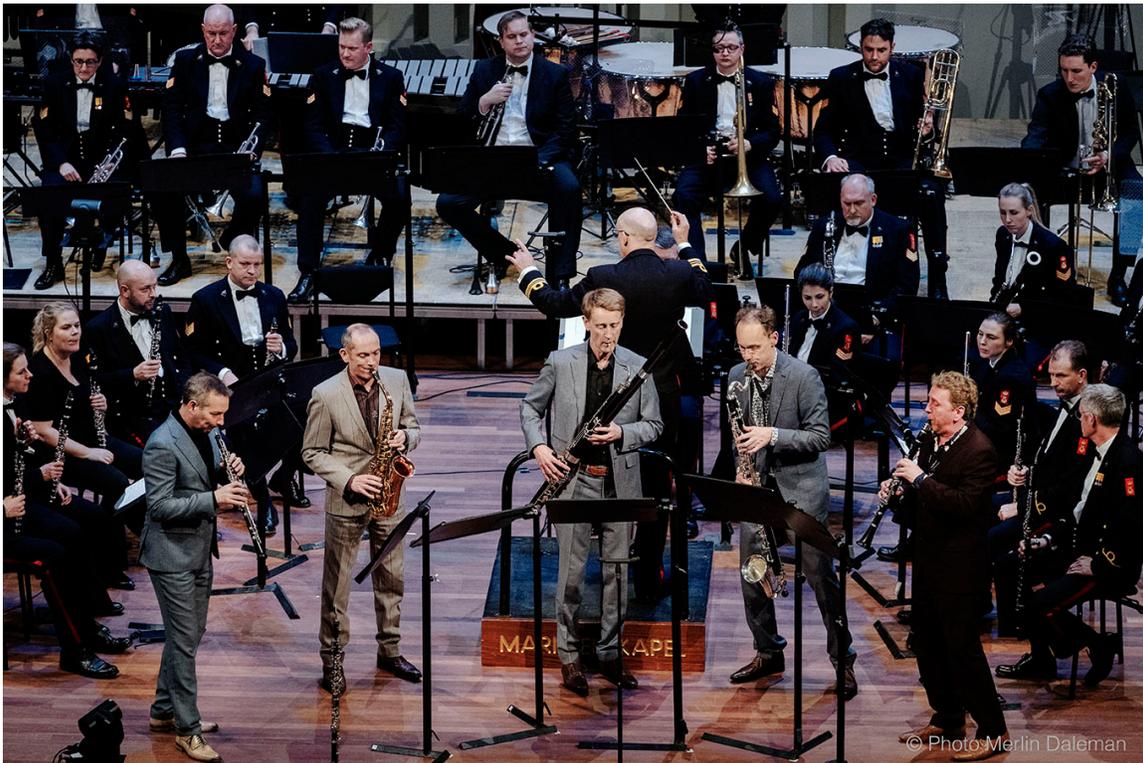


Un Momento Dado

A commemorative tribute to Johan Cruijff (1947-2016)

Concerto Grosso for reed quintet and wind orchestra



The Calefax reed quintet joins the world of the wind orchestras!

The much-anticipated collaboration between renowned Dutch composer Johan de Meij and one of Europe's most successful chamber music groups, the Calefax Reed Quintet, came to fruition in January 2020. Together with the Marine Band of the Royal Netherlands Navy, Calefax premiered a new work by De Meij: *Un Momento Dado*, an ode to another Dutch phenomenon, the legendary soccer player Johan Cruijff.

De Meij (1953) and the Calefax reed quintet have common roots in the Dutch music scene of the 1980s and '90s. What took so long for them to team up? Is it because

chamber music and wind orchestras are still worlds apart? Or did the geographical distance play a role, since De Meij moved to New York in 2008? Whatever it is, all agree, it's not a moment too soon.

