PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT

World Premiere: Jean Absil's Lost Guitar Concerto Op.155

June 15, 2025 – Waregem, Belgium
Belgian classical guitarist **Sam Desmet** has given the long-awaited world premiere of Jean Absil's *Concerto pour Guitare et Petit Orchestre Op.155*, performing with **Casco Phil Orchestra** under the direction of **Benjamin Haemhouts**. This marks the first public performance of the work since its creation.

Composed but never performed during Jean Absil's lifetime, the *Concerto pour Guitare et Petit Orchestre Op.155* was rediscovered in 2009 when Italian composer and musicologist **Angelo Gilardino** shared the handwritten manuscript with guitarist Sam Desmet. In 2010, Desmet assisted in preparing the orchestral score for publication through **Edizioni Berben** (now **Edizioni Curci**).

Further archival research at the **Royal Conservatory of Brussels** led to the discovery of an unpublished piano reduction, which Desmet fully reconstructed in professional notation software. This reduction proved essential in studying the concerto and understanding its structure and orchestration.

Although the surviving manuscript lists no dedicatee, historical context strongly indicates that Absil intended the concerto for Belgian guitarist **Nicolas Alfonso**, the dedicatee of all his other guitar works and the first guitar professor at the Brussels Conservatory.

Supported by the **City of Waregem** and **Probus Potegem**, this 2025 premiere brings a significant Belgian modernist work to public attention for the very first time.

PRESS CONTACT
Email: sam@samdesmet.com
Website: www.samdesmet.com

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