



IG HENNEMAN 65



Egmond aan Zee, summer 1958

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IG HENNEMAN: PERFORMING COLOUR

by Mischa Andriessen

1 'During a F.C. Gerania gig, I came up with the idea of improvising on one long note in the intro, but in no time the drummer joined in.'

The career of viola player, composer and bandleader Ig Henneman is a never-ending succession of logical conclusions, steps that on the face of it seem quite illogical. After training at conservatory, she shifted away from classical music to play viola and keyboards in the pop band F.C. Gerania. During the eight years that this group was together, from 1976 to 1984, she increasingly felt the need for a less restrictive musical straitjacket. In 1985, the 40-year-old Henneman took the bold step of embarking upon a new career as a bandleader and composer. Over the following 25 years, experience taught her how much control is required in order to be free.

Henneman spent the first few years of her new career working on the formation of the Ig Henneman Quintet, which was a fluid line-up, with herself and bass player Wilbert de Joodé as the only constant. The quintet started out as an ensemble of viola, double bass, drums, guitar and trumpet, but five years later, when *in Grassetto* – Henneman's CD debut as bandleader – was recorded, the line-up had become viola, double bass, drums, bass clarinet and alto saxophone. Replacing a guitarist with a bass clarinetist is a surprising move, but although that decision was to a large extent reached intuitively, as is often the case with Henneman, it was a well-considered decision that ties in closely with what seems to be essential to Henneman's career: finding an appropriate musical idiom. With Henneman 'appropriate' automatically means 'personal'.

Ig Henneman Quintet – in Grassetto

Ig Henneman – viola, Hein Pijnenburg – bass clarinet, Bart van der Putten – alto saxophone, Wilbert de Joodé – double bass, Fred van Duynhoven – drums / / recorded in May 1990

The majority of musicians in Henneman's quintet are primarily active in jazz and improvised music, but even though *in Grassetto* is Henneman's jazziest album its overwrought, dissonant tones make it clear that Henneman's musical outlook and tastes are very broad in scope and that she certainly does not allow herself to be hemmed in by a single genre. The opening track is 'Brug (voor Nedly) – Bridge (for Nedly) – a title that is short and to the point in typical Henneman style. The Nedly to whom the composition is dedicated is of course Nedly Elstak. Henneman followed improvisation workshops with this celebrated composer, bandleader and trumpeter, and she played in several of his bands. Elstak died on 5 August 1989, less than a year before *in Grassetto* was recorded. Those workshops were a first step on the road to a flexible conception of music, but it is the word 'bridge' that is so telling. From the very first track of *in Grassetto*, what one can perceive taking shape is without doubt a highly idiosyncratic amalgam of musical styles. Henneman is building bridges between improvised and classical music, between pop and jazz, between early music and contemporary classical. In itself that is not so remarkable; it is the fluidity of the process that is striking. In the title track, for example, a simple, classical-sounding theme shifts perfectly naturally into a rock riff. Within Henneman's oeuvre, *in Grassetto* is in any case the album in which the rhythm section is most prominent, sometimes spilling over into unabashed groove, while on later albums such rhythmical emphases are more often intimated than actually enunciated. The daring modulations and



[2] FC Gerania 1981: Carolien Schönfeld, Cora Hollme, Ig, Ansje Rietbergen, Regina Gorter



[3] Ig Henneman Quintet 1985: Regina Gorter, Ad Grüter, Wilbert de Jode, Ig, Theo Bodewes

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an angular directness are aspects that foreshadow Henneman's later work, betraying her love of the headstrong punk rock of, for example, Ian Dury. Strong, intentionally unpredictable rhythms combined with the guttural tones of the bass clarinet form a stark contrast with thinner upper registers, that of the viola in particular. Set down on disc 20 years ago, *in Grassetto* is still a convincing and successful early sampling of a highly personal sound. Here Henneman's wide-ranging musical preferences are still largely organised into a linear succession, like a patchwork; later on they will coalesce to a greater degree.

2 'For a long time I was unhappy in the world of music.'

At conservatory, in classical ensembles and with F.C. Gerania, but likewise within her own bands, Henneman has been searching for a means to give her taste and her musical ideas the best fitting colour and form. In the case of the tentet, with which she recorded the albums *Dickinson*, *Repeat that, repeat* and *Indigo*, that was essentially a quest to find the appropriate timbre, a combination of assembling the right set of instruments and the right musicians, who had to be able to improvise as well as properly execute the passages composed by her. Henneman opted to use poetry as the binding element for all three tentet albums. For the first she drew inspiration from poems by Emily Dickinson, for the second she took poetry in many different languages about birds, and for *Indigo* she used poems by Dutch female authors from various eras, from the early 20th-century socialist Henriëtte Roland Holst (1869-1952) to Albertina Soepboer (b. 1969).



[4] Ig Henneman Tentet: Wolter Wierbos, Mariëtte Roupe van der Voort, Michiel Scheen, Jannie Pranger, Kat Ex, Ig, Wilbert de Joode, Mary Oliver, Felicity Provan, Vera Vingerhoeds / Grand Theatre Groningen, January 9 1993

By the time of her third CD, *Repeat that, repeat*, the second album with her tentet, Henneman was evidently in full command of the instrumentation: three clarinets (bass included) instead of saxophones, and trumpet and cello instead of trombone. The piano has also disappeared from the ensemble and there is a more prominent place for the flute. As usual, the compositions were gradually fleshed out and fine-tuned by the musicians during a tour. *Repeat that, repeat* was recorded at the end of a series of concerts entitled 'De Nachtegaal tijdens de slaap' – The Nightingale while sleeping. The typical jazz idiom had to a large extent disappeared from Henneman's musical language by then, but her compositions were tailored to the individual musicians, just like Duke Ellington's bespoke compositions. Wearing the caps of composer and bandleader, she has endeavoured to take full advantage of her familiarity with their tone and their specific musical qualities in these compositions. The personal input of the musicians is always substantial and essential to this music's success. The musicians who work with Henneman must be self-reliant and one quality that they cannot be lacking is the ability to perform colour.

