



at Holland Festival

2 – 25 June 2006



MICHEL VAN DER AA

World premiere (Festival opening):

After Life

Opera based on the film by Hirokazu Kore-Eda
2 June 2006 Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ
Further performances: 4*, 5, 7, 8, 9 June 2006
Starting time: 20.00 / *14.00; a coproduction of
De Nederlandse Opera and Holland Festival

Musical direction	Otto Tausk
Director	Michel van der Aa
Assistant director	Jacqueline Poppelaars
Scenography	Dries Verhoeven
Lighting	Mark Truebridge
Dramaturgy	Klaus Bertisch
Aiden	Roderick Williams
Mr Walter	Richard Suart
Ilana	Margriet van Reisen
Sarah	Yvette Bonner
Chief	Claron McFadden
Kilian	Karl Daymond
Bryna	Helena Rasker
Mike	Mitchell Sandler
Orchestra	Asko Ensemble

“Michel van der Aa’s music translates everyday, worldly processes into extraordinary, unworldly sounds...”

Michiel Cleij

Dutch premiere:

Imprint

for Baroque orchestra
3 June 2006 Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ
Freiburger Barock Orchester
Musical direction: Gottfried von der Goltz

Further performances:

Here Trilogy

[Here \[enclosed\]](#)
[Here \[in circles\]](#)
[Here \[to be found\]](#)

6 June 2006 Concertgebouw

Barbara Hannigan, soprano
Asko Ensemble / Schönberg Ensemble
Musical direction: Reinbert de Leeuw



Top: Scene from Hirokazu Kore-Eda's film *After Life*
Middle: The scenic 'object' in *Here [enclosed]*

What was the most decisive moment in your life?
That is the essential question in Michel van der Aa's opera *After Life*. Based on the film of the same name by Hirokazu Kore-Eda, the opera introduces us to characters finding themselves at a way station between Heaven and Earth. There, guides have less than a week to help the newly dead sift through their memories for one defining moment to take with them to Heaven. The opera centers on the grudging respect that develops between Mr. Walter, an undistinguished old man, coming to terms with his uneventful life, and Aiden, the young guide assigned to help him.

In combining staged action and film, live music and electronics, Michel van der Aa produces a complex structure in a follow-up to his successful one-act chamber opera *One* (for which the composer in 2004 was awarded the prestigious Matthijs Vermeulen Prize). Divergent time planes are reflected in the music and the narrative, while the work still manages to retain its clarity and certitude, drawing on humanist beliefs. *After Life* explores our human need to discover meaning in the humdrum details of everyday life, and the ambiguous nature of human recollection.

One

Chamber opera
13/14/15 June 2006 Westergasfabriek
Barbara Hannigan, soprano

For full detail on all works, please see the list of compositions on back of page.

Bottom: Barbara Hannigan performing in *One*



“Notes of a sublime sharpness and a taut beauty...”

NRC Handelsblad

Also visit www.hollandfestival.nl / www.dno.nl

Press clippings

"In Michel van der Aa's compositions one hears living, breathing constructions with human characteristics: loneliness, unexpected humour, detachment and disunity. It is music that elicits extreme reactions, music as upsetting as it is poignant. Van der Aa is a dramatist: sounds are for him what actors are to a theatre director. His sounds can be plastic, malleable or recalcitrant; they reinforce or neutralize one another; they dominate or are dominated. This gives the music a strongly visual aspect: Van der Aa's imagery is evident even to the most unimaginative listener. And the confrontation between these images often has the intensity of a thriller."

Michiel Cleij

"Michel van der Aa fascinates... Important is the sheer quality of the notes themselves, possessing a highly concentrated, sublime sharpness and a taut beauty, both mechanical and human."

Ernst Vermeulen, NRC Handelsblad

"Michel van der Aa writes music that is similar in its effect to photography... Music as an art of time is detached from time itself... The impression of the music is strong and emotionally draining."

Peter Uehling, Berliner Zeitung

"One is masterly... a wonderfully poetic piece. As enchanting as a dream."

Erik Voermans, Het Parool

"Here Trilogy was a genuine revelation... One of the most gripping Ars Musica moments of the last years."

