

Press Release, December 2012

Baltic Début Successful

Murphy conducts Bach's B Minor Mass with Latvian State Choir

Dutch-based Australian conductor Simon Murphy (39) has successfully made his Baltic début conducting Bach's monumental *Mass in B Minor* with the Latvian State Choir in Riga in December 2012. Murphy performed Bach's masterpiece together with the Latvian State Choir and Latvia's Baroque orchestra, Collegium Musicum Riga, in the 13th century church of St John as part of the annual Latvian Christmas festival *Eiropas Ziemassvētki*.

Following the project, Murphy was offered several return conducting engagements by Latvian state concert organisation *Latvijas Koncerti* including repeat performances of the *B Minor Mass* with the Latvian State Choir as well as a number of concerts as part of Riga's musical celebrations as European cultural capital in 2014.



Simon Murphy conducting the Latvian State Choir in Riga, December 2012

Latvian State Choir

The Latvian State Choir was established in 1940. As Latvia's flagship choral ensemble, it represents the nation's enormously strong choral tradition which came to international attention during the "Singing Revolution" in the late 1980's in which Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians sang together in their hundreds of thousands successfully engineering massive social and political change at the end of the Soviet era. The choir is considered to be one of the best in the world, with Britain's Gramophone magazine recently describing it and the Latvian choral tradition as one of the world's glories.

About Simon Murphy

Murphy is chief-conductor of The Hague's Baroque orchestra, The New Dutch Academy (NDA), and internationally active as a guest conductor of both period instrument and modern symphony orchestras. He studied with the leading lights of the Dutch early music movement, performing extensively with legendary figures such as Gustav Leonhardt and Frans Brüggen. Murphy has won much recognition for his work as a "repertoire refresher", presenting fresh perspectives on established masterpieces and introducing newly rediscovered musical gems. Recent performance highlights in the Netherlands include cycles of Stamitz, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven and Mendelssohn symphonies for Dutch radio at The Hague's Philipszaal, Rotterdam's De Doelen and Amsterdam's The Concertgebouw.

Murphy and the Music of Bach

Alongside his passion for classical symphonic music, especially of the Mannheim School, Murphy has a great love for the music of J.S. Bach. He has earned a strong reputation for his distinctive performances of Bach's sacred and orchestral works, with recent appearances at major European festivals including the Holland Festival of Early Music Utrecht, Händel Festspiele Halle and Bachfest Leipzig. Of his performances, The Netherlands' *De Volkskrant* exclaimed "Murphy is a Baroque musician with "guts": a conductor with the passion and conviction of a born missionary" and Germany's music magazine *Concerto* said "Breathtaking, compelling, technically brilliant and unusually effervescent! Murphy has it all - verve and pulsating temperament - presented with the finest finesse."



Simon Murphy conducting the Latvian State Choir in Riga, December 2012

Murphy's recent performances of Bach sacred works at home in the Netherlands, including "Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen" with the Noord Nederlands Orkest (NNO), have also gained high praise in the Dutch press. "Guest conductor Simon Murphy doesn't only present the Baroque in a lively and captivating manner – he paces the musical development beautifully, letting the music breathe and rest along the way, whereby the listener's ears remain fresh and alert until the final chord. Under his leadership, the NNO's Bach cantatas sparkled." (*Dagblad van het Noorden*)

Other recent concert highlights

In October 2012, Murphy opened the NDA's 10th anniversary season in The Hague with the symphonic programme *Black Magic*. Exploring the late 18th/early 19th century's obsession with destiny and the supernatural, the programme featured 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*. 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.

Upcoming performances

In May 2013, Murphy will conduct the Queensland Symphony Orchestra in Brisbane, Australia in a double bill featuring music by Corelli, Handel, Stamitz, Abel and J.C. Bach. Entitled *Roman Holiday* and *New Generation*, the concerts will be broadcast live by the Australian national broadcaster, ABC. In the Netherlands, Murphy's NDA 10th anniversary season includes symphonic programmes with music by Mozart, Beethoven, Rossini, Schmitt, Romberg and Spohr.

Relevant Links

www.latvijaskoncerti.lv

www.simonmurphyconductor.com

CDs on PentaTone Classics

including:

Murphy's "legendary" recording of Corelli's *Concerti Grossi*

made at the Holland Festival of Early Music Utrecht

recently chosen in the top five highlights of the festival's 30 year history

www.simonmurphyconductor.com/web/music.aspx

Not for publication

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