

Wim Henderickx

Libretto: Krystian Lada

After the novel: De Bekeerlinge by Stefan Hertsman

THE CONVERT / LE COEUR CONVERTI*

Within a medieval historic setting, Henderickx creates a universal and timeless opera about identity, heritage, faith and human strength.

With no doubt the most successful contemporary opera production in the history of [Opera Ballet Vlaanderen](#).

Opera Ballet Vlaanderen, FB 5th June -2022



Lore Binon as Vigdis (© Tim Coppens)

Elementary links:

About: [The Convert – Opera Ballet Vlaanderen | OperaVision](#)

Trailer: : [\(845\) TRAILER | THE CONVERT \(DE BEKEERLINGE\) Wim Henderickx – Opera Ballet Vlaanderen - YouTube](#)

Complete Opera: Opera Vision/ You Tube: June 18 – Dec. 18

[\(845\) THE CONVERT \(DE BEKEERLINGE\) Wim Henderickx – Opera Ballet Vlaanderen - YouTube](#)

Creating an opera from start to finish:

[\(845\) Creating an opera, from start to finish – THE CONVERT Wim Henderickx – Opera Ballet Vlaanderen - YouTube](#)

REVIEWS

Much Praise to the music of Wim Henderickx!

Opernwelt:

Zahllose Schubladen der Musikgeschichte reißt Henderickx auf: Von Debussy leiht er den idiomatisch unverwechselbaren Duft, von Messiaen die (durch Module grundierte) Mystik, von Strawinsky die rhythmische Massierung, von Xenakis den Bruitismus des Clusters, von Boesmans den melodischen Zauber des Augenblicks, aus sehr fernen (Klang-)Kulturen den Hauch von Exotismus. Auch in der Abteilung Kirchenmusik bedient sich der belgische Komponist..

Jürgen Otten

Opear Journal/ Poland:

Wim Henderickx's De bekeerlinge is a work accessible to the ear, but also extremely skilfully composed, demonstrating a great sense of orchestral colour and fine balance between the stage and the pit.

Dorota Kozińska

Forum Knack

What a successful tour de force the composer has been doing! Together with the conductor Koen Kessels he is doing in his music what Hetmans is doing in his story; leading us through the world from the West to the East.

Els Van Steenberghe

Klassiek Centraal (11 mai 2022):

The collaboration between the team of author, librettist, composer, director and performers have turned Stefan Hertmans novel into a lived-in story, and above all, has poignantly clarified the intense sensitivity of the "Convert". The opera shows that the scientific quest

that the novel crosses even without theoretical passages, brings to life the actuality of a world from a distant past. Bravissimo Tutti!

Jessy Baeken

De Standaard (12 May 2022):

Henderickx sticks to the language he managed to develop during his impressive career as a composer... The recognizable, recurring theme "Once upon a dream" has the allure to grow into a full-fledged classic.

Bram Van Haelter

GVA (12 May 2022)

By interweaving Western and eastern motifs in his tranquil music, Henderickx's score contributes to depth... De Bekeerlinge is a fragile opera with serene music and clever performances.

Ilse Dewever

Klara (11 May 2022):

With Wim Henderickx I admire the seamless integration into the orchestral sound of exotic instruments such as the ud (a kind of lute), the qanun (a kind of zither) and the duduk (a wind instrument)....

Sylvia Broeckaert

De Tijd (12 May 2022):

Music and images form a strong entente in a gripping production.

Koen Van Boxem

De Morgen (16 May 2022):

Right from the musically impressive opening scene, Wim Henderickx seem to have reinvented himself. The all-too-beautifulness of some earlier works is captured in a grand harmonic and melodic structure, which eagerly uses elements from many cultures and yet unites them in a lyrical, emotional language.

Stephan Moens

PRODUCTION

Opera Ballet Vlaanderen in collaboration with

Muziektheater Transparant

World Premiere 10 May 2022

Composer: Wim Henderickx

Libretto: Krystian Lada, after the novel *De Bekeerlinge*
(*The Convert*) by Stefan Hertmans (2018)

Composition Wim Henderickx

Libretto Krystian Lada, after the novel *De bekeerlinge* by Stefan Hertmans (2018)

Staging, Scenography and costumes: Hans Op de Beeck

Duration ca. 2h 15min SUNG LANGUAGE English, Latin and Armaic.