Ig Henneman Tentet – *Repeat that, repeat*

Ilse van de Kasteelen – voice, Michael Moore – clarinet/bass clarinet, Ab Baars – clarinet, Hein Pijnenburg – bass clarinet, Mariëtte Roupe van der Voort – flutes, Mary Oliver – violin/viola, Ig Henneman – viola, Tristan Honsinger – cello, Wilbert de Joode – double bass, Fred van Duynhoven – drums / / recorded in May 1995

Eleven compositions based on as many poems about birds – about a swan, a nightingale, an ibis, swifts,

seagulls and other species. Probably drawing on the time she had spent working as a composer for film and theatre, Henneman manages to avoid the pitfall of literal illustration. These are no obligatory imitations of birdsong, but 11 salient characteristics of profoundly different animals. For example, in the setting of Primo Levi's 'Il Canto del Corvo' the crow sounds menacing thanks to the intrusive beat of the march. The swifts, by contrast, sound playful and brazen, yet in the musical expression of Guido Gezelle's poem lurks a certain melancholy: these graceful birds are as vulnerable as any living creature. The final track on *Repeat that, repeat* is 'The saddest noise, the sweetest noise', after the poem by Emily Dickinson. This composition appears on the *Dickinson* album, but the setting of this version is totally different. If you listen to them in succession, then you can hear how much headway Henneman made in a short space of time. The duet between double bass and saxophone on *Dickinson* sounds wholly improvised, and however empathetic the playing might be the composition loses something of the pervading mood of wistfulness that is generated by the slow, compelling rhythm. The duet in the second version, this time between double bass and bass flute, is more regimented and in the improvisation the structural line remains intact, so the composition as a whole resonates more clearly. The courageously borne sorrow of Emily Dickinson's poem is now expressed more urgently by the music. In *Repeat that, repeat*, Henneman brings together antipoles with much greater clarity than on the album in *Grassetto*: vitality and repose, playfulness and restraint, tension and relaxation, control and exaltation, composition and improvisation.

3 'The most wonderful thing about improvisation is the dawning of the feeling that a direction is emerging.'



Henneman's oeuvre can be divided into three categories. There are compositions that are fully notated, written on commission for ensembles and/or soloists, there are wholly improvised pieces such as her work with Ab Baars and Misha Mengelberg, and lastly there is a great deal of her work that is a hybrid of composition and improvisation, in which written material serves as the basis for improvisation. For Henneman improvisation and composition have always been strong, mutual influences. The fully notated compositions have become increasingly similar to the improvised work, even in terms of texture, while initially these were two different domains for her.

Having operated for many years within the rigid strictures of pop music when playing with F.C. Gerania, Henneman felt a growing urge to be free, to be able to do what she felt. However, at that time free improvisation did not necessarily produce what she had hoped for. Her 25 years as a bandleader have to a large extent been a lesson in the balancing act of guidance and letting go. Henneman gradually assimilated the widely divergent influences, from punk singer Ian Dury to the Renaissance composer Francesco Landini, from the occasionally well-nigh kitschy music of Mink de Ville to the uncompromising oeuvre of Galina Ustvolskaya. Over the years Henneman has devised a means of embodying her highly developed and nonconformist musical tastes with greater ease and ever more convincingly. This is often reliant on finding the right timbre and creating an open structure for the music, a form that allows timbres and the full range of dynamics to best come into their own.

Realising this has often proven to be difficult, because there are marked differences between classical and improvisational idioms. In the first place it is difficult to commit 'what exists as an abstraction in your mind' to manuscript paper, and you then have to explain it to those who will be interpreting it. 'Make sure that he or she understand the notes, for only then does the music truly exist,' says Henneman. 'It's easier to convey that if I'm there in person.'

That sometimes requires some effort with the fully notated works, while for the compositions that are moulded through improvisation the difficulty is preventing the compositional line becoming obscured in the free improvisation. With totally free improvisation the crucial component is the intelligent handling of the freedom and of the harmonic material that is created on the spot.

The divergent worlds of improvisation and composition converge most explicitly in the Henneman String Quartet, with whom she assembles a programme with compositions, sometimes based on work by other composers such as Franz Schubert and Francesco Landini, that are elaborated through improvisation. The programme also includes two compositions that are fully notated: 'Tratti per Arpa' and 'Righe per Corde'. These pieces fit seamlessly into the programme that is to a large extent improvised. The fully notated material breathes the same freedom, while the partly improvised pieces follow the thrust of the compositional line and never derail into mere infill or frippery.

Henneman String Quartet and Godelieve Schrama – *Strepen*

Ig Henneman – viola, Oene van Geel – violin/viola, Alex Waterman – cello, Wilbert de Joode – double bass, Godelieve Schrama – harp // recorded in November 2003

On *Strepen* – Stripes – one can clearly hear how Henneman brings together the different



disciplines. The unusual make-up of this string quartet aside, the composed passages retain a marked looseness, which immediately lends the music a totally different feel. While the composed sections are more playful than one might expect, a strict restraint can be heard in the improvisations. This is not the kind of dogmatism into which some 'Free Jazz' has degenerated, nor does it leave the listener with the sense that the musicians are doing whatever they want. The music is bristling with ideas but maintains a clear direction; the abandon is somehow kept in check. A fine example is 'Verdrongen Meisje' – 'Drowned Girl' – a composition that is distantly related to Schubert's famous string quartet, *Der Tod und das Mädchen*. After the first solo, the ensemble takes up a mournful but melodious theme that is twice interrupted by the same dissonant intrusion: the beauty of the maiden versus the pervasiveness of death. Those two bowed notes dismantle the melody completely.

