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Orpheus Instituut acquires prestigious library Ton Koopman

The internationally renowned Orpheus Institute (Ghent, Belgium) acquires the prestigious library of Ton Koopman. The focus of the collection is 17th- and 18th-century music, its cultural context and performance practice.

Ton Koopman (°1944) enjoys worldwide fame as an organist, harpsichordist, conductor, music pedagogue and researcher. He is one of the pioneers of the early music movement. His historically informed interpretations of Bach, Buxtehude and their contemporaries, as well as music from the later 18th-century, can be heard on hundreds of acclaimed CDs.



Ton Koopman and Peter Dejans (photo: mark Boone)

In the course of his sixty-year career, Koopman has collected an impressive collection of books and music. Among the thousands of prints and manuscripts are numerous unique works, including a cantata by Handel unknown until recently. In addition to this historical library with works from the 15th to the 19th century, Koopman has also collected thousands of modern books and periodicals on Baroque music and culture. Many of the books, both old and modern, have been annotated extensively by the artist himself, making the collection unique.

Thanks to the patronage of the Désiré Collen Foundation, the Orpheus Institute is able to bring this gem to Ghent. Peter Dejans, director of Orpheus Institute: "This is a real working library with a wealth of practice-oriented literature and scores. This collection is a dream for every performer of baroque music." The Orpheus Institute is a leading European centre for artistic research in music since 1996. In particular, the processes of music-making are central to the activities of the Institute, which now has 35 researchers.

For the development of a new research group around the Koopman collection, the Orpheus Institute has secured the financial support of the Department of Economy, Science & Innovation of the Flemish Government. The collection will be housed in the Koetshuis (coach-house), which is located next to the Orpheus Institute. This eighteenth-century building on the historic site of d'Hane Steenhuyse is made available by the City of Ghent and will preserve Koopman's books in optimal conditions. There will also be a multifunctional space for publicly accessible lectures, seminars, workshops and concerts. The renovation of this historic building started in the autumn of 2019 and will last until spring 2020.

The research group, with baroque specialists Dr Bruno Forment (principal investigator) and Dr Huub van der Linden, will develop projects around the collection to encourage innovative artistic practices and develop new methods within the digital humanities. In this context, the Orpheus Institute will also open up the collection digitally to make it available to researchers in Belgium and beyond. The team will be further strengthened in the future in order to realise these ambitions.

More information: www.orpheusinstituut.be/ton-koopman-library

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