
Jörgen van Rijen

Selected Reviews

Luciano Berio: SOLO for Trombone & Orchestra Lucerne Festival, September 2024

"Berio's Solo for Trombone and Orchestra, was a revelation, with soloist Jörgen van Rijen convincing me that the inherently comic trombone could be at times soulful, often playful and even menacing. Van Rijen's masterful slides gave the impression of an instrument out front and utterly alone, at odds with the occasional outbursts of other sections of the orchestra." **Ben Lawrence, *The Telegraph* ★★★★★**

"I heard an invigorating Lucerne Festival Academy concert in which George Benjamin conducted his own well-crafted Concerto for Orchestra and then, generously, two modern pieces that made rather greater impact.

One was Luciano Berio's Solo, in which a virtuoso trombonist, Jörgen van Rijen, did extraordinary multiphonic, triple-tonguing things against a volatile orchestral background." **Richard Morrison, *The Times***

Jimmy López Bellino's Trombone Concerto: Shift Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, June 2024

"The programme starts with a surprise premiere: Jimmy López Bellino's trombone concerto Shift. The 45-year-old Peruvian looks set to see Dutch Jörgen van Rijen perform as soloist in his brand new trombone concerto. Bellino's inspiration: vibrations through the sky, water or the universe. Waves make their way through the orchestra, in tiny motifs of descending notes or bursting bubbles. Van Rijen's trombone vibrates, bounces or glides back and forth between notes. His blazing virtuosity creates a big bang in the final section." **de Volkskrant**

"Appropriately, tonight features a brand-new spectacle piece for orchestra and solo trombone. The four-part Shift by composer Jimmy López Bellido showcases the many facets of the trombone. Wild and virtuosic, trumpet-like in the first part, but smoother and more mysterious in the second. Soloist Jörgen van Rijen performs glissandi: long sliding notes made with the trombone's characteristic slide.

In the two final parts, you hear what else the trombone has to offer: almost percussive playing, a growling low register, and comically muted squeaks. Van Rijen's soft vibrato in the high notes is dreamy. And then his endurance: he has almost non-stop notes to play." **NRC**

Mahler 3, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra (September 2023)

"However, this was to be the trombone's night. Jörgen van Rijen's solo was fabulous, and he very much deserved the loudest cheer of the evening. From stunning top notes to sophisticated phrasing, all was a dream." – **Clare Varney, *Bachtrack*******

Bryce Dessner Trombone Concerto, Birds of Paradise Festival (March 2023)

"The first movement enthrallingly isolates the trombone as a rhythmic pulse – seldom a soloist – driving the

Jörgen van Rijen

Selected Reviews

orchestra with one sharply repeated note, while the second and third movements colour a virtuosic dreamscape with drone-heavy backing." – **Tristan Gatward, *Loud and Quiet***

"This included three of Dessner's concerto's performed by Belgian chamber orchestra/ensemble Casco Phil and featuring exceptional performances from Jorgen van Rijen on trombone..." – **Nicolas Graves, *Clash Music***

CD: *Mirrored in Time with the Alma Quartet (January 2023)*

"The polished playing of trombonist Jörgen van Rijen always captures the essence of a piece... tragic beauty in a lamentation by Fauré, sunshine in Schumann's Fantasiestücke, deep melancholy in Gnossienne No. 1 from Satie... Van Rijen virtuously glides and blares through the dazzling closing number, Rock That Trombone by Chiel Meijering." - **Jenny Camilleri, *De Volkskrant********

"This is an intelligently planned, finely played album for trombone and string quartet, part recital of contemporary music, part hypothesis of what chamber music featuring trombone from the 19th and early 20th centuries could have sounded like." – **Guy Rickards, *Gramophone Magazine***

Tan Dun Trombone Concerto "Three Muses in Video Game" (world premiere), Concertgebouworkest (November 2021)

"His (Tan Dun's) video game heroes, the "muses", three ancient Chinese instruments, are masterfully summoned by solo trombonist Jörgen van Rijen. He is able to manipulate the sound of his instrument subtly but effectively, sounds like a bili (reed instrument) in one moment, and a xiqin (a two-stringed, bowed instrument) the next moment." - **Rick van Veldhuizen, *De Volkskrant********

"...during the solo in the second movement, van Rijen's staggering mastery becomes evident."

- **Rahul Gandolahage, *NRC Handelsblad********

"From rough, raspy trills to sensual glissandi, from cascades of full staccati that were delivered with the precision of a machine gun to beautifully lyrical, long cantabile lines.

That's what van Rijen does like none other – he sings on the trombone even in the very highest registers."

"The fantastic solo cadence that Tan Dun devised (...) was executed daringly and masterfully by van Rijen."

