

Projects by the Dome Arts Retreat 2013

1. Overview of activities

Two projects took place in 2013, both presenting music from the early baroque period. The German tenor and conductor Florian Cramer from Freiburg, who has visited the country twice before, led a production of the *Musikalische Exequien* by Heinrich Schütz and undertook a solo concert tour performing the song cycle “Winterreise” by Franz Schubert in the Cape with his accompanist Stephanie Gurga. The baroque violinist Antoinette Lohmann, who has visited South Africa several times yearly since 2008, led the South African Baroque Ensemble in three concerts of works by Buxtehude, Bruhns, Tunder, Rosenmüller and other early baroque composers.

- 1.1. Seventeen singers from Johannesburg and Pretoria participated in the Schütz project. The ensemble was accompanied by the Pretoria cellist Berthine van Schoor and the American keyboard specialist Stephanie Gurga, who lives in Switzerland and regularly accompanies Florian Cramer. After an initial rehearsal phase, the programme was performed in the ZK Matthews Hall in the Unisa concert series on Sunday 1 September 2013. In the following week, Florian Cramer and Stephanie Gurga embarked on a short concert tour with the *Winterreise*, culminating in a final concert in the ZK Matthews Hall at UNISA.
- 1.2. In the second project, from 22 to 26 September 2013, a programme of early baroque music for chamber ensemble and bass was performed by the South African Baroque Ensemble. After a short rehearsal phase, concerts were performed at the Atrium at the University of the Witwatersrand on 24 September 2013, at the Aardklop Arts Festival in Potchefstroom on 25 September, and in the Christ Church in Pretoria on 26 September.

2. The Projects

The baroque music projects aimed at promoting Historically Informed Performance Practice and Early Music in South Africa at the Dome Arts Retreat have become a fixed institution, with master classes and concerts having been organised at least once yearly between 2008 and 2013. These projects have made a major contribution towards establishing Early Music in the country, in terms of public awareness and acceptance, performances, education of South African musicians, and support and encouragement of the few Early Music specialists in the country. It is very important that the momentum gained with these projects be maintained, to be able to reap the benefits of the increased exposure and awareness that have resulted from the numerous master classes and concerts.

In previous years, covering the whole spectrum of instrumental activity from voice through strings to wind instruments has been a priority, so as to develop Early Music on all fronts. This aim has guided the project planning in 2013 also. The Schütz project aimed to further develop expertise in early baroque choral singing in the northern part of the country; the instrumental project performing the same function for strings. Apart from the musical success of both projects and the positive engagement of the South African musicians involved, a very satisfying result of these projects is the possibility of engaging the same experts also in coming years. This ensures continuity and maintaining the momentum gained over the past years. Especially the enthusiasm generated in the Schütz project allows future projects along the same line, with exciting possibilities regarding instrumentation ensemble. In particular, such projects make possible introducing baroque brass instruments without the necessity of already having an established ensemble.

Florian Cramer and his accompanist Stephanie Gurga arrived on Thursday 22 August at Johannesburg International Airport and departed for Deelfontein, where they prepared for the rehearsal weekend. The choir joined them on Friday afternoon and rehearsals commenced. All tutti passages for the full choir was rehearsed until Sunday. In the ensuing week, everybody moved back to Johannesburg and Pretoria, where the solo parts

were rehearsed individually until Wednesday 28 August. On Thursday and Friday two more full rehearsals were held, and on Saturday the ensemble was joined by the cellist Berthine van Schoor for the dress rehearsal. The concert performance on Sunday at 16h00 was enthusiastically received by a surprisingly large audience.

On Monday, Florian and Stephanie performed the Winterreise at the Dome Arts Retreat as a dress rehearsal for the following concerts. The party left for the Cape on Tuesday. The concerts at Franschhoek and Stellenbosch were unfortunately rather badly attended. It is envisaged to present future concerts in the region within well established concert series. Back in Pretoria, however, the concert at the Enoch Sontonga Hall in Sunnyside was very well received.

