

IOA
INTERNATIONAL
OPERA
ACADEMY

LoveMusik

International Opera Academy
Academic Year 2020-2021
General Manager Guy Joosten

Alfred Uhry/ Kurt Weill

LoveMusik

Streaming: English with Dutch subtitles
www.soundofghent.be/event/soundofghent/lovemusik
Co-production with Opera Ballet Vlaanderen and Casco Phil

ARTISTIC TEAM

Conductor and musical direction

Benjamin Haemhouts

Musical coach

Hein Boterberg

Director

Stefaan Degand

Dramaturge & director's assistant

Elien Hanselaer

Set Design

Bert Serneels

Language Coach

Rachel Harland

Lighting Design

Michiel Soete

Costumes

Stefaan Degand
& Krisje Biegel

Film director and editor

Mathieu Hendrickx

Dresser

Lies Maréchal

Audio

Jonathan Baltussen

Stage manager

Alberto Martínez



LOVEMUSIK CAST

Kurt Weill

Mikhail Silantev

Lotte Lenya

Kadi Jürgens

Bertolt Brecht

Yanqiao Shi

George Davis

William Branston

Otto

Sunghwan Park

Woman on Stairs

Sofia Marafona

Magistrate

Sawako Kayaki

Court Secretary

Keith Pun

Brecht's Wife

Sandrine Mairesse

Brecht's Woman 1

Victoria Perez-Santisteban

Brecht's woman 2

Sofia Marafona

Repetitors

Anastasia Silanteva & José Alberto Sancho

Ensemble

Casco Phil

Irene Pechner (auditioner)

Sandrine Mairesse

Erik Geibel (auditioner)

Sunghwan Park

Stage manager

Keith Pun

Stenographer

Victoria Perez-Santisteban

Judge

Sofia Marafona

Allen Lake

Sunghwan Park

Madam Zuzu

Keith Pun

Avoid

Sofia Marafona

Pretend

Victoria Perez-Santisteban

Groom

Sunghwan Park

Ensembles

singers from the cast





INTRO

LoveMusik is an ode to the 20th-century composer Kurt Weill. Written by the American theatre maker Alfred Uhry, the libretto focuses on Weill's music and on the composer's turbulent relationship with singer-actor Lotte Lenya. Their different careers forced them to travel often. Between the two of them, this resulted in a collection of letters. The original version of LoveMusik was based partly on these letters, which show the ins and outs of their relation. It turned into a two-act production, starting in Germany and ending in America. The work premiered on Broadway in 2007.

Stefaan Degand translates the story to this current situation, as the International Opera Academy and its students also groan under stifling Corona measures. Viewers travel with these classically trained singers through times that should be meaningful to them, if circumstances hadn't decided otherwise. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, this final performance and showreel to the world can't be played before an audience. And so, the singers turn to the cameraman as new viewer and ally, rather than to their beloved audience. In this production, the cameraman is present at all stages: the final performance, but also the rehearsal process in corona-restricted circumstances. Rehearsals will take place at the IOA and at De Minard theatre, where the Minard acts as the new main character: the empty room.

This is a co-production between the IOA, Opera Ballet Vlaanderen and Casco Phil.





SYNOPSIS AND VISUAL LANGUAGE

ACT I

Weill and Lenya meet in Germany and immediately move in together, but it becomes soon clear that their relationship is doomed to fail. He comes from a strict, Jewish family, she comes from a loud and lowbrow family. He is an up-and-coming composer, she is an actress/singer on the rise. Despite their different backgrounds, they get married. When Weill and Bertolt Brecht hold auditions for their new opera, 'Die Dreigroschenoper', Lenya auditions too. They become a well-known creative trio in Germany, but when Weill leaves for Paris, they part ways. They separate; Lenya remains in Germany with Otto, her boyfriend, but stays in touch with Weill through correspondence. When Weill returns to Germany, his Jewish upbringing forces him to flee to the US. Weill asks Lenya to join him, and she agrees.

ACT II

Kurt and Lenya arrive in the States and try to earn money. Weill assumes that the only way to succeed in America is to be rich. But soon, this adventure goes wrong too. Bertolt Brecht has fled to the States before, and already feels like a 'true American'. As the writer, he demands a share in the earnings of Weill and Lenya, but they end up having a row. Later still, Weill spends a lot of time in California, and Lenya plays several nightclub shows – thanks to the editor George Davis, whom they met after a US performance. When she finds out why Weill spent all that time in California, Lenya tells him to leave. Upon Weill's death, shortly after, Lenya and Davis are left by themselves. For the last time, they perform the Threepenny Opera.



