

# Baroque Project 2011

## 1. Overview of activities

Two members of the Netherlands baroque ensemble *Furor Musicus*, leader Antoinette Lohmann, and violinist Arjen de Graaf, visited South Africa between 26 September 2011 and 7 October 2011. They were involved in the following activities, all related to the promotion of historical performance practice in South Africa.

- 1.1. Master classes 26 – 28 September in Pretoria.
- 1.2. Rehearsals, participation in a colloquium, and performance of a programme of instrumental and vocal music at the music department of the University of the Free State, in collaboration with the Cape Consort (vocal baroque ensemble) and South African instrumentalists, 29 September to 2 October.
- 1.3. Rehearsals for and performances of a concert programme at the Aardklop Arts Festival in Potchefstroom, (6 October), at the Enoch Sontonga Hall in Sunnyside (5 October) and at the Glenshiel-auditorium in Johannesburg (4 October) in collaboration with South African instrumentalists and the soprano Elsabé Richter (Cape Town).

## 2. The Project

After the music projects of 2008 to 2010, at which several overseas specialists in historical performance practice collaborated in master classes and concerts organised by the Dome Arts Retreat, a project was planned for 2011 that would encompass instrumental concerts as well as a concertante performance of the Purcell-opera *The Tempest*, as well as instrumental and vocal master classes, with the baroque ensemble *Furor Musicus*. As a result of political changes in the Netherlands, the funding anticipated from the *Muziek Centrum Nederland* and the Netherlands Embassy was not allocated, and the project was adjusted to retain the aspect of tuition and collaboration between European and South African musicians, but with a much smaller budget. Apart from the planned master classes and one concert programme that would be performed at Aardklop, Johannesburg and Pretoria, an addition programme of early baroque music was performed at the Odeion in Bloemfontein in collaboration with the music department of the University of the Free State and Cape specialists on Early Music.

The Netherlands violinist Antoinette Lohmann, leader of the baroque ensemble *Furor Musicus*, has visited South Africa repeatedly since her first invitation to our country by the Dome Arts Retreat in 2008, and has since contributed extensively towards the establishment of Early Music in South Africa. After her arrival, she conducted master classes in Pretoria. With the arrival of her colleague Arjen de Graaf two days later, the activities moved to Bloemfontein, where they prepared a programme of vocal works by Monteverdi together with Hans Huysen (cello), Andrew Cruickshank (harpsichord), Gerhard Benadé (curtal) and the singers of the Cape Consort. During these preparations, the party participated in a departmental colloquium on historical performance practice. On 1 October the programme was performed in the Odeion to great acclaim. This performance was initially not planned as part of the project, and had its own independent budget, but this collaboration was welcomed as a positive opportunity for the overseas experts to reach even more South African musicians and audiences.

From Monday 3 October, the two Netherlands musicians prepared a programme consisting of the concertos *Spring* and *Summer* from the *Four Seasons* by Vivaldi, the *Suite Pulcinella* by Gallo, and two solo cantatas by Handel together with Elsabé Richter (soprano), Tanya Spiller (violin), Elmarie van der Vyfer (viola), Hans Huysen (cello), and John Coulter (harpsichord) in Pretoria. The concerts were performed in Pretoria, Johannesburg and Potchefstroom, and were enthusiastically received by the audiences, especially because of the interesting introductions given by Antoinette Lohmann during the concerts.

After concluding the project, Antoinette Lohmann departed to Cape Town for further collaborations, and Arjen de Graaf used the remaining weekend before his return to the Netherlands for a short visit to Deelfontein in the Vredefort Dome and to the Pilanesberg Game Reserve.

