

## Music & Nature

Strengthening a historic  
connection — already present in  
Queen Elisabeth's original vision

"But what can one say about this mighty creation: Nature! Ah! To understand that divine harmony, that highest music! To be moved by the sight of a leaf swaying in the caress of a gentle wind; to be touched and delighted by the indescribable song of that small winged creature perched on a branch, tirelessly producing trills and floating arpeggios, and the most harmonious (I would almost say harmonic) chirping sounds — for the more attentively I listen, the more music I discover in that tangle of high-pitched tones of incomparable purity. Just now, I thought that the birds' song is the jewelry of the trees, like wildflowers, modest and delicate, adorning the meadows.

What can be said about these giants that reach toward the heavens in God's work, or in the work of Nature (is that not the same)? What about the air, the wind, the hidden work of the earth that bends humans beneath its secrets and its magnificent, useful creations, and awakens in the artist the desire for creation."

***Eugène Ysaÿe, violinist, composer, and friend of Queen Elisabeth (letter to his wife Louise, 11 June 1908)***

Queen Elisabeth wanted to create an oasis of calm, far from the bustle of the city.

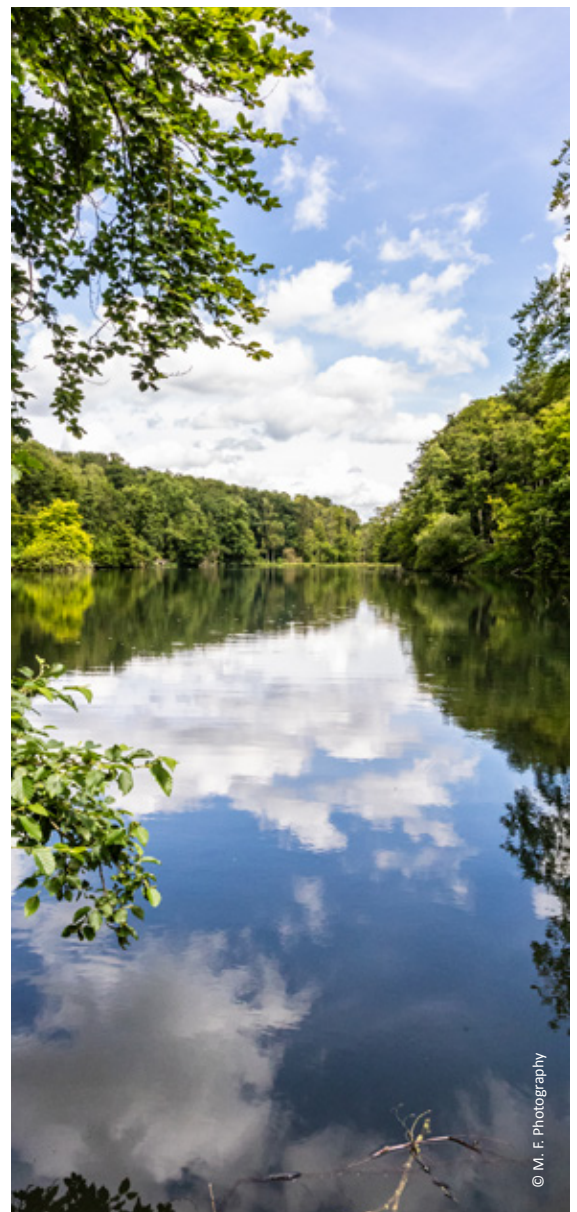
This philosophy remains a cornerstone of the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel's mission: a place where working, concentrating, breathing, and listening come together in an environment where nature becomes a full partner to music.

Nature has long offered artists a unique space for focus and inspiration. The green setting of the Music Chapel therefore forms an essential part of its appeal for artists from Belgium and abroad.

From this conviction, the Music Chapel has launched a deep reflection on its ecological impact, not as an obligation, but as an extension of its artistic mission. By caring for its surroundings, inviting artists and audiences to engage differently with their practice, and strengthening the connection with the Living World, the institution seeks to find a path where creation and responsibility come together.

As a cultural organization with an international reach, the Music Chapel is aware that this path is demanding and requires perseverance. It has chosen a gradual approach and structures its work around three priorities: reducing its carbon footprint, preserving biodiversity on the historic site, and promoting reconnection with the Living World through activities that bring music and nature together.

In each of these areas, the Music Chapel develops projects guided by scientific recommendations and evaluated based on their impact and progress.





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## The Argenteuil Domain, a natural extension of the mission

The Argenteuil Domain forms a green enclave on the outskirts of Brussels, covering approximately 136 hectares of meadows, forests, ponds, and wooded paths. The area is part of an important ecological corridor within the Sonian Forest, partially protected as Natura 2000, and serves as a link between the Brussels, Flemish, and Walloon sections of the forest.

The Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel will benefit from an exceptional natural setting that offers both a space for renewal and for artistic creation. Approximately 16 hectares will be dedicated to its activities, while the remaining areas will be integrated into an overall environmental management plan, with attention to forest management, the preservation of meadows and water bodies, gentle accessibility, and landscape management.

Out of respect for this unique environment, the Province of Walloon Brabant will coordinate between all relevant public and private actors: the new estate owners, Natagora, the Sonian Forest Foundation, the Music Chapel, and other competent authorities. In the initial phase, the focus will be on developing an integrated management and development plan for the estate's natural areas.