THE GENESIS OF LOVEMUSIK

Before he wrote LoveMusic, librettist Alfred Uhry had often written musicals and plays. For this musical, he used a selection of Weill's music. Based on the book 'Speak Low (When you Speak Love)', he investigated the relationship and lives of Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya.

Lys Symonette and Kim H. Kowalke adapted and translated their love letters. Theatre director and producer Harold Prince suggested the idea of creating a musical to Uhry. Together, Prince and Uhry worked at LoveMusik for four years before it was ready to perform. LoveMusik premiered as a musical on Broadway in 2007. The original production was nominated for awards several times, such as the Tony awards and the Drama Desk Award; later, it was translated and performed in Japan, Buenos Aires, Berlin and other places.



MUSICAL NOTES

Benjamin Haemhouts & Margot Van Gysel

The music of LoveMusik is composed of a number of well-known works by the 20th-century German composer Kurt Weill. His compositions can be understood to reflect his own life. He was inspired by early German avant-garde music, but also had a 'French period' while staying in Paris to work on a number of commissions. Finally, we note his famous American period, which began after he fled to America during the rise of Nazi Germany. He came to Hollywood and Broadway, and those influences can all be heard in his music.

Despite these musical periods in his life, it's difficult to outline clearly the beginning and end of any such period. It would be more accurate to say that he was adding styles onto one another throughout his life. Apart from his travels, his political activism also strongly influenced his music. Weill grew up in a Jewish family, and was very quickly targeted in Germany. He resisted the discrimination he himself had experienced through his music. There is often a dark side to his compositions, despite how joyful these may seem at first sight. It is important to know that his music is layered, and grew from his own experiences, either political, musical or private.



INTERVIEWS

Stefaan Degand - Director & Elien Hanselaer - Dramaturgy & Assistant Director

Stefaan & Elien: in creating LoveMusik, we were looking for something universal. We looked at the deep and complex love between Kurt and Lotte, which is at the heart of this work. The sentiment is more important than the story itself. The underlying theme here is attraction and rejection, the volatile dynamics at the centre of many relationships.

Stefaan: by using a minimalist decor, I try to tell the story in one image. I prefer this to large, overloaded sets. A pile of suitcases make up the scene, and refer to the characters, who are always on the move. It visualises their inner torment. Apart from that, the canvas was entirely blank. I like working impulsively and in interaction with the singers, with attention to their specificity. Moreover, these classically trained singers are approaching the genre of musical with an open perspective, and this creates a unique dynamic.

Stefaan & Elien: the singers have created a beautiful musical balance across the different genres within LoveMusik, without destroying the layered nature of the composition. The struggle between ambition and sincere love is expressed in the interplay of spoken and sung dialogue. Grotesque, comical figures intensify the restlessness that torments the main characters, but at the same time these emphasize the love between Lenya and Kurt, and the great effort that goes with it. All of this is in pleasant contrast to the jagged music and different characters. We consciously decided to add some comic relief – highly infectious and uplifting amidst all corona restrictions.





Benjamin Haemhouts - Conductor

LoveMusik encapsulates a number of songs in an artificial storyline. At first, I was reluctant to get it all together, as the songs are mixed and were translated into English for the Broadway show. What's more, the songs are in different languages. But the music and the melodic songs do constitute the heart of the work. Those songs, and Weill's musical ideas, do transcend the language, which gives the work a universal character. Moreover, there are plenty of possibilities within the work to express the different colours, timbres and sounds that Weill used to compose and excel with. Fortunately, Casco Phil is no stranger to Weill's music; we have produced an album with the repertoire from Weill's three different periods. More scrutiny is needed for Weill's more complicated compositions. His music may appear superficial, but is in fact highly layered and has a dark, cynical side.

As a matter of fact, Weill's music was strongly influenced by his turbulent life. The singers clearly sense how to sing and interpret these layered compositions. Some of the songs were originally written for classically trained singers, but when LoveMusik premiered on Broadway, everything was magnified and adapted.

That's not the case in this production, though. The performance veers between opera and musical. All credit to these classically trained singers for daring to leave the classical context of the opera, and using their own power and timbre to colour every song differently.

