

Press Release, December 2012

## China Début Successful

Dutch-based Australian conductor Simon Murphy (Sydney, 1973) has successfully made his début in China this November with appearances in Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Hangzhou and Beijing. During the 2 ½ week tour, Murphy also gave master-classes and workshops at the Beijing Central Conservatory and Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts, and performed at the official celebrations in Beijing of 40 years of diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and the People's Republic of China.

The tour's programmes included Mozart and Beethoven symphonies, together with works by 18<sup>th</sup> century Dutch symphonists newly rediscovered by Murphy. Alongside the visit's performing and teaching activities, Murphy had a series of introductory meetings with leading figures in the Chinese culture sector, discussing projects and exploring possible future co-operations.

Murphy earned several return invitations from the tour's activities. In May 2013, he will return to the country to give further workshops and master-classes in the areas of repertoire, interpretation and historical performance practice. Future orchestral concert performances are scheduled for 2014.



Simon Murphy at work with music students in Shenzhen (top), in Hangzhou (above)

The tour's orchestral activities also featured several members of Murphy's specialist The Hague based Baroque orchestra, The New Dutch Academy, in solo and coaching roles. Dutch-based American cellist Caroline Kang performed Haydn's Cello Concerto in C and C.P.E. Bach's Concerto in A minor and Dutch-based Irish flautist Emma Elkinson played Mozart's Flute Concerto in G and Bach's Orchestral Suite no. 2.

## About Conductor Simon Murphy

Dutch-based Australian conductor Murphy (39) studied with the leading lights of the Dutch early music movement, performing extensively with legendary figures such as Gustav Leonhardt and Frans Brüggen, also working as the violist of the Amsterdam String Quartet for many years. Murphy is currently chief-conductor of The Hague's Baroque orchestra, the award winning New Dutch Academy (NDA), with the conductor and orchestra celebrating their 10 year jubilee together this year.

Alongside his work with the NDA, Murphy is active as a guest conductor of both period instrument and modern symphony orchestras around the world. He has won much recognition for his work as an ensemble builder, musical innovator and “repertoire refresher”, presenting fresh perspectives on established masterpieces and introducing newly rediscovered musical gems.



Simon Murphy at work with students at the Central Conservatory, Beijing

## International Cultural Ambassador

Through his international performing, programming and educational activities, Murphy has become highly experienced in the area of cultural diplomacy and in the role of “cultural ambassador”. Over the past decade, he has worked regularly for Dutch local and national government on major bilateral celebrations and cultural exchange programmes. Highlights include performances in Rome for the Dutch Queen's visit to Italy during the Dutch presidency of the EU in 2004, in Sydney and The Hague for Australia-Netherlands 400 in 2006, and at the Cultural Olympiad in Vancouver and the Hudson 400 celebrations in New York in 2009.

During the November tour to China, Murphy's performance in Beijing at the official celebrations of the 40 year anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and the People's Republic of China featured a special, hand-selected programme of 18<sup>th</sup> century Dutch repertoire. The event was hosted by the Netherlands' Ambassador to China, H.E. Aart Jacobi.

The Hague's Vice-Mayor and Alderman for Economic Affairs, Henk Kool, also hosted two of Murphy's performances in China, with the cultural activities consolidating on diplomatic and economic relationships between The Hague and several Chinese cities. Murphy also gave a private chamber recital for Dutch and Chinese guests from the corporate and cultural sectors at the residence of the Netherlands' Consul General in Hong Kong, H.E. Wilfred Mohr.

## Other 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. Performances at the major European festivals include the Holland Festival of Early Music Utrecht, Händel Festspiele Halle and Bachfest Leipzig.

In October 2012, Murphy opened the NDA's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary season with the symphonic programme *Black Magic*, exploring the late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century's obsession with destiny and the supernatural, with music from Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Reichardt's *Macbeth*, von Weber's *Der Freischütz* and Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

In December 2012, Murphy made his début in the Baltic states, conducting the Latvian State Choir and the Latvian Baroque orchestra, Collegium Musicum Riga, in Bach's *B Minor Mass*, receiving return invitations to perform as part of Riga's musical celebrations as European cultural capital in 2014.

### **Upcoming Performances**

In May 2013, Murphy will conduct the Queensland Symphony Orchestra in Brisbane, Australia with a double bill featuring music by Corelli, Handel, Stamitz, Abel, J.C. Bach, C.P.E. Bach and Reichardt. Entitled *Roman Holiday* and *New Generation*, the concerts will be broadcast live by the Australian national broadcaster, ABC.

Further performances in the Netherlands as part of the NDA's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary season include symphonic programmes with music by Mozart, Beethoven, Schmitt, Rossini, Romberg and Spohr.

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### **Relevant Links**

[www.simonmurphyconductor.com](http://www.simonmurphyconductor.com)

[www.newdutchacademy.nl](http://www.newdutchacademy.nl)

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### **Not for publication**

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