

RNA

Dutch National Opera Academy
A collaboration with the Residentie Orkest

Kurt Weill

Die sieben Todsünden

Ballet chanté

Text by Bertolt Brecht

Viktor Ullmann

Der Kaiser von Atlantis

Spiel in einem Akt von Peter Kien

Die sieben Todsünden first performance – Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris on 07. June 1933

Der Kaiser von Atlantis first performance – Bellevue Centre, Amsterdam, on 16 December 1975

First performance of the DNOA production – Conservatoriumzaal, Amare, The Hague on 25. June 2025

"We live in a possessed world. And we know it. . . ."

– Johan Huizinga, 1935

Die sieben Todsünden

Ballet chanté

Text by Bertolt Brecht

In a version for 15 players by HK Gruber/Christian Muthspiel (2019)

Anna I	Elisa Maayeshi	25. & 28.06
	Aimee Kearney	26. & 29.06
Anna II	Demi Wals	

Die Familie

Tenor I	Salvador Simão
Tenor II	Milan de Korte
Bariton	Pavel Zelenev
BASS Die Mutter	Román Bordón

Der Kaiser von Atlantis *Op. 49 (1943)*

Spiel in einem Akt von Peter Kien

Kaiser Overall	Pavel Zelenev	
Der Lautsprecher	Román Bordón	
Der Tod	Wessel Wirken	
Harlekin	Milan de Korte	25. & 28.06
	Jack Roberts	26. & 29.06
Ein Soldat	Henrik Enger Holm	25. & 28.06
	Salvador Simão	26. & 29.06
Bubikopf, ein Soldat	Thalia Cook-Hansen	25. & 28.06
	Mathilde Guedj	26. & 29.06
Der Trommler	Stefanie Bruggeling	25. & 28.06
	Femke Hulsman	

Duration ca. Two hours and fifteen minutes with one forty minute 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 phone screens and digital alarms.*

Creative Team

Sam Weller *conductor*

Floris Visser *director & set designer*

Prem Scholte Albers *co-set designer*

Esmée Thomassen *costume designer*

Demi Wals *choreographer*

Gertjan Houben *lighting designer*

Klaus Bertisch *dramaturg*

Production Credits

Buğra Yüzügüldü* *assistant conductor*

Christina Domnick | Paul McNamara *language coaching*

Pieter Bogaert | Marta Liébana | Isaac Lam** *repetiteurs*

Maddalena Deichmann *producer & stage manager*

Demi Wals *choreographer & assistant director*

Ivet Serra | Aynó** *assistant director*

Job Gijsbrechts *assistant set designer*

Fleur Ummel *assistant costume designer*

*student of the Royal Conservatoire The Hague

**student of the Conservatorium van Amsterdam joining DNOA

Alida van Straaten *hair & makeup coordinator* | **Dominique van Hees** *hair & makeup*

Jolanda Mosselman *hair & makeup assistant* | **Sanne Kamp** *wardrobe coordinator*

Ashley van Linden | Roos Mittemeijer *wardrobe assistants*

Joep de Jong *Royal Conservatoire The Hague technical supervisor*

Bart Vilex *Royal Conservatoire The Hague technical coordinator*

Tom van Hoff | Maarten Spaans | Bertho de Winter *Royal Conservatoire The Hague technical team*

Boldizsar Szollosi* *Stage crew*

Set built by Maarten Smids and "De man met de hamer"

Matthias Konnechny *surtitles coordinator* | **Simon Heerze** *surtitles operator*

Reinout Bos *production photography* | **Bart Voorbergen** *production videos*

Kurt Weill ***Die sieben Todsünden*** (version for 15 players by HK Gruber/Christian Muthspiel – 2019) and Viktor Ullmann ***Der Kaiser von Atlantis*** are published © Schott supplied by Albersen Verhuur B.V., The Hague.



Der Kaiser von Atlantis dress rehearsals – June 2025

The Synopsis – The Seven Deadly Sins

Die sieben Todsünden tells the story of Anna, a woman sent out into the world by her greedy, exploitative family to earn money in 1930s America. On her journey, she visits seven cities and commits one deadly sin in each. Anna has a split personality and is torn between her mission to earn money and the desires of her heart.

PROLOGUE

Anna I (singer) and her 'sister' Anna II (dancer) are from Louisiana. They've been sent out to earn money for their family, with a dream of building a little house on the banks of the Mississippi. The sisters aim to collect the required money in seven years – or preferably in six. All their earnings are sent home to their family: Mother, Father, Brother I and Brother II. Anna I claims to be the practical and sensible one, while her sister is "pretty but a little crazy." Yet, according to Anna I, the two sisters are in fact one and the same person – sharing everything and always serving each other's interests.

SLOTH

The family recalls that Anna was a strange and lazy child, and that laziness is the root of all evil. On the other hand, she is obedient and loyal, so they hope she will remain dedicated on the dangerous path to fortune. With a threatening prayer, the family demands that Anna lead them "to prosperity."