Mathieu Hendrickx - film director and editing

I was engaged by the IOA as a cameraman mid April, right before the start of rehearsals. Only by that time, it had become clear that there would be no public performances: as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the door of the cultural sector remained firmly locked. Looking for an alternative format to present the production, it soon became apparent that the artistic team and IOA management were less than enthusiastic about having a classical streaming. I was given the assignment to create a visual composition, while maintaining musical integrity. It wasn't new to me to put myself in the audience's shoes, but this was still a challenge. It forced me to think even more creatively. I used images of the rehearsal process and the final runthrough as a basis for this film – Stefaan is directing the piece as he would have done in any other circumstances. The end result became clearer as rehearsals proceeded. The empty hall was always central, and became a character in itself. This kind of recording lends itself to understanding the bigger issue that the audience is painfully absent, and that young artists literally and figuratively face a black hole. It also offers a view behind the scenes, an aspect that is often lost on the audience.



BIOGRAPHIES ARTISTIC TEAM



BENJAMIN HAEMHOUTS - CONDUCTOR

Benjamin Haemhouts (born in Mechelen, Belgium in 1972) began his professional career as a trombonist with the Rotterdam Philharmonic and the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra. During this time, he conducted various youth orchestras and worked as assistant conductor to his teacher, Alexander Polyanichko. As a guest conductor he conducted the Belgian National Orchestra (Belgium), the Argovia Philharmonic (Switzerland), Brussels Philharmonic (Belgium), Bamberger Symphoniker (Germany), Guanajuato Symphony Orchestra and the Orquesta de Cámara de Bellas Artes (Mexico). In 2008 he became Artistic Director of the Belgian orchestra CASCO Phil, focusing on innovative programs that emphasize contemporary music combined with classical music and his own compositions as well as commissioning many new works. Since 2019 he is also Artistic Director of the Antwerp Spring Festival to which he invites groundbreaking classical artists, ensembles, dance companies and orchestras as well as key players on the Belgian pop and rock scene, emphasizing the many different faces of the harbor city of Antwerp.



STEFAN DEGAND DIRECTOR

Stefaan Degand graduated as an actor at the Herman Teirlinck Instituut in 2003, and participated in several (musical) theatre performances, including Dwangvoorstelling, De kussenman, Kreon/antagonist zkt tragedie and Zwanenzang (all by Theater Zuidpool), roestig of het bruingele geeuwen van de ziel and the Golden Boy (both Theater Antigone), Een totale Entführung and En(de)nicht (Muziektheater Transparant), Yerma een toefeling and Liefde/zijn handen (LOD), Revue Biedermann en de brandstichters (KVS),

Het gras zal altijd geeler zijn (Het Gevolg), Burgerlijke ongehoorzaamheid (De Koe), Leven in de Hel-De Operette (Theater Lantaren/Venster), Wees ons genadig (De Mexicaanse Hond), Sweetheart Come and De Misanthrop (Zeeland Nazomerfestival), Gilgamesj (De Theatercompagnie), Vakman (Theater Artemis), Urt!, Johannespassie, Décap (Johan Desmet), and performed with De Werf, Gasthuis, Dogtroep, Orkater and Walpurgis. Further, he performed in several television series and film, and sang in different recitals.



ELIEN HANSELAER - DRAMATURGUE / ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Elien Hanselaer (°1989) is an actress and theatre maker. She graduated from KASK (HOOGENT, Ghent) and east 15 Acting School (University of Essex, London). She premiered last summer in Ostend at Zomer in O with Ashes to Ashes, the first production that she made in cooperation with actor and director Stefaan Degand. Other recent theatre projects include Afropean/ Human Being (KVS), Europa in de Herfst (theater Malpertuis), Maria Novella and Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (KVS).

Her growing interest in participatory work led Hanselaer to conduct an artistic, practice-based doctoral research project about connections between actors. Hanslaer is also part of Hobo Theater, A British performance collective, which was founded in 2012 to set up participatory projects that reflect about an increasingly interconnected world. The research done by Hobo into play, games, co-creation and participation has broadened Hanselaer's practice beyond the standard context for theatre.



MICHEL SOETE - LIGHTING DESIGNER

Michiel Soete (°1986) works in various fields within the performing arts.

As a theater maker and actor, but also as a teacher, coach, lighting designer, musician, technician, (technical) production manager, scenographer or bricoleur. Generally he combines those various roles at the

same time within one project.

Most of his projects take place in a social-artistic or specifically urban context, working with vulnerable groups or within a vulnerable context.

Participatory art practices where interaction and co-creation are an essential part. Projects in the city (Decoratelier, CortaRica, Campus, MaF, Vooruit), with organizations (GlobeAroma, Fedasil, Caritas, de Heide), or specific groups (children with an autism spectrum or behavioral disorder, adults with disabilities, non-congenital brain disease or with dementia).