De Standaard

"The highlight of this Musiktage... The music flows organically and is of exquisite simplicity. Here [to be found] was a true blessing."

Stefan Hoffmann, Die Welt

"Emotion and superior technique exactly form the grandiose combination that rules in Van der Aa's composing... virtuosic use of electronics... Second Self is a work full of fantasy that always sounds apparent and striking but also always surprises."

De Telegraaf

"Imprint is a rhythmically taut, effective demonstration of collective virtuosity."

Max Nyfeler, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

"By far the most gripping piece was Imprint by the young Dutch sensation Michel van der Aa – not least because it was the only work to confront directly the irony of a 21st-century composer meddling in 18th-century sonorities. Van der Aa gave the work the frenetically patterned feel of a Vivaldi concerto, with the leader gradually infecting the whole band with manic figuration."

Richard Morrison, The Times

Works published by Boosey & Hawkes

After Life (2005/06) 95'

Opera

Libretto: Hirokazu Kore-Eda (E)

Video & stage direction: Michel van der Aa

2S,M,A,3Bar,B;

0.1.1.bcl.0-0.1.1.0-org(=hpd)-strings(3.3.3.2.2); soundtrack

FP: 2 Jun 2005 Holland Festival Amsterdam

De Nederlandse Opera / Otto Tausk cond.

Imprint (2004) 14'

for Baroque orchestra

2ob-hpd-strings(4.4.3.2.1); portative organ to be played by solo vln;

period instruments or modern instruments played in a Baroque way

FP: 27 Aug 2005 Lucerne Festival

Freiburger Barockorchester / Gottfried von der Goltz

Second Self (2004) 15'

for orchestra and soundtrack

0.0.Ebcl.1(II=bcl).0-2.2.2.tbtn.1-perc(2)-strings(12.12.10.8.6)

FP: 15 Oct 2004 Donaueschinger Musiktage

SWR-Sinfonieorchester Baden-Baden und Freiburg / Roland Kluttig

Memo (2003) 9'

for violin and portable cassette recorder

FP: Mar 2005

Maaik Aarts

Here trilogy (2001–2003) 50'

Here [enclosed] – Here [in circles] – Here [to be found]

(see work entries below)

FP: 14 Sep 2004 Berliner Festwochen

Barbara Hannigan / Asko & Schönberg Ensemble / Reinbert de Leeuw

Here [enclosed] (2003) 17'

for chamber orchestra and soundtrack

0.0.1.1-0.1.1.0-perc(1)-strings(6.6.6.4.2); theatrical object

FP: 30 Mar 2004 Budapest Spring Festival

Netherlands Radio Chamber Orchestra / Peter Eötvös

One (2002) 60'

Chamber opera for soprano, video and soundtrack

Music, libretto (E), video, directed by Michel van der Aa

FP: 12 Jan 2003 Frascati Theatre Amsterdam

Barbara Hannigan

Here [in circles] (2002) 15'

for soprano and ensemble

Text: Michel van der Aa (E)

cl.bcl.tpt-perc(1)-strings(1.1.1.1.1); small cassette recorder

FP: 3 Sep 2002 Gaudeamus Musicweek Amsterdam

Barbara Hannigan / Asko Ensemble / Etienne Siebens

Here [to be found] (2001) 18'

for soprano, chamber orchestra and soundtrack

Text: Michel van der Aa (E)

0.0.1.1-0.1.1.0-perc(1)-strings(6.6.6.4.2)

FP: 20 Oct 2001 Donaueschinger Musiktage

Barbara Hannigan / Radio Kamerorkest / Peter Eötvös

Just before (2000) 12'

for piano and soundtrack

FP: 30 Aug 2000 Felix Meritis Amsterdam

Tomoko Mukaiyama

Wake (1997) 9'

for percussion duo

FP: 12 Dec 1997 De Ijsbreker Amsterdam

Percussiongroup The Hague

For further information please visit Michel van der Aa's websites at www.boosey.com/vanderaa and www.doubleA.net, or contact Boosey & Hawkes at composers.germany@boosey.com

Earlier works published by Donemus; please visit www.donemus.nl

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