

## **Bassem Akiki**

Conductor, Composer

*Bassem Akiki conducts an augmented Netherlands Chamber Orchestra with verve and vehemence; the whole is meticulously rehearsed and impressively polished*

Shirley Apheror, Financial Times, Animal Farm, Dutch National Opera

Bassem Akiki is a Lebanese-Polish conductor and composer who regularly performs with theatres, festivals and orchestras worldwide. These include La Monnaie, Philharmonie de Paris, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Polish National Opera, Warsaw, Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra and Sinfonia Varsovia. In 2016, Akiki was nominated for The International Opera Award in the Young Conductor category and recently won the Polish Theatrical Music Award as Best Conductor. He previously held the position of Artistic Director of Opera Śląska, Bytom and was Artistic Director of the NFM New Year Festival in Wrocław until 2020. Future engagements include the world premiere of his first opera, commissioned by La Monnaie.

At the age of 24, Akiki made his professional conducting debut with Verdi's *La traviata* at Opera Wroclawska where he was resident conductor until 2013. Since then he has built an extensive repertoire of titles like Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, *Don Giovanni*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, Offenbach's *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, *Tosca*, *Turandot*, *La Bohème*, Verdi's *Falstaff*, *Nabucco*, *Rigoletto*, Hosokawa's *Matsukaze*, Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, Strauss' *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, Szymanowski's *Hagith*, *Król Roger*, Prokofiev's *The Fiery Angel*, Adès' *Powder Her Face* and Dusapin's *To Be Sung*, among many others. In 2013 he made his debut at Polish National Opera, Warsaw with Verdi's *Nabucco* and double bill of Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta* and Bartok's *Bluebeard's Castle*.

A specialist in contemporary repertoire, Bassem Akiki has conducted the world premieres of many new works, particularly at the Théâtre Royal de La Monnaie in Belgium. There, he conducted premieres of Björk's *Medúlla*, *Orfeo and Majnun* (also at Festival d'Aix-en-Provence), Mark Grey's *Frankenstein* and most recently Philippe Boesman's final opera *On purge bébé*. Other world premieres include Nicholas Lens' and J. M. Coetzee's *Slow Man* at Malta Festival, Poznań, Zad Moulataka's *Hémon* at Opéra National du Rhin and Alexander Raskatov's *Animal Farm* at Dutch National Opera. Current and future work includes debuts and returns to Opéra de Lyon, Dutch National Opera, Opéra National du Rhin and Royal Danish Opera. Bassem is currently writing his first opera for Théâtre Royal de La Monnaie, alongside various other compositions for theatres and festivals worldwide.

Beside conducting, Akiki's interests gather around the music of the East and the West, their mutual influence is the theme of a series of lectures he gave at the Philipps-Universität Marburg from 2007 onwards. He also led many masterclasses in institutions like Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel of Waterloo, Opera Academy of La Monnaie, and Swarthmore College, Philadelphia where he also performed Wysocka and Zadara's interdisciplinary project, *Chopin Without Piano*.