

## How my musical world

As a child, I was enchanted by the sound of the piano during my first General Theory of Music lesson. It opened my eyes to a new dimension, and that feeling has stayed with me ever since. Music became a part of my life.

As a young teenager, I took piano and violin lessons. Harmony and melody. Rhythm, especially hand percussion drew my attention. At the time it was only possible to study drums and classical percussion at the music school and a variety of percussion instruments was difficult to come by. It was around then that I started to listen to world music. An encounter with a Moroccan girl directed my interest towards Arabian music and in turn the darbuka (with no instruments available the people played on a dustbin turned upside down). I lived in Gent and was able to follow belly-dancing classes, which helped grow my interest in Arabian music. I later studied traditional dances from the Maghreb. For me, music and movement are inseparably intertwined. I have learned many rhythms through first learning to dance to them.

At long last, I found lessons for the darbuka in Rijsel, and for a couple of years I proceeded to immerse myself in learning the technique, and later on also with Turkish teachers. Apart from the darbuka, I also play the bedir (a frame drum), and the riq (an Arabian/Turkish tambourine). Once I had a better understanding of the Arabian rhythms, the Turkish rhythm's drew my attention. To have a better feel of these rhythms, I began to learn Turkish singing. I found singing whilst accompanying myself to my liking and for the next couple of years I proceeded to intensively work on Turkish singing.

All music genres interest me, but eastern music and folk music hold a greater fascination for me. What I enjoy about eastern music is primarily the freedom to improvise within the music system. Every concert is a separate creation with no two being exactly the same. The main attraction that folk music holds for me is the direct connection with the roots of a culture, regardless of which one. It's through stories, melodies and rhythms that a shared consciousness is realized that contains truths applicable for every person.

I currently perform as a musician and/or movement artist in various ensembles and projects and I occasionally do solo performances. I also give lessons and workshops in oriental percussion music. In addition to teaching and performing I work as a 'Content Manager' for Stingray digital/Music Choice, where I do programming for the radio channels 'Türk Müziği' (Turkish music), 'Türk Sanat Müziği/Arabesk' (Turkish classical/Arabesque) and 'Türkçe Slow' (Turkish slow).