Choir Mixed choir Community choir Small children's choir (ca. 6 children)

World premiere: Opera Ballet Vlaanderen May 10th 2022

Manager Opera: Annelien De Rycke

PERFORMANCE-HISTORY:

World premiere 10 May 2022 8.00 pm, **Opera Antwerpen**

Further performances:

13., 15., 17., and 19. May Opera Antwerpen

27., 29. May and 2. and 4. June Opera Gent

4 and 6 May 2023, [Opéra de Rouen Normandie](#).

ABOUT

With *The Convert* Opera Ballet Vlaanderen commissions a new opera from one of Belgium's most celebrated composers Wim Henderickx. In this new opera Henderickx brings the latest novel of award winning author Stefan Hertmans to the stage. The composer focuses on the main storyline of the novel: the forbidden love between a christian woman and a jewish man. Within a medieval historic setting, Henderickx creates a universal and timeless opera about identity, heritage, faith and human strength.

11th century Provence, France. A young christian woman Vigdis falls in love with a young jewish man. The only way for them to be together is for her to convert to judaïsm, which her family forbids. The lovers flee. David gives Vigdis a new Jewish name: Hamoutal. In exile they can build a happy live together and two children are born. When Pope Urban II calls for the First Crusade in 1095 to rise against Muslims in the Holy Land, also Jewish people are seen as enemies of Christ and therefor persecuted. David is killed and their two children are kidnapped. Hamoutal flees again. Torn between her Christian and Jewish faith, and broken by the many hardships, her life ends in a tragic way.

MUSICAL STYLE

Wim Henderickx's compositional style is unique in finding a bridge between different musical languages. For this score he is influenced by Jewish, eastern and western musical traditions, to create a highly individual, contemporary and poetic operatic language. Henderickx insists the opera will follow a very concrete storyline, with concrete characters, and not a meditative oratorium like others of his staged works. The libretto and score are developed in close collaboration with Stefan Hertmans. The story is told in the opera from the perspective of Vigdis, in a linear way but with use of flashbacks and dream sequences. All singers play different parts. The solo parts are complemented with parts for a full choir and a community choir. The sung language will be English, but with parts in Hebrew, Arabic and Latin. The instrumentation for full orchestra includes certain ethnic instruments and electronics.

Henderickx's ultimate goal with this opera is to create a work that is highly accessible for all audiences as well in storyline as with his music.

THE BOOK

In this work of historical fiction, the Booker International-longlisted author of *War and Turpentine*, Stefan Hertmans, reconstructs the tragic story of a Medieval Christian noblewoman who abandoned her life for the love of a Jewish boy. The Middle Ages have just begun when Vigdis Adelaïs, a young woman from a prosperous French family, falls in love with David Todros, a student at the city's yeshiva, and the son of a rabbi. To be together, they must flee their city, Vigdis renouncing a life of privilege and comfort. Pursued by her father's knights and in constant danger of betrayal, the lovers embark on a dangerous journey to the south of France, only to find their brief happiness destroyed by the vicious wave of anti-Semitism that sweeps Europe with the onset of the First Crusade. Stefan Hertmans meticulously retraces Vigdis's epic journey, first across France and then beyond, to Palermo and the Middle East. Blending fact and fiction, and with immense imagination and stylistic ingenuity, he painstakingly imagines her terrible trials, bringing the Middle Ages to life, and illuminating a chaotic world of passion, hate, love, and death.

ORIGINAL CAST:

A fantastic line up of musicians join forces in a full-evening opera.

Within a medieval historic setting, Henderickx has created a universal and timeless opera about identity, heritage, faith and human strength.

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[Vincenzo Neri](#)

[Brahim-Djelloul](#)

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[Daniel Arnaldos:](#)

[Luvuyo Mbundu:](#)

Vigdis

David, Shipowner, Embriachi **Amel**

Chaperon, Agatha, e.a.:

Lutgardis, fake Messiah, e.a.

Celebrant, Urbanus, e.a.