### 3. Music Programmes

#### Programme of the concerts at Pretoria, Johannesburg and Potchefstroom

1. **A. Vivaldi (1678 – 1741)**  
Concerto nr. 1 in E major, Op. 8, RV 269 "La primavera"  
*Allegro, Largo, Allegro (Pastorale)*
2. **G.F. Händel (1685 – 1759)**  
Nel dolce dell' oblio, HWV 134, for soprano and orchestra
3. **D. Gallo (1730-1768)**  
*Suite Pulcinella*, for two violins and basso continuo
4. **G.F. Händel**  
Notte placida e cheta, HWV 142, for soprano and orchestra
5. **A. Vivaldi**  
Concerto nr. 2 in G minor, Op. 8, RV 315 "L'estate"  
*Allegro non molto, Adagio e piano – Presto e forte, Presto*

#### Programme of the concert in Bloemfontein

All vocal works are by Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) except for the ballo *Della bellezza* composed by Giulio Monteverdi (1573-1630/31)  
The instrumental works are by Dario Castello (1590-1630)

Una donna fra l'altre	Book 6	5 voices
Zefiro torna	Book 6	5 voices
Sonata 4	Castello	2 violins
Lamento d'Arianna	Book 6	5 voices
Perche fuggi	Book 7	2 tenors
Misero Alceo, del caro	Book 6	5 voices
De la bellezza le dovute lodi	SM1	5 voices & 2 violins

#### INTERVAL

Qui rise, o Tirsi	Book 6	5 voices
Sonata 10	Castello	2 violins, dulcian
Lamento della ninfa	Book 8	Soprano, 2 tenors and bass
Ecco di dolci raggi	SM2	bass solo
Amor che, che deggio far	Book 7	4 voices & 2 violins
Batto, qui pianse	Book 6	5 voices
Tirsi & Clori – Ballo	Book 7	5 voices & 2 violins

#### 4. Report of Antoinette Lohmann

(Translation of her report, which was submitted in Afrikaans and Netherlands)

Feedback on the collaboration between Furor Musicus (Netherlands) and South African singers and instrumentalists, October 2011.

Organiser: Gerhard Benadé (Dome Arts Retreat)

After several visits to South Africa, I shall try to write the report in Afrikaans as token of my love for the country and my pride in the prospering of Early Music here.

This project was an important step in the three years that I have been giving master classes and concerts in South Africa, because every time I have collaborated with more South African musicians, whom I taught before. I have already brought many bows, baroque instruments and other parts and already there are quite a few instrumentalists with baroque instruments. This time, I brought only one other string player (Arjen de Graaf) from the Netherlands, all other musicians were South African. This is unique in the development of the past few years, and means that we are steadily getting closer to our aim, which is build and stimulate an own South African Early Music movement.

The first concert was with the Cape Consort in Bloemfontein. When I am in the Cape, I often work with them and with cellist Hans Huysen, who studied in Germany. Together with harpsichordist Andrew Cruickshank, Hans represents the same aims in the Cape as Gerhard Benadé in the northern parts of the country. The Cape Consort is the first South African group who performs early baroque repertory with singers. We performed only Italian works from the seventeenth century, and mostly Monteverdi, which is new to the South African audiences. For me it is equally important to educate the public as it is to educate the musicians, that is why we always try to include unknown works in the programmes next to well-known works, so as to be able to point out to the audiences the differences between historical and modern performance practices. Many of the singers I have met in Potchefstroom when Furor Musicus performed *Acis & Galatea* of G.F.Händel in 2010. In this concert, Gerhard Benadé played the curtal, hence the North was also represented.

Making the differences audible... that is what we did in the performances of the concerts Spring and Summer from the Four Seasons by Vivaldi. Several listeners afterwards told me that our performance was a big surprise to them. I introduced the concerts with a short lecture. It is very important to explain to the public what we are doing, why, and how, with which instruments and bows, what the instruments could mean for the interpretation, and what the historical resources could teach us. Here also, we performed with South African musicians. I have taught Elmarie van der Vyver and Tanya Spiller already since 2009, and with John Coulter and Hans Huysen I have played since my first visit to South Africa in 2008. Also soprano Elsabé I know from our performance of *Acis & Galatea* in 2011.

