

Japan as primary inspiration source for Maurick Reuser

Tilburg

Conservatory student Maurick Reuser (22) from Tilburg managed to win three prizes for works he composed.

Hoshi no kage ni. This is the name of Maurick Reuser's guitar work which received the third prize in Russia last month. It's Japanese for *In the Shadow of the Stars*. The music is contemplative, often seeks the silence. But also he enables guitarist Ekaterina Uvarova to express the unique sounds of the instrument. Two worlds come together, he says. "The western perception that you have to prescribe what to play, and the eastern perception to appreciate sound as it comes. This attention to the quality of sound is essential in the Japanese music tradition. With a special technique they give the biwa (a Japanese lute, red.) a buzzing timbre, reminiscent of the chirps of crickets. This idea of inclusion, which means that anything can be part of music, appeals to me very much."

Buddhism

Reuser's interest for the country was aroused by a composition of Dmitri Shostakovich based on Japanese poems, written after the Russian found a book with translations. This brought Reuser to the idea to read Japanese poetry himself. He got in touch with a completely different way of thinking and he decided to proceed to deepen his knowledge of Japanese culture. "It's possible to dedicate your entire life to this. I am doing research on Japanese aesthetic principles and in particular the role of Buddhism. They don't think in good or bad, but they give the sound the space to be, to breath. This is in sharp contrast with the rationalisation of music, which is rooted in us westerners firmly. This way of thinking connects well to my approach to music.

"The focus on sound is essential in the Japanese music tradition" ~ Maurick Reuser

That's how he composed the piece for guitar. "I focused on the usual sound of the guitar and the sound which the instrument provides for, but hardly comes out, as well. Like Michelangelo says that a sculpture is already enclosed in the marble. I want to offer this type of space to the performers of the work. A score is a guide which offers ten thousands of possibilities."

According to jury chairman Wim Hendrickx of the Prinses Christina Competition for composition, where Reuser won the third prize with *Memory Lane* last November, he is very versatile. Evidently. Besides other activities he learns Japanese, and at Tilburg university he studies public. In the context of this studie, he intends to go on exchange to Japan this fall, also to study the music there.

René van Peer, 5th of March 2021 in Brabants Dagblad.