

Love is Louder

Concerto
for
clarinet
perfumer
ventilators
and orchestra

BENJAMIN ATTAHIR

composer

ANNELIEN VAN WAUWE

clarinettist

Erich Berghammer

perfumer

About the clarinet concerto

Love is Louder is a new clarinet concerto by French composer Benjamin Attahir, dedicated to Annelien Van Wauwe. This work invites the audience into a multi-sensory experience where music and scent speak a shared, emotional language.

At the heart of the project is the idea that music and fragrance—both fleeting, both evocative—can deepen one another when experienced together. As the orchestra plays, perfumer Erich Berghammer diffuses real-time scent compositions using natural resins, flowers, and plant essences. These scents drift through the concert space via incense burners and ventilators, creating a unique atmosphere for each movement.

The inspiration began with Van Wauwe’s performances of D’om le vrai sens by Kaija Saariaho, a concerto exploring the five senses. There, she discovered the powerful connection between sound and smell, and envisioned a new work where these elements would intertwine even more closely.

The conceptual structure of the piece is inspired by the symbolism of the rainbow—a natural phenomenon as ancient as the Earth itself, used across cultures to represent hope, divine promise, and transformation.

The rainbow, like love and music, is universal, fluid, and beyond ideology. As artists, it is Attahir’s, Berghammer’s and Van Wauwe’s task to reclaim symbols like these—not to limit them, but to play, explore, and expand their meanings. Each color becomes a symbol and a scent, forming a sensory palette that underpins the musical composition.

Movements & Scents

- Red** – Life, love (rose damascena)
- Orange** – Healing, hope (orange, tangerine)
- Yellow** – Light, future (bergamot, araucaria)
- Green** – Growth, nature (nettle, pine)
- Turquoise** – Art, magic (styrax)
- Indigo** – Clarity, harmony (chamomile, lavender)
- Violet** – Soul, reconciliation (olibanum sacra, myrrh)

Each movement of the concerto is accompanied by carefully designed stage lighting, reflecting the specific color associated with that section of the rainbow. These color washes subtly transform the visual environment onstage, aligning with the music and scent to create a cohesive sensory atmosphere. The shifting light helps guide the audience through the emotional and symbolic arc of the performance.

The title, Love is Louder, taken from a sign seen at an LGBTQ+ rights demonstration, captures the essence of the work: an open, expressive celebration of connection. Love—like music and scent—crosses boundaries, speaks without words, and lingers long after the moment has passed.

By integrating sound and scent in real time, Love is Louder creates a concert experience that is engaging, multisensory, and memorable.

Benjamin Attahir



Durand Salabert Eschig

Annelien Van Wauwe



www.annelienvanwauwe.com

Erich Berghammer



www.odo7.com

SCORING:	LENGTH & STRUCTURE:	TIMELINE:
solo clarinet in B-flat	appr. 30 minutes	Performances from Autumn 2026 onwards
2/2/2/2 - 4/2/(3)/(1) - 1hp - 1 perc - 1 timp - Str	7 movements	Score will be finalised & published in may 2026
2 - 3 XL scent ventilators (integrated in the musical score)	I. Red: Life, Love	Pentatone album (Saariaho & Attahir Concertos)
	II. Orange: Healing, Hope	
	III. Yellow: Light, Future	
	IV. Green: Growth, Nature	
	V. Art, Magic	
	VI. Clarity, Harmony	
	VII. Soul, Reconciliation	

Current commissioning partners:

- Orchestre National d’île de France, conductor Kristian Sallinen
- Schleswig-Holsteinisches Sinfonieorchester, conductor Harish Shankar
- Buffet Crampon Paris
- Festival Vlaanderen Gent (tbc)
- Muziekgebouw Amsterdam (tbc)
- Festival Vlaanderen Kortrijk Wilde Westen (tbc)
- Brussels Philharmonic (tbc)
- Beethovenfest Bonn - Beethovenorchester Bonn (tbc)

Biographies

Benjamin Attahir (born 1989)

Born in Toulouse in 1989, Benjamin Attahir first studied violin before discovering his passion for composition. His teachers include Édith Canat de Chizy, Marc-André Dalbavie, Gérard Pesson and Pierre Boulez.

