

Press Release, April 2013. For immediate release.

Simon Murphy to conduct QSO in double bill

Dutch-based Australian conductor Simon Murphy (Sydney, 1973) will make his début with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra (QSO) in Brisbane, Australia this May with a special double bill. Entitled *Roman Holiday* and *New Generation*, Murphy's hand-crafted programmes feature selections from two iconic 18th century orchestral masterpieces – Corelli's *Concerti Grossi* and Handel's *The Water Music* – alongside pioneering, early classical symphonies by J. Stamitz, C.F. Abel, J.C. Bach, C.P.E. Bach and J.F. Reichardt.

Murphy is the chief-conductor of The Hague's Baroque Orchestra, The New Dutch Academy (NDA). Branded the “Repertoire Refresher” by the European press, his dynamic, innovative musical approach and highly engaging performance style have made him a popular fixture on the European circuit. This status has earned him major music industry awards and regular guest conducting engagements with period instrument and modern symphony orchestras around the world. Murphy's ground-breaking recording projects have shed new light on many facets of 18th century music, including the German and Dutch symphonic schools, with his work on Corelli being perhaps his most spectacular to date – recently chosen as one the top five highlights of the prestigious 30 year history of the Holland Festival of Early Music Utrecht.

Murphy's 2013 QSO concerts promise Australian audiences exciting insights into classic 18th century orchestral music as well as the opportunity to become acquainted with newly rediscovered symphonic gems with the programmes featuring a selection of works unearthed by Murphy in European archives.



[Photo] Simon Murphy conducting Corelli's *Concerti Grossi* at the Holland Festival of Early Music, Utrecht
[Listen to the CD](#)

Corelli

Murphy's “legendary” Corelli *Concerti Grossi* project at the Holland Festival of Early Music was recently voted as one of the top five highlights of the prestigious festival's 30 year history. Following extensive research, Murphy's performances presented the composer in a completely new light. His resulting CD of the *Concerti Grossi* with the NDA (PentaTone Classics, 2003) became the first ever recording to use Corelli's own large scale orchestra, rich Italianate improvisation and extemporisation, and a full and varied basso continuo section (including baroque guitars, baroque lutes, archlutes, theorbos, harpsichords and organs). It succeeded in redefining contemporary understanding of the iconic 17th century Roman composer's musical aesthetic, instrumentation, performance practices and orchestral soundscape, with the BBC Music Magazine writing:

“When it came to his orchestral music, size mattered for Corelli ... These accounts by the New Dutch Academy, a big band playing on period instruments, reflect the best of both worlds. Its sound is sumptuous, but textures are sufficiently transparent to allow details to cut through, and the historically informed approach includes stylish ornamentation and a battery of continuo instruments which would surely have delighted the composer. ... director Simon Murphy infuses these accounts with subtle jazz-like touches: swinging rhythms, inventive extemporisations and vigorous guitar strumming effects.”

Following the project, Murphy was honoured with a personal invitation to perform Corelli's *Concerti Grossi* for the Italian president at the Palazzo Quirinale in Rome, doing so in a special concert for guests including the Dutch Queen, broadcast live on Italian radio and television. Other invitations included performances of Corelli's *Concerti Grossi* and Handel's *The Water Music* for the ZaterdagMatinee at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw for Dutch radio (NPS) and at the Händel Festspiele Halle for German radio (MDR).



[Photo] Simon Murphy performing Corelli's *Concerti Grossi* in the Palazzo Quirinale, Rome

Roman Holiday

Murphy's QSO programme *Roman Holiday* connects Corelli and Handel, taking inspiration from Handel's visit to Rome in the early 18th century during which the young German composer worked with Corelli and his famous Roman orchestra. The experience left a long lasting impression on Handel and massively influenced the development of his own musical aesthetic and love for a rich and substantial orchestral soundscape. The programme explores Handel's early 18th century cosmopolitan orchestra masterpiece, *The Water Music*, from the perspective of Corelli's orchestra, instrumentation and performance practices.



[Photo] Simon Murphy conducting Handel's *The Water Music* at the Händel Festspiele, Halle
[Listen to the live performance](#)

Mannheim and the Birth of the Symphony

Murphy's award-winning research, performances and recordings exploring the foundation of the western cultural phenomenon of the symphony in the mid-18th century have been most enthusiastically welcomed by the international music press, who have labelled Murphy's work "revelatory" and "a total eyeopener". Murphy's series of world première CD recordings of pioneering, but nowadays often underrated, *Mannheimer Schule* composers F.X. Richter and the "Father of the Symphony" Johann Stamitz have been heralded for presenting these visionary composers in a completely new light, with The Australian reporting:

"The hottest property on the European baroque scene Simon Murphy puts flesh on the cobwebbed skeletons of Haydn's predecessors and drags musicology into the hypercritical glare of the contemporary concert platform replete with swashbuckling dynamic contrasts, piquant continuo parts and soaring Mannheim rockets."

