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PROFESSIONALS' PROGRAMME 2018

Wednesday 23 May

	de Doelen	Theater Rotterdam Schouwburg
15:00		Registration opens in the foyer
16:00		City walk with surprise act
17:30	Dinner	
19:00		Ballad Opera (to 20:15) By Xander Straat (NL), Gareth Davis (UK), Newton (NL) <i>"Set in a nightclub that resembles a waiting room, based on a satirical 18th century English opera format for the 'common people', with a singer steeped in melancholy. Newton's Ballad Opera reinvents and entertains."</i>
20:30		When I die by Thom Luz, Mathias Weibel (CH) "A ghost story based on Rosemary Brown's mysterious scores of dead composers, set to music" (to 22:00)
22:00		Swiss reception and talk after <i>When I die</i> , together with Thom Luz and audience

Thursday 24 May – Operation Music Theatre

	Theater Rotterdam Schouwburg	On location
10:30	Registration opens	
11:00	Keynote by Bernard Foccroulle (End of the Opera Europa programme / start of the Operation Music Theatre programme)	
11:30	Pitches Dutch music theatre makers	
12:30	Lunch	
13:30	Pitches By Swiss music theatre makers	
14:30	Speed dates	
15:30	Break	
15:45	Pitches Music theatre makers from abroad	
17:00	Showcase Project Wildeman (NL)	
18:00	Dinner – on your own	
19:00	Mary Stuart: In my end is my beginning by Robert Zuidam (NL), IMAGO MUNDI (BE), Anouk Declercq (BE) <i>“Modern approach to classical repertoire, featuring excellent musicians”</i>	
22:00		Canticum Cantorum – Song of Songs, a protest song By Serge Verstockt, ChampdAction & Collegium Vocale Gent (BE) <i>“An ineluctable love story in rebellious registers”</i>

Friday 25 May

	Theater Rotterdam Schouwburg
19:00	DIDO DIDO By Nicole Beutler (NL) and Silbersee (NL) <i>“A spellbinding opera inspired by Henry Purcell's aria, 'Dido's Lament' about the tragic fate of a mythical queen. Five singers/musicians, one dancer, and a puppet borrowed from Japanese Bunraku create room for a slow letting-go.”</i>
20:30	Camility / Billy By Ben Johnston (US), Gavin Bryars (UK), Claron MacFadden (US/NL), Jean Cornerie (FR) and Les Percussions Claviers de Lyon (FR) <i>“Wild West opera with texts by Michael Ondaatje, featuring singer Bertrand Belin and soprano Claron McFadden who portray mythical heroes Billy the Kid and Calamity Jane. The renowned composer Gavin Bryars wrote the music.”</i>

OPERADAGEN ROTTERDAM 2018 IS ALL ABOUT HEROISM

The 13th edition of Operadagen Rotterdam, the festival for contemporary opera and music theatre, runs from Friday 18 through Sunday 27 May 2018. Operadagen Rotterdam presents more than 100 performances in major theatres, unusual venues, and outdoor locations in Rotterdam. The festival theme for 2018 is heroism with fascinating stories about the trials and challenges of a hero's journey.

Operadagen Rotterdam is a worldwide opera and music theatre festival featuring contemporary, innovative, and ground-breaking productions by established international makers as well as young and adventurous talent. The festival presents stories about pushing back frontiers and the search for a new identity under the central festival theme *Lost & Found* from 2017 through 2020. Operadagen Rotterdam lets the audience rediscover classic operas from days long gone in brand-new arrangements as it leaves the beaten tracks with new music theatre performances, and points to exciting and unknown horizons.

Heroic stories

Operadagen Rotterdam keeps a finger on the pulse of today's world; its performances reflect topical social themes. The 2018 festival presents *Heroism*, the second of four yearly themes under the umbrella of *Lost & Found*. The intrepid hero enters the eye of the storm, defies danger, confronts his demons, and ventures into strange places far from home. Heroes often display the greatest courage in the darkest moments of the journey. Mata Hari and Mary Stuart are among the heroines paying a visit to the festival and so is Leonore from Beethoven's opera *Fidelio*. All exemplify heroism in their own way.

International festival favourites

The programme features international top productions, modern classics, and high-profile new work by young talent with a contemporary voice. The ensemble Cappella Mediterranea and conductor Leonardo García Alarcón have achieved the status of global super stars within a short space of time. They are back at Operadagen Rotterdam after doing *L'Orfeo* in 2017. The latest production is about cultural interchange in times of colonisation and suppression. The welcome wrinkly rockers of Young@Heart are also returning to the festival with their new energetic show in Theater Rotterdam.

International platform with Opera Europa

Operadagen Rotterdam is a global opera and music theatre network encompassing professionals from around the world. A delegation from Opera Europa will attend for the second time since 2010 this year. The members of this international network of opera companies and festivals convene to take part in conversations and presentations on the subject of *Collaboration between smaller opera companies and large opera houses and festivals*. They bring their own stakeholders to Operadagen Rotterdam to facilitate even more meetings and exchanges of information between people in the field. FEDORA, a cross-border non-profit organisation for the development of young opera and ballet talent, will also assemble in Rotterdam during the current edition of the festival.

SHOWS THAT ARE PART OF THE PROGRAMME

Ballad Opera

A reinvented 18th-century opera phenomenon

Ballad Opera refers to a satirical opera format that was all the rage in 18th century England. It was the signature English common people's reaction to lofty Italian operas. The music comprised well-known ballads, opera arias, church hymns, and folk tunes. Beggars, vagrants, and criminals populated the stage instead of noblemen and princes.

