

Speech by Mark Rutgers

Announcement of the winner of the 2017 Leonardo da Vinci World Award of Arts

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Location: Pieterskerk, Leiden

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to introduce the winner of the 2017 Leonardo da Vinci World Award of Arts.

We are delighted that he can be present here in Leiden today, together with his wife and daughters. He is perhaps the most prominent figure in the history of percussion. Russell Hartenberger, Emeritus Professor of Ethnomusicology and Percussion at the University of Toronto, fully deserves this recognition of his lifetime commitment to cultivating and shaping our understanding of music across cultures and genres, respecting the diversity of world traditions.

After receiving his bachelor's and master's degrees in Music, in 1974 he obtained his PhD in World Music at Wesleyan University, venturing into a remarkable range of instruments, including the mridangam and tabla from India, the Javanese gamelan and West African drums, together with musicians from the respective countries.

Russell Hartenberger's pledge to demonstrating and performing the fundamental human experience of time through collaborative, cross-cultural percussive performance and improvisation expresses a vision of humankind that reaches audiences all over the world. His work has been an exceptional vehicle for fostering the kind of societal-cultural understanding and fraternity that contributes fundamentally to the betterment of the world and its human legacy.

His achievements as a scholarly writer and extraordinarily talented percussionist, and his commitment to teaching and inspiring new generations of young musicians and scholars are truly admirable. If anyone deserves this Award, it is Russell Hartenberger.

Why is that? The Leonardo da Vinci World Award of Arts was established as a means of acknowledging a renowned artist, or outstanding figure or innovator in any discipline or expression of the arts,

whose work constitutes a significant contribution to the artistic legacy of the world. Russell Hartenberger matches this description perfectly.

The distinguished percussionist Evelyn Glennie says of him: “His knowledge, constant curiosity and dedication to all he does and everyone he meets always means that you are a better person for having been in his presence.” Today we are the lucky ones! And we are very proud to have this opportunity.

As Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, I am also very proud of the students and alumni of our institute, the Academy of Creative and Performing Arts, in short: ACPA, who are performing here today. ACPA embodies the collaboration between Leiden University and the University of the Arts The Hague (that is: the Royal Conservatoire and the Royal Academy of Art).

But now, let’s return to the person whose achievements we are here to celebrate. I would like to invite you to watch a video on Professor Russell Hartenberger.

*<After the video>*

I would now like to ask Sir Colin Blakemore, Rector Carel Stolker and Esteban Meszaros Wild to present the 2017 Leonardo da Vinci World Award of Arts to Professor Russell Hartenberger.