Benjamin Attahir won numerous competitions and prizes, including the Ernst von Siemens Music Prize, the USA IHC in Bloomington, the UNESCO International Rostrum of Composers, several prizes from SACEM and SACD, and the Académie des Beaux-Arts and he has been nominated for the Victoires de la Musique Classique in 2019, 2021 and 2023.

His works are performed by various ensembles and orchestras (Staatskapelle Berlin, Orchestre National de France, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Orchestre du Capitole de Toulouse, Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, Netherlands Philharmonic, Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne, Ensemble Intercontemporain, Tokyo Sinfonietta, Les Éléments, Musicatreize, la Maîtrise de Radio France, Trio Zadig, Quatuors Arod and Van Kuijk Quartets...).

He has been composer-in-residence at the Orchestre National de Lille, the Gulbenkian in Lisbon and at numerous festivals (Aix en Provence, Gstaad, Les Arcs, Messiaen, Lucerne Festival, etc.).

As a resident at the Villa Médicis (16/17), he discovered the work of the writer and dramatist Lancelot Hamelin, with whom he has been in constant dialogue ever since.

The author of two operas, whose premieres he conducted in 2012 and 2015, the stage is the backbone of his musical work, which, like his origins, draws its inspiration from halfway between East and West.

In 2019, he conducted the Orchestre de La Monnaie de Bruxelles in his third opera 'Le Silence des Ombres' on a libretto by M. Maeterlinck.

He regularly collaborates with artists such as Daniel Barenboim, Renaud Capuçon, Bertrand Chamayou, Emmanuel Pahud, Jean-Guihen Queyras, Marc Coppey, Henri Demarquette, Gérard Caussé, Hae-Sun Kang, Geneviève Laurenceau, Raquel Camarinha, Tugan Sokhiev, Andres Orozco-Estrada, Pascal Rophé, as well as with the Comédie Française and the Liyuan Theatre in Quanzhou (China).

His works are published by Durand Salabert Eschig.

Annelien Van Wauwe

Belgian clarinettist Annelien Van Wauwe is one of the most captivating and original soloists of her generation. She knows how to enchant her audience with her expressive, lyrical and virtuoso performances.

A former BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist, Annelien has won numerous international competitions. Her joint Second Prize award at the ARD International Music Competition in Munich in 2012 was a decisive step towards international recognition. She won a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award in 2018 and an Opus Klassik Award in 2020 with her debut album 'Belle époque' (Pentatone).

Annelien's concerto engagements for the 2025/26 season includes debuts with the Zurich Chamber Orchestra, the Liepāja Symphony Orchestra en Szczecin Philharmonic.

She has performed with many leading orchestras, including the Deutsches Symphonieorchester Berlin, the Konzerthausorchester Berlin, the NDR Radiophilharmonie Hannover, the Symphony Orchestra of the Bayerischer Rundfunk, the Radiosymphonieorchester (SWR) Stuttgart, the Deutsche Radiophilharmonie, the Frankfurter Opern- und Museumsorchester, the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra, OFUNAM Mexico, the Wroclaw Philharmonic Orchestra, the Kyiv Philharmonic Orchestra, the Dresden Philharmonic, the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, the Sichuan Symphony Orchestra, the Mozarteumorchester Salzburg, Brussels Philharmonic, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, the Residentie Orchestra the Hague, Phion Orkest van Gelderland & Overijssel, Philharmonie Zuid-Nederland, the Orchestre de Cannes, the Orchestre National de Lille, the Orchestre de Lorraine, the Munich Chamber Orchestra, the Vienna Chamber Orchestra, Camerata Salzburg, the Swedish Chamber Orchestra, the Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Liverpool and the many BBC Orchestras (BBCSO, BBCNOW, BBCSSO, BBC Philharmonic, BBC Concert Orchestra); with conductors such as Andrew Manze, Martyn Brabbins, Joshua Weilerstein, Jac Van Steen, Michael Schønwandt, Jun Märkl, James MacMillan, Mario Venzago, Darrell Ang, Finnegan Downie Dear, Ryan Bancroft, Rafael Payare, Clemens Schuldt, Markus Stenz, Nuno Coelho, Thomas Dausgaard, Hartmut Haenchen, Otto Tausk, Marta Gardolińska, Anja Bihlmaier, Kristiina Poska, Karina Canellakis, Edo de Waart and Dirk Brossé.