Henneman's skill in bringing together the different idioms of classical and improvised music is also evident in the two works that she wrote for 'improvising string quartet and harp'. The classical harpist Godelieve Schrama collaborates in exemplary fashion with the string quartet of musicians from the realms of jazz and improvised music. These are striking illustrations of Henneman's long-cherished vision: merging diverse playing styles and modes of musical thinking to elicit the creation of a new kind of music.

4 'I was so tired that I thought it would be delightful to join in somewhere.'

A drawback of Ig Henneman serving as a bandleader and running her own CD label was that it left little time or space for the musician in her. The constant organisation of performances and recording sessions, producing, delivering new

[6] Henneman String Quartet 1993: Tristan Honsinger, Ig, Wilbert de Joode, Mary

[7] Henneman String Quartet 2002: Dene van Geel, Alex Waterman, Ig, Wilbert

[8] Queen Mab Trio: Marilyn Lerner, Lori Freedman, Ig / Bimhuis, February 20

compositions on time – in short the whole rigmarole of being a fixer and manager which means that time for personal practice often goes by the board, as can staking a claim to a space to perform solo on a stage that is already pretty limited, especially in a tent. All this meant that at a given moment Henneman was keen to see the back of the managerial aspects and responsibilities. It was then that she was presented with the opportunity to tour across Canada with clarinetist Lori Freedman and pianist Marilyn Lerner, the Canadians who form the Queen Mab duo. As part of a group rather than its figurehead, Henneman rediscovered the fun in playing and her love for the viola, thus learning to allow more freedom into the music as well, especially in her own playing.

After this Canadian tour, Henneman became a fully fledged member of what then became the Queen Mab Trio. The unusual ensemble of clarinet / bass clarinet, viola and piano gives the musicians huge leeway and opportunities, but it simultaneously places a great responsibility on their shoulders: the balance in this ensemble sits on a knife edge and there is no rhythm section, no groove to lean on, as it were. If one of the three musicians contributes too little, then the result is automatically bare, but in Freedman and Lerner Henneman has found two associates who also dare to improvise without using the idiom as a life raft that you can jump on to beat a retreat to *terra firma*. With the same rigour that they would impose on themselves when composing, they force themselves to tell their story effectively and diligently, even in the free passages. Just like Henneman, Freedman and Lerner push the envelope of their instruments' capabilities and are fond of a transparent frugality. The music is measured, but miserly it is not. The self-imposed strictness does not result in sterile music; the musicians give what they themselves would wish to receive.

Queen Mab Trio – *Galina U*

Marilyn Lerner – piano, Lori Freedman – bass clarinet/clarinet, Ig Henneman – viola

recorded in November 2002 and October 2005, includes a previously unreleased recording from May 2006

Galina U has been compiled from compositions that Henneman contributed to the Queen Mab Trio albums, *See Saw* and *Thin Air*, along with 'Overtoom', from a previously unreleased recording session. For *See Saw* Henneman contributed three tracks: 'Marilyn L', 'Lori F' and 'Galina U'. The latter is an evocative ode to the Russian composer Galina Ustvolskaya, in which Henneman endeavours to mirror Ustvolskaya's idiom with ominous, compelling rhythms and piano chords hammered out with full force, and she succeeds in coming unmistakably close while fortunately retaining her own vocabulary. It is a rough-hewn and intractable work that is harrowingly uncomfortable. It is as if Henneman were holding up Ustvolskaya's inexorability as an example and after all these years is at last obeying her own will unreservedly. Henneman is more clearly present as a musician in this trio than in her own ensembles. The compositions are also more lucid because they are pared down even more, are better able to accommodate emptiness and silence, thus setting off the contrasts even more keenly. All three musicians share equal responsibility for the music, which might explain why Henneman grows into a role as commentator here, someone who complements the conversations with measured interventions and manages to shift the modality. The viola sometimes merges seamlessly into the unruly sound of clarinet and piano; at other times it stands out clearly. Henneman often deploys the viola percussively and she dares to bring out what has been described as 'beautiful, but not in any conventional sense' – her signature sound on the viola – with vivacious, unorthodox techniques.



5 'What I want to hear has become increasingly clear in my mind.'

After the successful collaboration with Lerner and Freedman, Henneman did not return to her Tentet and String Quartet. Besides the composition assignments that she continues to receive and fulfil, she has increasingly devoted herself to free improvisation. Improvisation is an ideal opportunity to explore an instrument's possibilities and to discover the still unknown colours it can produce. 'Instant composing' is a form of logical thinking that can preserve improvisation from its greatest enemy: being overly free. Such freedom cannot be gratuitous; it is a proffered opportunity that must be handled with care. For Henneman improvisation is an essential step on the path to the transparency and purity that she wishes to attain in her music. She no longer needs music to be technically perfect, as in her classical days, but it is important that the improvisation is executed with concentrated intent and conviction – that is true freedom. Henneman and her improvisation partners cannot allow themselves to lapse into gimmickry or simply filling in temporal space for the sake of it, but must truly exploit it, use it like a precious jewel. 'Instant composing' is the term that Henneman uses for this *modus operandi*, indicating that for her it is certainly not about the process alone; the ultimate objective is a composition that meets the same quality standards as music that is fully notated. Improvisation is just a different way of getting there.