Another aspect is working with or for youth and children. Ranging from making performances with young people (Theater Antigone, Larf, Studio Orka, Transfocollect), to playing for children (Laika, Kopergietery), giving theater workshops (Kopergietery, Theater Antigone, LeChannel, Fr.), as well as teaching theater students (Emilio Romagna Teatro/Iolanda Gazzero, Italy and RITSC). Usually this is also connected to a trajectory with large groups, where the playful way of making is a recurring element, to motivate many people together each time and to take the role of committed coach and director. More information: www.michielseoete.net

MATHIEU HENDRICKX - FILM DIRECTOR AND EDITOR

Mathieu Hendrickx studied psychology at the University of Ghent (2006-2009) and audiovisual arts at LUCA School of Arts in Brussels (2009-2013, MA).

Together with some friends from art school, he founded the film collective Messervideo. They have worked for i.a. Meg Stuart Damaged Goods, Art Brussels, Youth Orchestra Flanders, Beursschouwburg, etc.

His own artistic practice is a dialogue between film and performance.

Recently, he worked on a documentary project with Oleg Danilov; *The Country Was Stolen*.

Since several years he's been looking at his own hands, other people's hands, their gestures & how they relate to one another.

Until now, these observations result into props for a performance, short video sketches & texts. www.mathieuhendrickx.com

BIOGRAPHIES CAST



KADI JÜRGENS

Versatile Estonian mezzo-soprano Kadi Jürgens is laureate of the PLMF Music Trust award by Marje and Kuldar Sink “Young Singer 2018”. Her music studies started at Tallinn Music High School with violin and flute. Since 2014 she has continued with classical singing at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre (EAMT, Prof. Kurem) and followed in addition contemporary improvisation (Prof. Poll). Kadi spent the academic year 2018/19 as an exchange student in Belgium at the Royal Conservatoire Antwerp (RCA, Prof. Jankowski, Van Deyck). Kadi has taken part in several masterclasses held by renowned opera singers and coaches from Estonia, Italy, Great Britain, Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands, Switzerland, USA, Israel, Russia, Lithuania, Poland, Finland, Sweden, Norway (Pille Lill, Wilma Vernocchi, Margareta Haverinen Brandt, Charlotte Margiono, Dietrich Henschel, Maciej Pikulski, Kristian Attila etc). She was given scholarships from Italy and Estonia to participate in Wilma Vernocchi’s masterclasses in Italy. During her studies at the EAMT Kadi has sang opera roles such as La Maestra Delle Novizie – G. Puccini Suor Angelica (2016), Mrs Grose – B. Britten The Turn of the Screw (2016), Dido – H. Purcell Dido and Aeneas (2016) and Orlando – G. F. Händel Orlando (2018). In 2017 she made her debut at the Theatre Vanemuine in Estonia as Andromache in Märt-Matis Lill Into the Fire and in 2019 at the RCA as Nancy in B. Britten Albert Herring. Kadi has also performed as a soloist with Oulu Symphony Orchestra (2018) and worked with many eminent conductors and directors such as Neeme Järvi, Giorgio Proietti, Michiel Delanghe, Markus Lehtinen, Paul Mägi, Taavi Kull, Ingrid Roose, Stephan Jöris, Hermann Keckeis, Benoît De Leersnyder, Stefaan Degand, Laura Kalle, Taago Tubin.



KEITH PUN

Praised by Opera magazine as “...an extremely resonant countertenor...”, Keith Pun is one of the most active countertenors of his generation. He performed the role Chai Ping in *The Original Chinese Conjuror* by Raymond Yiu for Leeds Opera Festival in 2018. He also performed as a soloist for the Pulitzer prize-winning opera *Angel’s Bone* by Duyun in Hong Kong New Vision Arts Festival 2018 and Beijing Music Festival 2019. In 2019, he participated in the world premiere production of *Beauty and Sadness* by Elena Langer conducted by Gergely Madaras. He sang the roles of Fish/King in the one-man chamber opera *Untold: Yexian Story* by Alex Ho which won the George Butterworth Prize. His other operatic appearances include Fairy in *A Fairy Queen* with the London Early Opera Company, Liù in *Re-imagined Turandot* at Grimborn Festival, Spirit in *Dido and Aeneas* with Die Konzertisten and Pastore in *Tosca*.

