

LE CHANT DE L'AUBE

The viola da gamba is one of those instruments whose sound is so close to the human voice that it came to symbolise human expression. It was in France that composers such as Sainte-Colombe, Marin Marais and Antoine Forqueray left their mark on the collective memory, painting a musical picture in which interiority and self-awareness are brought to the fore, revealing a profound insight into intimacy. This openness of mind and soul finds a magnificent tool in the viola: with its unique sounds, full of resonance, subtle tones and poignant lyricism, it urges Man to see himself as he is, to feel, to question himself and to seek authentic freedom and happiness.

While the intimacy of this repertoire calls for introspection, its virtuosity and brilliance invite intelligent reasoning and an agile, critical mind: like painted vanitas and moralistic writings, music for the viola accompanied the dawn of the Enlightenment in the 17th century, with pieces by composers such as La Bruyère, Pascal, Rousseau, Diderot and many others.



A portrait of Pieter Theuns, a man with wavy, light-colored hair, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

Pieter Theuns, theorbo

Pieter Theuns began his musical career largely as a self-taught musician, initially focusing on rock and pop music. Gradually, his attention turned to classical music. He obtained a master's degree in classical guitar at the Lemmensinstituut under the guidance of Raphaëlla Smits, followed by a bachelor's degree in theorbo at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels with Philippe Malfeyt.

In 2010, he founded B.O.X - Baroque Orchestration X, a collective that integrates baroque instruments into collaborations with artists from other musical worlds. B.O.X has worked with numerous national and international artists, including Dez Mona, Liesa Van der Aa, Brihang, Tsar B, Eefje De Visser, Sylvie Kreusch, An Pierlé, Stef Kamil Carlens, Spinvis, Shara Nova, DM Stith, Mugison, Valgeir Sigurdsson, Petur Ben, Efterklang and Richard Reed Parry (Arcade Fire).

In 2022, he founded CASA SAGA, a new cultural centre in Antwerp, Belgium, where artists and ensembles from all over the world can come to stay. This venue allows for a deeper exploration of the tradition, network and expertise of B.O.X, which is dedicated to the reinvention and evolution of early music.

At the same time, Pieter Theuns remains active in the classical field. In 2015, he was artist-in-residence at the Flanders Festival in Mechelen. In 2017, he became one of the central figures of the Baroque Year in Antwerp. As a freelance musician, he has collaborated with numerous orchestras and ensembles, including Cappella Mediterranea, Concerto Soave, Ensemble Mare Nostrum, Ensemble inAlto and Ensemble Clematis.