

BRONX

Dutch National Opera Academy

In collaboration with The Royal Conservatoire of The Hague

# Postcard from Morocco

*An opera in one act by Dominick Argento*

*Libretto by John Donahue*

*after Robert Louis Stevenson's "A Child's Garden of Verses"*

*Commissioned by Minnesota Center Opera Company*

*First performed Cedar Village Theatre, Minneapolis, Minnesota 14. October 1971*

*First performance of this production: Amare, The Hague 23. March 2022*

*Further performances of this production 24., 26. & 27. March 2022*

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# The Cast

A Man With a Paint Box	<b>Hugo Kampschreur</b> <b>André Lopes*</b>	<i>23. &amp; 26. March</i> <i>24. &amp; 27. March</i>
A Lady with a Cake Box	<b>Gita Rebeka Dirveika</b> <b>Taylor Burgess</b>	<i>23. &amp; 26. March</i> <i>24. &amp; 27. March</i>
A Lady With a Hat Box	<b>Maria Warenberg</b> <b>Lucie van Ree</b>	<i>23. &amp; 26. March</i> <i>24. &amp; 27. March</i>
A Lady with a Hand Mirror	<b>Sharon Tadmor</b> <b>Maria Koroleva</b>	<i>23. &amp; 26. March</i> <i>24. &amp; 27. March</i>
A Man with Old Luggage	<b>Gabe Clarke</b> <b>Theodor Uggla</b>	<i>23. &amp; 26. March</i> <i>24. &amp; 27. March</i>
A Man With a Shoe Sample Kit	<b>Einar Gudmundsson</b> <b>Jitze van der Land**</b>	<i>23. &amp; 26. March</i> <i>24. &amp; 27. March</i>
A Man with a Cornet Case	<b>Filips Krauklis</b> <b>Michal Karski</b>	<i>23. &amp; 26. March</i> <i>24. &amp; 27. March</i>

\*undergraduate student of the Conservatorium van Amsterdam

\*\* undergraduate student of the Prins Claus Conservatorium, Groningen

Duration ca. ninety minutes without interval

*The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment in the auditorium are forbidden  
Members of the audience are requested to turn off all mobile phones and digital alarms*

# Creative Team

**Gary Matthewman** *conductor*

**Robert Chevara** *director & choreographer*

**Jessica Curtis** *set design*

**Jorine van Beek** *costume design*

**Jasper Nijholt** *lighting design*

# Production Credits

**Sebastiaan van Yperen** *assistant conductor*

**Onno Heerlien** *assistant director*

**Lisa de Faria** *choreographic assistance*

**Sanne van Loenen** *stage manager*

**Mirsa Adam, Marta Liebana** *repetiteurs*

**Philip Mayers & DNOA faculty** *musical preparation*

**Astrid Vreeken** *hair & makeup*

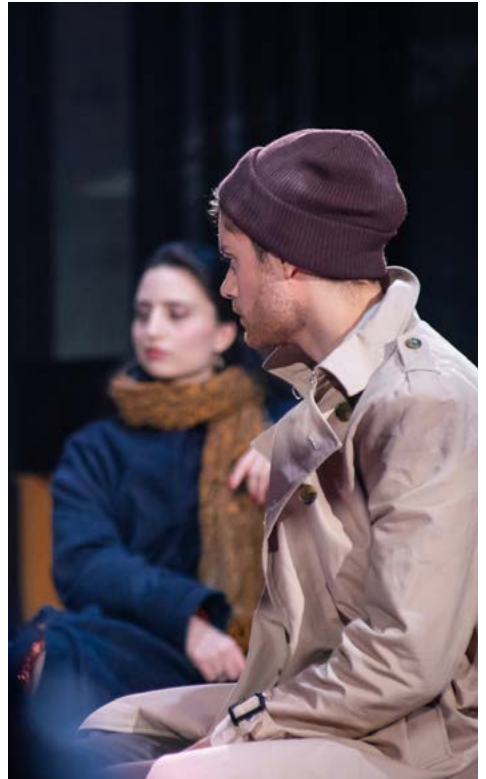
**Sophie de Groen, Sanne Kamp** *costume design assistance & wardrobe*

**Manfred Kokmeijer** *production manager*

**Joep de Jong** *technical manager*

**Tom van Hooff, Bart Vliex** *theatre technicians*

**Bob Walraven** *lighting operator*



# Orchestra

A collaboration with the Royal Conservatoire The Hague.