Frequently in demand on the recital and concert platforms, Keith Pun has appeared at the National Gallery and St John Smith Square in the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Hong Kong and Japan. His oratorio repertoire includes J S Bach’s *St John Passion*, *St Mark Passion* and cantatas, Bernstein’s *Chichester Psalms*, Handel’s *Israel in Egypt*, *Jephtha*, *Messiah*, Pergolesi’s *Stabat Mater*, Rossini’s *Petite messe solennelle*, Vivaldi’s *Gloria* and Zelenka’s *Litaniae de Venerabili Sacramento*. He has performed as a soloist under the baton of John Butt, Jonathan Cohen and Matthew Halls. In 2022 Keith Pun will perform Eurindo in *The Strength of Paternal Love* by Stradella with Barber Opera in Birmingham. Keith Pun was a runner-up in David Clover Festival Singing Competition 2018 (recital class). He has worked in masterclasses with Gemma Bertagnolli, Michael Chance, Charlotte Margiono and Deborah York. He was a Nieuwe Stemmen Artist at Operadagen Rotterdam and New Generation Artist at Iford Arts Festival. Born in Hong Kong, he studied singing at The Chinese University of Hong Kong and at the Royal College of Music. Subsequently he joined Opera Works at the English National Opera. Currently he is one of the fourteen selected training vocalists of International Opera Academy Ghent.



MIKHAIL SILANTEV

Mikhail Silantev was born on 15 January 1993 in Kurgan, where he studied at Gymnasium № 27 from 1999 till 2010. From 2010 till 2014, he studied at the vocal department of Kurgan State Music University. He then continued his studies at the vocal department of Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory until 2019.

Mikhail obtained first prizes at the International Competition of Russian Romance “White Acacia” (Yoshkar-Ola, 2009), the Regional Open Vocal Competition “Solo” (Tyumen, 2010), the Regional contest of young vocalists (Kurgan, 2012), the third International Vocal Competition. B.T. Shtokolova (St. Petersburg, 2012), the International Forum of Classical Music (Moscow, 2015), the International Forum Musical Performance and Pedagogy (Lonigo, 2016). He won the 47th All-Russian Competition of Vocalists Graduates of Musical High Schools (St. Petersburg 2019).

Further, Mikhail was awarded second prizes at the 10th International vocal competition of academic genre (Yekaterinburg, 2011) and the XIX International Competition of Vocalists ‘Bella Voce’ (Moscow, 2013). He obtained diplomas at the II Open Interregional Vocal Competition named after L.V. Myasnikova (Novosibirsk, 2011) and the V International Music Competition. S.V. Rachmaninov (St. Petersburg, 2012).



SANDRINE MAIRESSE

Sandrine discovered classical singing at the age of 9, when she entered the children’s choir of La Monnaie. There, she learned to work under the direction of internationally renowned conductors (Pappano, Haenchen...) and stage directors (Loy, McVicar, Joosten...) and took part in several international tours with the choir.

She studied singing technique with Eunice Arias and obtained her qualification diploma in piano with Monique Dekeyser. She later went to study solo singing at the Conservatorium of Maastricht, in the class of Frans Kokkelmans, where she graduated with a Master degree in Voice and Opera

in 2016. During her studies, she sung in different opera productions, as L'Enfant in *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Mistery in *The Fairy Queen*, and Arminda in *La Finta Giardiniera*. She later studied at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade, Serbia, to continue her training in the operatic repertoire, under the tuition of Katarina Jovanović. She has, since then, had the opportunity to take part in masterclasses by o.a.

Nelly Miricioiu, Claron McFadden, Peter Sellars, Marie-Paule Hallard, Janice Dixon and Vladimir Redkin. Sandrine made her professional debut in 2018 as Amahl, in Menotti's *Amahl and the night Visitors*. The same year, she also sung the roles of Poppea from Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* in Thessaloniki and Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte*, a production by the opera group *The Fat Lady*. Next to her operatic career, she has regularly been giving concerts with the foundation *Muziek Jong voor Oud*, both as a singer and a pianist and has participated in the creation of two contemporary art songs during the festival *Stemmig Maastricht*.

She recently distinguished herself by winning the First Prize at the "Nouveaux Talents de l'Art Lyrique" competition (2018) and the Second Prize at the 1st BOT Operette competition (2019). She regularly appears as soloist in sacred repertoire too: Haydn – *Die Schöpfung*, Orff – *Carmina Burana*, Brahms – *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Vivaldi – *Magnificat*, Pergolesi – *Stabat Mater...* She is, since 2019, a member of the International Opera Academy in Ghent, where she follows a post-graduate programme, together with other talented young singers and pianists.