PRIDE

Their first stop is Memphis, where Anna II gets a job as a dancer in a dubious cabaret. She doesn't immediately appeal to the crowd, as she dances in an artistic manner – wanting to be a true artist. Anna I convinces her that the cabaret audience expects something very different from a dancer. "Pride is for the rich," so Anna II must comply with what is expected of her. Once again, the family's prayer echoes in the background.

WRATH

The family grows impatient. Things aren't moving fast enough, the money isn't sufficient, and they accuse Anna of squandering it. While Anna I defends herself, the family prays again. Anna II is in Los Angeles working as an actress in the film industry. Things seem to be going well, but she cannot contain her rage at the injustice she experiences. Anna I intervenes with another moral lesson: Anna II must learn to restrain herself, because openly condemning injustice is not appreciated in Los Angeles.

GLUTTONY

In a letter, Anna I informs the family that Anna II has become a ballet dancer in Philadelphia. Unfortunately, she had to sign a harsh contract stipulating that she must not gain even a single ounce. Starving, she is driven to despair, while her family tries to soothe her with promises of all the delicious food she can have when she returns to Louisiana. She just needs to hold on and remember: gluttony is the devil's work.

LUST

In Boston, Anna II experiences love. She has found a wealthy man, Edward, who truly loves her and gives her a generous allowance. But she doesn't love him. Instead, she's in love with the penniless Fernando and supports him with Edward's money. Anna I warns that they cannot afford to lose both the money and Edward. "Only someone who depends on no one can afford to play both sides." She takes control and orders Fernando to leave her sister alone. When Anna II sees her sister with Fernando, they get into a furious fight. As the family begins yet another prayer, everything ends in tears of heartbreak.

GREED

Through a newspaper, the family learns that Anna is in Baltimore. She has become a socialite, and desperate men are reportedly shooting themselves over her. This news pleases the family, as such a reputation promises wealth. But they immediately become anxious – what if Anna II becomes too greedy? If people believe she is driven only by greed, they'll avoid her, making it harder to do business.

ENVY

In San Francisco, Anna II sees women everywhere who are successful because they were allowed to commit the sins she was forbidden: to be lazy, proud, or angry, to love freely, to eat, and to take what they want. Anna I becomes overwhelmed with jealousy and no longer knows who she is. She has lost her way in her split personality, and "sister turns against sister." Anna I concludes her moral lesson with this: those who show self-restraint will ultimately triumph. "Don't enjoy your youth too much – it is fleeting."

EPILOGUE

After a seven-year journey, Anna returns to Louisiana. The little house on the banks of the Mississippi is complete. Or so she thinks . . .



Die sieben Todsünden dress rehearsals – June 2025

The Synopsis – Der Kaiser von Atlantis

Emperor Overall, the ruler of Atlantis, proclaims a war of "all against all" and demands that Death, his old ally, lead this campaign. Offended by the Emperor's arrogant attitude, Death refuses to continue his work: no one can die anymore. This leads to chaos, as wounded soldiers and the sick can no longer pass away and hover hopelessly between life and death.

PROLOGUE

The Loudspeaker introduces the story and the characters to the audience.

SCENE I

Harlequin speaks of his sorrowful life without laughter or love. Death joins him, and together they lament the slow passage of time in a grim world. Meanwhile, new victims arrive in the realm of Atlantis, but Death refuses to let them die.

Harlequin, having lost his beloved, is tired of it all and wants nothing more than to die. But Death refuses to take him, as he himself has lost the will to continue. He downplays Harlequin's wish to die and explains how much more dire his own situation is.

Once, wars still had meaning: "Those were wars, where people wore the most magnificent clothes – to honour me!!" But now that the Emperor wants to turn it into a factory process, Death refuses to do his job any longer. He will not take part in death on an assembly line. The Drummer announces the Emperor's final decree: everyone will be armed, and everyone will fight until no one survives. Death condemns the Emperor for taking over his role. "Only I can take souls!" He declares that he is going on strike, breaks his sabre, and stops time.

SCENE II

The Emperor gives orders for the battle and, together with the Loudspeaker, monitors the progress of the universal war from his palace. He hears of a man who, eighty minutes after his hanging and shooting, is still alive. The Loudspeaker reports that thousands of soldiers "are currently struggling with life and doing their best to die," without success. Driven to despair, the Emperor realizes that a higher power is thwarting him. Boastfully, he announces that this eternal life is a gift to his subjects for their bravery, but inwardly he worries that his rule will not last if people no longer fear death. "Death, where is your sting? Hell, where is your victory?"

SCENE III

Meanwhile, a soldier and a girl, who were supposed to fight each other, fall in love. Unable to kill one another, their thoughts drift in an attempt to escape the misery of war. They dream of distant lands where kind words exist alongside meadows "full of colour and scent." The Drummer tries to lure them back into the fight with the sensual call of his drum. The girl responds: "Now Death is dead, and we no longer need to fight!" The soldier and the girl no longer want to live in this dark world. They decide to commit suicide: "Only love can unite us."

