

After weeks of holiday and then a few weeks of packing moving boxes, it is now high time for another column. Definitely, because if we don't write a column now, we will miss the most column-worthy period of the year, December. A holiday in October and November, and especially in Southern Europe, can completely throw you off balance. At 23/24 degrees, you can still enjoy the beach at the end of November, and on both the way there and back, your eye is drawn to the many Christmas decorations. When young people experience something like this nowadays, they get an "error"; we'll call it a minor short circuit in the brain. It was so bad that on the way to the beach, my girlfriend almost pulled the emergency brake because she suddenly saw a huge shop that was completely decked out in Christmas spirit. Outside, there were countless Christmas trees with lights, and behind the windows, all kinds of Christmas figures smiled at us. There was no escaping it; after visiting the beach, we had to go to that shop for a real Greek Christmas bauble. Being the good soul that I am, I turned a blind eye, because at the same time I thought of the last rehearsal we had with the Stadhuiskoor. They were already rehearsing Christmas carols at the beginning of October. In this way, Janneke showed that she reads the columns carefully and is perfectly in tune with current events, as we suggested in one of the first columns. Nevertheless, as Nicholas, I must raise a warning finger. We returned to the Netherlands on the 17th of November, and on the 15th of November we had already been able to follow Sint Nicolaas' arrival in the Netherlands via digital channels. It was probably just as alienating for him as it was for us. It's not easy to go from 23 degrees to 10 or 11 degrees. There was even frost on the ground. It's crazy that in southern Italy and Greece they sing about dreaming of a White Christmas. The strangest thing I ever experienced was during a Christmas holiday in Africa, where there was a sleigh on a pile of cotton wool (snow) at the entrance to the hotel and where Santa Claus occasionally appeared in a beautiful Santa Claus suit, but whose skin colour betrayed that he did not come from the North Pole but probably from the equator. All this aside. Of course, I am very happy with the Christmas repertoire that we started working on in October, so that we will be well prepared for the performance on the 13th of December in Nieuwerkerk. Nevertheless, as Nicholas, I am terrified that Santa Claus will supplant Sinterklaas. I keep saying that this won't happen as long as schools continue to celebrate Sinterklaas, but now there is already a school that no longer celebrates it. Stop the dismantling of Sinterklaas (weird image). To counteract the dismantling, I am in favour of including the new Sinterklaas songs in the repertoire of the Stadhuiskoor. Just think about it, you can't sing along to any contemporary Sinterklaas songs anymore. Yes, the melody, but of course we're going to make that four-part harmony too. If you think, I'm not going to participate in that nonsense, then I advise Janneke to include Benjamin Britten's Saint Nicolas Cantata in the repertoire next year. If this saves the Saint Nicholas celebrations from certain death, I am sure that the Pope will canonise me after my death: Saint Nicholas Nijenhuis.