

# NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier  
University



## Famed Dutch composer works with Laurier music students

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WATERLOO – Netherlands’ most successful composer, Johan de Meij, is coming to Wilfrid Laurier University to work with students in the music faculty February 24-27. The Dutch composer will also conduct two concerts of his work with the Wellington Winds, an outstanding local wind ensemble.

Laurier’s Michael Purves-Smith, associate professor in the faculty of music, calls de Meij “arguably the most successful of all composers for wind ensembles and is the most noteworthy of all Dutch composers since the 16<sup>th</sup> century.”

De Meij studied trombone and conducting at the Royal Conservatory of Music at The Hague, quickly earning international fame as a composer and arranger. His catalogue consists of original compositions, symphonic transcriptions and arrangements of film scores and musicals. His first symphony, *The Lord of the Rings*, based on Tolkien's best-selling novels, received the prestigious Sudler Composition Award in 1989. In 2001, the orchestral version was premiered by the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, and has since been recorded over 20 times by renowned orchestras such as the London Symphony Orchestra and the Nagoya Philharmonic Orchestra.

On Saturday, February 24, de Meij will lead a read-through with students of some of his work for student ensembles, with the Wilfrid Laurier University Wind Ensemble forming the reading band. This event is sponsored by St. John’s Waterloo Music.

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On Sunday, February 25, de Meij will conduct the Wellington Winds concert. The event will include a transcription of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* and de Meij's own *The Wind in the Willows*, with local actor Ted Follows narrating each. De Meij will also conduct the Wellington Winds playing *Giacomo Casanova*, his concerto for cello and wind orchestration based on the life of the famed Venetian (with Penderecki String Quartet member Simon Fryer on solo cello). Later that day, de Meij and the renowned Canadian trombonist Al Kaye will lead a trombone master class. This master class is sponsored by Wilfrid Laurier University and Yamaha Music, and will provide an opportunity for musicians to try Yamaha's line of trombones.

The full schedule of de Meij events includes:

- Reading Session: Saturday, February 24, 2-4 p.m., Aird Centre, Room 318, Wilfrid Laurier University.
- Wellington Winds Concert (Laurier professor and member of the Penderecki String Quartet, Simon Fryer, solo cello): Sunday, February 25, 3 p.m., First United Church, Waterloo.
- Trombone Master Class: Sunday, February 25, 7:30 p.m., Aird Centre, Room 318.
- Orchestration Master Class: Monday, February 26, 8:30 a.m., Aird Centre, Room 221.
- Composition Master Class: Monday, February 26, 7 p.m., Aird Centre, Room 221.
- Open rehearsal (de Meij conducts the WLU Wind Ensemble in his symphony *The Big Apple*), Tuesday, February 27, Aird Centre, Room 318.
- Wellington Winds Concert (repeat of the February 25 concert): Sunday, March 4, 3 p.m., Grandview Baptist Church, Kitchener.
- Reception with the composer: Sunday, March 4, 5:30 p.m., Grandview Baptist Church, Kitchener.

All events are open for public viewing. Events are free except for the two Wellington Winds concerts, February 25 and March 4. For more details, please contact Michael Purves-Smith in the Faculty of Music at (519) 884-0710 ext. 2228 or mpurvess@wlu.ca.