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Bio T h e H a g u e P e r c u s s i o n

Since its founding in 1977 the musicians of The Hague Percussion (Slagwerk Den Haag) have focused on performing and developing contemporary percussion music in its most diverse forms: from existing repertoire, via a large number of new commissions and ongoing collaborations with composers, to researching the furthest limits of organized sound. As a specialized ensemble The Hague Percussion has built up a leading position, both nationally as well as internationally; a position, which has brought them to virtually all European countries, the United States, the Middle East, Japan and Korea.

In its use of instrumentation as well as sound sources The Hague Percussion is noticeable for an enormous diversity. Equally broad is its programming: from specialized research projects to accessible programs for a general public and from concerts for the youngest generations to large-scale (inter)national co-productions. The Hague Percussion actively pursues collaborations with other ensembles and disciplines as well - such as dance, theater and visual arts.

Due to the regular rejuvenation of its line-up over the years, The Hague Percussion has not only maintained its vast experience, but also an openness of character. A characteristic, which is also apparent in the way the musicians present their concerts and manage to communicate with large and diverse audiences.

Bio + CV The Hague Percussion

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Repertoire and renewal

The repertoire of The Hague Percussion stretches from the earliest composed works for percussion ensemble to the large percussion sextets of Iannis Xenakis and can be characterized by an unremitting curiosity into the nature of sound. During the course of its 30 year existence the group has actively contributed to the creation of new repertoire, working together with several of new music's most prominent pioneers, among whom composers such as Mauricio Kagel, John Cage, Karl-Heinz Stockhausen and Steve Reich.

The Hague Percussion currently premieres up to eight new works a year, by both established names on the new music front, such as Michael Gordon, James Wood or Guo WenJing, as well as younger composers with whom the group seeks to establish ongoing relationships, such as Peter Adriaansz, Yannis Kyriakides, Seung-Ah Oh, Christopher Fox, Donnacha Dennehy or Michael Maierhof. To this purpose, the group also keeps a close eye on the youngest generation of composers, involving them actively in the development of their repertoire.

Due to the nature of many new works, the group is frequently involved in the design and construction of entirely new instruments, built especially for or by the group itself. In recent years, working with electronics, live electro-acoustic media and other media, as well as an ongoing search for new forms of musicianship have also become an increasing source of inspiration.

Collaboration with other musicians and disciplines

The group regularly works together with other ensembles and musicians. This led, among other projects, to three editions of the series *Slag & Sax* with saxophones, the unusual combination of percussion and church organ (*100% Organic*, 2001) and *Prana* by Peter Adriaansz (2007) for an entirely amplified ensemble of percussion, female voices and electric guitars.

The Hague Percussion collaborates on a regular basis with Belgian colleague ensemble *Champ d-Action*, a collaboration that led to a provisional pinnacle with the large-scale, semi-staged co production of James Wood's *Hildegard* (2005/2006). The Hague Percussion also works extensively with theater, dance and visual arts. Noteworthy examples were *Access all Areas*, with the National Ballet (2000), the Japanese premiere of Maki Ishii's opera *Tojirarete Fune*, the integration of new compositions and contemporary dance (*Bows & Bruises*), with choreographer Marie-Cécile de Bont (2004), a visual program revolving around miniature instruments (*Underground*, together with Rosemary Joy, 2007) and *Words and Beyond: Hwang JinYi* (2008) by Seung-Ah Oh, with Korean singing, solo dancer and site-specific installation by Korean artist JiYoung Chae.

In the future new projects will be realized around dance (*Pinball & Grace*, 2009, with Michael Gordon and Club Guy and Roni) and theater (*Les poissons ne toussent pas*, 2011, with Jan van de Putte and director Jos van Kan).

Three lines of activity

The Hague Percussion (Slagwerk Den Haag, or SDH) divides its activities along three basic programming lines:

- *SDH-Laboratory*, which is process-related and mostly revolves around the research of new sounds and concepts in close collaboration with composers;
- *SDH-Productions*, which is product-related and revolves around new and existing repertoire and musical or interdisciplinary collaboration programs;
- *SDH-Educational*, which is public-related and revolves around accessible programs for a broad audience (such as *Karbonkel*, *Global Warming*) and which includes the successful youth programs (*And now quiet...* about the world of John Cage, or *Bring in da Noize* about electro-acoustic music and live-samples), and the giving of workshops.

Dispersion and audience scope

With its varied programming The Hague Percussion reaches a very broad audience, as diverse as the performance spaces the group plays in. In this way the group not only attends to the larger concert halls or to smaller, specialized venues, but also plays on location and manages to reach the smallest villages with its youth programs. SDH contributes regularly to many national Festivals, such as Dag in de Branding, Gaudeamus, Musica Sacra and the Output Festival and has recently performed at international festivals such as the Festival van Vlaanderen, Music@venture and Transit (B), Avignon (Fr), Schleswig-Holstein (D), Huddersfield (GB) and TIMF (South-Korea).

Nearly all programs are recorded for the radio. In 2008 The Hague Percussion played 60 concerts, in five countries, reaching an audience of well over 10.000 visitors.

Cd's

The first three cd's to be issued by the group revolved around specific instrumental families: wooden instruments on *The Wooden Branch*, skin instruments on *Skin Hits* and metal instruments on *Irony*. On the occasion of its 25th anniversary in 2002 the group issued a special cd-single of the work *Music of Mercy pt. 3* by composer and artistic director Peter Adriaansz and in 2003 *New Works for Percussion* was released, with a selection of recent commissioned works by Osvaldo Budón, Ivo van Emmerik, Claudio Baroni, Seung-Ah Oh and Donnacha Dennehy. In 2009 The Hague Percussion released its first dvd, *Parade*, with specifically filmed recordings of recent, starkly visual, percussion works by Mayke Nas & Wouter Snoei, Guo Wenjing, Anthony Pateras and Peter Adriaansz.

Personnel and office

The current line-up of the The Hague Percussion consists of Marcel Andriessen, Fedor Teunisse, Diego Espinosa, Niels Meliefste, Pepe Garcia and Frank Wienk, but also works regularly with guest musicians. All members of SDH are also active outside of the group, in several new music ensembles, orchestras and multi disciplinary projects or as teachers at the conservatory.

The Artistic Leadership is divided over Peter Adriaansz (programming) and Fedor Teunisse (ensemble leader). Management and production are in hands of Paul Dijkema and Stephanie Buttrich.

Since 1989, The Hague Percussion has received ongoing financial support from the Netherlands government. For more information, visit: www.slagwerkdenhaag.nl