SAWAKO KAYAKI

Japanese soprano Sawako Kayaki was born in 1999. She began playing the violin at the age of 3, and started singing at 16 years old. As her early singing experience, she sang *Ein deutsches Requiem* (Brahms), *Fidelio* (Beethoven), *Symphony No. 9* (Beethoven), *Magnificat* (Rutter) etc. in *Kyoto Symphony Chorus*. She studied at *Tokyo University of the Arts* in Japan. Her operatic repertoire includes *Pamina* in *Die Zauberflöte* (Mozart), *Alcina* in *Alcina* (Händel), *Morgana* in *Alcina* (Händel), *Blonde* in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (Mozart), *Ännchen* in *Der Freischütz* (Weber) etc. In addition, she proactively interprets German songs (*Lieder*).

In 2017 she took part in a masterclass of *International Lied-class* in Germany and she sang in a salon concert and a concert for the completion of the

masterclass. So far she studied under Yoshinari Tanaka and Emiko Suga and at this moment she is studying with Dietrich Henschel. She is enrolled at the International Opera Academy and starts the second year of 2019-2021 cycle in October 2020.



SOFIA MARAFONA

Sofia Marafona is a Portuguese soprano who recently graduated with distinction from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London. She was generously supported by the Marianne Falk Award and was awarded with a Concert Recital Diploma for a high distinction in her Final Recital. Throughout her master's, Sofia studied with Susan Waters and had a chance to work with prestigious singers and professors as Edith Wiens, Ian Burnside and Graham Johnson.

Before going to London, Sofia was a member of the Porto Conservatoire's Opera Studio and had a chance to perform Dido from Purcell's Dido and Aeneas and the title role in Handel's opera Alcina. In London, Sofia interpreted various characters at the Guildhall School's Opera scenes and was also a Golden Tressed maiden in the world premiere of The Hogboon, the last opera from Sir Maxwell Davies in the Barbican Center under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle. Only this year, Sofia played Soeur Anne de la Croix in Poulenc's opera Dialogue des Carmélites in an Opera Course production at the Guildhall School.

As a recitalist, Sofia always enjoys exploring unusual or unknown repertoire, combining in thematic recitals often associated with visual arts. Barber's Hermit Songs, Menotti's Canti della Lontananza or Debussy Baudelaire Songs are just a few of the cycles that Sofia performed last year in Lisbon and in London. Her last project involved a collaboration with the Portuguese National Museum of Music in Lisbon, exploring French repertoire dedicated to the Portuguese composer Ruy Coelho.

Since started studying singing, Sofia won several prizes and competitions, the most recent ones being 3rd prize at the Rotary Club Singing competition and 2nd prize at the Young Musician's Prize, two of Portugal's most prestigious competitions.



SUNGHWAN PARK

The young Korean baritone Sunghwan graduated from Kyunghee University after completing a Master's degree in Performance in Advanced Performance under Hyung Kyu Kang. He gained his Bachelor's at the same university, and was awarded 1st Class honours.

He attracted attention by winning many competitions and awards include Grand Award in Daegu Singing Competition, 2nd Prize in KCSA International Competition, Bronze Medal in Korean National Opera Competition etc. Recently, he was one of the semi-finalists in the 8th Mirjam Helin International Singing Competition in 2019.

These achievements led him to various concerts, operas and recitals including a Gala Concert with Gyeonggi Philharmonic and Marcello in Puccini's *La Bohème*. Sunghwan performed with numerous National Symphony Orchestras, and had a solo recital at Kukje Art Hall.

Last year, Sunghwan was a Young Artist at the Georg Solti Academia, and in great demand. Sunghwan has worked and collaborated with many artists, such as Sir Richard Bonygne, Barbara Frittoli, Roberto Frontali, Jonathan Papp, Anthony Legge and Rodrigo de Vera.

Next year, he will be making a debut as Figaro in Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at the Swiss Ticino Music Festival and Schaunard in Puccini's *La Bohème* at the Korea National Opera.



VICTORIA PEREZ-SANTISTEBAN

Victoria Perez-Santisteban (Granada, 1990) is a Spanish soprano. Her music education started at the age of six with the violin. After two years studying singing at Koninklijk Conservatorium of Brussels, she returned to Spain where she finished her Bachelor's degree at the Conservatory 'Joaquín Rodrigo' of Valencia, where she also received a Master in Opera Performance. She studied with Ana Luisa Chova, David Menéndez, Lola Arenas, Margarida Natividade, Ofelia Sala and Claudine Arnaud among

others.

