**Carlo de Wijs**

“The Man Behind The Hammond Organ”

At the age of seven, Carlo de Wijs sat behind an electric organ for the very first time, not realizing that this instrument would determine the rest of his future professional life. When his father played a Rhoda Scott LP five years later, he was gripped by the Hammond sound. After this, he just knew: he would become a Hammond organist.

The years following, Carlo spent most of his time behind the organ - as he still does. The Hammond organist in Carlo was shaped by a mix of many inspirations and influences. Hammond role models like Rhoda Scott, Jimmy Smith and Eddy Louiss; heroes like Quincy Jones, Stevie Wonder and Joe Zawinul; in combination with current interesting trends in electronic music, ensure his never ending quest of reinventing the artist within.

Throughout the tones of the warm Hammond sound, he developed into a musician, bandleader, cultural entrepreneur, educator, and both instrument and sound designer. Nowadays, ‘scientist’ can be added to this list as well. His passion and ambition cause Carlo to constantly look for seemingly complex connections between these different disciplines. “I believe that they are strongly connected, inspired and influenced by each other.”

Music is a way to feed the personal identity. For Carlo, it is therefore all about *Bildung*: ‘building’ your own person and personality, of which development and innovation are central aspects. “My personal drive focuses on the development of a unique instrument, sound, style of performing, of music and the creation of new structures of collaboration. Therefore, I want to realize the most personal approach possible for me as an artist.” Contributing to and acquiring inspiration from this dynamic, creative world - that is what being a Hammond organist stands for, Carlo states.

In addition to *Bildung* on a personal level, the concept is also of great importance within the Hammond community. “Hammond is a metaphor for inspiring (young) people, colleagues and enthusiasts,” Carlo says. “Through Hammond, various visions and disciplines come together. This could lead to new structures in which the sharing of music, art and knowledge are key.”

Some might wonder: aren’t all these ambitions transcending reality every now and then? Perhaps, but this will never stop Carlo from pursuing his vision. “Now the Hammond organ is slowly getting back into that spotlight, it is time to build on this visibility and involve as many people as possible in the process.” It appears to be the perfect time to realize goals - of course with the help of others and through numerous projects. Carlo is working on off- and online initiatives in which innovation, sound, education, research and the Hammond community yet again come together. Examples include the New Hammond Sound Project and Hammond education-developments at Codarts.

“It is clear that I may not always choose the easiest way possible. Nevertheless, I can happily praise the many highlights that have been decisive for my current practice.”

*Carlo de Wijs is one of Europe’s top Hammond organists. The past decades he has been performing with his own formations, including D’WYS & Voices of Soul; and as a soloist with Candy Dulfer’s Funky Stuff, the Benjamin Herman Quartet, Corrie van Binsbergen, Lucas van Merwijk and the Metropole Orkest. He has been sharing the stage with internationally known artists such as Steve Lukather from TOTO, Gary Booker (Procol Harum) and Rhoda Scott. Carlo released his own albums and played on many productions, presented a special Hammond Alive section on Radio 6 and initiated HammondSongbook.com. He is currently active as a teacher and educational developer at Codarts in Rotterdam, while writing his PhD on the history and innovation of the Hammond Organ and setting up the New Hammond Sound Project with drummer Jordi Geuens.*