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Collège Néerlandais, Paris, France

## Rachmaninovs Winged Messengers : a recital by Ella van Poucke, Caspar Vos & Niek Baar

*It is a new experience to be able to descend a flight of stairs at home - coffeecup in hand - and become a part of an intimate audience at an all-Rachmaninov recital of international allure.*

Both Niek Baar and Caspar Vos had given masterclasses at the Collège Néerlandais this luminous Sunday morning, tirelessly passing on their experience to wide-eyed students. Their performance that same night with Ella van Poucke included the lauded *Vocalise* (this time for violin and piano, Opus 34 No. 14), which formed a great contrast to the virtuoso *Hungarian Dance* from his Opus 6: *deux Morceaux de salon*. It was Baar who allowed the violin to speak for itself, eliciting a bel canto, 'chest-voice' timbre from his instruments abdomen that rung vibrantly and deeply. The program was kept in place by two pillars of monumental works, at its start and its finish - Rachmaninovs *Trio élégiaque No. 1* and *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, opus 19 in g minor. In his introduction of the latter, Vos called the work a "cellosonata". He later humbly corrected himself, stating that the piano had indeed a greatly important part to play. And from the first few bars we, the audience, understood why.

Endless streams of notes cascading like coloured waterfalls, not only dyeing every change in harmony a different shade, but also urging on van Poucke in every way possible.

To breathe as one, to lose each other, to find each other again. Not because of a shared sense of aesthetic, but because the Music itself demanded it. For us listeners this included to be taken further and deeper into the narration, swept away by Rachmaninovs never-ending stream of consciousness. A consciousness translated by two people on stage, nearly one century later. The result? A sincerity in their collective music making that spoke to the emotional intelligence of their audience, leaving them with a sense of immense gratefulness.