Rehearsals for the programme of early baroque works for bass and ensemble started on Monday evening 22 September 2013. The members of the ensemble, consisting of Antoinette Lohmann (violin), Tanya Spiller (violin), Elmarie van den Vyver (viola), Berthine van Schoor (cello), Gerhard Benade (dulcian) and Charles Ainslie (bass), were all known to each other from previous projects and masterclasses. The first concert took place in the Atrium at the University of the Witwatersrand on 24 September. The next day the ensemble performed at the Aardklop Arts Festival in Potchefstroom, and the project was concluded with the concert in Pretoria at the Christ Church on Thursday. Before and after this project, Antoinette Lohmann was engaged in collaborations with South African baroque musicians in the Cape and Durban, as well as giving master classes.

3. Music Programmes

Programme of the Schütz concert at Pretoria

Musikalische Exequien
(SWV 279-281)

I. Nacket bin ich von Mutterleibe kommen

Concert in the form of a German Burial Mass

II. Herr, wenn ich nur dich habe

Motet for double choir

III. Herr, nun lässest du deinen Diener /Selig sind die Toten

Parentationmotet

Interval

Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt

From the Geistliche Chormusik 1648

Selig sind die Toten

From the Geistliche Chormusik 1648

Ich bin die Auferstehung und das Leben

From the Kleine geistliche Konzerte

Wir gläuben all an einen Gott

From the Kleine geistliche Konzerte

Verleih uns Frieden /Gib unsern Fürsten

From the Geistliche Chormusik 1648

Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes

From the Geistliche Chormusik 1648

Programme of the concerts in Johannesburg, Potchefstroom and Pretoria

1. **D. Buxtehude (ca1637-1707)**
Mein Herz ist bereit BuxWV 73
(vir bas, 3 viole en basso continuo)
2. **F. Tunder (1614-1667)**
Salve coelestis pater
(vir bas, viool en basso continuo)
3. **F. Tunder (1614-1667)**
O Jesu dolcissime
(vir bas, 2 viole en basso continuo)
4. **J. Rosenmüller (1617-1684)**
Lauda Jerusalem
(vir bas, viool en basso continuo)
5. **N. Bruhns (1665-1697)**
De profundis clamavi
(vir bas, 2 viole en basso continuo)
6. **J. C. Bach (1642-1703)**
Wie bist du, O Gott, in Zorn auf mich entbrannt
(vir bas, 4 viole en basso continuo)

4. Financial report

Schütz project

Income:

Grant of the Rupert Music Foundation	36 000
UNISA concert payment (2 sponsored concerts)	30 000
Concert revenue Winterreise	1 300

Total **67 300**

Expenses:

Flights (International and national)	22 576
Transport	2 697
Artist fees (Florian Cramer, Stephanie Gurga, Berthine van Schoor)	27 180
Accommodation and meals	4 800
Administration, hall rentals, diverse expenses	4 747

Total **67 300**

Chamber ensemble project

Income:

Grant of the Rupert Music Foundation	14 000
Concert revenue (Johannesburg, Potchefstroom, Pretoria)	7 521

Total **21 521**

Expenses:

Flight (International)	14 295
Transport	4 218
Artist fees	2 153
Administration, hall rentals, diverse expenses	855

Total **21 521**

5. Press resonance

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Paul Boekkooi

Heinrich Schütz-program – Fons Partita / Florian Cramer

ZK Matthews, Unisa, Pretoria

Wat Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672) se werk so intens verrykend én verreikend maak, het alles te doen met die musikale kruisbestuiwing tussen die vroeë Barok-musiek uit die Rooms-Katolieke Italië en die oorwegend Protestantse gebiede noord van die Alpe.

Dié uitvoering deur die vokale Fons Partita-ensemble onder leiding van Florian Cramer, met Stephanie Gurga (kabinettorrel) en Berthine van Schoor (tjello), was 'n enorme, lewensvervullende ervaringsaanwinst vir liefhebbers van 17de-eeuse vokale musiek.

Fons Partita bestaan uit 16 sangers wat hulle toewy aan musiek van die Renaissance tot by die Barok.

