

The philosophy of the festival

The legendary Huelgas festival in Talant distinguishes itself from all other festivals by the different content and design that is given to the event. The idea of a new, refreshing approach was prompted by the fact that, more and more, festivals fall back on known repertoire, rusty concepts and a virtually non-existent relationship between listener and audience. The Huelgas Ensemble has also often been the victim of such attitudes when invited to classical festivals worldwide.

Hence the step to create a festival with these new aims:



1. Most of the works performed are unknown and/or by unknown masters. Naturally these compositions, which are never heard elsewhere, must also meet the very high quality standards of the Huelgas Ensemble.

2. During the concerts a number of experiments are performed that do not take place in our usual seasonal concerts. Thereby the audience is confronted with elements that the ensemble questions in its search for new insights. The listener is thus confronted with the 'inner workings' of polyphony.



3. The audience is intensely involved with the programming, the various concert forms and with discussions between performers and the critical listener. The final concert of the festival is composed by the listeners themselves, from a selection list of fifty compositions.

4. Short, unexpected intermezzi, surprising guests (for example a professional 'raconteur', the German Minguet Quartett and our friend Jos Van Immerseel) and accidental works that fall outside the repertoire of the ensemble give the festival a festive character.



5. Last but not least, the village where the festival takes place has a magical attraction. The picturesque village overlooking Dijon is quiet, has no shops, cafés or restaurants, but does have a beautiful late Romanesque church, the centre of the festival. And yet, due to the proximity of Dijon, the village offers all facilities: a short distance away you will find restaurants, hotels and shops.

The centre of Dijon can even be reached on foot, or you can take the direct bus connection between Dijon centre and Talant.

6. And the festival bar 'Chez Josquin' is the central meeting place for the musicians and the audience. A cozy environment where you can get to know other international festival goers and discuss performances with the audience and musicians, everything can happen in the festival bar with a Burgundian or Belgian snack or drink. This interaction is an essential part of the festival and therefore sets it apart from an ordinary classical concert.



Paul Van Nevel.