Selected in 2019 in New York by the Miami Music festival (MMF), she sang the main role of Margarita Xirgu in *Ainadamar* (Golijov) under the direction of Jennifer Williams and conductor Francesco Milioto. She also performed the roles of Almirena in *Rinaldo* (Händel), Dido in *Dido & Aeneas* (Purcell), Titania in *The Fairy Queen* (Purcell) and Despina in *Così fan tutte* (Mozart). She has done zarzuela characters such as the Countess in *El Juramento* (Gaztambide), the Duchess in *Jugar con fuego* (Barbieri) and Ascension in *La del Manojito de Rosas* (Sorozábal) and sang several oratory works, including *Messiah* (Händel), *Stabat Mater* (Pergolesi) and *Exultate Jubilate* (Mozart). Victoria actively participated in masterclasses with David Menéndez, Ana Luisa Chova, Rubén Fernández Aguirre, Teresa Berganza, Adrian Thompson, Iain Burnside and Jaume Aragall.

WILLIAM BRANSTON

Welsh tenor William completed his masters degree with distinction from Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, London where he studied with Atkinson and Tilbrook.

Recent performances include Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet* (Gounod) with Arcadian Opera, 1st Priest & Armed Man in *The Magic Flute* (Mozart) with Waterperry Opera, Borachio in *Much Ado About Nothing* (Stanford) with the Northern Opera Group, Rodolfo in *La bohème* (Puccini) with Paisley Opera, Tebaldo in *I Capuleti e I Montecchi* (Bellini) with Opera Holloway, Acis in *Acis and Galatea* (Handel) with Hurn Court Opera, Male Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia* (Britten) with Trinity Laban Opera, premiering the role of Gehazi in McNeff's *The Burning Boy* with Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Lucano/Liberto in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (Monteverdi) with Hampstead Garden Opera.

William's oratorio performances include Tenor soloist in Puccini's *Messa Di Gloria* with Slough Philharmonic, Beethoven's 9th Symphony and Britten's *St Nicholas* with the Ludlow Orchestra, Mozart's *Requiem* with Chipping Campden Festival Chorus and Handel's *Messiah* with The Waynflete Singers at Winchester Cathedral. In 2019 he made his BBC radio 3 debut as a soloist in a lunchtime concert celebrating International Women's Day. He is very grateful to have received the Drapers' De Turckheim Scholarship and to have received support and funding from Help Musicians UK and Opera Prelude. For the 2020-21 season he is thrilled to be joining the International Opera Academy in Ghent, Belgium.



YANQIAO SHI

Chinese baritone Yanqiao Shi began to learn piano when he was five. He began his bachelor studies at the Shenzhen University (China) in 2008. During his bachelor's degree studies, he appeared with the choir in a few concerts from the Shenzhen Poly Theater, the Shenzhen Concert Hall and the Shenzhen Grand Theatre. In 2013, he continued to study under the teaching by Aziz Kortel and Berthold Possemeyer in Germany. From 2014 to 2018 he studied master's degrees in opera and classical music under the teaching by Mathias Behrends, Franco Trinca and Christian Hiltz at the Bern University of the Arts. He's successfully completed them in 2018. During his master's degree studies, he attended masterclasses with Rudolf Piernay, Felicity Lott, Capucine Chiaudani, Vesselina Kasarova, Francisco Araiza, Claudia Eder, and Martin Bruns.

From 2015 to 2019, he appeared in several opera productions and concerts of the Swiss Opera Studio, the Theater Orchester Biel Solothurn and the Theater Magdeburg in Switzerland and Germany. In April 2018, he interpreted Gustav Mahler's symphonic orchestral songs *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* with the HKB Chamber Orchestra. In spring 2019, a studio recording of this collection was released on CD by Claves Records.



ANASTASIA SILANTEVA

Anastasia Silanteva was born on 30 December 1994 in Armyansk. From 2006 to 2012, she studied at the Lysenko specialized music school in Kiev. During her studies, she attended the CEI Youth Orchestra Summer concert tour in July-August 2010, which included intensive rehearsals in Assisi and concert performances in Assisi, Gubbio, Caorso and Busseto. From 2012 to 2014, she studied at the piano department of the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Kiev. Since 2014, she has been studying at the Gnnessin Academy of Music at the piano department in Moscow. In 2015, she worked at the Institute of Theater Arts as an accompanist.