**Marlon Titre** *Head of the Classical Music Department*

**Daniele Zamboni** *Production Coordinator*

Cecilia van Berkum *violin*

Emiel de Jongh Swemer *viola*

Andrea Dettori *contrabass*

Miguel Esperanza Perez *clarinet*

Chang-Han Huang *saxophone*

José Ferreira Dias *trombone*

Gonçalo Dias Martins *percussion*

Amrat Majumder *guitar*

Rui Braga Simões *piano/celeste*



# Synopsis

A group of strangers meet by a railway station. All are going somewhere, waiting to travel. Each has a secret. None wants the others to see what is really inside their suitcase. One woman sings about her hand mirror. How she can see people following her in it, or maybe a murder reflected in it, and her fear of drowning. The passengers question each other about their careers, and why they are travelling. All are evasive. But do they actually lie or avoid each other's probing questions? Mr. Owen has a paint box. Does this mean he is a painter? Another passenger tells them all he sells shoes, but will not allow them to see any and won't open his bag. Another man has a cornet case, but will not open the case. Does he really carry a musical instrument? A woman, who is interrogated by two others, says she makes hats for films. But will not open the hat box and is reluctant to give the women her name. One of the women carries a cake box, in which she says she keeps her lover. No one believes her. She sings of her passionate memories of him. Could he really be inside the box? His ashes? A finger? A nose? Mr. Owen tells the woman that he has seen her before. He has sketched her and her lover. Doesn't she remember him? She does not, but there's a suggestion that they may have at some time been lovers. He sings about a magical ship he imagined in his childhood. The ship was his escape and would take him far, far away. But it disappeared. Ever since he felt a terrible loss and longing that he could never find it again. A puppet maker sings about all of the things that go into puppet making. He tells the other travellers that he has been watching them all. He could make them into puppets too. They laugh, slightly uneasily. Mr. Owen is asked to paint the travellers' portraits. They try to bully him into painting them. Maybe they are bored and want to be sketched or maybe they want to be remembered. Mr. Owen accuses them all of hypocrisy. He berates each one of them and angrily confronts them with their own secrets and lies. They finally leave to go through customs. They present their papers, identity cards and passports. Will they be allowed to enter? Will they be refused? Only Mr. Owen stays where he is trying to conjure up his lost childhood dreams of sailors, boats and the Sea.

# Dominick Argento (1927 - 2019)

"I think that music ... began as an emotional language. For me, all music begins where speech stops." – Dominick Argento

Dominick Argento (1927 – 2019), considered to be America's preeminent composer of lyric opera, was born in York, Pennsylvania in 1927. At the Peabody Conservatory, where he earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees, his teachers included Nicholas Nabokov, Henry Cowell, and Hugo Weisgall. Argento received his Ph.D. from the Eastman School of Music, where he studied with Alan Hovhaness and Howard Hanson. Fulbright and Guggenheim Fellowships allowed him to study in Italy with Luigi Dallapiccola and to complete his first opera, *Colonel Jonathan the Saint*. Following his Fulbright, Argento became music director of Hilltop Opera in Baltimore, and taught theory and composition at the Eastman School. In 1958, he joined the faculty of the Department of Music at the University of Minnesota, where he taught until 1997 and later held the rank of Professor Emeritus.

Although Argento's instrumental works have received consistent praise, the great majority of his music was written for voices, whether in operatic, choral, or solo context. This emphasis on the human voice is a facet of the powerful dramatic impulse that drove nearly all of his music, both instrumental and vocal. Music critic Heidi Waleson described Argento's work as "richly melodic... [his] pieces are built with wit and passion, and always with the dramatic shape and colour that make them theatre. They speak to the heart."

During his years at Eastman, Argento composed his opera, *The Boor* (1957); John Rockwell of *The New York Times*, writing of a 1985 production, stated that "[it] taps deep currents of sentiment and passion." Following his arrival in Minnesota, the composer accepted a number of commissions from significant organisations in his adopted state. Among these were the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, who commissioned his suite *Royal Invitation* (1964); and the Civic Orchestra of Minneapolis, who commissioned *Variations for Orchestra [The Mask of Night]* (1965). Argento's close association with Sir Tyrone Guthrie and Douglas Campbell, directors of the Minnesota Theatre Company, led to his composing incidental music for several Guthrie productions, as well as a ballad opera, *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1967).

