

TON KOOPMAN

Cleveland Orchestra

May: 3 – 4 & May: 9 – 10, 2013

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PROGRAMM

May 3 – 4

Mozart /Fischer/Rebel/Haydn

May 9 – 10

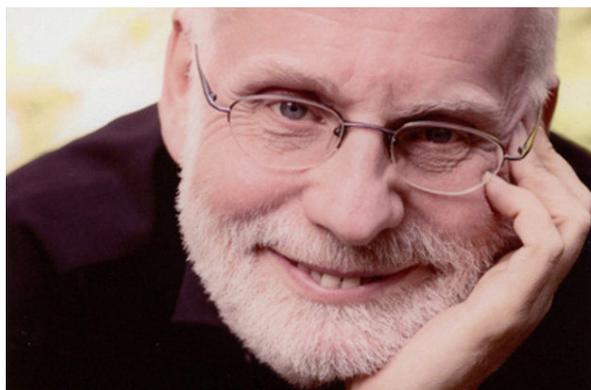
Handel Water Music Suite
Coronation Anthem No. 1,
"Zadok the Priest"
Dettingen Te Deum

The Plain Dealer

Ton Koopman ends residency at Cleveland Orchestra with dashing Handel program

By Zachary Lewis
The Plain Dealer

May 10, 2013 at 10:44 AM



Ton Koopman's reign as artist-in-residence is ending, but his presence at the Cleveland Orchestra will be felt for years to come.

On an all-Handel program Thursday marking his final concerts as resident artist, the 18th-century specialist delineated more clearly than ever the impact he's had on Severance Hall these last three years.

Thanks to him, the orchestra now plays Baroque music not only beautifully but also stylistically, in

keeping with period aesthetics. Its Handel on Thursday practically sizzled, driven by the exceptional purity of tone and infectious enthusiasm Koopman brings to every performance.

Whenever the group takes up music from older eras, surely now it also will consider some of Koopman's many other preferences, all on display Thursday and on separate recitals here on organ and harpsichord, including brisk tempos, flexible dynamics, and textural transparency.

The orchestra has not been the only beneficiary. Koopman also has had a marked effect on the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus.

Singing Handel's "Dettingen" Te Deum and brief but powerful Coronation Anthem No. 1 Thursday, the chorus's chamber ensemble was a model of Baroque-style clarity and lightness, handling unquestionably tricky music with aplomb. For a few moments, everyone could imagine being King George II.

The Te Deum, written in celebration of a British victory, is far from Handel's finest work. Though splendid and rousing at times, the music generally is not memorable.

Still, with Koopman on the podium, discovering pockets of great luster, there was much to enjoy. The Chamber Chorus as a whole sang robustly, with impeccable diction, and the women made in portions featuring them alone a fervent, haunting sound.

Several soloists also illuminated the performance. Principal trumpet Michael Sachs provided a brilliant regal element, while guest vocalist Klaus Mertens, a bass-baritone, stood apart with an upper range both sweet and poignant. Joining him in the performance were countertenor Jay Carter and tenor Steven Soph.

Koopman rounded out the evening in splendid fashion with Handel's "Water Music," a suite composed for a different but similarly named ruler: King George I. Last heard here just three years ago, the work came to life again in a dashing performance only the orchestra's outgoing resident could have elicited.

Leading vigorously from the harpsichord, Koopman held the orchestra's feet to the fire, asking for and receiving throughout the swiftest of readings. On top of that, he insisted on sensuously tapered cadences and precipitous swings in dynamics, not once permitting a moment of stasis. Alluring solos likewise abounded from oboists Mary Lynch and principal Frank Rosenwein and horn players Jesse McCormick and principal Richard King.

Prior to Koopman's arrival, Baroque music wasn't a staple in the orchestra's diet. Now it is, at a high level, and audiences have likewise grown accustomed. For so many reasons, let's hope Koopman's presence here doesn't end with his tenure.

http://www.cleveland.com/musicdance/index.ssf/2013/05/ton_koopman_ends_residency_at.html