

New Year's Day concert by Cappella Pratensis vocal ensemble streamed live from the Grote Kerk (Church of Our Lady) in Breda, the Netherlands

As part of the municipal Winter Light activities, the City of Breda, the Grote Kerk Breda Foundation and Cappella Pratensis are presenting a New Year's Day concert on January 1, 2021 at 5 PM Central European Time. The concert will open with a New Year's greeting from Mayor Paul Depla, a word of welcome by Marieke Wiegel, director of the Grote Kerk, and fascinating pictures of Breda. Then the internationally renowned vocal ensemble Cappella Pratensis will sing an ode to the composer Josquin Desprez. All of this will be captured on several cameras and streamed live from the magnificent Grote Kerk Breda. The concert can be seen and heard throughout the world free of charge.

The Cappella Pratensis ensemble specializes in polyphonic masterpieces from the 15th and 16th centuries, particularly from the Low Countries. Standing around a central music stand, they sing directly from old facsimiles of original choir books. The ensemble is world famous and has fans across the globe. They prepare their concerts thoroughly, often supported by musicology research and documentation. In this regard, Cappella Pratensis works closely with the Alamire Foundation, International Centre for the Study of Music in the Low Countries (University of Leuven). In contrast with these traditional productions, Cappella Pratensis works regularly with surprising partners such as dance companies, jazz musicians and theatre-makers. The ensemble was founded in 1987 and is now under the artistic direction of singer and conductor Stratton Bull. Besides giving regular concerts in the Netherlands and Belgium, Cappella Pratensis performs at leading international festivals and venues throughout Europe and the United States.

Start of the Josquin Desprez Anniversary Year

This concert is also special in that it marks the 500th anniversary year of the death of French-Flemish composer Josquin Desprez. He is perhaps the greatest of the Renaissance composers. With this concert, Cappella Pratensis is simultaneously starting the New Year in Breda and presenting a worldwide homage to the great master. A striking additional note is that this composer was working during the same period that the construction of the Grote Kerk Breda was being completed under Hendrik III. So he was an important contemporary of the Breda Nassau's!

Josquin Desprez (1450-1521), from the Belgian province of Hainaut, was active in the French-Flemish school of polyphony. He was renowned as a singer, composer and educator, primarily working in France and Italy. His music is characterized by its great clarity and tight structure, in which the notes closely follow the lyrics. In his chansons, he was the most important exponent of a style that was new in the mid-15th century, in which the techniques of canon and counterpoint were applied to secular songs.

You can follow the concert by clicking these links: www.cappellapratensis.nl/nl/josquin500/ / www.grotekerkbreda.nl/livestream

Note to the editors: further information can be obtained by contacting Barbara Canters, Event Manager, Grote or Onze Lieve Vrouwe Kerk. Tel: +31 76 5218267 / mail: info@grotekerkbreda.nl
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