

Press Release August 2011

Australian Dutch conductor Simon Murphy chosen as top 5 highlight in Festival's 30 year history

Dutch Classical Radio has chosen Simon Murphy's "legendary" performance of Corelli's Concerti Grossi at the Holland Festival of Early Music Utrecht in 2003 as one of the top 5 highlights of the festival's 30 year history. Murphy (38, born in Sydney, currently based in the Netherlands) is Chief Conductor of The Hague's Baroque Orchestra, the international award winning "New Dutch Academy" (NDA), a group he has led since founding it in 2002.

His groundbreaking performance, broadcast and recording production of Corelli's orchestral masterpieces with the NDA at the Festival in 2003 – including the iconic "Christmas Concerto" – succeeded in presenting Corelli's musical aesthetic and soundworld in a completely new light. The resulting SA-CD recording of the Concerti Grossi, made by Murphy and the NDA for Dutch label PentaTone Classics, became the first ever recording to use Corelli's own, large scale orchestra, rich Italianate improvisation and extemporisation, and a full and varied continuo section (including baroque guitars, baroque lutes, archlutes, theorbos, harpsichords and organs). The production was highly enthusiastically received by the world's music press, the BBC Music magazine reporting:

"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."

Dutch Classical Radio is currently celebrating the 30 year old Utrecht Festival of Early Music with a series of downloads of live historic festival concert recordings from the radio's archives, including performances by The Orchestra of the 18th Century (Frans Brüggen), The Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra (Ton Koopman) and The New Dutch Academy (Simon Murphy).

Recent performance highlights for Simon Murphy and the NDA have included appearances at the Händel Festival Halle, Bachfest Leipzig and for the Zaterdagmatinee at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw. In season 2011-2012, the Murphy and the NDA present well and lesser known 18th century masterpieces by Corelli, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Cimarosa, Paisiello, Rossini and their contemporaries in the orchestra's symphonic, Baroque orchestral and chamber series at home in The Hague and around the Netherlands. Upcoming tours take the orchestra through eastern Europe and Asia.

Read more on the Holland Festival of Early Music's top 5 on the Dutch radio's website:

<http://festivals.radio4.nl/pagina/oudemuziek/oudemuziekdownload3/oudemuziek/>

Listen to the Corelli CD: http://www.newdutchacademy.nl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=41:corelli-cd-hfomu-2003-murphy-nda&catid=37:cds&Itemid=22

Read more about the NDA on the NDA's website: www.newdutchacademy.nl