

B'Rock Orchestra has the Baroque era at heart. Our intuitive, passionate, and connective touch has established us as one of today's most successful and forward-thinking period orchestras. With an eye on the world around us and a desire for encounter and exchange, we feel inspired by collaborating with visionary artists. These frontrunners in the world of music, theatre, dance and the visual arts make up our Artistic Family. Together, we research, associate, and create captivating experiences for the ears of a broad audience.

We advance a dialogue with the connoisseur, the curious, and everyone in between. On period instruments, we explore five centuries of music in opera, oratorio and instrumental music. Presenting an excellent performance of a Baroque masterpiece is as important to us as a world première of contemporary music. Our B'Rock Vocal Consort gives us the freedom to expand our repertoire with like-minded singers.

As we resonate with the world around us, we feel a responsibility to be an organic part of society and contribute to a consequential discussion. Within our artistic concepts, we address relevant topics such as the relationship of humanity and nature, colonialism and exploitation, and the role of women in art throughout the centuries.

The desire to deepen the connection with our audiences, and with artists of the future, is the driving force behind B'Rock Encounters. Under this umbrella, we create space for participative adventures and the sharing of experience, insight, and knowledge on and off the stage.

With strong Flemish roots and Ghent as our home base, B'Rock Orchestra is active throughout the world. We enjoy long-term links with production and presentation partners such as DE SINGEL International Arts Centre (Antwerp, BE), Muziektheater Transparant (Antwerpen, BE), KASK & Conservatorium Ghent (BE), International Opera Academy (Ghent, BE), and Opéra de Rouen (FR). We are regular guests at Concertgebouw Brugge (BE), Muziekcentrum De Bijloke (Ghent, BE), Bozar (Brussels, BE), Concertgebouw and Muziekgebouw Amsterdam (NL), Amare Den Haag (NL), Kölner Philharmonie (DE), Beethovenfest Bonn (DE), Opéra Grand Avignon (FR), and many more.

Recent highlights include a 6-city European tour with Carmen (version 1874), led by René Jacobs together with the Choeur de Chambre de Namur and the children's choir of Opera Ballet Vlaanderen; a collaboration with Rotterdam circus company Tall Tales and guitarist-composer Kalle Kalima for a dynamic adaptation of Bach's Johannes-Passion titled In Your Hands; the Listeners Academy at Musikfest Berlin in which Alexander Melnikov discussed and then played Beethoven's First Pianoconcerto; and the first of a series of tours with soprano Jeanine De Bique.

B'Rock Orchestra is generously supported by the players of the Belgian National Lottery, and receives subsidies from the Government of Flanders and the City of Ghent.



## Short biography

Founded in 2005 in Ghent, Belgium, B'Rock Orchestra has kept its founders' passion for Baroque music and a commitment to pushing the boundaries of traditional performance practices. The ensemble's name reflects its intent to bring a fresh, energetic approach to the interpretation of early music, with a contemporary edge. Prominent musicians, but also visual artists and thinkers make up its Artistic Family.

From its inception, B'Rock Orchestra was guided by a mission to explore the full expressive potential of period instruments, while engaging with a wide range of musical styles and eras. This innovative approach has earned the ensemble a reputation for its bold programming and inventive performances.

B'Rock Orchestra's repertoire spans five centuries, ranging from the masterpieces of the Baroque period to contemporary works. With the Vocal Consort, B'Rock has expanded its repertoire working with like-minded singers.

B'Rock Orchestra also engages with contemporary societal issues through its artistic concepts and educational initiatives like B'Rock Encounters, which deepen connections with audiences and nurture future talent.

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After productions for Klara, BR Klassik, and Archiv, B'Rock Orchestra now records for Pentatone. Recent releases include *Handel Water & Fire*, the requiems by Philippus van Steelant, as well as Schubert's complete symphonies led by René Jacobs.

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## Discography



### **Handel – Water & Fire**

B'Rock Orchestra & Dmitry Sinkovsky

Handel's royal extravaganzas with XL forces

G.F. Handel: Water Music suites 1-3

G.F. Handel: Music for the Royal Fireworks

July 2023



### **Schubert – Unfinished & Great Symphonies**

B'Rock Orchestra & René Jacobs

F. Schubert: Symphony no.9 in C-Major

F. Schubert: Symphony no.8 in B-flat-Major

December 2022 (from November 2024 in a new boxset with all of Schubert's symphonies)



### **Antwerp Requiem ca. 1650**

CantoLX, B'Rock Orchestra & Frank Agsteribbe

Groundbreaking masses by Philippus van Steelant

P. van Steelant: Missa pro defunctis (1650)

P. van Steelant: Missa pro defunctis (1656)

July 2022

### **Schubert – Symphonies 4 & 5**

B'Rock Orchestra & René Jacobs

August 2021

### **Schubert – Symphonies 2 & 3**

B'Rock Orchestra & René Jacobs

November 2020

### **Schubert – Symphonies 1 & 6**

B'Rock Orchestra & René Jacobs

October 2018

### **Handel – Orlando**

B'Rock Orchestra o.l.v. René Jacobs

January 2014

### **Handel – Der Messias**

B'Rock Orchestra & Chor des

Bayerischen Rundfunks

& Peter Dijkstra

November 2015

### **Vivaldi | Cage – 8 Seasons**

B'Rock Orchestra & Rodolfo Richter

September 2011

### **Petersen – Speelstukken**

B'Rock Orchestra

January 2010

### **Handel – Concerti Grossi, Overtures**

B'Rock Orchestra

September 2009

### **Telemann – Suites for Strings**

B'Rock Orchestra

January 2008

## Press quotes

### **Carmen / René Jacobs – March 2024**

“A sensational version [...] adieu tiresome bombast, welcome clever nimbleness. [...] Fortunately, there was B’Rock in top form and a phenomenal cast in which there was not one weak link.” — [De Standaard \(Antwerp\)](#)