When Calefax started performing, De Meij was still active as a trombonist in ensembles such as Orkest de Volharding, founded in 1972 by Louis Andriessen, Willem Breuker and Jan Wolff (the latter was to play a significant role in Calefax's early career, in his capacity as director of the Dutch contemporary music center De IJsbreker). De Meij played in this celebrated ensemble for two decades, experiencing major changes at close hand – as the ensemble transformed from rag tag group of politically engaged musicians into a contemporary music ensemble. When he first joined De Volharding in 1988, De Meij was putting the finishing touches on the work that would signify his breakthrough as a composer— his first symphony 'The Lord of the Rings' for wind orchestra. In the years he spent with De Volharding, De Meij assisted in premiering over 200 new works from various composers, which have been influential in shaping his compositional thinking and approach.

Calefax first approached De Meij in 2017. it was a difficult time for De Meij, as the usually peripatetic composer had to slow down his travel due to a ski accident. On the positive side, he had more time for composing, and he agreed to take on the assignment to write for Calefax. His first meetings with Calefax's bassoonist Alban Wesly involved lighthearted banter including references to colorful Cruijffian catchphrases, such as '*Every downside has its upside*'. Coincidentally, the association with Johan Cruijff proved to be fruitful. Cruijff, says De Meij, is known for his virtuosity, creativity, capriciousness and radical innovation. "I also observe these qualities in Calefax, a group that has created an entirely new chamber music genre with its unique instrumental line-up."

De Meij felt inspired to name the piece: 'Un Momento Dado', as a reference to a baffling but funny statement Cruijff made at a press conference in his Catalan years. The phrase means 'at a given moment', in Catalan Spanish. But beyond that, it wasn't clear what Cruijff meant. The Spanish were so delighted by this nonsensical phrase that it was jokingly adopted into everyday Spanish. De Meij believes that Calefax, not unlike Cruijff, has displayed a single-minded, creative drive and that it, too, has conquered a place in the chamber music world for its idiosyncratic instrumental combination.

With strong encouragement from the Calefax musicians, De Meij opted for a *Concerto Grosso*-like form for his new work, in which the reed quintet and the wind orchestra seamlessly alternate with each other, as well as occasionally combining forces. During the majestic orchestral opening, with its brilliant trumpet flourishes and a notable role

for the harp, one can instantly hear the thematical material that De Meij chose for *Un Momento Dado*.

This *Leitmotiv* comprises the notes C-A-E-F-A: the actual notes that appear in the name CALEFAX. In its pure form this motif is first heard when the reed quintet makes its initial appearance, introduced by the oboe. What follows is a succession of inspiring musical ideas with richly expressive color combinations. In this context, De Meij creates striking moments when he connects one of Calefax's instruments to a group from the wind orchestra; a dreamy passage for saxophonist Raaf Hekkema together with the saxophone section, and oboist Oliver Boekhoorn combined with the wind orchestra's double reed instruments. There is also a moment in which Calefax is responded by the same five wind players in the orchestra, who De Meij jokingly refers to as "Shadowfax". The C-A-E-F-A motif returns in various forms, ultimately even as a quote from Richard Strauss's celebrated *Tijl Uilenspiegel* motif, which it recalls, before sprinting to a triumphant conclusion in a virtuosic cascade of sounds.

For years, Calefax had set itself the goal of making its repertoire available to other reed quintets. Early this century, the group began publishing sheet music of its arrangements in the CALEFAX EDITION. Scores and parts are available in the calefax.nl web shop. In addition, Calefax is extending the repertoire of original works for reed quintet by commissioning works and by organising an annual composers competition. At present there are no less than 40 reed quintets throughout the world, and that number is steadily increasing. Every wind orchestra includes the instrumental line-up for a reed quintet. As such, Calefax hopes to bolster this growth via its new collaboration with wind orchestras, while De Meij is also planning to re-orchestrate *Un Momento Dado* for Reed Quintet and *Symphony Orchestra*.

The première of *Un Momento Dado* took place on January 10th, 2020 in Tilburg, under the direction of the Marine Band's chief conductor Arjan Tien.

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