The 1970s and 1980s saw the composer working increasingly in the song cycle form, while still writing operas and orchestral music. Among his major song cycles are *Letters from Composers* (1968); *To Be Sung Upon the Water* (1973); *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf* (1975); the choral *I Hate and I Love* (1982); *The Andree Expedition* (1983); and *Casa Guidi* (1983). Later song cycles include *A Few Words About Chekhov* for mezzo-soprano,



baritone, and piano, which was given its premiere in 1996 by Frederica von Stade, Håkan Hagegård, and pianist Martin Katz at the Ordway Theater in St. Paul; *Walden Pond* (mixed chorus, harp, and three cellos), commissioned and premiered by the Dale Warland Singers in 1996; and *Miss Manners on Music* (1998), set to texts by the noted advice columnist Judith Martin.

Beyond finding great success in the US, nearly all of Argento's operas have also been performed in Europe, beginning with *Postcard from Morocco*. Among these are *The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe* (1976), *Miss Havisham's Wedding Night* (1981), and *Casanova's Homecoming* (1984). Robert Jacobson of *Opera News* described the latter work as "a masterpiece." *The Aspern Papers* was given its premiere by Dallas Opera in November 1988 to great acclaim, was telecast on the PBS series "Great Performances," and was again presented, to critical praise, by the Washington Opera in 1990. The opera was also presented in Germany and in Sweden; as well as at London's Barbican Centre in 1998.

Argento's final opera, *The Dream of Valentino*, examined fame and the immigrant experience, set in the early days of Hollywood. Washington Opera gave the work its premiere under the baton of Christopher Keene in January 1994, followed by its co-commissioning company, Dallas Opera, in 1995. The production featured special multimedia sets by John Conklin and costumes by the couturier Valentino. Writing of the premiere, Peter G. Davis of *New York magazine* stated, "What a pleasure to encounter a real opera composer, one who has studied and learned from his predecessors, loves the form, understands its conventions, has mastered them, and then lets his imagination take wing." *The Dream of Valentino* received its European premiere in February 1999 in Kassel, Germany.

Among other honours and awards, Dominick Argento received the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 1975 for his song cycle *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf*. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1979, and in 1997 was honoured with the title of Composer Laureate to the Minnesota Orchestra, a lifetime appointment. In honour of his 85th birthday, the University of Maryland presented a special career retrospective that included *Miss Havisham's Fire*, *Postcard from Morocco*, and *Miss Manners on Music*, as well as other recitals and lectures. Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton officially declared 8 August 2016, to be Dominick Argento Day in the state of Minnesota, recognising Argento as a master composer, revered educator and beloved Minnesotan.

## Dominick Argento – Minnesota Romantic

"My interest is people," says Dominick Argento. "I am committed to working with characters, feelings, and emotions." The joys and struggles of humanity form the heart of a body of work—operas, song cycles, choral music, and even orchestral works – that places him among the 20th century's preeminent vocal composers. His musical and scholarly peers have responded with some of their highest honours, including awards from Opera America and Chorus America, two Guggenheim Fellowships, election to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and a Pulitzer Prize. Listeners, for their part, respond to the lyric beauty and emotional impact of music that stems from the Romantic tradition and affirms that works of art can help us know ourselves.

While Argento's fame has spread across the United States and Europe, its fountainhead is Minnesota. More than 60 Argento works have been premiered in the Twin Cities, and nearly every major musical organisation in the state has commissioned work from him. Although Minnesota's best orchestras and choruses have long served as ambassadors for the arts around the globe, no single figure has done more to place Minnesota on the international musical map than Dominick Argento.

Argento came to the Twin Cities in 1958 on three days' notice when a position at the University of Minnesota Music Department suddenly opened. An Easterner who had grown up in the historic town of York, Pennsylvania, he had already discovered as a Fulbright and Guggenheim scholar that Italy was his spiritual home. He had one opera behind him, *The Boor* (1957), the first of three provocative works based on Chekhov. At first, the Twin Cities disappointed the young professor and his wife, soprano Carolyn Bailey, but they soon realised that they had arrived on the threshold of a cultural explosion ignited by the opening of the Guthrie Theater.

Before long, Argento himself was immersed in the new theater, collaborating with Sir Tyrone Guthrie and Douglas Campbell in such memorable productions as *The House of Atreus* and *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, and adding to the cultural scene by co-founding the boldly contemporary Center Opera, which was destined to evolve into the Minnesota Opera. The Guthrie provided the stage for that company's 1964 debut with Argento's *The Masque of Angels*, a one-act opera, full of pageantry and dance, about a band of restless angels who occupy an empty church. *The Masque* showed Argento's inventiveness in breathing life into a moribund genre, and its rich choral dimension prophesied the emergence of a top-rank choral composer.

