

Albert Bonnema, tenor

The Dutch tenor Albert Bonnema studied singing and opera at the Sweelinck Conservatory in Amsterdam with mezzo-soprano Cora Canne Meijer. After graduating he continued his studies with the distinguished Swedish tenor Nicolai Gedda.

While still a student he won several prizes, which led to performances on Dutch television and an engagement in the *Theater des Westens* in Berlin to sing the leading role in Franz Léhar's *Das Land des Lächelns*.

For a number of years he sang major roles in classical operetta both in Berlin and in Vienna, and was then engaged by *Stadtheater Bern* in Switzerland to be part of the theatre's operatic ensemble. He built up a large repertoire and developed into a heroic tenor.

In 1995 he auditioned for the Dutch National Opera and was immediately invited to sing the role of Walter von Stolzing in Richard Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* in the Holland Festival. His success in this role led to international recognition. The director Harry Kupfer invited Bonnema to sing Steva in Jančák's *Jenufa* at the Semperoper Dresden and Florestan in Beethoven's *Leonore* at the Komische Opera Berlin. John Eliot Gardiner engaged him for the same role for a tour to Italy and France and then to the Holland Festival, where a semi-staged performance in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw was broadcast on Dutch TV.

Bonnema performed in opera in Berlin, Dresden, Hamburg, Munich, Karlsruhe, Stuttgart, Bonn, Cologne, Düsseldorf, Essen, Graz, Basel, Zürich, Brussels, Montpellier, Nancy, Dijon, Dublin, Rome, Zagreb, Beziers, Tel Aviv, Tokyo, Sidney, San Francisco and Seattle, to name only the major cities. His principal repertoire was Lohengrin, Walter von Stolzing, Erik, Florestan, Don José, Jim Mahoney, Hans in Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*, Der König Kandaules in Zemlinsky's opera of the same name in Cologne conducted by Gerd Albrecht and directed by Günter Krämer, and Siegfried in *Götterdämmerung* in the Ring cycle conducted by Edo de Waart. He also sang this role in Zürich in Robert Wilson's production and in the famous Stuttgart Ring cycle conducted by Lothar Zagrosek and directed by Peter Konwitschny. Bonnema sang the role of Boris in *Katya Kabanova* in San Francisco, conducted by Donald Runnicles and directed by Johannes Schaaf, and Lohengrin in Seattle, conducted by Asher Fish and directed by Stephen Wadsworth. He sang Lohengrin and Tannhäuser in the New National Opera in Tokyo.

He made guest appearances at the Salzburg Festival as Lohengrin, conducted by Ivan Fisher, and as Midas in *Der Liebe der Danae* conducted by Fabio Luisi and directed by Günter Krämer. Other festival appearances included the *Dresdner Festspiele*, the Tivoli Festival in Copenhagen, the *Festival du Radio France à Montpellier*, the Eugene Oregon Festival and the Holland Festival. Bonnema sang with conductors such as Valerie Gergiev, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Ingo Metzmacher, Hartmut Haenchen, Peter Schneider, Jaap van Zweden (Florestan in *Fidelio*), and with many celebrated directors including Harry Kupfer, Pierre Audi, Willy Decker, Peter Konwitschny, Günter Krämer, Andrea Breth and Vera Nemirova. His concert repertoire includes Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, Beethoven's *Christus am Ölberge* as well as his

Missa Solemnis and Ninth Symphony, Dvoř Stabat Mater and Verdi's Requiem. Bonnema also appears regularly as a performer of art song.

Albert Bonnema is a gifted singing teacher, giving master classes in the theatres where he appeared as soloist, and also in Tokyo, Kassel and the Royal Conservatory of The Hague where he currently assists Professor Frans Fiselier. He takes private students. He is a member of the preliminary jury of the International Vocal Competition Den Bosch.

In recent years Albert Bonnema has developed a talent as producer and director in his own right. Collaborating with the province of Friesland he organised a concert series in unusual locations featuring well-known soloists as well as young local talent. The idea of these concerts is both to attract audiences to local landmarks and also to give young, talented musicians the chance to present themselves to the public and to work with established soloists. Many of these young musicians have found their way to the Dutch music conservatories. Bonnema presents the concerts and sings as well.

Albert Bonnema is artistic director of the *Haarlemse Opera*. Since he took over the leadership of this small opera company it has taken a giant step forward. In 2014 he produced and directed *Torrentius*, a pastiche-opera about the eponymous seventeenth-century Dutch painter, which he not only directed but also compiled himself, and for which he wrote the script. In 2016 a production of *Verona aan het Spaarne* is to follow and in 2017 the Haarlemse Opera is planning to put on *De Spiegel uit Venetië* by Hendrik Andriessen, to celebrate the composer's centenary.

Albert Bonnema works with pianist Andrew Wise (www.wisenose.net), his regular accompanist and collaborator.