SCENE IV

The Emperor loses control over his realm, and the people turn against him. The only one still willing to fight for him is the Drummer. Harlequin pleads with him not to go to war and reminds the boy of the innocence of his youth. But the Drummer remains determined in his dream of serving the Emperor.

The Emperor realizes that he no longer remembers what a human life is worth. He sees what he has done and that he bears the guilt for the deaths of millions. Filled with remorse, he wonders whether he is still even human.

When the Emperor pulls the cloth from the mirror, he sees Death as his own reflection. Death describes himself as a gardener, who only wants to take lives to spread peace and heal suffering. He offers to resume his work, but only if the Emperor is willing to be the first to die. The Emperor agrees and sings his farewell song. A final chorale warns against invoking Death's name in vain.

The opera was intended as a protest against Nazi propaganda and the madness of war. The creators of the opera, including Ullmann and librettist Peter Kien, were murdered in Auschwitz.



Der Kaiser von Atlantis dress rehearsals – June 2025



Der Kaiser von Atlantis dress rehearsals – June 2025

Like on a volcano

Klaus Bertisch

With a double bill consisting of *Die sieben Todsünden* by Kurt Weill and *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* by Victor Ullmann, DNOA ventures into somewhat unfamiliar and challenging territory. With these two one-act operas, they present works from the so-called "interbellum", referring to pieces planned and realized between World Wars I and II. Two works with a highly political content that occupy an exceptional place in the operatic repertoire.

Both composers are of Jewish origin. Kurt Weill (1900–1950) successfully escaped to Paris in 1933, later to Switzerland, and then settled in the United States. He eventually became an American citizen. In contrast, Viktor Ullmann (1898–1944), an Austro-Hungarian from Teschen, was deported to Theresienstadt in 1942, where he was able to compose most of his opera *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*, before finally being killed in the Concentration Camp of Auschwitz in 1944.

The brutality of the First World War, which ended in 1918, left a deep impression on Ullmann, which is why the work, performed here, should perhaps be considered rather as part of the "interbellum". He by no means intended to depict the current political situation in Nazi Germany and the Second World War, in which he found himself at the time of composition. The violence he saw himself exposed to in the German Reich was indeed gigantic, but he did not want to simply depict and pillory it. Furthermore, the Theresienstadt internment camp had developed into a kind of artistic centre, where many creative people of Jewish origin sought to further pursue their talents. For them, it was a kind of survival strategy, a golden thread to which they could cling. Ullmann chose allegorical images for his piece, which could be used to establish and convey concrete connections to his time, but he was not concerned with making clear references with which to portray his situation. The Kaiser in his opera, in all his weakness, was much more like Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, who, after his abdication in 1918, was forbidden from returning to Germany from asylum in 1934. This Kaiser had become a powerless figure, for whom any chance of a renewed monarchy had been removed, especially with Adolf Hitler's authoritarian regime.

During rehearsals for this opera in Theresienstadt, however, Nazi observers interpreted Ullmann's Kaiser as a portrait of Adolf Hitler and banned the performance. The work only premiered in Amsterdam in 1975, long after Ullmann's assassination and the end of World War II.

The characters in Ullmann's opera present, on the one hand, the human, abstract aspects of the population (Bubikopf, Soldat, Trommler), and, on the other hand, the allegorical, universally valid good AND bad qualities of those who attempted to influence, guide, or misguide people's lives (Kaiser, Harlekin, Tod).

The Lautsprecher (loudspeaker) acts as an additional character, commenting on the events as a kind of narrator. Directed by Floris Visser, the Lautsprecher becomes an independent and truly visible figure. It is not a neutral, abstract object. Through personalisation, it transcends the purely functional aspect that one would normally associate with it.

Der Kaiser von Atlantis was actually a piece that operated with the so-called alienation effect, which Bertolt Brecht, in particular, had used as the theoretical basis of his work, including the pieces he created in his collaboration with the composer Kurt Weill, together with whom he had written such groundbreaking works as *Die Dreigroschenoper* (1929) and *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (1930). The characters appearing in *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* are primarily to be seen as caricatured and pictorial characters and by no means as vehicles for identification. Realistic portrayal and personal identification, however, were precisely what the National Socialist rulers most wanted to see on stage. It was precisely in this sense that in that time the more recent developments in theatre, on the operatic stage, and in art in general were rejected by politicians, if not banned or persecuted altogether. Both Kurt Weill and Viktor Ullmann were considered to be composers of *Entartete Musik* (degenerate music) because their works did not apply to the views, standards and demands of the rulers of their time.