Duo Baars-Henneman – *Stof*

Ab Baars – tenor saxophone/clarinet/shakuhachi/noh-kan,
Ig Henneman – viola // recorded in July 2006

The CD title *Stof*, which means 'material', also in the sense of textiles, as well as 'dust', is as telling as 'Brug' – Bridge – the name of the composition that opened Henneman's debut album. This material represents the transience of improvisation, its ephemerality, as well as what Henneman is searching for most, besides colour, in her music: texture. The duets with Ab Baars, who has been Henneman's partner in improvisation and in life for many years, do ample justice to the word's two-fold meaning. The music is often rarefied and brittle, so distinctly stripped back to the essence of air and friction but also materialised. The pieces have not been left as invasive flashes, nor are they a succession of unrelated ideas; they are recognisable attempts to construct something from nothing or almost nothing, to create on the spot, as well as to understand, support and where necessary contradict one's fellow performer in that creative process. What resonates is two voices that belong together without being completely

[9] Ig, Ab Baars / De Prinsenhof, Delft, November 2 2009

[10] Ig, Ab Baars / Concertgebouw Koorzaal, Amsterdam, August 29 2010

subsumed by the other; they literally play with one another. These pieces sometimes possess a wittier lightness than Henneman's previous albums. However, it also includes more emotionally intense tracks such as 'Stof – To Eiske', in which the tension is ratcheted up across a timespan of more than 10 minutes. This piece returns inexorably and unremittingly to the beginning of the tale. As Samuel Beckett put it, 'Try again, fail better.' This is utter vulnerability, devoid of false sentiment. It seems as if Henneman's fingers become entangled during an ever-accelerating solo and then re-muster themselves, receiving assistance from the clarinet, which starts to take up the theme softly and warmly. Then the music slowly dies away, the notes becoming sparser, the tone thinner, raspier and shriller, until silence falls.

[11] With Pils / Prinsengracht, Amsterdam, 1985



IG HENNEMAN AND HER CHOICES

an interview with Ig Henneman by Anne La Berge

Composer/performer Ig Henneman celebrates her twenty-fifth anniversary as a composer/bandleader and her sixty-fifth birthday this year. As part of the celebration, she will be touring with her new international Ig Henneman Sextet. The compositions and improvisations in the sextet concert program include homages to some of her artistic soul-mates including Thelonious Monk, Emily Dickinson, Jimmy Giuffrè, Ian Dury, Galina Ustvolskaya, Misha Mengelberg, Morton Feldman and Francesco Landini.

This anniversary tour is a celebration of the pivotal moments in Ig Henneman's career as composer/violist/bandleader in both the modern classical music and improvisation worlds and includes a select group of musicians that Ig regards as musical kindred spirits.

In her own words, Ig sees this project as another step forward. 'I have worked for years with the Henneman String Quartet and I feel like it's time for a new band. This anniversary is a good reason to form a new group. Through the years, I have met many musicians but few kindred spirits. The new Ig Henneman Sextet consists of kindred spirits that I have built a history with and one newcomer. They are Ab Baars on saxophone, clarinet and shakuhachi, my partner in life and work; Wilbert de Joode on bass, my soulmate in all the years I've spent as a band leader; the Queen Mab Trio, Lori Freedman on bass clarinet and Marilyn Lerner on piano, from Canada, with whom I've played many beautiful concerts in the last eight years; and as 'newcomer,' the Berlin trumpeter Axel Dörner. I have also known him for years and see this as the right time to invite him into the sextet. We start rehearsing three days before the first concert. Because it's an international group, there's not enough funding to support a whole week of rehearsals. I prefer to rehearse very fast when preparing for improvised-music concerts anyway.'

A: First off, would you give us a short description of your upcoming Kindred Spirits project? Why did you develop the program the way you did and why did you ask these specific players to join you?

I: The first reason was that I will be celebrating my sixty-fifth birthday. It's a silly reason because nobody is interested in my birthday but I wanted to show my friends and family what I am doing because I am proud of it. And then I realized that in 1985 I began my career as a composer/bandleader when I started my first band, the Ig Henneman Quintet. That was twenty-five years ago and those twenty-five years are worth celebrating.

A: And the rock band FC Gerania?

I: That was nobody's and everybody's band. I was not the leader.

So twenty-five years from when I started leading my own bands was a better reason to have a celebration. It was in 1985 when I really decided that I had my own taste. It's a small word, but taste is so important to have to know what you really want to do. In 1984, the rock band fell apart and I wanted to improvise more. I started collecting material and listening to New York improvisers. I gathered many things around me and decided that it was time to have my own band, be the boss and develop my own ideas. In general, I think that a band with a leader always works the best. There was a huge period in the 60's where people denied leadership and believed in the collective. In my opinion that is a total misunderstanding of how things work and a waste of time. So I decided instead that I wanted to have my own band. First I started collecting material and, at the same time, I listened to a lot of musicians to find musicians that I wanted to have in my band. I asked the



[12] FC Gerania: Vera Vingerhoeds, Jantien Keunen, Stan Wijnans, Ansje Rietbergen, Regina Gorter, Ig / Prinsengracht, Amsterdam, 1982



[13] FC Gerania: Ansje Rietbergen, Regina Gorter, Cora Hollema, Carolien Schönfeld, Ig / Waarheidsfestival Beatrixpark, Amsterdam, October 1980

guitar player, Regina Gorter, who I already knew from FC Gerania. I wanted a bass player and discovered Wilbert de Jooode, who had impressive energy and dedication. He had been playing electric bass and was just starting to play the double bass. He wasn't even using his bow when we first started working together.

So the quintet became Regina Gorter on guitar, Wilbert de Jooode on bass, Theo Bodewes on drums and Eric Boeren on trumpet. I worked with the quintet from 1986 to 1993. There were different formations during those years and Wilbert was the only consistent member throughout. We made the CD 'in Grassetto' that was released in 1991.

A: So you began collecting kindred spirits with your first quintet in 1985.

I: Yes. Now after those twenty-five years I want to start a new band and I wanted to give it something that reaches out to people. Offer a view on myself. That's why I've given this project the name Kindred Spirits.

[14] Ig Henneman Quintet: Wilbert de Jooode, Ig, Theo Bodewes, Regina Gorter, Eric Boeren / Bimhuis, Amsterdam, March 21 1986



[15] Ig Henneman Quintet: Wilbert de Jooode, Ig, Bart van der Putten, Fred van Duynhoven, Hein Pijnenburg / Heerewarden, 1990



The people that I choose to play with have been my inspiration and some of the most important people to me in all those years. The list includes performers, composers, writers and poets.

A: Let's backtrack a bit. You spoke about Queen Mab. Why did you go so far away to unite with these players in 2002?

