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(1561-1621)

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INTRODUCTION

On 16 October 1621, Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, who lived in the Koestraat in Amsterdam, died at the age of fifty-nine or sixty. Around 1564, he had moved with his parents from Deventer to Amsterdam, where his father was appointed organist of the Oude Kerk. Even before 1580, probably in 1577, at the age of fifteen or sixteen, Sweelinck indirectly followed in the footsteps of his father, who died in 1573, as organist of the Oude Kerk. Sweelinck remained at this post until his death and was succeeded by his son Dirck.

Sweelinck grew into a leading musician of international stature. During his lifetime, he was praised for his exceptionally beautiful organ playing. He was also regularly called upon for his great expertise in the field of organ building. Students (mainly from the German regions, especially Hamburg) came to Amsterdam to take lessons from the Amsterdam Orpheus, as he was affectionately called. His students in turn often became important musicians and carried Sweelinck's memory with them into the future. Thus Sweelinck stood at the basis of the North German organ school, from which Johann Sebastian Bach would emerge at the end of the century.

Sweelinck was not only active as an organist, he was also the leader of the Amsterdam Collegium musicum. This group brought together (often well-to-do) residents of Amsterdam both men and women. They met weekly, usually on Friday afternoons, in one of their houses to make music together under Sweelinck's inspiring leadership. They sang and played instruments and the vast majority of Sweelinck's vocal music originated in direct (or indirect) relation to the Collegium musicum.

Sweelinck's organ playing and expertise disappeared with his death, now exactly 400 years ago. What remains are the compositions that have stood the test of time. Sweelinck's surviving oeuvre is not very large, but the quality is unparalleled. Both the keyboard works (only surviving in manuscript form) and the polyphonic vocal music (only surviving in printed editions) and even the canons (partly in print and partly in Sweelinck's own handwriting) bear witness to the spirit of the age and rest on the three pillars of (musical) life at that time: Catholic, Protestant, and secular. Whereas for some contemporaries these pillars were divisive, Sweelinck managed to unite them in harmony, so much so that it is impossible to know where his personal preference (if any) actually laid.

In this 400th anniversary year, we honour Sweelinck with a festival in which his music is displayed, discussed, described, but above all, performed. Much attention will be paid to the pure Sweelinck – performed according to the interpretations of the current state of research – but there will also be contemporary expressions in which Sweelinck serves as an inspiration. There will be exhibitions, symposia, books, magazines, concerts, teaching programmes for schools, and even a performance for children. In the week of 16–24 October, Sweelinck will be resounding throughout the Netherlands (as far as restrictions around Covid-19 permit). Especially in Amsterdam, where he lived and worked, but also in other places in the Netherlands

and even far beyond the country's borders, Sweelinck will receive the attention he deserves.

The many activities surrounding the 400th anniversary of Sweelinck's death, culminating in the Sweelinck Festival (see: www.sweelinckfestival.nl), will also be expressed in this edition of TVNM. Musicologists and other experts will share with us the latest state of their research into and around Sweelinck. A few new facts will be presented in the 'Sweelinckiana', new light will be shed on the basso continuo part of the *Cantiones sacrae*, and Sweelinck's textual choices in his Italian and French music will be scrutinized. Sweelinck's keyboard music will also be discussed in terms of meter and performance practice. One of Sweelinck's students, who was unknown until now, will be introduced and we will delve into the word-tone relationship with Johann Adam Reincken (also born in Deventer). Finally, attention will be paid to the nineteenth-century rediscovery of Sweelinck.

I close this introduction with the hope that, during this commemorative year, Sweelinck will strike a chord with many people, and that interest would extend even beyond this celebratory occasion.

Simon Groot