Annelien has appeared regularly at prestigious European venues including the Tonhalle Zurich, the Berliner Philharmonie and Konzerthaus Berlin, the Konzerthaus in Vienna, the Wigmore Hall London, Bozar Brussels, the Philharmonie Luxembourg, the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, the Alte Oper Frankfurt, Amare the Hague, the Doelen Rotterdam, the Muziekgebouw Eindhoven, the Rudolfinum Prague and the Palace of Arts Budapest. She is a regular guest at international music festivals such as the Lucerne Festival, Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, Rheingau Festival, Heidelberger Frühling, Kissinger Sommer, Cheltenham Festival, West Cork Chamber Music Festival and the Festival de Radio France in Montpellier.

In 2017, Annelien made her debut at the BBC Proms at Cadogan Hall and in 2018, BBC television filmed her performance of Mozart's clarinet concerto with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and conductor Thomas Dausgaard at the BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall. In 2023, she played Copland's Concerto there with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales conducted by Ryan Bancroft.

Annelien's infectious passion and interest in new music have inspired several composers to write music for her. In 2017, Manfred Trojahn dedicated his Sonata V to her. Annelien practices yoga intensively, which strongly influences her clarinet playing and eventually led to a composition commission for Wim Henderickx. The new piece SUTRA is based on breathing and meditation. It was co-commissioned by BBC Radio 3 and the Borletti-Buitoni Trust. The concerto was premiered in 2022 with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra conducted by Martyn Brabbins. Future collaborations and premieres of clarinet concertos are planned with Benjamin Attahir (Orchestre National d'Ile de France / Philharmonie de Paris) and Annelies Van Parys.

Annelien Van Wauwe records exclusively for the Pentatone label. Her first album 'Belle époque' with the Orchestre National de Lille conducted by conductor Alexandre Bloch, was released in 2019 and won an Opus Klassik in 2020. Her latest concerto recording 'FLOW' with the NDR Radiophilharmonie under Andrew Manze contains basset clarinet concerti by Mozart and Henderickx and was released in 2022.

An inspired chamber musician, Annelien is founder of the Belgian-based chamber music ensemble CAROUSEL, which came into being in 2019. Highlights of the ensemble include concerts at the Bijloke Ghent, the Singel Antwerp, the Concertgebouw Brugge, the Vereeniging Nijmegen, the Philharmonie de Luxembourg, the Beethovenfest Bonn and the Wigmore Hall London. In 2021, Annelien founded the woodwind quintet BREEZE together with the four woodwind members of CAROUSEL.

Further chamber music partners include Danae Dörken, Lauma Skride, Paloma Kouider, Cédric Tiberghien, Severin von Eckardstein, Vineta Sareika, Alexandra Soumm, Magdalena Hoffmann, Quatuor Danel, Schumann Quartet, Leonkoro Quartet, Quatuor Van Kuijk, Aris Quartet, Zemlinsky Quartet, Trio Karenine and Amatis Trio.

Annelien originally studied with Sabine Meyer in Lübeck, with Pascal Moragues in Paris, with Alessandro Carbonare in Rome and with Wenzel Fuchs and Ralf Forster in Berlin. She has also participated in classes with her mentor Yehuda Gilad in Los Angeles. Annelien has a strong affinity for early music and studied historical clarinet with Eric Hoeprich in Paris and Ernst Schlader in Trossingen.

As a sought-after pedagogue, Annelien regularly gives masterclasses and teaches at the Royal Conservatoire The Hague.

www.annelienvanwauwe.com

Erich Berghammer

In 2002, Amsterdam-based former graphic designer and book illustrator Erich Berghammer coined the term 'aromajockey' to describe the process of translating music, action film themes or products into scent during an event. This involves scenting event halls, clubs, festivals and concert halls live on stage.