I: I was very tired at the turn of the century. I was fifty-five at that time. I had worked so hard. Made a lot of CDs for my own Wig label, composed a lot, had different bands and different projects, and I had to keep the Wig Foundation up and running. I felt like I needed to get away from my life here. Maybe that was one of the reasons. Lori and I always kept in touch after she played on *Indigo* one of my Tentet records and she sent me the Queen Mab duo CD *Close* that had all different guests. I loved that CD so much that I just called her and told her that if they ever wanted me as a guest I'll be there.

During our first (Queen Mab duo plus me as guest) tour we were traveling back from Banff to Calgary by car and I said, 'I think this is the Queen Mab Trio now.' They agreed. We were simply three independent musicians that wanted to play together. It was not my band. Lori and Marilyn were at the point as free improvisers where they wanted to explore more and move on to a new phase. I brought in more compositional material. It was good for them at that time to work with me and it was good for me to play with them because there was plenty of room for me as an improviser. We all three kept adding more and more material.

I: Were you looking in other directions for something to feed you as an artist then?

I: Yeah, I wanted to play more and have less responsibility. Until then, I had always been the band leader, nearly always the only woman, and all the stuff that comes with that. I felt like the whole Dutch system was wearing me down. People think that we are spoiled here in the Netherlands. Of course we are spoiled because we have the system that supports the arts and our activities, but it's not like we can simply



hold our hand out and get money for our projects. I had to learn so many professions to build my career: start a foundation, serve as director, do the business, take care of the finances, manage a CD label and organize the tours. It's totally insane and when I reached fifty and kept running and running, it became harder for me. When I look back at that period, I see that I had wanted to play the viola more. Because I was so involved organizing and preparing the projects and concerts, I actually didn't have enough time to work on my skills as a player in the way that I really wanted to.

A: Was that also the time when you and Ab started playing together?

I: Yes. That was in 1999 and it was totally coincidental that it happened. We wanted to take some time away from Amsterdam and we went to Rome. We met some improvisers there and were asked to play as a duo on the Controindicazioni festival in October. It was their idea. So we thought about it for a couple of days and decided that, as long as we were there, we'd give it a try. We were totally isolated from the world at that time because we were working every day, the whole day. I was composing and practicing viola. Ab was practicing tenorsax and clarinet. We had weeks and weeks to develop a program and to try things out. Our festival concert was a huge success. People really loved it. And then every time we returned to Rome we played a few duo performances. That was the beginning. For the last five years we've played and toured together quite a lot.

A: Do you think your duo with Ab would have happened anyway, somewhere, somehow?

I: I have no idea. Maybe not. If they hadn't suggested this, we may not have discovered that we liked to work together so intensely.

A: So the duo will last forever?

I: As long as I keep playing.

A: Another long-term ensemble project is your string quartet. Did your quintet sort of evolve into a quartet or did you stop one project before you thought about the next?

I: The quintet still existed when I formed the project on Emily Dickinson with the first Tentet combination. I wanted to do a project using poetry and the work of Dickinson spoke to me. The Tentet projects were all individual projects with different combinations of players that I put together in the early 90's. Those larger projects gave me many possibilities for composition and instrumentation. The quartet evolved out of the Emily Dickinson project. At that time I wanted to have a smaller band that could do smaller things because working with a group of ten people is totally insane. Too many people. You can use ten musicians in a specific project but for touring a quartet is better.

A: And why did you settle on a string quartet this time?

I: I wanted to find out what I could do with strings alone. I listened a lot to improvising string quartets. Most of them I didn't like at all. But I wanted to try it out myself. And using the double bass is totally different from composing for a classic string quartet instrumentation. Most of all, I wanted to have more space for different volumes. That was one reason why my string quartet was the first ensemble I put together that had no drummer.

[16] Queen Mab Trio: Ig, Marilyn Lerner, Lori Freedman / St. Johann in Tirol, (AU), October 7 2005

[17] Duo Baars-Henneman / Palermo (IT), June 5 2006

[18] Henneman String Quartet: Ig, Mary Oliver, Tristan Honsinger, Wilbert de Joode / Theater Elcker, Bussum, October 9 1997

A: That sounds like a big move. Were the Tentets also amplified?

I: We worked mostly with microphones. But with the string quartet we did a big project called *Westwerk* where we played in all kinds of little medieval churches. The concert was completely acoustic and it was so nice that we were not amplified. I really liked it.

A: Did you have sleepless nights wondering about who would be in your string quartet as you were forming it or did it happen organically?

I: The string players Wilbert de Jooede, Tristan Honsinger and Mary Oliver were already in my Tentet band and I had been working with these people for a long time. It just felt right. The quartet lasted from 1994 to 2004. Ten years. We had our last concert in 2004. I never decided to stop it. I became so involved with the Queen Mab Trio and with my duo with Ab at that time that I didn't pursue concerts for the quartet. I was composing a lot and needed to divide my time between composing, performing, practicing and management. When I look back on the transition time between the quartet and my recent projects I see that I've grown enormously as an improviser in the last eight years. I have a much clearer idea what I can do and what I want to do. Of course, my technical skills are not getting any better these days. I often describe myself as an old painter that uses a rough brush but still knows exactly what she or he wants to produce rather than depending on an array of virtuoso techniques. It is less important for me to depend on so many technical skills than on my creativity and resourcefulness.

A: I recently heard a composer explain to me that she found it a shame that singers lose their technique as they age. I think that many older performers can offer such a rich palate of experience and character that the comparison between technique and depth of experience is somehow irrelevant. Have you had this experience as both a composer and as a performer?

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I: I learned to produce a viola tone that suits my own musical language much later and I did it on my own. It was after my conservatory training and I was almost thirty years old, I think. Now, after all these years, I finally love my instrument.

A: I can see that love when you play. Have you found a new home in the last eight years or so?

