina Chromatico* (2015)

The title *Carmina Chromatico* refers to the first movement of *Prophaetiae Sibyllarum* by the Renaissance composer Orlando di Lasso. The music of *Prophaetiae Sibyllarum* refers to the twelve Sibyls, also known as Dodekatheism. The rich chromaticism in this work was far ahead of its time - some music theorists see it as a precursor of the wildly chromatic world of Gesualdo.

Although the structure of *Carmina Chromatico*, clearly consisting of three movements, can be traced very directly to *Prophaetiae Sibyllarum*, De Raaff felt it was his duty to use these elements and building blocks in a rudimentary fashion rather than as dominant structures, and this is clearly evident at the beginning of the composition. The rudimentary material has been transformed and is not immediately recognisable, as if the centuries between the two works had formed a sort of sediment that blurred the characteristic features, sometimes even effacing them completely. Straight away in the opening bars of *Carmina Chromatico* Di Lasso's spectre hovers around the instrumental solos of the various woodwinds as they struggle to free themselves from the sediment, again and again rising to the surface. These solos resurrect the old DNA and bring it to the fore, but the surrounding forces – a stylistic counterpoint on this historical base – cause the piece to find its own way by separating itself from them, and deconstructing the solos in order to favour the energetic dynamics of the whole, of more complex tutti textures.

At the heart of the composition is the longest solo, played by the violin (in a duet with the cor anglais), an attempt to bridge the gap between the new and the old material, but in vain. The tutti moments are an expression of the sediment laid down by the centuries; they cause the piece to clog up in the climax at the end of the composition.

The world premiere was given at the Orlando Festival in the Netherlands in the Maastricht Academy of Music on 28 August 2015. The second performance, on 29 August 2015, was held in the Aula Major of Rolduc Abbey in Kerkrade. Both were played by Gruppo Montebello and conducted by Henk Guittart.