In contrast to Ullmann's opera, Kurt Weill's *Die sieben Todsünden* functions as a parable of the developments and events between the two world wars. It is the last work created in collaboration between the composer and the writer Bertolt Brecht. The twin sisters Anna I and Anna II (who, in director Floris Visser's vision, represent two sides of a single personality) depict the great pursuit of money and happiness, which was relatively common in Germany in the 1920s. The Weimar Republic made this possible. In the newly established democracy, which for the first time followed the collapsed German Empire as a political form, artistic freedom prevailed, and all disciplines wanted to contribute to it. A broad, progressive cultural spectrum developed with exciting new trends, but this quickly collapsed due to financial deficits. The rapidly advancing Great Inflation can partly be seen as a consequence of the First World War. Right-wing tendencies emerged and were directed against almost everything that allowed artistic progress to flourish in Germany.

Added to this one has to take into account the influence of the United States, where the stock market crash of 1929 led to a sharp decline in economic performance in Europe as well, nipping in the bud all investments which seemed immeasurable and by that non-profitable. Thus, for a dancer like Anna, the central figure of the piece with two roles (Anna I and Anna II), it was inevitable that she would go astray. Anna found herself forced to prove her ambitions in art forms previously considered unethical, and almost inevitably she fell victim to the seven deadly sins on her journey through seven various American cities.

Her own family, for whose benefit she intended to be on the road, played a thoroughly negative role with their fatalistic, petty-bourgeois and hypocritical attitude. Anna's family practically pushed her into a life from which they then ultimately distanced themselves.

Already the very fact that the main character is split into two personalities and is confronted with the seven deadly sins of sloth, pride, wrath, gluttony, fornication, avarice and envy in seven American cities clearly indicates an alienated portrayal intended by the authors. An identifiable portrayal of the whole seems completely impossible and in no way appropriate to the message of the play.

The entertaining cabaret style of Kurt Weill's work, which premiered in Paris, seems just as out of step with the subject matter as the almost polystylistic composition of Ullmann, who incorporates numerous allusions to other authors of his time in his work. Arnold Schoenberg and Alexander von Zemlinsky, both composers also rejected by the Nazis, are just two examples, both teachers of Viktor Ullmann who died much too early being gassed in Auschwitz.

With the Dutch National Opera Academy's production of this double bill, all young singers are faced with the additional challenge, in addition to the challenge of delivering a professional performance at the highest possible level: by creating the performance, they are making it their mission to ensure that the audience never forgets what happened in the years between the two world wars. It is the task of art to show its viewers, its audiences, through the works performed, what must never happen again. Never again may an Anna, divided or not, give in to the hypocritical needs of her family. Never again may an emperor hide behind his own demands. We don't need a raised finger to understand which political leaders in our time behave in this way and which people follow them, causing irreparable damage to humanity. We need these plays, which have existed for so long, in particular, to understand the situation we find ourselves in today. The world is just as out of joint and dancing on a volcano today as it was in the years before the outbreak of the Second World War. Let's look and listen. That's why we have works like *Die sieben Todsünden* and *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*, so we can learn to understand and put a stop to emerging developments.

"It should be emphasised that we by no means just sat lamenting by Babylon's rivers and that our will to culture was adequate to our will to live."

— Viktor Ullmann

Fight!

Floris Visser

"We live in a possessed world. And we know it. . . . It would come as no surprise to anyone if the madness suddenly broke out in a frenzy, leaving this poor European humanity in stupor and bewilderment, the engines still running and the flags still waving, but the spirit gone."

– Johan Huizinga, 1935

I had to think of these words during the last few days. We are at a pivotal point in history and we all feel that. The similarities and parallels between our time and that of the "interbellum", and the subsequent Second World War and the mass destruction of Jews, Sinti, Roma, homosexuals, political prisoners, the mentally handicapped etc. are frightening. Democracy and the rule of law are not being overthrown, but are slowly hollowing themselves out from within, due to a lack of moral awareness and moral compass among the leaders and the administrative class.

As a child I always wondered how things could have gotten this far in the 1930s. But now I know. The failure of the centrist parties and the ruling class. A great disinterest and cynicism among the majority of the electorate, another part that desperately and screamingly marches behind populist leaders, an economic crisis and a ruling class that does not dare to take action or really tackle the problems. The biggest crisis of our time is not the asylum crisis, but income inequality and climate change. But we don't want to talk about that. That's why it's all the more important to perform pieces like *Die sieben Todsünden* by Kurt Weill and *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* by Viktor Ullmann.

In recent years, Paul McNamara asked me several times if I wanted to direct for DNOA. I always indicated that I did not want to do a repertoire piece but rather something special that also would fit within the possibilities of DNOA. When he suggested Ullmann's piece, I immediately jumped up. It is an enormously important piece, especially for the new generation and especially in these days and time. Today's singers often no longer have grandparents or parents who can tell them the stories of the time of the "interbellum" and the Second World War first-hand. And that is extremely dangerous and of great risk. My grandmother went to school with Anne Frank. My great-grandfather and paternal grandmother were active in the resistance in Amsterdam. Their stories have always inspired me and taught me that anything that even resembles xenophobia can lead to the Holocaust and a (world) war and must therefore be fought tooth and nail. The risk is that if future generations no longer hear and know these stories, the monster of fascism and war will raise its head again. We must never forget what happened. I once said to myself: "We are storytellers, and that is already a lot." And that is true. Tell the stories, again and again and fight! Fight! Never surrender and never give up. That is why we must continue to play these operas.