Duidelikheid van die teks was lank 'n onderwerp van bespreking in spesifiek liturgiese werke. In Italië het dit tydens die konsilie van Trente tot hewige debatte gelei. Die humanistiese Reformasie het die belang van 'n goed verstaanbare teks bo alles gestel.

Dat Schütz tydens twee uitgebreide verblyfperiodes in Italië sterk beïnvloed is deur die werk van albei Gabrieli's asook Monteverdi, staan vas, maar hy het ook geput uit en voortgebou op die voorraad werk wat deur sy Duits-Protestantse kollegas oor 'n voorafgaande tydperk van nagenoeg 'n driewert eeu byeengebring is.

Schütz pas die beginsel van meerkorigheid op 'n besonder ekspressiewe wyse toe. Hy het dié tegniek uit 'n diep religieuse en filosofiese agtergrond en benadering laat voortspruit. Vir hom was kreatiwiteit rondom hierdie kaleidoskoop van beelde 'n weergawe van die wêreld self, van God se skitterende en allesomvattende skepping.

Die eerste helfte van Sondag se program het bestaan uit sy driedelige Musikalische Exequien, SWV 279-281.

Dit illustreer Schütz se stilistiese diversiteit volledig. Cramer het wat die continuo betref eenvoud vooropgestel deur slegs van 'n tjello ('n viola da gamba sou ook gaaf wees!) en kabinettorrel gebruik te maak. Dit is meer as toereikend en kon die polifoniese vokale prestasies voluit in die klankkollig plaas.

Veral in die dubbelkorige motet, "Herr, wenn ich nur dich habe", was dit die solostemme – feitlik elkeen met 'n verskillende karakter en timbre – wat binne dié sewestemmige struktuur opgeval en verras het. Ook veral die effek van die eggokoor het die Italiaanse invloed bevestig.

Cramer se tempo's was redelik vlot, maar nooit ten koste van 'n duidelik onderliggende strewe na tekstuele helderheid en melodies-harmoniese uitdrukkingskrag nie.

Ná die pouse is vier dele uit Geistliche Chormusik en twee uit Kleine geistliche Konzerte uitgevoer. Ook hier het dit in dié vertolkings duidelik geword: Die woord beheers Schütz se musiek. Op die basis van dié Duitse tekste, hul ritmes en aksente, het sy melodiese, harmoniese en kontrapuntale vindingrykheid sterk opgebloeit.

Dié konsert was een van die verkwikkendste klassieke aanbiedings tot nog toe vanjaar.

6. Impact and results of the project

For the sixth consecutive year, concerts and master classes in Historical Performance Practice were presented under the auspices of the Dome Arts Retreat, with collaboration between experts from Europe and South Africa. The activities of August and September 2012 built upon the successes of the previous five years. The aim of these projects is establishing a tradition of performing non-contemporary music according to the performance practices of the time and with period instruments.

Although there exists great interest amongst musicians and the concert-going public for such performances, it is evident that a great input would be necessary before the critical mass of musicians is reached to be able to stage the normal repertoire, like for instance the Christmas Oratorio of Bach, making use of South African musicians only. This point still lies many years in the future. Even more time would be required before a reasonable fraction of the corps of professional musicians would consider educating themselves with regard to historical performance practice because of the promise of income in this section of the South African music scene. Unfortunately, one has to face the fact that it is this financial aspect that has proven to be the greatest hindrance in developing early music skills in the country.

Nevertheless, great advances have been made. With the success of the Schütz project of 2013 and the possibility of combining small string, woodwind and brass ensembles in performing the multi-choired works of Schütz, a new line of attack has opened up. In this way, it is possible to perform early music

without compromising authenticity and also to involve more wind players without needing a large string orchestra.

It remains the policy of the Dome Arts Retreat to combine visits of overseas musicians with educational and collaborative projects. This ensures that these visits have a much more lasting impact upon the musical landscape of the country and helps to build the fledgling early music scene here. The visits of Florian Cramer, Stephanie Gurga and Antoinette Lohmann fitted these aims very well and all the South African musicians who participated profited greatly from the opportunity. Collaborative projects like these help to maintain the momentum gained in the past six years and assure that Early Music becomes ever more firmly established in South Africa.