Since 2015, Erich Berghammer has also been working as a perfumer, marketing fragrance designer and fragrance product developer.

Erich's aim is to bring his audience closer to their natural ability to perceive scent, without the ideological or religious backgrounds that can sometimes be associated with ambient scent.

During an introductory talk before each concert, the artist will explain his work in detail, focusing on the specific scents he will be using during the performance. Erich recommends that you keep your eyes closed during the concert in order to fully immerse yourself in the experience of hearing and smelling.

Q&A with Erich

Why do you scent events, what is the message you want to convey?

Fragrances have not been allowed on concert, theatre and art stages since 400 AD, when the Roman emperor Augustus banned the use of incense except for religious rituals, in this case the "Roman Catholic Church Ritual".

In 2002 I realised that scent is only used to cover up bad smells, like deodorants or chemical perfumes do. Literally no one on the planet was using scent as a medium to express art. I started to break the ban and began to scent concerts, exhibitions, events, festivals and parties.

Just as sound and sight play a crucial role in art, scent has emerged as a powerful medium. Like sound, scent has its own octave, with certain natural scents even evoking specific effects and emotions. Interestingly, scent is perceived in the same part of the brain as sound, making it an ideal companion to music. Incorporating natural scents into concerts, events, parties and classical performances opens up a new world of possibilities and captivating multi-sensory experiences that combine sight, sound and smell to take audiences on authentic journeys of sensory delight.

How do you perfume concerts?

There are two main types of instruments used for perfumery:

- 1) Perfumed sprays : fragrances composed for specific purposes based on essential oils, absolutes, resins, balsams or essences diluted in a carrier liquid.
- 2) Charcoal: used to heat certain fragrant materials such as woods, resins, leaves, flowers and incense compositions.

Ventilators are used to distribute the scents to the audience.

I only use natural scents made from organic essential oils and wild harvested plant extracts.

What does the audience learn in your introductory talks about live perfuming?

In an introductory talk, I say a few words about the cultural and historical background of scent performances, explain the scents the audience will experience and why I have chosen them, and the connection between the scents I have chosen and the music.

What does an audience learn in your educational workshops?

In an educational workshop for groups of 25 people, I introduce the scent material and its cultural, geographical and historical background, and from there we look at the effects of certain scents. The octave of fragrance is also very important to look at. Finally, I explain how to blend and what to blend and how to use the scents (technically).

What can audiences expect?

At a Scented Classical Concert, audiences can expect an immersive experience like no other. The infusion of authentic and natural scents, carefully curated to complement the music, will heighten emotions and create a deeper connection with the performance. The effects of these scents will take the listener into new realms of sensory pleasure, perceiving the music in a completely different way than without scent. Some audience members may experience synaesthetic effects, as described by the Japanese term "Kodo": "listen to the incense".

Bookings

World, except the territories covered by the following *

Stanisław Suchora (he/him)

Sonora: stanislaw@sonoramusic.eu +48 795 655 826

* Belgium, Netherlands, Luxemburg:

Leontien Vandervliet (she/her)

Interartists Amsterdam: leontien.vandervliet@interartists.nl +31 6 52 46 87 07

* Spain, Portugal, Latin-America:

Andreas Weller (he/him)

Weller Artists: andreas.weller@wellerartists.com +34 722 689 671

* Japan:

Yuichi Murakami (he/him)

Artists & Concert Management Eurassic Tokyo

yuichi.murakami@eurassic.jp

+81 3 3481 8636

+81 90 3129 7431

Editor Benjamin Attahir:

Elsa Vautrain (she/her)

Durand Salabert Eschig Artistic & Promotion manager

elsa.vautrain@umgconsult.com

+33 6 72 18 56 86

Questions related to bookings: stanislaw@sonoramusic.eu

For More Information

For inquiries and clarification, please reach out to annelien@annelienvanwauwe.com

WEBSITE:	PHONE:	SOCIALS:
www.annelienvanwauwe.com	+32 484 34 81 62	insta @annelienvanwauwe fb @vanwauweannelien