*"Every day, I go to earn my bread
In the exchange where lies are marketed,
Hoping my own lies will attract a bid."*

– Bertolt Brecht, Hollywood Elegies (1942)

from Re-Contextualizing Viktor Ullmann's *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* within Twentieth-Century German Opera

Mindy Eliza Buckton

In the summer months of 1943 Ullmann began work on one of the largest and most complex undertakings of composition within Theresienstadt, the one-act-opera '*Der Kaiser von Atlantis oder Die Todverweigerung*' (*The Kaiser of Atlantis: or Death's Refusal*). The work was completed in February of 1944 and rehearsals were begun with a planned summer performance to be conducted by Rafael Schächter. The production of the work was halted by the SS-commander during rehearsals, and the work was never performed in Ullmann's lifetime. The autumn of 1944 was the beginning of the liquidation of Theresienstadt as well as many other camps and ghettos, as the German forces were being driven back from occupied territories. Ullmann and his wife Elisabeth were transported on 16 October 1944 on the 'Künstler-Transport' (the artist transport) to Auschwitz, where they perished in the gas chambers upon arrival. Ullmann had entrusted his works to the Theresienstadt-librarian, Professor Emil Utitz, thereby securing their preservation.

Throughout the opera, there are moments when the inmates of Theresienstadt and their circumstances are being alluded to: They are the living who have forgotten how to laugh and the dying who cannot die. The Harlekin and Tod watch as the opera commences. Just as Brecht used opera as a form of resistance against the impending rise of National Socialism and the end of the new Republics, we find that *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* is also a clear representation of resistance against the treatment and conditions in occupied Germany. The displacement of the Jews and other minorities in Europe should not be accepted, and giving in to defeat and acceptance of their circumstances was in its own way a type of death. Between the lines of the text in *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* we can see that both Ullmann and Kien were communicating to the audience that there were still some things that could not be taken away from them, and it is only through perseverance that they could overcome the darkness that surrounds them. Ullmann was a composer who was actively immersed in the developing world of music within the interwar period. His role in the production of concerts for the *Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen* and his position at the various opera houses place him as a composer of the interwar period. Theresienstadt allowed Ullmann to focus on music as a form of personal resistance, creating his most productive compositional period. However, this time period does not define Ullmann's artistic style which developed and matured during the interwar period. *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*

is a work defined by the situations of Theresienstadt and the politics of World War II. Nonetheless, it is within the context of opera and theatre from the interwar period that we can begin to understand the skilful ways in which this material is represented within Ullmann's work. Examining the framework of *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* within the *Zeitoper* and *Epic theatre* reveals that there is more behind the context of the work, which moves it beyond the walls of Theresienstadt. It is easy to limit the examination of representation in Ullmann's opera to the events and times surrounding the work, including the association of Kaiser Overall to Hitler.



The Westerbork National Monument is one of the most striking and impressive of the thousands of war memorials in the Netherlands. The monument, designed by camp survivor Ralph Prins, was intended to keep the memory of Camp Westerbork alive.

At the end of the rails which are 90 meters long, Ralph Prins wanted to show with as few means as possible that something terrible had happened at this location. The upward-curling rails express despair; they have been treated as if they had been shot at. They show the destruction. The closer to the end, the more they are splintered. These rest on 93 sleepers, which refer to the number of transports that left Camp Westerbork. Four sleepers that are loose from the rails symbolise four transports that left from elsewhere to Eastern Europe. The wall of boulders looks like a pile of skulls from a distance. This wall, as it were, closes off the monument from the eye. In front of it is the buffer stop, close to the place where the railway line from Hooghalen to the camp also came to its end point. Ralph Prins deliberately did not want to use the authentic buffer stop that still lies behind the wall. This also applies to all the materials of the monument: nothing comes from the camp itself, not even the rails.

The two marble slabs bear the Bible text Lamentations 4:18.

They hunt our steps, that we cannot go in our streets: our end is near, our days are fulfilled; for our end is come.

This National Monument Westerbork is probably the only memorial that has been unveiled twice. At the official unveiling on 4 May 1970, only a select group of dignitaries and a number of representatives of the press were present. The absence of camp survivors, relatives and their organisations was remarkable: they were not invited. That is why the Dutch Auschwitz Committee organised a second unveiling in September 1970, which was attended by around one hundred and fifty survivors. In the meantime, commemorative meetings are held annually on 4 May at the National Monument Westerbork, which are attended by thousands of interested parties.