"Early on," Argento recalls, "it started to dawn on me that living here I was able to do exactly what I lived for. After a few years, it never occurred to me that there was any other place I'd want to be except Minnesota. Here I've only had to be concerned with

the performers and audiences I'm dealing with; living in a place like New York or San Francisco, a composer is always reading the market value of the arts – the ticker tape is coming into his workroom all the time. That is a distant phenomenon for me."

Such a declaration of independence reveals the confidence of a creative artist who has resisted compositional fashions – atonality, chance and electronic music, minimalism, and the infiltration of the popular culture, especially rock. Ironically, though he will never be labelled a 12-tone composer, the serialism rampant when he came of age provides the logical underpinning in nearly everything he writes, although listeners don't realise it. The composer takes a sly pleasure in pointing out tone rows from which he has constructed soaring melodies and opulent harmonies. His compelling monodrama, *A Water Bird Talk* (1974), is based on two serial motives, one for the birds, another for the henpecked professor who realises that his wretched marriage is reflected in their mating habits.

Argento shrugs off the label "conservative" and is weary of comparisons with Benjamin Britten, in whom many critics find a similar lyricism, refined sense of language, and consummate craft. Argento's voice is his own. Had he not been a composer, he no doubt would have been a writer. In most cases, his best librettos are those he has written himself, *A Water Bird Talk*, *Casanova's Homecoming* (1985), and *The Aspern Papers* (1988). Or Argento might have been a critic, applying his analytical skills and sharp wit to a dumbed-down age.



While some were speculating that the 20th century had no place for opera, Argento held steadfast in his belief in the genre. The opera companies flourishing since the 1980s (bolstered by supertitles and television broadcasts) have vindicated his loyalty. Although several Argento operas explore his hallmark theme of self-discovery, no two are alike. Indeed, their diversity is astonishing. The most performed is the 1971 *Postcard from Morocco*, a surreal fantasy consisting of entertainments – a virtuosic display of aria types – in which a group of travellers in a waiting room keep their secrets hidden in their luggage. A paragon of eclecticism, mildly dissonant and with tunes of enduring appeal, the score incorporates a fragment of Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*, an instance of musical allusion characteristic of his style.

Many Argento works boast strong connections to the past: *Casanova's Homecoming*, produced in celebration of the new Ordway Music Theatre, abounds with the spirited ensembles typical of its 18th-century Italian model, the opera buffa. Act I incorporates a musical tour de force, offering as a diversion an opera seria that Casanova might have heard in the Venice of his day. Similarly, Argento retreats to the bel canto idiom of 1835 when, in *The Aspern Papers*, a passage of the hero's lost opera is introduced.

Argento is at his grandest in the darkly romantic *Voyage of Edgar Allen Poe* (1976), commissioned by the University of Minnesota for the 1976 Bicentennial and selected in 1990 by the Lyric Opera of Chicago to launch its series of revivals, "Toward the 21st Century." With powerful choruses and the continuous commentary of a large orchestra, Argento presents the spectacle of the poet's last nightmarish days. In the diary Argento kept during the opera's genesis, he contemplates the end of Poe, musing that he wanted to win compassion for the poet: "a lump-in-the-throat" welling up of sympathy for the pitiful life Poe led. As in *A Water Bird Talk*, which gradually shifts its comic tone to genuine pathos, Argento summons the emotional response of the listener to revelations of the heart. In this, he is the descendant of Verdi, whose portrait hangs on the wall of his study overlooking Kenwood Park.

**Mary Ann Feldman** (1933 – 2019) was an American music critic and long-time programme annotator, editor, music advisor and historian for the Minnesota Orchestra by whose kind permission this article (2002) is reprinted. Ms. Feldman and Dominick Argento were great friends.

## The Elegant Musical Vessels of Dominick Argento

Postscript – *The New Yorker*, 28. February 2019

In the last couple of years, several icons of the state of Minnesota – think Keillor, Franken, Klobuchar – have got a bit scuffed on the road to glory. Not Dominick Argento, America's leading composer of lyric opera, who died last week, at ninety-one, at his home in Minneapolis, a city that embraced and supported his music and career for more than half a century. Because I was one of his last students in composition at the University of Minnesota (he completed his long career there, in 1997), I developed a certain angle on the man and his enduring music.

