

The MAfestival: old music with a new twist

The 56th edition of the MAfestival will take place in Bruges from 2 to 11 August. This leading and internationally renowned festival for early music once again presents a daring program and an innovative outlook on tradition.

MAfestival 2019 presents and creates a wide range of activities in the historical setting of Bruges and its surroundings. These activities include a thematic concert series - on the theme of , grounded in a coherent and through-provoking dramaturgy; the prestigious International Competitions Musica Antiqua for young baroque soloists; a series of Fringe concerts for young and promising ensembles; a specialist exhibition of historical instruments; and the musical bikeride VéloBaroque. VéloBaroque combines early music with a bicycle tour through the Bruges Woodland and Wetland. This year the VeloBaroque is heading in the direction of the coast, with start and arrival in Lissewege.

Under the heading Ex machina MAfestival explores the intriguing bond between god, man and machine. By becoming smarter, healthier and older, with help of technology, we resemble the inaccessible gods we have always envied. According to Yuval Noah Harari, author of the recent bestseller Homo Deus, this optimism about progress is leading to the eradication of our own existence. Does the fall come after pride? MAfestival looks for the answers, conducting the audience through music about humanlike gods and godlike humans, the emergence of musical machines and artificial intelligence, which is taking over music, the world and ourselves.

The MAfestival also opens its doors to contemporary dance this year, with a new choreography on live music by Femke Ghyselincx - the long-life artistic assistant of Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker ; and to contemporary art, with spatial projections by video artist Jemma Woolmore, who offers the audience of Minimal boundaries a visual experience.

MAfestival 2019
2 - 11 August 2019
Bruges
www.mafestival.be

Highlights: Innovative, surprising concerts

Minimal boundaries: Monday 5 August

Ensemble La Tempête presents a fusion of Bach and minimalism on period instruments. Combined with the spatial projections of video artist Jemma Woolmore, Bach's driving motifs meet the equally hypnotic works of composers such as Steve Reich and John Adams

Pygmalion double bill: Friday 9 August

With Cupid's assistance, the sculptor Pygmalion brings his beloved creation to life. Apotheosis treat us to two versions of this celebrated story. Jean-Philippe Rameau's familiar one-act opera, Pigmalion, with a new choreography by Femke Gyselinck (the whip hand of Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker), is followed by Georg Benda's little-known gem of the same name: a gripping monodrama for speaking voice and orchestra.

Highlights: masterpieces

Opening concert: King Arthur: Friday 2 August

MAfestival defies Brexit and opens with a citytrip back to 17th century London, where King Arthur, Henry Purcell's most celebrated dramatic opera, was created. In the libretto, rival kings Arthur and Oswald do battle, assisted by assorted magicians and spirits – on land, sea and in the air. Vox Luminis, together with narrator Simon Robson, bring Purcell's magic world to life.

Closing concert: Il Diluvio Universale: Saturday 10 August

In Michelangelo Falvetti's baroque oratorio, Il Diluvio Universale (The Universal Flood), we hear the last cries of mankind as the Flood, at first a trickle and then a torrent, breaks out with chorus and instruments. Leonardo García Alarcón and Cappella Mediterranea revive this unique work, in all its Sicilian passion, after three centuries of silence.

VéloBaroque

VéloBaroque: Sunday 11 August

VéloBaroque combines early music with a bicycle tour through the Bruges Woodland and Wetland. This year we are heading in the direction of the coast, with start and arrival in Lissewege. Be surprised by adventurous concerts at unique locations!

International Competition Musica Antiqua

International Competition Musica Antiqua 2019 — pianoforte: from 1 to 7 August

Since 1964 the Flanders Festival Bruges organizes every year the famous International Competition Musica Antiqua. They are open to young, highly qualified performers from all over the world, who specialize in the historically informed performance practice. The International Competition Musica Antiqua focuses on the pianoforte in 2019. Johan Huys, Bart Van Oort, Keiko Schichijo, Christine Schornsheim, Piet Kuijken and Wolfgang Brunner will be the members of the jury. The first round starts on Thursday August 1st 2019. The final will take place on Wednesday August 7.

Concert of last year's winner: Tuesday 6 August

Following the 2018 International Competition Musica Antiqua, prizewinner Andrea Buccarella returns to MAfestival Brugge. With a mixture of old and new harpsichord music, in this laureate concert Buccarella combines the world premiere of Quatre Otudes pour clavecin à deux claviers by jury chairman Johan Huys with the vivacious sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti.

For more information, interview requests and press tickets, please contact

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