



Rob van Bavel Time for Ballads (The Maene Sessions)

An art which isn't based on feeling isn't an art at all...
- Paul Cezanne

Rob van Bavel - piano
Marcel Serierse - drums
Frans van Geest - double bass



01. Search For Peace-Peace (05:51)
02. De Tor Ahead (04:50)
03. The Shadow Of Your Smile (06:30)
04. In A Sentimental Mood (05:12)
05. Bob's Piano Bar (04:56)
06. Ballad For René (03:43)
07. Body And Soul (04:45)
08. Your Nocturne (03:43)
09. For Lieke (02:40)
10. Roaring Heights (04:16)
11. Elegie (05:10)
12. Ballad For Danny (04:26)
13. I Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out To Dry (03:27)

"This album is the result of what has been a most rewarding musical journey. Jazz is often associated with busy, energetic (or even neurotic) music. I have played my share of it and enjoyed it...but deep down, I really do love to play and listen to ballads. In October 2020, I played a concert with the John Engels Quintet in a beautiful little wooden church called 'De Terp' in Oudorp. That night I had the pleasure and honor to be the first Dutch Jazz pianist to perform on the amazing Chris Maene Straight Strung Concert Grand piano. The combination of this beautiful instrument with the acoustics of the church made a great impression on me. I realized that if I were to record a ballad album; that instrument in that church would be an ideal combination. I presented the idea to 'Jazz in Oudorp' organizer Alexander Stegeman and he immediately liked the idea and subsequently his support throughout the whole project has been absolutely amazing. I asked friends and people from my social network to name their favorite ballads and from that huge list of titles, I made a selection of songs. My 2 favorite musicians and members of my trio, bassist Frans van Geest & drummer Marcel Serierse, liked the idea of a ballad project. So at the end of 2020, a moment in time when (for obvious reasons) everything had slowed down, we started rehearsing for this album.



My good friend Frits Landesbergen had sent me a copy of the REF album 'Born To Be Blue' he recorded for the Sound Liaison label. I was very impressed by the album so I contacted engineer Frans de Rond & producer Peter Bjørnild, the Sound Liaison team, and asked if they would be willing to record my project as well. They loved the idea of recording in the old wooden church. Peter told me that Columbia's 30th Street Studio, where the classic Miles Davis album 'Kind of Blue' was recorded, was originally a Greek Orthodox church with wood paneling just like the church in Oudorp. It is one of the reasons that the album sounds so good as this kind of church has an almost ideal natural reverb. Setting up for the recording Frans & Peter knew exactly where to place each microphone in order to capture even the slightest nuances. They also placed 2 microphones a bit further back, to capture the beautiful lush reverb of the church. The sound they created and the positive feedback during the recording process made the whole thing come together."

Rob van Bavel



"It was a wonderful experience recording the **Chris Maene Straight Strong Grand Piano**. Each note has a wonderful clarity and timbre. This piano really sings. My guess is that because the strings are not crossed as on a normal grand piano, the sound of each string is free to ring out as it does not have to pass other strings above or below. The upper harmonic ringing from sympathetic strings, as one can faintly perceive on even the best of the traditional cross strung grands, is completely absent. And last but not least; the perfect placement of the lowest note completely to the left and the highest completely to the right is a sound engineer's dream come true.

Another dream come true was recording the beautiful 'wood' reverb in the old church. The sound of this church is really special. A normal stone church has a never ending brittle sustain that can be difficult to handle when recording but the sound in this little church is warm and lush with a gorgeous natural decay."

Frans de Rond



"Working with Rob van Bavel, Frans van Geest and Marcel Serieuse made it all the more clear to me why they belong to the absolute top of the European jazz scene. It is professionalism at its highest level. Marcel Serieuse, knowing the sound of the church, brought a drum set specially tuned for the occasion. And when setting up Frans van Geest asked me to play on his bass while he walked around the church estimating just how much attack was needed to produce the fullest sound in the hall. Rob van Bavel had arranged each song but was completely open to suggestions from Frans and Marcel. Rob knows how to lead by appreciating the individual. And they know how to keep things light. Recording a ballad album one could suspect that the atmosphere would be grave and serious but the contrary was true, this one day marathon session was full of laughter and joy. Maybe it also had to do with the fact that we realized early on, that this recording was going to be something special."

Peter Bjørnild

The Chris Maene Straight Strung Concert Grand Piano

In the late 19th century, Steinway & Sons successfully brought to fruition the concept of the modern cross-strung grand piano. Ever since then, this construction concept has been imitated by all piano builders. It resulted in a standardization of piano building and a certain uniformity of sound. As a reaction to this, the second half of the 20th century witnessed an intense quest for historical instruments, a search for more diversity and transparency of sound. As part of this movement, the Chris Maene Factory began building harpsichords and pianofortes, based on Chris Maene's renowned and unique collection of more than 300 historical instruments. In 2013 Daniel Barenboim commissioned Chris Maene to build a perfect parallel-strung concert grand piano. A piano that would reconcile the unique characteristic sonorous richness of the historical piano with the volume, clarity, power and playing comfort of the best modern concert piano. A piano with different sonorous properties, aiming to offer a valid artistic alternative to existing concert grands.



Chris Maene and his team went to work and after extensive experiments they built the first Straight Strung Concert Grand Piano. In May 2015 Daniel Barenboim inaugurated the new straight strung grand piano with a series of Schubert recitals in Vienna, Paris and London. The sound of the unique instrument was very well

received by press, audiences and musicians alike. Today 'Chris Maene Straight Strung Grand Pianos' are played all over the world by the best international concert pianists.

I am very proud to be the first jazz pianist to record with this unique instrument and I am honored and grateful that Chris and his team gave me this special opportunity. For more information on Chris and his pianos please visit www.chrismaene.com.

Special thanks to: Henk Swinnen & Marc van der Marel (Maene) for providing the beautiful Straight Strung Concert Grand, Peter Bjørnild & Frans de Rond (Sound Liaison) for the fantastic recording, Alexander Stegeman (Jazz in Oudorp) for all the amazing help and support, Mihan & Jiyong for the beautiful flowers, Tom Beek for the artistic photography & cover design, and last but not least Frans van Geest and Marcel Serierse for their playing and friendship!

Rob van Bavel

Recording, mixing and mastering by Frans de Rond.
Produced by Peter Bjørnild & Rob van Bavel.
Recorded the 10th of October 2021 in 'De Terp', in Oudorp.

Piano tuning: Freek Dijkstra

Total time: **59:29**
Catalog Number: **SL-1053A**

Original recording format **DXD 352,8 kHz**
The original recording is analog mixed.
All other formats are converted versions of the original.

Used microphones:
Main set: 2x DPA 4006
Rob (piano): Josephson C700S, 2x Josephson e22, 2x Josephson C617
Marcel (drums): 2x Sonodore RCM-401 (overhead), 1x Josephson e22 (snare),
1x Josephson C715 (bassdrum)
Frans (bass): Josephson C700A

Used equipment:

Micpre's: Merging Horus
Microphone cables by AudioQuest & Mogami
Speakers (mixing): TAD Compact Evolution
Poweramp: Moon 760A
Recording & mixing headphones: Hifiman HE1000se / Sennheiser HD800S
All power cables and power conditioners by AudioQuest.

Cover design & portrait photos by Tom Beek and location photos by Frans de Rond