The term "lyric" fuels the approbation "lyrical," meaning music that is attractive, melodic, and grateful on the ear. In other words, pretty. There's a lot of pretty music around these days, but beautiful – beauty that radiates from the music's very bones – is something much more rare. Argento's best music has this. It springs not only from his interlocking mastery of every element of classical composition – harmony, counterpoint, orchestration, form – but from his acute sensitivity to the setting of words and a deep understanding of how human emotion is translated into rhythm and tone. That understanding came partly from the fact that his wife, Carolyn Bailey, was an operatic soprano of considerable talent who served as her husband's critic, adviser, and muse. But it also came from Argento's connection to the great lyric tradition, a line that goes back to the beginnings of opera, in 17th-century Venice.

He was linked to this tradition in a fundamental way that America's two leading operatic paragons, John Adams and Philip Glass, are not. To be fair, their music is more *sui generis*; in such minimalist masterpieces as *Nixon in China* and *Satyagraha*, moulds were broken and new, specifically American traditions were formed. Argento's music, however, strives not for originality but for sympathy. In a work like *The Aspern Papers* – his supreme opera, a daring adaptation of the Henry James novella for which he made his own libretto – Argento records the quick and subtle fluctuations of his characters' emotions while maintaining an unbreakable underlying flow of energy and melodic line. (When I teach Monteverdi's mini-opera *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* to my students, in Nashville, I hear Dominick's music, buried deep.) "Nixon" may be an even greater opera than "Aspern," but Adams's Dick Nixon would be a hectoring cardboard cutout without Alice Goodman's rich, pliant, and multi-referential text. His music and her words move in tandem, joined for mutual advantage. But in Argento's resurrection of James's Jeffrey Aspern – now a composer, not a writer – the fusion is intimate, seamless, and complete.

"Aspern" got a glorious, star-studded world-première production at the Dallas Opera, in 1988. The opera's first seven minutes refine a technique that Argento had foreshadowed in his two renowned monodramas for voice and piano, *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf*

(written for Janet Baker, in 1974) and *The Andrée Expedition* (1982). Listen to how the music unfolds: passages that slyly verge on atonality are linked like gossamer chains to hinge moments of pure tonal euphony, each expressing a clear dramatic point. I like to think of it as "canal form": you may stroll along the stone shoulders of Venetian waterways for many an absentminded moment, but you can wander only so far before reaching one of those consoling yellow signs, like "ALLA FERROVIA" or "PER RIALTO," that direct you back to the place the city fathers intended. (After Florence, Venice was Argento's favorite European city.)

These two contrasting impulses – the yearning for fantasy and the necessity of control – form the fulcrum of Argento's art, and help explain why the composer and his community found one another so appealing. In 1971, Argento, teaming up with some of the talented colleagues with which, under the umbrella of the Walker Art Center, he had founded the Center Opera of Minnesota (which eventually became the Minnesota Opera), created *Postcard from Morocco*, a surreal chamber opera that was as valid a contribution to the American avant-garde as were the more fractiously provocative speech-operas of Robert Ashley. (Some of that avant-garde spirit leached into *In Praise of Music*, from 1977, Argento's finest work for orchestra.) The piece made his national reputation, but audiences, unlike critics, were not uniformly approving of it, and Argento never went that "far out" again. As Mary Ann Feldman, the annotator, lecturer, and all-around eminence blanche of the Minnesota Orchestra for several decades, put it in 1999, "Edo" – de Waart, the orchestra's music director from 1986 to 1995 – "came here thinking that because Minneapolis is the home of the Walker Art Center and a lot of experimental theatre, audiences would be receptive to bold contemporary programming. Well, they're not." (In a poetic twist, Feldman died just two days before Argento did, Lee Radziwill to his Karl Lagerfeld.)

Argento, a warm and brilliant but tough-minded man from a working-class background, understood this, I think, and "Virginia Woolf" – which won the Pulitzer Prize that "Postcard" had laid the groundwork for – marks, for all its durable satisfactions, a cunning tactical retreat. Argento's melodic gift, while fluent and abundant, was not quite as distinctive as those of Samuel Barber and Ned Rorem, the two American neo-Romantics with whom he is most easily compared. But his dramatic instincts were far more sure. Under his watchful care, characters in extreme situations – the isolated, suicidal Woolf, the doomed polar explorers of *The Andrée Expedition*, Aspern's crazed and aged lover, Juliana Bordereau – become domesticated and relatable, and, getting to know them, we feel a little less extreme ourselves. Argento's works are elegant and deftly fashioned vessels for their souls.