I am very happy with these progresses in Early Music in South Africa. It has now progressed to the stage that a group of South African musicians, playing on the correct instruments and bows, can disseminate their knowledge of historical performance practice. Elmarie van der Vyver teaches at the Northwest University in Potchefstroom and can enlighten her students about historical performance practice, and Tanya Spiller does the same with the children she teaches in Johannesburg... It is very important for the advancement of Early Music in the country that students and children already start with this practice, since they determine the musical future.

## **5. Feedback from the participants**

### **Elsabe Richter**

It was wonderful to me to participate in this project. At our very lively rehearsals, I felt the desire to learn even more of the baroque genre and the technicalities of baroque instruments, and also how to adjust the voice even better to this changed accompaniment. I experienced the public in the audiences as very open and attentive and involved in what we presented to them, especially since Antoinette took the time to introduce them in a very professional and entertaining way to the metaphorical content of the pieces by Vivaldi. The ensemble worked together very well, and we certainly won many a heart with our concerts. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity.

### **Arjen de Graaf**

For me, this visit to South Africa was unique and unforgettable. There was a great response and appreciation from my fellow South African musicians and from the public. It is a pity that the halls were not packed, maybe one could rectify this with better marketing? The warm welcome from my hosts (colleague musicians) also added to feeling at home here.

Early Music in South Africa finds itself in the beginning stages, and I am glad that I could add to building the movement by my presence here. It would be nice to do this more often! The collaboration was very enriching. Personally for me, it was a wonderful and intense experience to spend so much time with Antoinette Lohmann, and to perform with her so often. Specifically in Bloemfontein it was very inspiring, also because of the repertory (some Italian sonatas). I have had lessons from her for a few years, and have performed with her often, but every time I find that there is more to learn from her! I would that the South Africans have still many opportunities to learn from her in the years to come.

Another highlight for me was the solo concert that I could give at Deelfontein. The whole setting in the midst of nature and the intimate and very interested audience, as well as the always more intensive concentration and preparation for a solo performance made this concert a very inspiring experience to me.

I hope that there will be possibilities to collaborate with Gerhard Benade, the Cape Consort and the other musicians I met in future.

### **Tanya Spiller**

In October 2011 I was invited to join Antoinette Lohmann and Furor Musicus in a concert that they presented in Pretoria and Johannesburg and Potchefstroom. The experience was extremely beneficial for me. Watching these masters of Historically Informed Performance Practice was a huge learning curve. The attention to detail, not only of the correct notes and bowing but more especially how to deliver the “affect” that was intended, was very informative. My playing has improved as a result of the experience as has my interest in Baroque performance. There is not a great deal of Performance Practice to be heard in Gauteng. However, it is in my teaching that I feel the benefits most. I have been able to impart this knowledge to so many students, and to inspire them to open their minds to new ways of thinking and listening.

### **Elmarie van der Vyver**

This baroque project (and all the other baroque opportunities that arose in the last three years from this initiative) has changed my life as artist, life long student and pedagogue irrevocably. The deciphering of the baroque idiom through the historical performance practice by means of hands on contact with international specialists (in particular Prof. Antoinette Lohmann of the Netherlands) in this field, has tremendously improved my ability to perform in an informed way. Of course, this also spills over to my students, who directly profits from my experience. I would be very glad if this initiative would continue in future, since the benefit to the South African musical scheme is enormous.

### **John Reid Coulter**

It was for me great to play again with Antoinette. She has a particularly engaging approach to the music and shows great perspicacity and ingenuity. Tackling the Four Seasons by Vivaldi is more than an average challenge as the work has been performed and recorded so many times. To say something fresh and original becomes harder with such a work and this she managed with great aplomb.

Antoinette brings to the listener other violinistic insights which few players are able to do. Her unpretentious and relaxed approach make all involved willing to participate in the creative journey. It is precisely this approach that 'leaves no stone (note) unturned' for which artists from The Netherlands are renowned. Modern orchestral practice can so often fall into the trap of rushed rehearsals in which details are suppressed with players resorting to automaton modes of performance, that hearing the freshness of period instrument performance is an invigorating and uplifting experience. We need greater exposure to this type of music-making in order to let historical performance practice take its rightful place in the musical life in South Africa.