I: It's fantastic. I really love it. I think it has to do with deciding to go to Canada and to play in a duo with Ab. That gave me the room to focus more on my instrument. It was always there. Especially with the rock band. In the days I played with FC Gerania I had a golden Barkus Berry viola, a very loud and ugly instrument. One time I wanted to play a single note in the intro of a song during a concert in Paradiso. As I was just getting into playing a low C that I wanted to last forever, the drummer came in and I lost my chance. Since that time I've always longed to do something that is really mine and now I've found it. I trust that when I'm on stage these days I can even surprise myself. It's such a good feeling.

A: Let's talk about composition. That is yet another musical activity you pay serious attention to. You've spoken about needing to make decisions regarding how much time and energy you invest in practicing, performing, composing and managing. Do you decide consciously each week or month how you'll juggle all of these aspects of your musical life?

I: I decide by the day and the month and the year. In retrospect, I see that making decisions was somewhat dictated by need. By, 'I have to do this and I have to do that.'



[19] Wilbert de Joode and Ig / Bimhuis, Amsterdam, April 26 1991

A: Did you feel that you wanted to continue as a composer/performer and that you needed the viola to do that?

I: To be a composer/performer is such a luxury. As a performer, I have far more contact with my audience. When I improvise (call it "instant composing") on the viola, I use my intuition in ways where there are no thresholds between soul and sound. I don't have to deal with all the complicated baggage that fully notated composing requires. I don't need to notate everything. The music is immediately there and I don't have to wait for other people to perform it. As a performer I can share my music with colleagues on the spot. It is less lonely than composing. And on top of that, improvising is an important inspiration for my composing. It feeds my imagination. Enough reasons for keeping up the viola.

A: Let's look back a bit now. Bands, improvising and the viola have clearly been deeply essential to your musical world. And then composition snuck in. You've been actively composing in the two different streams since you were in your early forties. But, at some point, you decided to seek a composition coach. What led you to do that?

I: That was a long time ago. I got a commission from the Leids Studenten Kamer Orkest as part of a program of women composers. They asked me to write an orchestra piece. I phoned Theo Loevendie to ask him what I should do. He said, 'just jump in the water and I'll help you.' I knew him because I had taken counterpoint from him in Haarlem when I was seventeen. After that first phone call, when I every now and then got stuck, Theo helped me out. Later, I showed Ton de Leeuw my film score and he told me that it was

composed with verve. He seemed to like my work but told me that I was too old to start being a composer. I was 40 at the time. After that, I met up with Maarten Altena and he told me that he was studying with Robert Heppener. Maarten had a similar strange background to mine and I thought that perhaps Heppener would be good to work with. I had worked with him when I was studying at the conservatory in Amsterdam and liked him. He seemed to be exactly what I was looking for. I only went to him when I needed him to have a look at what I was working on. The first time I called him I was totally stuck. His first advice over the phone was to say, "OK. When you intend to sit at your table and compose at 9.00 am, then sit at your table at 9.00 am." We all know that this should be very simple to do. But it's so true that one needs to be reminded to do it. The other thing he said on the phone was "just write something down. Then you can throw it away." We then made an agreement that I would write a short piece everyday. It felt very good. I've used some of the material later. I did a bass clarinet piece with him. He was very important to me for a certain period even though it was only four times a year or so. I went all the way to Limburg to see him.

I would never have dared to be a composer if I had stayed in the classical music world. In that world, you have to feel like you're Mozart to compose. While I was playing in the rock band I wrote songs and you know, every band in the world needs songs. But later, when I went back to my classical roots as a composer for totally scored pieces I felt like I didn't know enough and thought that it would be good to have someone coach me. In the end, I made a good decision to ask Heppener because our work together was exactly what I needed. He told me ten years later that he had found my material so minimal that he often wondered what I would do with it and was impressed with my solutions. He gave me the confidence to keep searching and looking for that unique trait I gave to my compositions.

[20] Conducting the Italian Instabile Orchestra (Sulla Lingua) / Moncalvo (IT), 2001.



A: You come out of an unusually talented family. Your brothers and sisters have all achieved respectable careers and some of them are also artists. Did all of your siblings play musical instruments at a young age as you did?

I: Nobody. I was the only serious one. My brothers and sisters played a bit of piano, recorder and guitar. My mother said that I always sat next to the radio and listened to music. She also played a little bit of piano. Mostly old Dutch songs. When I was five years old I wanted to play the piano. It was my thing.

A: And even though you were such a successful young pianist, was it your choice to move on to violin?

I: Yes, I dreamed about playing the violin. My mother told me just to keep playing the piano but finally I got a violin. You know, children mostly choose something that belongs to them, that suits them. I was too lonely playing the piano and I wanted to play with other people. I even remember that I was very proud that I could show off that I was a violinist while walking through the streets of Haarlem with a violin case in my hand.

A: And when did you change to the viola?

I: While I was playing in ASKO, I switched to viola. I loved it. I started playing with ASKO as a violinist but at that time they needed a violist. After that I studied with Louis Metz here in Amsterdam and Erwin Schiffer in Tilburg.

A: The viola has a specific historic baggage and a special sound. What is it about the viola that you love?

I: I love the range of the instrument. I'm not a fan of high pitched instruments. I like male singers more than absurdly high virtuoso voices. The conservatory education and discipline for the violin is totally linked

[21] With Robert Heppener and Ron Ford / Vredenburg, Utrecht,
Nederlandse Muziekdagen (première Righe Per Corde), December 1 1995



[22] Composer in residence at the Leighton Artists' Colony /
Banff (CA) 2010





[23] The Henneman family: Ignatine, Joris, Koos, Piet, Gré, Maria, Maarten, Eiske, Janjeroen / Haarlem, summer 1956



[24] Ig and her mother Margaretha Henneman

to virtuosity and that didn't grab me. I wanted to play contemporary music and the viola suited me much more. I could make my own choices about the sounds I used and make my own interpretations without all that history on my back. And the viola tradition is more lazy. Its more about filling in the parts. Now I understand why I liked playing it in an ensemble such as ASKO. For a composer its very nice to sit in the middle of an ensemble. I could hear all the low instruments and I enjoyed the musical roles the viola played.