Carl Heinrich Graun *Cleopatra e Cesare* – December 2021 © Reinout Bos

## About DNOA

A partnership of the Conservatorium van Amsterdam and the Royal Conservatoire The Hague, the **Dutch National Opera Academy** is an elite two-year's master's programme offering a wide-ranging curriculum encompassing all aspects in the training of an aspiring opera artist. In addition to a focus on refining technical skills, students are supported in developing a very clear sense of vocal and artistic identity, and how these attributes can best be united to meet market demands and expectations. The programme is tailored so as to enable young artists to enhance chances of success in a competitive field as they transition from full-time education to the workplace. DNOA graduates can be found in many of the world's leading opera houses.

The programme mounts several full-scale productions each season and enjoys close ties with the wider world of opera.

For more information please visit [www.opera-academy.nl](http://www.opera-academy.nl)

*"The DNOA is the Champions League in Arts education. It provides a unique and supportive environment for ambitious singers wanting to cross the gap between education and the international stage."*

**Gerben van der Werf** counter-tenor – graduate 2021

**Paul McNamara** *Artistic Leader*  
**Peter Nilsson** *Head of Music*  
**Daniel van Klaveren** *Drama*  
**Marisa Grande** *Embodiment & Performative Body*  
**Klaus Bertisch** *Master Research*  
**Mirsa Adami, Marta Liébana** *Music staff*  
**Manfred Kokmeijer** *Production & Operations Manager*  
**Cheuk Yan (Kris) Ng** *Administrative Assistant (interim)*

Board:

**Henk van der Meulen** *Director of the Royal Conservatoire The Hague*  
**Tba** *Director of the Conservatorium van Amsterdam*



Johann Strauss *Die Fledermaus* – July 2021 © Reinout Bos



# About the Performers & Creative Team

For more details about the current DNOA singers please see <https://www.opera-academy.nl/our-students>

**JITZE VAN DER LAND** *baritone* – The Netherlands – A Man With a Shoe Sample Kit

Currently an undergraduate at the Prince Claus Conservatorium, Groningen where his voice teacher is Hanneke de Wit.

Started singing at an early age in various choirs, including the Roden Boys Choir and Vocal ensemble *The Gents*, with whom he sang multiple concerts in the Netherlands and abroad.

Performance credits include the title role in the first act of *Le nozze di Figaro*, Fauré *Requiem*, Saint-Saëns' *Oratorio de Noël*, and several radio performances on Radio 4. Masterclasses with Margreet Honig, Pieter Jan Belder, Marjan Kuiper, David Prins and Nico van der Meel amongst others. He has worked with Peter Dijkstra, Stefan Asbury, and Krista Audere.

**ANDRÉ LOPES** *tenor* – Portugal – A Man With a Paint Box

Currently a third year undergraduate at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam where his principal teacher is Pierre Mak, André Lopes began his musical studies at the school of music Palco de Estrelas prior to studying at the Conservatory of Music Calouste Gulbenkian in Braga in the classical voice class of the teacher Inês Sofia. He is a prizewinner in the National Singing Contest of the Conservatoires of Music in Portugal.

Performance credits to date include Mozart's Requiem with Escola Superior de Artes Aplicadas in Castelo Branco, Portugal and musicals such as *Dreamland* (based on *Miss Saigon* – 2017); *(Un)Fairplay* (based on *West Side Story* – 2018) and *reSTAGE* (based on *Babes in Arms* – 2019) also in Portugal.

While at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam he has performed in various concerts and projects including a Philharmonic Friday programme conducted by Ed Spanjaard, Schubert Lieder arranged by Bernard Cavanna for the Score Collective as well as being involved in the Voice Departments presentations of Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites* (*L'Aumônier* and cover) and Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* (Don Curzio).

## **GARY MATTHEWMAN** *Conductor*

Building on the considerable skills and expertise he developed during twenty years working at the highest international level as a song recital pianist, répétiteur and vocal coach, Gary Matthewman made his operatic conducting debut with Donizetti's *Roberto Devereux* for Chelsea Opera Group at Cadogan Hall, London (2021).

Conducting credits include Britten *War Requiem* (The Sage, Gateshead) and several seasons with London's Orion Orchestra where he was Artistic Director and Principal Conductor with repertoire such as Handel *Messiah*; Fauré *Requiem*; Beethoven Symphony No.4; Stravinsky *Pulcinella Suite*; Prokofiev *Peter and the Wolf*; Mozart Piano Concerto in C minor K491 and Violin Concerto in A K219; Shostakovich Cello Concerto No.1; and works for Strings by Purcell, Holst, Finzi, Sibelius and Grieg. Gary led Orion Orchestra's commissioning and performance of two world premieres: *Smile, O voluptuous cool-breath'd Earth!* – a choral setting of a Walt Whitman text, by Simon Rowland-Jones – and *Prelude (with Bird, Cicadas and Bells)* by Peter Longworth.

