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Discantare Super Planum Cantum : new approaches to vocal polyphonic improvisation 1300-1470

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Citation

Berentsen, N. M. T. (2016, December 14). *Discantare Super Planum Cantum : new approaches to vocal polyphonic improvisation 1300-1470*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/45012>

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Title: Discantare Super Planum Cantum : new approaches to vocal polyphonic improvisation 1300-1470

Issue Date: 2016-12-14

CURRICULUM VITAE

Niels Berentsen (The Hague, 1987) is a singer, researcher, and music educator. He originally trained as a composer and his works include the chamber-operas *Pontormo* (2006) and *Serenade* (2008). He received his Master's degree in composition from the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague in 2011, with a minor in singing. A specialisation in early music performance followed, including master classes with acclaimed performers such as Evelyn Tubb, Marcel Pérès, Jill Feldman, Eric Mentzel and Corina Marti.

As a singer, Niels regularly appears as a tenor-soloist in cantatas and oratorios, and performs with vocal ensembles such as The Ascoli Ensemble (The Hague) and Capella Sancta Maria (Amsterdam). With the former, he has recorded two CD's: *I Frammenti Ascolani* (2010) and *Veneto 1440* (2014). His opera debut, as Grimoaldo in a production of G.F. Händel's *Rodelinda regina de' Longobardi*, took place in 2015. He is the artistic director of the ensemble Diskantores, specialising in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century music.

As a researcher, Niels has investigated techniques of polyphonic improvisation in the 1300-1500 period. He has spoken on this topic, amongst others, at the Fondazione Cini's 'Con la mente e con le mani' conference (Venice, 2013), the Utrecht Early Music Festival (2014), the Medieval and Renaissance Music Conference, where he also chaired a session on historical improvisation (Brussels, 2015), and the festival Laus Polyphoniae (Antwerp, 2016). He was interviewed about his research by the newspaper *NRC Handelsblad*, and his publications have appeared in the *Journal of the Alamire Foundation* and the *Tijdschrift Oude Muziek*.

Niels has taught the theory and performance of medieval and Renaissance music at the Royal Conservatoire since 2011. Recently, he led the Renaissance Ensemble of the conservatoire in a performance of Antoine de Févin's *Missa pro fidelibus defunctis*. Guest-lessons about polyphonic improvisation have been given at the Russian Gnessin's Academy of Music (Moscow), the Israel Conservatory of Music (Tel-Aviv), the Conservatory of Amsterdam, the Kodály Institute (Kecskemét), and the House of Polyphony (Leuven).