## **6. Financial report**

The following is a summary of the detailed report, which is available as Excel file upon request. With the aid of the sponsor funds and the concert income, most of the costs were covered. The South African hosts were responsible for the majority of accommodation and meals.

### **Income:**

Grant of the UNISA Music Foundation	20 000
Grant of the Rupert Music Foundation	36 000
Concert revenue Pretoria (Own collection)	3 100
Concert revenue Johannesburg (Glenshiel, 60% of total)	1 900
Concert revenue Aardklop (Computicket, 80% of total)	2 985
<b>Total</b>	<b>63 985</b>

**Expenses:**

Flights (Overseas)	15 437
Flights (Local)	3 900
Artist fees	25 600
Accommodation	1 952
Administration	3 691
Transport	2 715
Printers fees	9 174
Diverse expenses	1 516
<b>Total</b>	<b>63 985</b>

## 7. Impact and results of the project

For the fourth 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 September and October 2011 built upon the successes of the previous three years, and, although the project of 2010, with two instrumental programmes and a full stage production of the baroque opera *Acis and Galatea*, certainly was a highlight in terms of scale, the current project bears witness to the fact that Early Music is slowly becoming established in South Africa to the extent that South African instrumentalists and singers are able to perform in the historic idiom at a high level of professionalism.

The programmes were performed to great acclaim and met with much enthusiasm. As in previous years, it was clear that the Early Music movement is still largely unknown with the South African public and that concertgoers are uninformed about historically motivated performance practice. This is clear from the surprised reaction by listeners upon hearing the expressiveness of the performances and the unfamiliar rhetorical language. In addition, it is also clear that much needs to be done to break down prejudices and negative perceptions toward this sector of the musical landscape, so that a growing audience for performances of Early Music may be mobilised and the very important financial profitability threshold be reached. From the limited resonance from professional musicians, it is clear that Early Music as yet does not play any serious role as a viable economical opportunity.

In spite of this, the interest and enthusiasm amongst those musicians reached by the 2011 project and its predecessors are great, and the activities amongst South African musicians in this field are steadily increasing in number. In this respect, the projects presented by the Dome Music Retreat since 2008 have played an important catalysing role. The founding of the vocal ensemble Cape Consort early in 2011 is an example. The growing number of exponents of Early Music in South Africa is finding the energy and the financial means to collaborate in spite the large distances involved, and is joining forces to make performances possible that, for each group on its own, would be difficult to realise.

The performances of October 2011 and the planned projects for 2012 are ample proof of the fact that a viable kernel for a South African Baroque Orchestra already exists, and that the establishment of such an orchestra is only a question of time and perseverance. With increased visibility (audibility!) of Early Music amongst the public and especially at music schools and music departments, young musicians will increasingly be won and the necessary critical number of musicians be ready to bring the movement into the South African music mainstream as it already is in the rest of the world.

Apart from the fact that the baroque projects of the Dome Arts Retreat of the past four years form the spearhead in the establishment of Early Music in South Africa, that these projects have succeeded in bringing together the geographically isolated forces in this field, and that important impulses were given in the field of musical education, two further aspects need emphasis.

Firstly, it is vital that the quality of the performances be at the same high level as elsewhere in the world, so as not to discredit the movement in this country. This has been achieved by these projects, as testified

by the enthusiastic response from audiences and press alike. The high level of professionalism is to a large extent due to the indefatigable Antoinette Lohmann, who has saved Early Music in South Africa from mediocrity with her energy and dedication.

Secondly, the participants of the projects over the past four years testify to the perhaps surprising fact that Early Music is not limited to a small elite group of Eurocentric musicians. It is obvious that the movement has struck a vital nerve especially in the community of black singers, and the potential for popularising historical performance practice in the general public by way of the genres Opera and Oratorium is indeed very large. It is for this reason that the education of singers in historical performance practice is emphasised in the planning of future projects.