A: When you look back at your career moves, can you think of any that stick out? It sounds to me like your story is a wonderful series of developments.

I: It just happened intuitively. I never made a career plan. When I played with symphony orchestras I simply knew that I did not want to be there. There were things that I clearly did not want to do but I wasn't sure what I *did* want to do. I was curious and wanted to try things. I remember when I was in the rock band and I wrote my first song. It surprised me that there were things in me that I had to say. My inner voice said to me, 'Hey!! I love to make songs!'

One of the papers I wrote in high school was about blocks with black and white people scratching their nails on the blocks. While I was writing I realized that I had a real need to write and to create. That surprised me. I had a good education at a girls' school and we had many music and art classes but it was the time I wrote this paper and later when I made my first rock song that I felt my creativity and my need to express something.

A: As an outsider looking at your family, I would have assumed that the minute you were born you were told that you were supposed to be creative.

I: My father had his own business and we were a family of independent spirits where everyone created



Witteveen / Ventimiglia (IT), February 1980



[25] Working on Big Marble, Prinsengracht, Amsterdam, 1985

their own opportunities. My mother was a perfect organizer. She had been a teacher and she was very talented and creative, especially in drawing.

A: So you didn't feel that you were required to be creative?

I: No, not at all. But I was required to take responsibility for what I wanted to do. That's what we learned. Don't run away. Just do it. My mother thought that creativity was what we needed to learn well. She supplied us with toys and taught us crafts and how to use our hands early on. Being an artist is, of course, something else. But I was used to feeling that I could create something new. I also trusted that I could find people to help me or to teach me things I wanted to learn.

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A: I think it's remarkable that you had the courage from early on to phone someone up for help.

I: When I was ten or eleven, I wanted to change piano teachers from the one I had, Lottie Koekoek, to a man. My mother handed me the phone and told me to find one. I had to do it all myself and I did it. That was part of my family education. It's incredible when I see what parents do for children now.

A: Shall we touch on your role as a woman in the Dutch musical culture?

I: I'd like to talk about the woman thing in reference to the all-woman rock band FC Gerania that lasted from 1977 to 1984. This experience was very, very important for me. Not only did I start writing my first songs at that time but we made our historical mark as women. We could play everywhere because it was the second feminist movement here in Holland. I am actually a product of the second women's movement. That was the time when my career started. In that band we did everything ourselves and there were no men judging how we did it. This was unusual then for a group of women musicians.

A: Do you think about your career in terms of being a woman?

I: After I was in FC Gerania, I didn't want to think about these things anymore. I decided not to look at it. The only other time I looked closely at that chapter again was in 1991 when I was involved in organizing the Congress on Women in Music. I found it very important to have a central role in such an important event for women. I have many things to say about women's issues but for myself I try not to think about it too much. The only thing I would like to say is that when I meet young women I like to hear their stories. When I see them struggle with their careers in their thirties it is important to me to talk to them and to encourage them to keep going. I feel like I can be a role model for them.

A: Do you consider yourself a role model because of your history?

I: I don't know. I'm the only woman in Holland from my generation that does what I do, as far as I know.

A: I have one more question. If you would look at your career as if it were an image, a film or an abstract form, rather than a list of events that you've experienced, what would you see?

I: I am very visually oriented. When I think about composing a piece I mostly see geometric figures in my head. Similar to that paper I wrote in high school. But I don't see my life as a visual image. Not like a Mondriaan painting or something. As I get closer to this upcoming anniversary tour and look back at my life, I see my huge family and then my move to Amsterdam and then being unhappy at the conservatory and then this blooming rock band and then all of my own bands with their creative explosions and then now, in the present, as I, an older woman, search for what is still possible for me to do. And I see that I am looking forward to developing specific things that I want and need to do.

This whole Kindred Spirits project is an enormous undertaking, like so many I've done before. It feels different though, in that I realize that I know how to produce this project in my own way and if bits go wrong, I'm too old to be stressed. That is a very good feeling. In response to your question, I would say that the colors of my life are less bright. This also has to do with the fact that there are people around me who have died recently. In the applications for funding for this project, I wrote that the sounds from this project could range from a ferocious train to a totally abstract white painting. But that's how I feel about my life too. There is more sadness and there is more peace.





Ig Henneman with: 26 Gerard Bouwhuis, Heleen Hulst 2010 / 27 Ab Baars, Kenichi Matsumoto, Keita Ito, Tokyo (JP) 2006 / 28 Misha Mengelberg, Ab Baars 2008 / 29 Masterclass St Petersburg (RUS) 2004 / 30 Martine Sikken 2008 / 31 Mats Gustafsson, Mario Schiano, Controindicazioni, Rome (IT) 1999 / 32 Henneman String Quartet, Maribor (SI) 2003 / 33 Carrie de Swaan, Jeroen Henneman 2004 / 34 Ig Henneman and Ab Baars in a drawing by Jantien Buisman 2008 / 35 Ab Baars, Alberto Braidà, Lodi (IT) 2006 / 36 Wilbert de Jood 2010 / 37 Yasuhiro Usui, Takuji Kawai, Gok Studio Tokyo (JP) 2009



DISCOGRAPHY

CDS

Ig Henneman *Collected*

(Wig 18) 2010

Baars Henneman Mengelberg *Sliptong*

(Wig 16) 2009

Duo Baars-Henneman *Stof*

(Wig 13) 2006

Queen Mab Trio *Thin Air*

(Wig 14) 2006

Queen Mab Trio *See Saw*

(Wig 11) 2005

Henneman String Quartet *Strepen*

(Wig 10) 2004

Henneman String Quartet *Piazza Pia*

(Wig 07) 2002

Henneman String Quartet *Pes*

(Wig 05) 1999

Ig Henneman Tentet *Indigo*

(Wig 04) 1998

Ig Henneman Tentet *Repeat that, repeat*

(Wig 03) 1995

Ig Henneman Tentet *Dickinson*

(Wig 02) 1993

Ig Henneman Quintet *in Grassetto*

(Wig 01) 1991

DVD

Henneman, Henneman & de Swaan *Strepen – Music and Image in Concert*

(Wig 10) 2004

LPS

FC Gerania *Get the Knack*

(FC2) 1983

FC Gerania *FC Gerania*

(FC1) 1981

[38] Ig Henneman Sextet (minus 3): Ig, Ab Baars, Wilbert de Joode
Concertgebouw Koorzaal, Amsterdam, August 29 2010





