

Press Release October 2012

The Hague's Baroque Orchestra, The New Dutch Academy

10 Year Jubilee Season Opening a Success

Chief-conductor Simon Murphy (Sydney, 1973) has successfully opened the 10 year jubilee season of The Hague's Baroque Orchestra, The New Dutch Academy (NDA), with the symphonic programme *Black Magic* on 18 October in The Hague's Philipszaal. Soloists included Chinese-American fortepianist Shuann Chai in Mendelssohn's powerful d minor piano concert and the German star soprano Gudrun Sidonie Otto performing music from Rust's *Colma's Klage* and Reichardt's setting of *Macbeth* together with arias from Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and von Weber's *Der Freischütz*.

The near to sold out performance was hosted by The Hague's vice mayor Henk Kool and the Australian Ambassador to the Netherlands H.E. Neil Mules, with special guests including leading members of The Hague's diplomatic corps, the vice president of the Netherlands, Mr. Piet-Hein Donner and the mayor of Wassenaar and former cultural ambassador of the Netherlands, Mr. Jan Hoekema.

Conductor Murphy described the performance event as “a wonderful and very emotional experience” and “an extremely important milestone for the orchestra in these – for the arts – highly challenging times in the Netherlands”.

Innovative, Distinctive and Dynamic

Since its establishment in 2002, the New Dutch Academy and conductor Murphy have won major industry awards and attracted international media praise, developing a strong international reputation for their dynamic, engaging and cutting-edge performances, delivering fresh perspectives on 18th century music with new soundscapes and new repertoire. “A revelation!”, “breathtaking, compelling, technically brilliant and unusually effervescent!”, “sumptuous, vibrant and energetic”, “liveliness and groove, great dynamic profile and a beautiful use of timbre”, “daring and full of character” are but a few of the international press' enthusiastic reactions.*

Programming, Performance and Presentation

To date, Murphy and the NDA have performed more than 50 unique, hand-crafted concert programmes together in more than 250 concerts throughout the world. Tours have taken the orchestra through Belgium, Germany, Sweden, Norway, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Poland, Australia, Indonesia, the United States, Canada and Russia. Highlights have included productions for the Bachfest Leipzig, Händelfestspiele Halle and the UNESCO world heritage site Schloss Brühl.

At home in the Netherlands, Murphy and the orchestra have been regular guests at the country's most prestigious series, halls and festivals, including the ZaterdagMatinee at the Concertgebouw Amsterdam and the Holland Festival of Early Music Utrecht. In its home town of The Hague, the NDA has established new symphonic, Baroque and chamber concert series for the city, as well founding successful education, community art and outreach programmes.

New Perspectives

During the past 10 years, Murphy and the orchestra have shed much new light on 18th century music and culture through their projects together, introducing exciting new repertoire and delivering new perspectives on classic repertoire. Murphy and the orchestra have successfully rediscovered and reintroduced the Netherlands' own symphonic heritage, making several first recordings of symphonies by Schmitt “The Dutch Haydn”, Graaf, Stamitz, Schwindl and Zappa on the Dutch label PentaTone Classics. The group's pioneering CD series of early *Mannheimer Schule* symphonies has received major industry awards including an Edison, and the orchestra's groundbreaking recording of Corelli's *Concerti Grossi* made at the Holland Festival of Early Music Utrecht was recently voted in the top 5 highlights of the 30 year history of the festival.

The NDA's performances of classic symphonic repertoire, including symphonies of Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven and Mendelssohn, have been documented on a series of live CD recordings for Dutch radio. Murphy and the NDA's multidisciplinary productions such as the *Fêtes Galantes* and the recent *Empress of Pleasure* show together with Baroque dancer and choreographer Caroline Copeland have also gained much interest.

New Generation Specialists

With its own distinctive blend of dynamism, engagement, vibrancy and integrity, the NDA represents the new generation of the innovative Dutch (based) early music tradition made renowned in the 20th century by pioneering figures such as Gustav Leonhardt. Comprised of 40 hand-selected, top international specialist early music performers, the NDA orchestra is an exceptionally international outfit with more than 20 nationalities represented amongst its member musicians who range in age between 25 and 40.

International Cultural Ambassador

In the past 10 years, the NDA has made substantial contributions to the Netherlands' international cultural diplomacy programmes. At the invitation of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the city of The Hague, the orchestra has regularly represented the Netherlands at major bilateral occasions, performing hand-crafted programmes profiling Dutch cultural heritage and celebrating international cultural relations. Highlights include performances in Rome (Visit of HM Queen Beatrix to Italy and Dutch EU Presidency), New York (Hudson 400), Vancouver (Cultural Olympiad), Los Angeles (Getty Center) and Sydney (Netherlands Australia 400). Later this year the NDA will visit China for the first time, at the invitation of the Dutch and Chinese governments.

Jubilee Season Programme

Following the orchestra's season's opening programme *Black Magic* exploring the late 18th/early 19th century's obsession with the supernatural with music from Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Reichardt's *Macbeth*, Rust's *Colma's Klage*, Weber's *Der Freischütz* and Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, other highlights of the NDA's jubilee season include guest appearances by the winner of the 2011 London Handel Singing Competition Canadian soprano Stefanie True in Mozart Concert Arias and the winner of the 2010 Brugge Competition Hungarian fortepianist Petra Somlai in Mozart's Concerto in C (KV 467) *Elvira Madigan*. Closing the season is the monumental symphonic programme *Ein Heldenleben* with music from Romberg's *Ulysses*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and

Rossini's *La Cenerentola* (Cinderella) together with Beethoven's Symphony no. 3, *Eroica*.

Next Ten Years

What would conductor Murphy personally like to say, looking back on the challenges and achievements of the past decade and thinking about plans for the next ten years? “I am very proud of the many excellent, distinctive and ground-breaking things we have achieved as an organisation and as an orchestra during the past 10 years, from the research to recordings to performances to productions, *especially* given the massive financial and political difficulties which the arts continue to face in this country. However, the strain placed on our very compact organisation due to our ongoing commitment to delivering quality under these challenging circumstances has been enormous. And hence the theme of this jubilee programme, *Black Magic*. I don't quite know how we've managed to do it, but I would like to thank all of those who have made the orchestra's achievements possible during these first 10 years. Their efforts have been truly magical.”

The conductor continued, “on a personal level and as a foreigner in this country, it also meant so much to me to have the support and presence of *both* the Australian Embassy and the city council of my adopted home city of The Hague at the opening of this jubilee season. I would also like to particularly thank the NDA musicians and the current board members, staff and volunteers of the NDA for their commitment and hard work over the last year and a half which has made this jubilee season possible.” And the future? “First a little break and then on with this very special season.”

* Quotes respectively from Codaex, Concerto, Gramophone, Toccata – Alte Musik Aktuell, Frankfurter Neue Presse and Haagsche Courant.

Not for publication

Further information and interviews
info@newdutchacademy.nl

Conductor Simon Murphy
+ 31 614 975 395
www.simonmurphyconductor.com

www.newdutchacademy.nl