““The overture was a moment of grace. Momentum, colour, transparency of the voices, theatrical intensity in gentle nuances, clarity in the leitmotifs, everything came together to make theatre.” — [La Libre \(Antwerp\)](#)

“The result [...] is convincing all along the line: B’Rock plays agilely and transparently on historical instruments with gut strings and the characteristically softer-sounding winds, the Choeur de Chambre de Namur and the children’s choir of Opera Ballet Vlaanderen sing slenderly and powerfully, the cast is first-class.” — [Rondo Magazin \(Antwerp\)](#)

“This Carmen gives the impression of rediscovering its opéra comique colours. [...] B’Rock Orchestra, playing on historic instruments, reveals the typically French freshness and clarity of Bizet’s brilliant score, making it a pleasure to savour or rediscover.” — [Diapason \(Paris\)](#)

“The orchestra asserts itself in the overture, revealing expert instrumentalists joining in a precise ensemble sound. The ensemble sound [of the Choeur de Chambre de Namur] rises powerfully with a remarkable homogeneity.” — [Olyrix \(Paris\)](#)

“The Belgian ensemble, who will celebrate their 20th birthday next season, seduces with a theatrical streak, pleasing timbres of their historic instruments, and an ideal flexibility in accompanying the singers.” — [Bachtrack \(Paris\)](#)

“Jacobs’s line-up of performers is, honestly, formidable across the board. [...] Stormy applause after a net duration of a good 3 hours – and rightly so!” — [Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger \(Cologne\)](#)

“Everything lead to the necessary, positive side effect of detoxification – with B’Rock’s line-up – instead of the exaggerated sound and stylistic pathos [...] of a “regular” Carmen. Not to mention the now extraordinarily improved intelligibility in Jacobs’ choice, also in the balance in tutto.” — [Bachtrack \(Dortmund\)](#)

“As is Jacobs’ iron rule, the entire ensemble of native-speaking singers was hand-picked and perfectly suited to the historical requirements. It is sensational how well the ‘Ur-Carmen’ does when the orchestral sound is skilfully purified.” — [Hamburger Abendblatt](#)

“The Belgian B’Rock Orchestra, under the attentive baton of Jacobs, gave an impeccable performance, full of nuances, and the Chœur de Chambre de Namur, always enthusiastic, as well as the ORCAM’s Pequeños Cantores deserve a special mention.” — [Ópera Actual](#)

**In Your Hands / Tall Tales Company – June 2024**

*"In Your Hands* is just so improbably beautiful that it constantly makes you hold your breath. [...] To celebrate 300 years of [Bach's] St. John Passion, Finnish jazz guitarist Kalle Kalima created this shortened chamber version, featuring a vintage synthesizer that surprisingly fits well alongside the baroque instruments of B'Rock Orchestra. Kalima only lets his electric guitar wail briefly during the final chorus. You can hear how respectfully he treats Bach, particularly when he occasionally plays the Evangelist's vocal line while the singers speak the text." – De Volkskrant

**A Solid Dose of Flair / Avi Avital – May 2024**

"And indeed, as the missing 'a' suggests, B'Rock Orchestra vigorously goes against the grain of these 300-year-old works by Antonio Vivaldi, Francesco Durante, Emanuele Barbella, and Pietro Antonio Locatelli. It's as if baroque effects, classical breadth, and romantic expression—despite their different temporal origins—are being fused into a new connection. [...] In the Schwetzingen Mozart Hall, the lively and expressive playing of this Belgian instrumental ensemble is met with receptive ears, sparking almost stormy enthusiasm." – Mannheimer Morgen

**Listeners Academy / Alexander Melnikov – September 2023**

"Melnikov had an almost instinctive understanding with his concertmaster Afanasy Chupin; the orchestral sound was a marvel of transparency, vibrant and incredibly expressive playing. The dialogues in the second movement were captivating, and the exhilarating drive in the third movement was breathtaking." – General-Anzeiger Bonn

**The Travels of Monteverdi – June 2023**

"Meeting Monteverdi at this high level erases the four hundred years that separate him from us. Just like Shakespeare - at once uniquely contemporary and modern." – Dagens Nyheter

**Double Debut / Vilde Frang & Maxim Emelyanychev – April 2023**

"A tornado swept through the auditorium of the Neue Universität [Heidelberg] on Saturday evening, clearing away all the dust, dirt, and baggage that had settled not only there, but also like mildew on a musical genre called classical music. [...] Not only Schnittke grooves like a well-oiled twelve-cylinder engine. The agogic is sharp, the rhythm is pointed, and the dynamics resemble a high mountain landscape with deep valleys and snow-capped peaks." – Mannheimer Morgen