LIST OF WORKS

Kindred Spirits	compositions for the Ig Henneman Sextet	2010
Chant	violin and piano (Heleen Hulst, Gerard Bouwhuis)	2010
Floating Worlds	compositions for improvising trio: koto, ts/cl/shakuhachi, via	2009
Sliptong	improvisations Baars, Henneman, Mengelberg (CD Wig 16)	2009
Lines of Descent	compositions for the Queen Mab Trio	2008
Traghetttore	git, mandolin and recorder (Zimbello)	2008
Vôga Lunga	git, mandolin and recorder (Zimbello)	2008
Organ theme	for the 47th International Organ Improvisation Competition, Haarlem	2008
Twirl	small big band (Clazz Ensemble)	2007
Molot	marimba solo (Wim Konink/Fredrike de Winter/Tatiana Koleva)	2007
Stof	duo Baars-Henneman (CD Wig 13)	2006
Bow Valley Whistle	flute solo and electronics (Anne La Berge)	2006
Thin Air	compositions for the Queen Mab Trio (CD Wig 14)	2005
Finalmente	trb 4, str 4, perc 4 (Kwartettenfestival)	2004
See Saw	compositions for the Queen Mab Trio (CD Wig 11)	2002
Daikem Nia	symphony orchestra and male choir (Residentie Orkest)	2003
Tratti per Arpa	harp solo (Godelieve Schrama)	2003
Strepen	compositions for the Henneman String Quartet and harp (CD Wig 10)	2003
Piazza Pia	compositions for the Henneman String Quartet (CD Wig 07)	2002
Sulla Lingua	big band (Italian Instabile Orchestra)	2001
Persistente	ensemble (Orkest de Volharding)	2000
Disegni per Corde e Marimba	ensemble (Nieuw Ensemble)	2000
Pes	compositions for the Henneman String Quartet (CD Wig 05)	1999
Due Mani	piano solo (Ivo Janssen)	1999
Indigo	compositions for the Ig Henneman Tentet (CD Wig 04)	1998
Organ theme	for the 42th International Organ Improvisation Competition, Haarlem	1998
Westwerk	compositions for the Henneman String Quartet	1997
Hiragana Blues	piano solo (Marcel Worms)	1997
Swiet Viele	symphonic jazz orchestra (Metropole Orkest)	1996
Repeat that, repeat	compositions for the Ig Henneman Tentet (CD Wig 03)	1995
Righe per Corde	harp, via 2 and vc (Ensemble Amadé)	1995
Gedicht voor Land- en Tuinbouw	mezzo-sopr, fl, cl, bcl, perc (Ig Henneman Tentet)	1994
Hinter der Wand	mezzo-soprano, accordion and vc (Trio Le Cheval)	1994
Dickinson	compositions for the Ig Henneman Tentet (CD Wig 02)	1993
Danswoede	music for documentary (Jellie Dekker, Jessica Voeten)	1993
How slow the Wind	trb 8 (Detmold Trb Festival/Trb Choir Rotterdam Conservatory)	1992
Vrouwen vertellen	music for documentary (Nouschka van Brakel)	1992
De vrouwen, de ridders, de wapens, de liefdes en...	theatre music (puppet player Damiet van Dalsum)	1991
Si tira avanti	accordion solo (Miny Dekkers)	1991
Het Zeeuwse Licht	music for documentary (Jetske Spanjer, Caroline Hissink)	1991
in Grassetto	compositions for the Ig Henneman Quintet (CD Wig 01)	1985-1990
Hollebollenbeer	theatre music (puppet player Damiet van Dalsum)	1990

Sottosuolo

Le tigre di mare

Kleur

Gezocht: lieve vader en moeder

Big Marble

Baby Rjazanskye

Drie cent in het uur

De geest van gras

Het gaat wel weer over

FC Gerania

bass clarinet solo (Hein Pijnenburg)

2 alto saxophones and orchestra (Ricciotti Ensemble)

theatre music (puppet player Damiet van Dalsum)

music for documentary (Sarah Marijnissen, Agna Rudolph)

chamber orchestra (LESKO)

soundtrack for silent movie (Olga Preobrasjenskaya)

soundtrack for film (Jacqueline Bakker)

soundtrack for film (Marleen Gorris, Mieke van Karsbergen)

soundtrack for film (Aгна Arens)

songs for the rock band FC Gerania

1990

1989

1988

1987

1986

1984

1984

1983

1982

1976-1984

[39] Workroom Prinsengracht, Amsterdam, 1985





SUMMARY

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In December 2010 Ig Henneman celebrated her 25th anniversary as a composer and bandleader as well as her 65th birthday. To mark this occasion the Wig Foundation released a limited edition box set of five CDs and a DVD, *Ig Henneman Collected* (Wig 18), together with this *Ig Henneman 65* booklet.

The *Ig Henneman Collected* box set contains:

in Grassetto Ig Henneman Quintet (Wig 01, 1991)

Repeat that, repeat Ig Henneman Tentet (Wig 03, 1995)

Strepen Henneman String Quartet and harp (Wig 10, 2005), previously only available on DVD

Strepen – Music and Image in Concert Henneman, Henneman & de Swaan (DVD Wig 10, 2005)

Galina U Queen Mab Trio (2002-2006), a new compilation that includes a previously unreleased recording

Stof Duo Baars-Henneman (Wig 13, 2006)

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