- **Peter van der Lint, *Trouw********

Bryce Dessner Trombone Concerto, Dallas Symphony Orchestra (October 2020)

"Trombonist Van Rijen, who performed the work's world premiere in September in Cologne, Germany, here presented the excruciatingly demanding solo part with energy, unflinching technical virtuosity, and insightful musicality." - **Wayne Lee Gay, *North Texas Performing Arts News***

"I wonder how many trombonists could match van Rijen's virtuosity, or his command of tones from matte-finish to

Jörgen van Rijen

Selected Reviews

high gloss." - **Scott Cantrell, *Dallas Morning News***

CD: Macmillan, Verbey, Berio, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra (October 2019)

"All the qualities of the trombone are highlighted: march-like, virtuosic and not to mention singing, Jörgen van Rijen, principal trombonist of the Concertgebouw Orchestra, utilizes all chances and possibilities ... Grand master Van Rijen once again shows us his formidable abilities with Ivan Fischer." - **Gerard Scheltens, *Luister***

CD: Fratres: Pärt and Bach, Camerata RCO (December 2018)

"The instrumental control of Jörgen van Rijen, first trombonist of the Concertgebouw Orchestra, borders on incredible. ... Van Rijen translates Pärt flawlessly on the trombone. As for the Bach, the music stands strong, thanks to Van Rijen's impeccable sound production and the fresh playing of the Camerata RCO." - **Joep Christenhusz, *NRC***

James MacMillan Trombone Concerto, Dallas Symphony Orchestra (February 2018)

"There can't be many trombonists who could match van Rijen's dazzling virtuosity, or his silken tone elsewhere."
- **Scott Cantrell, *Dallas News***

"...van Rijen was impressive as he ploughed through the thicket of normal and experimental sounds as well as some incredibly fast triple-tongued notes" - **Gregory Sullivan Isaacs, *Theater Jones***

"Van Rijen entered with a muted solo over a spooky, cloud-like texture created by percussion and strings, and he eventually emerged aggressively, but with an unfailingly controlled and burnished tone."
- **Wayne Lee Gay, *Texas Classical Review***

James MacMillan Trombone Concerto, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra (November 2018)

"Performances, by soloists who gave the premieres, could not be bettered." - **Richard Whitehouse, *Gramophone***

James MacMillan Trombone Concerto (world premiere), Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra (April 2017)

"The trombone sang, sang, sang ... At the very end Van Rijen and MacMillan completely enveloped me. In the serene, quiet harmonies the trombone was once again heartrending." - **Peter van der Lint, *Trouw***

"Beautiful how the MacMillan makes Van Rijen sparkle in full glory. Seamlessly, his solos are transformed into the rousing sounds of the orchestra" - **De Telegraaf**

"...the trombone concerto turned out to be a dream show for the king Van Rijen" - **NRC**

Jörgen van Rijen

Selected Reviews

CD: *Tintomara*, Jörgen van Rijen and Wim Van Hasselt, Channel Classics (June 2015)

"Wim Van Hasselt and Jörgen van Rijen appear to find a golden thread to weave through remarkably diverse musical traditions." - **Jonathan Freeman-Attwood, *Gramophone***

Mahler Symphony No. 3, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra (January 2015)

"Primitive life did not emerge writhing from bubbling sludge, but forged itself into wondrous plasticity, blooming into an undeniable force in the throbbing trombone solo, superbly executed by Jörgen van Rijen."

- **Jenny Camilleri, *Bachtrack*******

Kalevi Aho Trombone Concerto (UK premiere), BBC Symphony Orchestra, Barbican (May 2012)

"Forget the stereotype of a lumbering, comedy instrument; van Rijen and Aho turned the trombone into a fount of melodic grace and gambolling, cradled over four generous movements by an equally refined orchestra... The finale was terrific, a hiccupping rhythmic feast suddenly aborted by a return to the concerto's dream-like opening, with van Rijen magically disappearing into a twinkling infinity of bells." - **Geoff Brown, *The Times***

"(...) disarmingly deft traversal of the solo part... The most distinctive ideas come in the second movement, a scherzo, in which the soloist shimmies his way through an increasingly heated, jazz-infused drum-dance... within his traditional aesthetic, Aho knows how to challenge his musicians – lots of subtle percussion, especially in the finale – and keep his audience alert across a 30-minute span." - **Andrew Clark, *Financial Times***

"(...) the trombone was mournful or jaunty but always lyrical." - **Nick Kimberley, *Evening Standard***

"Only high praise can be showered on the soloist, Jörgen van Rijen, who coped superbly with the many demands made on him by Aho's imagination, including the need to play two trombones, the alto and tenor, and sing at the same time. The fast movements were dispatched with brio and the score was given the best possible London launch." - **Edward Clark, *Classical Source***

Selected Quotes

"...All give Jörgen van Rijen the opportunity to show rich tone, outstanding technique, and thoughtful interpretations." - **American Record Guide**

"One of the world's finest trombonists" - **Audiophile Audition**

"...his virtuoso technique need fear no comparison with the best in this field" - **Gramophone**

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Selected Reviews

"Rijen's accounts of the well-known 18th-Century alto trombone concertos surpass anything I have heard, in both solo and orchestral parts. He is a world-class artist" - **American Record Guide**