Der Kaiser von Atlantis dress rehearsals – June 2025

Residentie Orkest

Wouter Vossen *violin I*

Justyna Briefjes *violin II*

Timur Yakubov *viola*

Gideon den Herder *cello*

Jos Tieman *bass*

Eline van Esch *flute*

Barbara Patricio *oboe*

Hans Colbers | Jasper Grijpink *clarinet*

Gretha Tuls *bassoon*

Sergei Dovgaliouk *horn*

Erwin ter Bogt *trumpet*

Timothy Dowling *trombone*

Martin Ansink | Murk Jiskoot *percussion*

Daan van Koppen *alto saxophone*

Paul van Utrecht *banjo/guitar*

Pieter Bogaert *piano/harpsichord/harmonium*



Residentie Orkest during dress rehearsals – June 2025

Residentie Orkest The Hague

The Residentie Orkest is the orchestra of, for and from The Hague. It has firm links with the city and its inhabitants. It also plays a strong role in supporting The Hague's wider profile as seat of government, home to the royal family and city of peace and justice as well as a centre of diplomacy, a first-rate place to live, a business hub and a city with a socially committed heart. The orchestra actively uses classical music to connect and stimulate all residents and visitors based on four pillars: symphonic, education, talent development and outreach. It aims to make a valuable contribution towards an inclusive, inspiring, collaborative and multi-faceted city.

The orchestra offers a top-quality musical experience with an adventurous profile and dynamic zeal. It challenges, surprises and provides enjoyment and always looks to approach its music in a fresh, contemporary and youthful way. From summer 2021 the orchestra is located in the new concert hall Amare in the centre of The Hague. The Residentie Orkest can also be heard frequently at locations such as the Royal Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, TivoliVredenburg in Utrecht and De Doelen in Rotterdam. In addition, special crossover concerts and other innovative productions are performed in The Hague's prominent pop venue Paard.

The Residentie Orkest is also part of many prolific collaborations with a wide range of partners, including Pieterskerk in Leiden, the Dutch National Theatre, Kunstmuseum Den Haag, NTR Saturday Matinee and the Dutch National Opera. In recent seasons, the orchestra has played in a highly acclaimed production of Messiaen's rarely performed opera *Saint François d'Assise* as well as in Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites*, Puccini's *La bohème* and *Madama Butterfly*, Verdi's *Nabucco* and the world premiere of *Ritratto* by Willem Jeths.



Residentie Orkest during dress rehearsals – June 2025

A rich history

Since its first concert in 1904, the Residentie Orkest has developed into one of the most prominent symphony orchestras in the Netherlands. Founded by Dr Henri Viotta, who was also its first chief conductor, it soon attracted composers like Richard Strauss, Igor Stravinsky, Max Reger, Maurice Ravel, Paul Hindemith and Vincent d'Indy. Guest conductors have included Arturo Toscanini, George Szell, Bruno Walter, Leonard Bernstein and Hans Knappertsbusch. After World War II, Willem van Otterloo was appointed chief conductor. He led the orchestra from 1949 to 1973 and built a strong reputation by combining high-quality performances with adventurous programming. Van Otterloo was succeeded by Jean Martinon, Ferdinand Leitner, Hans Vonk, Evgenii Svetlanov, Jaap van Zweden, Neeme Järvi and Nicholas Collon.

The orchestra has built up a rich discography with labels such as BIS, Chandos, Challenge and DGG. The Residentie Orkest can also be heard frequently in many major concert halls across the world. Its various tours have included New York, Boston, Chicago, London and Vienna and the orchestra has also performed in Japan, China, Germany, France and South America.

Conductors

Jun Märkl is the chief conductor of the Residentie Orkest and Richard Egarr principal guest conductor.



Mozart *La finta giardiniera* – June 2023

About DNOA

A partnership of the Conservatorium van Amsterdam and the Royal Conservatoire The Hague, the **Dutch National Opera Academy** is a two-year 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

DNOA 2025-2026

Giovanni Battista Pergolesi

La serva padrona

Intermezzo per musica

Christina Domnick conductor | **Rennik-Jan Neggers** director

A collaboration with Klassiek op het Amstelveld, Amsterdam | 20. September 2025

Theater Orpheus, Apeldoorn | 16. November 2025

Conservatorium van Amsterdam | 22. November 2025

NedPhO-Koepel, Amsterdam | 23. November 2025

Amare, The Hague | 29. November 2025

A collaboration with the Classical Department, Conservatorium van Amsterdam.

A festive programme with the Dutch National Opera Academy

Giacchino Rossini | Saverio Mercadante

Beyond the Carol

Daan Boertien piano

Recital Hall, Concertgebouw, Amsterdam

17. December 2025

Soirées Musicales

Isaac Lam piano

Recital Hall, Concertgebouw, Amsterdam

25. February 2026

Benjamin Perry Wenzelberg

Nighttown

an operatic reimaging of James Joyce's Ulysses

Benjamin Wenzelberg conductor | **Robert Chevara** director | **Matthijs van Bergen** design

Amare, The Hague | 3, 4, 6, 7. February 2026

A collaboration with the Classical Department, Royal Conservatoire The Hague.