The musical establishment at the court in Mannheim in the mid-18th century not only succeeded in giving the symphony form and face, but became the benchmark of top 18th century orchestral quality. 18th century musical traveller Charles Burney stated that the Mannheim Court symphony orchestra was "an orchestra of generals" with each of its players being equally fit to plan as well as to fight a battle. Mannheim was a source of envy, admiration and inspiration, with even the often highly critical Leopold Mozart describing it as being the musical sun which lights up the skies of whole of Europe.

The Netherlands

Alongside his work on the seminal *Mannheimer Schule*, Murphy has recently also turned his attention to other 18th century European symphonic centres including cosmopolitan the Netherlands. He has become responsible for uncovering the previously unknown Dutch 18th century symphonic tradition. His recording projects with Dutch label PentaTone Classics have presented the works of several key, Dutch 18th century symphonists on disc for the first time. Murphy has surprised listeners with the fresh and distinctive characteristics of Amsterdam composer Joseph Schmitt ("The Dutch Haydn") and The Hague court composers Graaf, Schwindl and Zappa, and his discs have received major industry prizes including the Edison Music Award.

New Generation

Murphy's QSO programme *New Generation* presents an array of music by the visionary, new generation of ground-breaking, pan-European composers responsible for establishing the phenomenon of the symphony in Europe in the mid-18th century. Represented in the programme are members of the *Mannheimer Schule*, two musicians from the Prussian court of Frederick the Great in Potsdam C.P.E. Bach and Hofkapellmeister J.F. Reichardt, London-based star Bach student and Mozart mentor C.F. Abel together with friend and colleague J.C. Bach ("The London Bach"), Amsterdam composer J. Schmitt ("The Dutch Haydn"), Hofkapellmeister at the Court of Orange in The Hague C.E. Graaf, and Italian opera maestro D. Cimarosa, composer of one of the most often performed operas in the period *The Secret Marriage*.

Murphy – Recent Concert Highlights

At home in the Netherlands, Murphy's recent appearances include cycles of the symphonies of Stamitz, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven and Mendelssohn at Amsterdam's The Concertgebouw, The Hague's Philipszaal and Rotterdam's De Doelen, with performances at the major European festivals including the Bachfest Leipzig.

In October 2012, he opened the NDA's 10th anniversary season with the symphonic programme Black Magic, exploring the late 18th and early 19th century's obsession with destiny and the supernatural, with music from Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Reichardt's *Macbeth*, Rust's *Colma's Klage*, von Weber's *Der Freischütz* and Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Further symphonic performances as part of the NDA's 10th anniversary season in 2013 include music by Mozart, Beethoven, Schmitt, Rossini, Rombert and Spohr.

In November 2012, Murphy made his conducting début in China with appearances in Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Hangzhou and Beijing, also giving master classes and workshops at the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts and Beijing Central Conservatory. In December 2012, Murphy made his début in the Baltic states, conducting the Latvian State Choir and Collegium Musicum Riga, in Bach's *B Minor Mass*, receiving immediate return invitations including performances as part of the city's musical celebrations as European cultural capital in 2014.

QSO May 2013

In May 2013, Murphy brings his musical energy to the QSO in Brisbane, treating audiences to vibrant interpretations of Corelli and Handel's rich Baroque sensuality, and to the cutting-edge excitement of the visionary composers who created the first ever symphonies. With their power chords, exciting rhythmic figures, driving bass lines, and overdrive orchestral effects – such as the Mannheim rocket – this is music which, under Murphy's baton, has been described on more than one occasion as being “18th century rock 'n roll”.

Events

Queensland Symphony Orchestra
Simon Murphy, conductor

QSO Studios South Bank, Brisbane, Australia

Friday, 24 May 2013, 7 pm

Roman Holiday

Corelli and De Fesch *Concerti Grossi*
Handel *The Water Music*

Friday, 31 May 2013, 7 pm

New Generation

Symphonies and Overtures by Stamitz, Abel, J.C. Bach, Graaf,
Cimarosa, Reichardt and Schmitt “The Dutch Haydn”

QSO Event Links

<http://qso.com.au/roman-holiday>
<http://qso.com.au/new-generation>

Relevant Audio and Video Links

[Listen to Murphy's SA-CD recording of Corelli's *Concerti Grossi* made at the Holland Festival of Early Music with the New Dutch Academy on Dutch label PentaTone Classics](#)

[Listen to Murphy perform Handel's *The Water Music* live in concert at the Händel Festspiele, Halle](#)

[Listen to Murphy perform Handel's *The Water Music* live in concert at The Concertgebouw, Amsterdam](#)

[Listen to Murphy's world première recordings of symphonies by the 18th century Dutch Hofkapellmeister Graaf and by “The Dutch Haydn” Joseph Schmitt](#)

[Watch Murphy conduct “The Dutch Haydn” Joseph Schmitt's “Hurdy Gurdy” Symphony](#)

For further information on conductor Simon Murphy, visit:

www.simonmurphyconductor.com

Not for publication

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