Music theatre company Newton's *Ballad Opera* is set in a nightclub with live band, somewhere in the world. The location is as real as it is imaginary. A place of limbo? Or perhaps a waiting room where strange creatures congregate. The singer of the band has performed in the club since time immemorial. She is waiting for a miracle.

Set in a nightclub that resembles a waiting room, based on a satirical 18th century English opera format for the 'common people', with a singer steeped in melancholy. Newton's *Ballad Opera* reinvents and entertains.

When I Die: A Ghost Story with Music

Swiss top director creates a virtuoso and amusing ghost opera

This is a true story. The ghost of composer Franz Liszt (who died in 1886) visited Rosemary Brown in November 1964. He asked her if he could dictate some compositions that he had not completed in his lifetime. Brown was not musically educated but she agreed to his request. Johan Sebastian Bach dropped by immediately afterwards with exactly the same question. Many other composers followed in quick succession, including Johannes Brahms, Sergei Rachmaninoff, and Edvard Grieg. The Swiss director and musician Thom Luz uses Brown's scores as the starting-point for a cheerful and spooky night featuring three musicians, one actor, and an actress.

When I Die: A Ghost Story with Music by Swiss director/musician Thom Luz uses scores notated by Rosemary Brown at the behest of long-dead composers including Liszt, Johan Sebastian Bach, and Rachmaninoff. Cheerful and spooky.

Mary Stuart: In my end is my beginning
Modern approach to classical repertoire, featuring excellent musicians

Mary Stuart (1542-1587). A vile murderer or a proud heroine? Interpretations vary greatly regarding the tragic life of probably the most famous Scottish monarch of all times. Lore Binon, Anthony Romaniuk, and Sofie Vanden Eynde have created a contemporary soundscape using vocals, lute, theorbo, pianoforte, and electronics as they intentionally disregard any historical context. The performance incorporates the many conflicting images of Mary Stuart. To realise this theatrical concert, the makers have sourced materials from the rich musical tradition that underpinned Stuart's life, including pieces of music written for her. Robert Zuidam, one of the Netherlands' most fascinating composers, has put music to a number of sonnets about Stuart that were written by the Nobel literature laureate, Joseph Brodsky.

Mary Stuart was a contentious Scottish monarch. Without heeding historical context, the three makers created a contemporary soundscape using vocals, lute, theorbo, pianoforte, and electronics. Robert Zuidam set Joseph Brodsky's sonnets about Stuart to music.

Canticum Canticorum – Song of Songs, a protest song
An ineluctable love story in rebellious registers

Fervent, headstrong, and brimming with sensuality. The Old Testament book Song of Songs is among the most beautiful and enigmatic love songs ever written. Numerous experts have tried to interpret and claim the book down the centuries without avail. It expresses the poetic passion of an exotic woman who dares to go against law and order. ChampdAction and Collegium Vocale Gent explore the Song of Songs as a protest song against society's restrictions, obstructive authorities, and segregation barriers. An overpowering love story in rebellious registers. *Canticum Canticorum* is staged as a live installation set in the aisles of a majestic church amidst immersive video projections, contemporary sound structures, and sublime early polyphony.

A live installation with immersive video and sound set in the aisles of a majestic church. Central is the Old Testament book Song of Songs, an enigmatic and beautiful ode to love as strong as death.

DIDO DIDO

A spellbinding opera about saying farewell that crawls under the skin

DIDO DIDO brings us closer than ever to the tragic fate of the mythical Queen Dido. Director/choreographer Nicole Beutler and musical director Romain Bischoff found inspiration in Henry Purcell's most famous aria, 'Dido's Lament', from his opera *Dido and Aeneas*. 'Remember me, but forget my fate.' Uprooted and crossed in love, the brave Dido decides to end her life. Five singers/musicians and one dancer give voice to Dido's psyche. They animate a puppet that is borrowed from the Japanese Bunraku tradition and imbue her with life. With the use of chanting and instruments from all quarters of the world they reiterate and rearrange the classical aria. Thus they delay the inescapable and create room for a slow letting-go.

A spellbinding opera inspired by Henry Purcell's aria, 'Dido's Lament' about the tragic fate of a mythical queen. Five singers/musicians, one dancer, and a puppet borrowed from Japanese Bunraku create room for a slow letting-go.

Calamity/Billy: A two-part Paradise Lost

Wild West opera about two legendary desperadoes

Calamity/Billy is a musical theatre project revolving around two mythical heroes of the American Frontier. One is the illustrious cowboy Billy the Kid. The other is Calamity Jane, the tough cowgirl who outclassed all her male contemporaries. The famous French director Jean Lacornerie juxtaposed the two gunslings after reading *The Collected works of Billy the Kid* by Michael Ondaatje and listening to *Calamity Jane's letters to her daughter*, put to music by American composer Ben Johnston. The renowned composer Gavin Bryars wrote new music specifically for the French singer Bertrand Belin and the American-Dutch soprano Claron McFadden. Belin channels Billy the Kid while McFadden, of course, portrays Calamity Jane.

Wild West opera with texts by Michael Ondaatje, featuring singer Bertrand Belin and soprano Claron McFadden who portray mythical heroes Billy the Kid and Calamity Jane. The renowned composer Gavin Bryars wrote the music.