Anastasia was awarded first prize at the International Forum of Classical

Music (as accompanist, Moscow, 2015), the International Forum Musical Performance and Pedagogy (Art of accompaniment, Lonigo, Italy, 2016). She obtained second prizes at the International Forum of Classical Music (Moscow, 2015) and the IX International competition of performers and composers 'Romanticism: Its origins and beyond' (Moscow, 2017). Further, she was given third prize at the IV International competition of academic and pop singing named after M.I. Landa (as accompanist, Moscow), and participated in the final of the First International Competition of lieder singing named after Nina Dorliac (as accompanist, Moscow, 2017).



JOSE ALBERTO SANCHO

José Alberto Sancho graduated at the Conservatory of music "Bonifacio Gil" in Badajoz under the guidance of Ángel Sanzo with the highest grades and honors ("Premio extraordinario fin de carrera"). There, he also received chamber music lessons with Alexander Kandelaki. Further, he attended piano courses with lots of different pianists and teachers such as Colom, Garcia-Barredo, Kereselidze, Gulyàs, Chiantore. He also received advice from masters such as Kuyken, Dalberto, Rogé...

He has performed in different concert halls: Salón Noble de la diputación de Badajoz, Biblioteca de la alcazaba in Badajoz, Auditorio casa de las artes in Cádiz, Centro cultural Sa Nostra in Mallorca, Teatro Joaquín Turina in Seville, Grand Salle of Royal Conservatory of Brussels, etc. He has obtained different prizes in different competitions, such as the Santa Cecilia Otero chamber music competition in Cadiz (first prize), Julio García Casas competition in Seville (second prize) or music interpretation competition in Cadiz (playing Mozart, concerto 23).

In 2019, he finished his master degree under the guidance of pianist Madžar at the Royal Flemish conservatoire in Brussels with the mention of 'cum laude'. Later on, he obtained the diploma of didactic master (AESS) at the French conservatory of Brussels. Furthermore, he has had the chance to get some experience as accompanist. He took lied lessons with teacher Spinnette and instrumental accompaniment with Op de Beck. He was also accompanist during FEBAC summer classes in Cádiz (Spain) and he played as accompanist in Daniel Gauthier's saxophone masterclasses in Brussels in 2018. From now on, he is part of the International Opera Academy in Ghent.

BIOGRAPHY CASCO PHIL

Over the past ten years, 'Casco Phil – The Chamber Orchestra of Belgium' has built up a strong reputation. In 2008, the Orchestra got off to a flying start at deSingel in Antwerp. Concerts then followed in places all over Belgium and the Netherlands. Under the Director of Music, Benjamin Haemhouts, our workshop is made up of a stable pool of about 39 musicians, which is expanded or reduced depending on the project. Casco Phil wishes to reinterpret the concept of 'orchestra'.

We're strengthening our basic premise, our 'House of Music' with concert series, projects for children and young talent, and projects with a social commitment. At the same time, our aim is to evolve into a music workshop where experiment in the broadest sense of the word, across all the art forms, is combined with the traditional practice so we can become a hotbed for emerging talent. The 'orchestra' as an institution can no longer be an obstacle to creativity: at the heart of our activities is the artistic idea. The form around this idea can change and also enhances it. By breaking open the traditional orchestral structure we force ourselves to seek out new creative boundaries. In its concert programmes, one can find adventurous, atypical combinations.

Besides, the orchestra gives talented young Belgian composers the opportunity to write new work for chamber orchestra under the supervision of a renowned composer. In addition to its on-going cycle of concerts, the Chamber Orchestra of Belgium also has a social mission.

Trough Partnerships with the Community and with Kids, the Orchestra fulfils its obligation to bring underprivileged groups and children into contact with classical music.

Eyecatchers during the last seasons were its recording of Beethoven's 3rd Symphony and Britten's Simple Symphony for Culture 7 TV channel and its collaboration with the Flemish Radio Choir and the Flemish Opera Children's Choir in Fauré's Requiem. In 2012 followed its successful début at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw; the concert resulted promptly in more invitations for the next seasons. In 2014, Casco Phil also has been invited at the Concertgebouw Bruges.

The Orchestra works with young and renowned soloists, such as pianist Boris Giltburg and violinist Yossif Ivanov (prize winners Queen Elisabeth Competition), clarinettist Annelien van Wauwe (prize winner ARD Competition), harpist Anneleen Lenaerts (Vienna Philharmonic), violonist Liza Ferschtman and the German Morgenstern Trio.

Casco Phil is a Creative, Adventurous, Socially engaged Cultural-Organisation.

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