Gaetano Donizetti

Il campanello

Farsa per musica in one act

Marco Vallone conductor | **Rennik-Jan Neggers** director | **Maartje Prins** design

Bredeweg, Amsterdam | 26. April 2026

A collaboration with the Bredeweg Festival

Leoš Janáček

Příhody Lišky Bystroušky *(The Cunning Little Vixen)*

An opera in three acts

Chloe Rooke conductor | **Daniel van Klaveren** director | **Maartje Prins** design

Amare, The Hague | 24, 25, 27, 28. June 2026

A collaboration with the Residentie Orkest

About the performers & Creative team

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

Sam Weller *conductor*

Originally from Australia and now based between Sydney and Amsterdam, Sam founded Ensemble Apex in 2016, which has been hailed as "one of the most exciting new ensembles on the Sydney scene" (*Limelight Magazine*). In 2024 they launched Apex Festival supported by the Australian Government – a cutting edge new orchestral music festival in Australia.

As one of six 'designated winners' of the International Conducting Competition Rotterdam, Sam Weller recently conducted ensembles such as the Rotterdam Philharmonic, Klangforum Wien and Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century.

Sam's upcoming engagements include operas with the Dutch National Opera Academy and symphonic concerts with Noord Nederlands Orkest, the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Phil Zuid and Residentie Orkest.

In 2022 Sam graduated from the prestigious National Masters of Orchestral Conducting in the Netherlands where he studied with Ed Spanjaard, Jac Van Steen, Kenneth Montgomery OBE and guest professor Antony Hermus.



Sam Weller – June 2025

Floris Visser *director*

Considered one of the leading talents in a new generation of opera directors, Floris Visser has directed productions in numerous renowned opera houses, including Glyndebourne Festival Opera, the Bolshoi Theatre, Opernhaus Zürich, Dutch National Opera, The Royal Danish Opera, Semperoper Dresden, Oper Graz, Oper Köln, Aalto Musiktheater Essen and the Internationale Händelfestspiele Karlsruhe. He was, until recently, artistic director of Opera Trionfo, where he created productions of rare and unique operas and showed his passion for developing young talent.

Born in Amsterdam, the opera director and arts administrator performed on stage from a very young age and attended Maastricht Theatre Academy where he graduated as an actor and director, before studying classical singing at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague. Currently professor at the conservatories of The Hague, Amsterdam, and the Theatre Academy of Maastricht, he was appointed Director of the Royal Holland Society of Sciences and Humanities in 2018. Over the years he has worked regularly as a guest lecturer and as director of several productions at the DNOA. His awards include the Charlotte Köhler Prize from the Prince Bernhard Culture Fund and a number of Golden Mask Award nominations. His production of Gluck's *Orphée et Eurydice* was awarded 'Opera of the Year' by Opera magazine.



Floris Visser – June 2025

Klaus Bertisch *dramaturg*

Klaus Bertisch is a freelance dramaturg, director and writer. He started as a dramaturg with Frankfurt Opera. Subsequently he worked for Siemens Cultural Programme in Munich and opera houses in Germany, France, Belgium and Austria. He was Head of Dramaturgy at Dutch National Opera (1990–2018). With Pierre Audi he worked in Amsterdam, Brussels, Paris, at the Salzburg Festival, the Ruhrtriennale, and in Milan, Munich and Madrid, with Willy Decker in Dresden, Barcelona and for the Salzburg Festival, with Dale Duesing in Berlin, and with Floris Visser in Moscow and Karlsruhe. With Christof Loy he worked for the Salzburg Festival, in Amsterdam and Vienna, and with Andrea Breth in Amsterdam, Brussels and Aix-en-Provence.

Bertisch also directed different projects and staged recitals with renowned singers. He has been a lecturer at the University of Amsterdam and taught at the International Opera Studio Nederland, at the Academy in Aix-en-Provence and the Academy of Fine Arts in Stuttgart. He teaches at Dutch National Opera Academy in Amsterdam where he recently staged Johannes Brahms's *Liebesliederwalzer*. Amongst many other books he published the first German biography about Dutch composer Leo Smit *Unerhörtes Talent*, and collaborated with the renowned photographer Ruth Walz on her extensive publication *Theater im Sucher*.

Demi Wals *choreographer*

The Dutch choreographer Demi Wals is an interdisciplinary artist working in dance, opera, theatre, and film. She graduated with a double bachelor's degree from Lucia Marthas Institute for Performing Arts. As a dancer and dance captain for the Dutch National Opera, she performed in the Donizetti productions *Anna Bolena* (2022) and *Maria Stuarda* (2023), both directed by Jetske Mijnsen. In 2024, she further contributed to the company as a dancer in Barrie Kosky's *Die Fledermaus*.

She worked as assistant director and head of production for Leonard Bernstein's *Mass* (2023) at Theater Münster with director Tom Ryser. In 2024, she worked for the first time at the Dutch National Opera Academy as an assistant director and stage manager for *Transformations* (2024), and continued her collaboration on *La fedeltà premiata* (2025).