As an assistant conductor in opera, his engagements include Glyndebourne, La Monnaie Brussels, Cape Town Opera, and Birmingham Opera Company (with the CBSO), working on a wide range of repertoire: Donizetti *L'elisir d'amore*; Puccini *La bohème*; Wagner *Das Rheingold*; Shostakovich *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*; Britten *The Turn of the Screw*; and Stravinsky *The Rake's Progress*.

Professor of vocal repertoire at London's Royal College of Music, and repertoire coach for the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, he is a regular artist at Wigmore Hall. Other recent and forthcoming appearances include recitals at Carnegie Hall New York, Musikverein Vienna, Rudolfinum Prague, Philharmonie Paris, Bolshoi Theatre Moscow, and in Barcelona, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Lisbon, Stockholm, Verbier, Washington DC, Santa Fe, Toronto, São Paulo, Cape Town, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Hong Kong, Melbourne and Sydney. His UK Festival performances include the BBC Proms, Aldeburgh, Brighton, Buxton, Leeds Lieder, Oxford Lieder and Glyndebourne.

## **ROBERT CHEVARA** *Director*

The award-winning director and writer is a former Director of Productions English Touring Opera (1997 – 2001) and is currently an Associate Director at the King's Head Theatre (London).

Opera credits include *Die Fledermaus*, *West End Girl (La fanciulla del West)* King's Head Theatre; *La voix humaine* (Stockholm Opera House, awarded Best Contemporary Opera production); Thomas Adès *Powder Her Face* (Ystad Opera Festival, Sweden, awarded Best Contemporary Opera Production); *Potent Shakespeare* (Toovey, Festival Hall, London); the

world premiere of Pascal Dusapin *To Be Sung* (Banff Centre); Puccini *Madama Butterfly* (Opera New Zealand); Stravinsky *The Rake's Progress*, Bizet *Carmen*, Verdi *Macbeth*, Beethoven *Fidelio*, Massenet *Werther* (English Touring Opera); Barber *Hand of Bridge*; Gershwin *Blue Monday*; Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti* (Barbican Centre, London); Mozart *The Magic Flute* (European Chamber Opera, London); Maderna *Satyricon* (Opera Factory/The Drill Hall, London); Prokofiev *The Fiery Angel* (Royal Opera House, Associate Director with David Freeman); Rossini *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Dublin Grand Opera Society); Dvorak *The Cunning Peasant*; Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites*; Britten *Albert Herring* (all Guildhall School of Music & Drama); as well as numerous operas by Rameau, Haydn, Verdi, Bizet, Rossini, Handel, Donizetti for the Royal Academy of Music, London.

Film and TV credits include Marschner *Der Vampyr* for BBC TV mini-series (Winner of Prix Italia and BAFTA nomination).

Theatre credits include Tennessee Williams' *The Chorus Girl Plays* (Tennessee Williams Festival, Provincetown 2013), the world premiere of Lionel Bart's musical *Quasimodo* (Kings Head Theatre, 2013); Tennessee Williams' *Vieux Carré* (Charing Cross Theatre transfer from King's Head Theatre) and *The Glass Menagerie* (TheatreSpace, London); *As You Like It* (English Theatre Berlin); *Fair!* devised play with music (NYT at Bullwood Hall Prison, Essex); Caryl Churchill *Top Girls* (Hau Theatre, Berlin); Paul Doust *Hotter than Rochester* (Théâtre du Neslé, Paris); JM Barrie's *Mary Rose* & Strindberg's *Easter* (TheatreSpace, London); *Eva Peron/ The Four Twins*, a double-bill by Copi (BAC). Published works include *West End Girl* (Oberon Books, 2014). An anthology of poems which is in preparation.

Awards include: Best Revival of a Play Award from Front Row Dress for *Vieux Carré* (2013); Best Contemporary Opera Production award (*Powder Her Face*) Sweden (1999); Japanese Government cultural study award (1997); Prudential Award for Mid Wales Opera's *Carmen* (1996); Churchill Fellowship award for opera (1995).

Previous production for the DNOA: Judith Weir *Blond Eckbert* & Berkeley *A Dinner Engagement* (2019).

