

ARNO BORNKAMP BIO



Classical saxophonist Arno Bornkamp is a unique figure in both the saxophone world and the Classical music world in general. In his career, now spanning nearly 40 years, he has amazed the music world of his energetic and stylish interpretations, full of lyricism and passion. He believes in the saxophone as an instrument with an infinite amount of nuance and colors, reflecting the human soul with all its shadings of light and dark. Bornkamp is a natural storyteller

on his instrument, and offers a highly personal take in his interpretations of all the music he plays.

Arno Bornkamp's saxophone style is strongly rooted in the 20th century French tradition: his primary teachers were, in addition to Ed Bogaard, the French saxophone legends Daniël Deffayet and Jean-Marie Londeix. Nonetheless, he was primarily influenced by the Dutch musical climate of the 1980s, a time when traditions were overthrown, dogmas were broken and classical music reached a huge audience.

Bornkamp flourished greatly in this cultural climate, and together with Johan van der Linden, André Arends and Willem van Merwijk, he founded the Aurelia Saxophone Quartet (1982-2017). For a long period this quartet was one of the world's greatest, and opened the doors to make string quartet literature accessible to the saxophone quartet, such as the quartets by Debussy and Ravel, which they usually performed without sheet music. The Aurelia Quartet, later with Niels Bijl, Femke IJlstra and Juan Manuel Dominguez, has left a true legacy, which still serves as a source of inspiration for young quartets.

Also noteworthy is Bornkamp's long collaboration with pianist Ivo Janssen. Janssen, himself a gifted soloist, was the perfect musical foil for Bornkamp. Their interpretations of original repertoire and arrangements, many of which have been released on CD, are still considered exemplary. More recently, Bornkamp has started working with younger musicians: the Trio Abril with fellow saxophonist Juana Palop and pianist Frank van der Laar, the Duo Calvadoré with the Flemish pianist Jan Lust, and the Pannonica Saxophone Quartet, which specializes in playing Argentine Tango.

His infectious way of making music makes Arno Bornkamp the ideal soloist. He has given more than 200 performances as soloist with orchestra, wherein he collaborated with conductors such as Hans Vonk, Jac van Steen, Lucas Vis, Thierry

Fischer, Bernhard Klee, Jean-Bernard Pommier, Andrey Boreyko, Pierre-André Valade and others. His repertoire spans from the standard repertoire for saxophone to new, often commissioned concertos. The 'Tallahatchie Concerto' by Jacob ter Veldhuis ranks highly in the latter category, with Bornkamp giving many performances around the world. Quite recently, in July 2018, he gave the premiere of 'Leyendas' by Guillermo Lago (pseudonym of Willem van Merwijk), which was warmly received by the audience during the performance of the XVIII World Saxophone Congress in Zagreb.

For approximately 25 years, orchestras such as the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Residentie Orkest, Holland Symfonia, and various radio orchestras have used Bornkamp's services as a substitute player, giving him the privilege of performing orchestral repertoire under such greats as Carlo-Maria Giulini, Riccardo Chailly, Mariss Jansons, Daniele Gatti, Mstislav Rostropowitsch, Heinz Holliger and Bernard Haitink.

Bornkamp very much loves the tradition of the saxophone. He has built up a small collection of historical instruments, which enable him to perform older repertoire in an historically informed way, in both solo projects and also with the Flemish orchestra Anima Eterna. However, he has a particular fondness for new music: In total, Bornkamp has collaborated on more than 150 premieres, both as a soloist and chamber musician. Initially inspired by leading composers such as Luciano Berio and Karlheinz Stockhausen, he later built deep, long-term, and productive musical relationships with composers such as Ryo Noda, Christian Lauba, Guillermo Lago, Santiago Baez and Jacob ter Veldhuis, frequently performing many of their works. In his most recent project 'Little Big Horn' (premiere December 2020) Arno Bornkamp puts the baritone saxophone in the spotlight: surrounded by a theatrical concept made by André Arends Bornkamp presents 8 brand-new solo pieces by various composers from the classical- and the jazz field. Among them is Branford Marsalis.

Arno Bornkamp finds it essential to pass on his know-how to new generations of musicians, teaching at the Conservatory of Amsterdam where many of his students put his ideas into practice. He is also regularly invited to give master classes all over the world.

Arno Bornkamp has released dozens of CDs under his own name, with the Aurelia Quartet, and in the context of other projects. His latest CD projects are solo CD's which have been released by the German label Genuin: one with music by Johan Sebastian Bach (February 2020) and the most recent one 'Folies de Baryton' with old and new music for baritone saxophone (May 2023). In 2024 we can expect a cd with works from the French Composer Henri Sauguet.