Besides that, she recently choreographed *De Avond van de Filmmuziek* at the Ziggo Dome in Amsterdam, the largest venue in the Netherlands, with the Metropole Orchestra. In addition to her stage work, she has appeared in many Dutch television series and written short stories for the women's platform Cycle Care.

Esmée Thomassen *costume design*

Visit www.aesmey.com

Prem Scholte Albers *co-set designer*

Prem Scholte Albers (1975) studied Theatre Technology at the Amsterdam School of the Arts. After a number of years as a touring technician for companies such as Orkater, Het Toneel Speelt, Toneelgroep Amsterdam and Companions Opera, he developed his skills further in the performing arts in several disciplines. Including stage management, technical production and lighting design and occasionally venturing out to stage design as well. His lighting designs are known for bold directional gestures and saturated colours as a recurring theme. In set design, symmetry colliding with irregularities keep reappearing.

As a technical producer he was, amongst others, responsible for the Uitmarkt Amsterdam, The Ketikoti Festival and the route of the royals of Kingsday in Amstelveen and Groningen. For Nicole Beutler Projects the performances *Metamorphosis* and *Ginko* (50 million years ago there were palm trees on the north pole), stand out.

After the outbreak of corona and the consequential lockdowns Prem co-designed and produced a corona proof venue with De Warme Winkel. His first production with DNOA was in 2003 and many collaborations followed.

Gertjan Houben *lighting design*

Gertjan Houben is an internationally active lighting designer working in opera, theatre, events and television. Recently you may have seen his lighting for the Amsterdam 750 Openingsconcert in the Ziggodome on television. He has 25 years of experience and a Master's in Lighting from Tisch School of the Art in New York. Houben is excited to bring his knowledge and experience to the Conservatoriumzaal stage and work with the DNOA students. Besides his work as a designer Houben is the Artistic Director of the Design and Technology programme at the Academy for Theatre and Dance in Amsterdam. D&T is the premier bachelor programme for the next generation of theatre designers and technician. When he is not at the Academy or travelling for work, Houben enjoys spending time at home with his wife Katie and sons Wim and Marcus.

Buğra Yüzügüldü *assistant conductor*

Currently studying orchestral conducting at the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague under the guidance of Jac van Steen, Ivan Meylemans and Alex Schillings, Buğra Yüzügüldü has worked with orchestras such as the National Ballet Orchestra, Het Zeeuws Orkest and Klassiek Collectief. Next to this, he assisted the Youth orchestra of the Netherlands as a conductor, where he has worked alongside soloists like Rosanne Phillipens, Maria Milstein and Victor Julien-Laferrrière. With a passion for opera he has conducted a wide array of productions, from Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* to works like Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*.

Alongside his conducting he is a much sought after violist, playing as principal in many youth orchestras across Europe. He is currently studying viola at the conservatoire with Lech Antonio Uszynski.

Ivet Serra *assistant director*

Ivet Serra is a multidisciplinary musician from Spain whose work bridges performance, composition and direction. Trained as a classical flautist, she earned her Bachelor's degree from the Conservatorium van Amsterdam under the guidance of Kersten McCall, Vincent Cortvrint and Mariya Semotyuk. She previously completed her Diplôme d'Études Musicales at the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Paris with Claude Lefebvre.

With a passion for expanding the boundaries of classical music, Ivet's artistic practice extends beyond traditional performance. She has appeared as both composer and performer at the Boslab Festival, Bostheater and created her own adaptation of Mozart's *Idomeneo*, arranged for woodwind quintet, tenor and soprano, and performed in various venues across the Netherlands, including at the Muziekzomer Gelderland summer festival.

Her growing involvement in opera and stage direction has led to several collaborations with the Dutch National Opera Academy (DNOA), where she has worked as assistant director on various productions including *La fedeltà premiata* directed by Anja Kühnhold and Brahms's *Liebesliederwalzer* with Klaus Bertisch.

Before entering the world of theatre and opera, Ivet performed with renowned ensembles in Europe such as the Symphonic Orchestra of Vallès, and with Ensemble Matheus under Jean-Christophe Spinosi, where she appeared as soloist at the opening of the 2024 Paralympic Games' overture in Paris.



Die sieben Todsünden dress rehearsals – June 2025

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The Services Departments of the Conservatorium van Amsterdam and the Royal
Conservatoire the Hague

Programme Credits

Synopses – *Floris Visser & Klaus Bertisch*

Like on a volcano – *Klaus Bertisch*

Fight! – *Floris Visser*

Re-Contextualizing Viktor Ullmann's *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* within Twentieth-Century
German Opera – *Mindy Eliza Buckton, Laurentian University, Sudbury Canada (2010)*

Hollywood Elegies – Bertolt Brecht (1942) – Translation Adam Kirsch

Westerbork National Monument photo © Shutterstock

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