### **JESSICA CURTIS** *set design*

Jessica Curtis trained on the Motley Theatre Design Course.

Recent work includes *Vincent River* (The Bridge Theatre, Brussels); *Genesis Inc.* (Hampstead Theatre); *Loosing Venice* (The Orange Tree Theatre); *Uncle Vanya* (The Almeida); Villette, *Dangerous Corner* (West Yorkshire Playhouse); *Pod, Provok'd* devised at Guildhall School; *Kiss me Quickstep, Haunting Julia, Love Letters* (The Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch); *One for the Road, Glass Cage, Follies* (Royal and Derngate, Northampton); *The Holy Rosenbergs* (National Theatre); *Hotel Ceris* (Theatre Royal, Stratford East); *Another Door Closed*

(Theatre Royal Bath); *Endgame* (Liverpool Everyman); *Dangerous Corner* (West Yorkshire Playhouse and West End); *Frankenstein* (Frantic Assembly, Northampton); *Burial at Thebes* (Nottingham Playhouse/Barbican/US Tour) and *Rhapsody, Fantasy* (Royal Ballet at the Royal Opera House).

She has also designed the Grosvenor Park Open Air Season 2013 – 2016/2021, the opening season at Storyhouse and bar interiors for Underbelly at the South Bank, Hyde Park and Leicester Square.

### **JORINE VAN BEEK** *Costume design*

Internationally regarded, Jorine van Beek's work encompasses the worlds of dance, theatre, film, art and opera. She studied at the Academy of Arts in Maastricht (NL) and at the Wimbledon School of Arts in London (UK).

Her opera credits include renowned houses such as the Bayerische Staatsoper (Munich), Teatro del Liceu (Barcelona), The Israeli Opera, Staatsoper Hannover and the Opéra national de Paris.

Following her initial work in 2006 she was awarded the Edmund Hustinx Prize for Fine Arts. Her costumes for Bizet's *Les pêcheurs de perles* were nominated for a Goldene Schikaneder award in Austria.

She has collaborated regularly with the DNOA over the years and her work is defined by a refined characteristic of theatricality which seamlessly fits the specific piece. She describes her work as follows:

*"A human being in its splendid diversity of appearances, her vulnerability, consistency and individuality fascinates me. Vulnerability and perishableness, but above all theatricality play a big role in my work. While working I try to create a tension field between the theatricality from the costumes and the materials. I am very much inspired by visual arts, literature, music, but also by ordinary life.*

*Working from a concept is crucial for me. Finding a completely balanced concept is always an ongoing quest for me, both content-wise and formwise. In the end I try to create a symbiosis between a strong concept and a strong image."*



## **JASPER NIJHOLT** *Lighting design*

A graduate of the Amsterdam University of the Arts, Jasper Nijholt developed an early passion for lighting. Over the years he has worked on a wide variety of projects both internationally and at home in the Netherlands including work in theatres, opera, museums and installations. As a result of his experience with different genres, his work is subtle, fresh and innovative.

His credits to date include Dutch National Opera, DOX, MORE Theaterproducties and Froukje. His work as an Associate Lighting Designer includes productions at the Teatr Roma Warsaw and Teatr Wielki Opera Narodowa including *Aida*, Szymanowski's *Król Roger* and Korngold's *Die tote Stadt*.

## **SEBASTIAAN VAN YPEREN** *Assistant Conductor*

Currently an undergraduate student of orchestral conducting at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam, Sebastiaan van Yperen has also studied in the class of Sian Edwards at the Royal Academy in London as an exchange student. He has participated in masterclasses with conductors such as Karina Cannelakis and Colin Metters.

He has conducted several ensembles and orchestras such as the Philharmonie Zuidnederland and Asko Schönberg and has assisted several eminent conductors including Karel Deseure (Adamo *Little Women* for DNOA, *L'heure Espagnol* and *La voix Humaine* at Opera Zuid and Bach *Johannespassion* at Philharmonie Zuidnederland), Ed Spanjaard, Toby Purser and Antony Hermus among others.

In addition to his association with the DNOA, future operatic plans include Beethoven's *Fidelio* at the Nederlandse Reisopera as assistant to Otto Tausk.

Sebastiaan has previously earned a degree in composition at the conservatory of Amsterdam where he studied with Joel Bons, Richard Ayres, Willem Jeths, Wim Hendrickx and Jorrit Tamminga. His compositions have been premiered in venues such as Tivoli Vredenburg, Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ and the Dutch National Opera & Ballet earning praise for their craftsmanship and natural musicality.

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# Programme Credits

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