

Biography of Wolfert Brederode

'Wolfert Brederode combines an improviser's unpredictability with a concert pianist's virtuosity and precision...the sound flows like water from his grand piano. His attack is so lovely it brings tears to the eye'

- *Het Parool*

Wolfert Brederode's piano playing and compositions are interlaced with subtle contrasts. His elegant melodies are the first thing that catches listeners' attention, brought to life by his precise and delicate touch. Few pianists are so recognizable while continuing to surprise. Brederode achieves that primarily by allowing for space: space for his own ideas, and for those of his fellow musicians; space for each individual note. Those notes form the building blocks of his melodies, which are catchy but never predictable and characterised by delicate shifts. And there is always a penetrating but elusive atmosphere of melancholy, with a restrained but threatening undertone.

Brederode often contrasts the gracefulness of his melodies with short bursts of vitriolic rhythmic variations, and that suffuses his music with energy. A restrained acidity often rings through, and becomes even more menacing by being held in check. It's no wonder Brederode gave one of his albums the title 'Black Ice,' referring to the treacherous gleam that is transparent but dangerously slick. That title also encapsulates the tension, which in Brederode's music remains an essential – albeit underlying – characteristic.

Brederode's music is accessible, yet its depths can never be fully plumbed. There is friction between control and letting go, between composition and improvisation, and between the search for restraint and stillness as apposed to the complex capriciousness of a deeply felt emotion. With Brederode, a single note can become a world in itself. Because that note has been chosen in a thoughtful and well-considered way, but primarily because it reflects Brederode's broad range of interests in theatre, film and literature. His fascination with the past is reflected in Brederode's passion for historically grounded novels by such authors as André Makine and Philippe Claudel. Another writer he admires, especially for his gritty rawness, is Dimitri Verhulst. Brederode is passionate about the Impressionists—both in art and music—including Claude Debussy. That is in line with his tendency to leave things to listeners' imaginations without filling in all the blanks. Additionally, he has an abiding love for Russian composers like Sergei Rachmaninoff and Alexander Scriabin. This devotion was sparked by Brederode's first piano teacher, who didn't assign him the standard practice repertoire. According to Brederode: 'Instead, I played Russian children's songs, remarkably simple, but with beautiful melodies.'

After graduating from The Hague Conservatoire, Brederode attracted international attention with his atmospheric, spatial music. He founded the Nimbus and Batik groups and led a quintet with drummer Eric Ineke. Brederode also formed a successful duo with drummer Joost Lijbaart. In 2007, his album 'Currents' appeared on ECM, a renowned label he is still affiliated with. In 2011, also on ECM, he released 'Posts Scriptum' with his international quartet. That album was followed in 2016 by his trio CD 'Black Ice.' In 2022 Brederode's impressive composition 'Ruins and Remains' will be released, a sensitive interplay recorded with drummer Joost Lijbaart and the Matangi Quartet. 'Ruins and Remains' is a work that perfectly sums up Brederode's style, composed with vision and a sense of atmosphere while also giving the musicians plenty of freedom.

As both a bandleader and a sideman, Brederode plays entirely in the service of the music. Nevertheless, his playing is immediately recognizable because of its focus and subtle intensity. In addition, he always allows for a great deal of contrast, especially in how he elegantly makes a piece's dynamics his own, creating an energetic twist. Brederode also performs with the Swiss singer Susanne Abbuehl and with the Dutch saxophonist Yuri Honing. He has had a longstanding duo with percussionist Joost Lijbaart. In addition, he performs with such renowned international musicians as the singer Jeanne Lee, the percussionist Marilyn Mazur, the violinist Mark Feldman, the reed-players Michel Portal and David Liebman, and the trumpeters Mathias Eick and Arve Henriksen. Brederode has released acclaimed albums with pianist Martin Fondse and saxophonist Kika Sprangers, among others, and his works have twice been awarded an Edison. He regularly receives rave reviews both at home and abroad.