Rabbi Obadiah

[Guido Jentjens:](#)

Gudbrandr, Rabbi Todros, e.a.:

[Symfonisch Orkest Opera Ballet Vlaanderen](#)
[Koor Opera Ballet Vlaanderen](#)
[Kinderkoor Opera Ballet Vlaanderen](#)
Stadskoor Madame Fortuna in cooperation
With ontmoetingscentrum [Het Oude Badhuis](#)

[Koen Kessels](#)
[Hans Op de Beeck](#)

Conductor
Direction, scenography and costume
design

[Jorrit Tamminga](#)
[Peter Quasters](#)
[Koen Bollen](#)
[Jan Schweiger](#)
[Hendrik Derolez](#)

Electronics
Lighting design
Dramaturgy
Chorusmaster
Children's chorus master

CAST

Singers: 7 soloists

LIBRETTO

By Krystian Lada
After the novel: *De Bekeerlinge* by Stefan Hertmans

Link to [libretto](#)

SCORING:

ORCHESTRA

2 Flutes (2nd also alto flute and piccolo)
2 Oboes (2nd also English horn)
2 Clarinets in Bb
Bass clarinet in Bb (also contrabass clarinet in Bb)
2 Bassoons (2nd also contrabassoon)
4 Horns in F (also normal mute)
3 Trumpets (also normal mute, plunger, harmon mute)
3 Trombones (also normal mute, plunger, harmon mute)
Tuba

Timpani
Percussion (3 players)

Harp

Duduk
Ud
Qanun

Strings, preferably 12, 10, 8, 6, 4

Electronics

NOTES FOR THE PERCUSSION PLAYERS

Timpani (5), also 2 cymbals (L, M), temple bell ('E'), metal chimes (S)

Percussion 1:

vibraphone, Glockenspiel, tuned gongs ('Bb', 'D', 'Eb', 'E'), tuned glasses ('B'),
5 roto-toms, snare drum (L), 3 bongos, daf (frame drum with jingles),
3 cymbals (L, M, S), sistrum, 5 metal blocks, 2 Peking gongs, thunder sheet (S),
2 shakers (S), rattle, sandpaper blocks, African slit drum, glass chimes, ocean drum

Percussion 2:

marimba, crotales,
snare drum (S), 3 congas, 2 tambourines (L, S),
tamtam (M), 3 triangles (L, M, S), 3 cymbals (L, M, S), 2 finger cymbals, sistrum, metal chimes (L),
waterphone, flexatone,
2 shakers (L), sandpaper blocks, temple block (L)

Percussion 3:

tubular bells, temple bell ('A'), tuned glasses ('E'), tuned gong ('E') or tubular bell,
bass drum (L), frame drum, 3 toms, lion's roar (cuica), field drum, tambourine (S),
tamtam (L), 2 triangles (M, S), 2 finger cymbals, 3 cymbals (L, M, S), bell tree, Chinese cymbal (L), sizzle cymbal (M),
thunder sheet (M), Indian bells (S), spring coil, metal chimes (S),
claves

ELECTRONICS

The programming patch for the Sampler was developed in SuperCollider by Jorrit Tamminga and is available from Norsk Musikforlag A/S, Oslo
Technical Rider on demand.

SCORE:

Link to score:

send an e-mail to skjalg.reithaug@musikkforlagene.no

INTERVIEW WITH STEFAN HERTMANS AND WIM HENDERICKX BY OPERA BALETT VLAANDEREN :

"Her story had me in its power" :

<https://musikkforlagene.no/stefan-hertmans-and-wim-henderickx-on-the-convert/> - (English version)

Interview by Thea Derks:

<https://thederks.wordpress.com/2022/04/29/in-the-convert-wim-henderickx-explores-the-pitfalls-of-intercultural-relationships-my-opera-is-highly-topical/>

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[Hendrik Derolez](#)

Conductor

Direction, scenography and costume design

Electronics

Lighting design

Dramaturgy

Chorusmaster

Children's chorus master

USEFUL VIDEOS FROM OPERAS AND MORE BY WIM HENDERICKX

AQUARIUS DREAM (Symphony n°2)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QK-QRuAFGGI>

VOID

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_gQUoKFBto

REVELATIONS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUJXlhSkt2E>

VISIONI ED ESTASI

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XA3VY_zEot8&t=70s

TEJAS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=litVYCQ8h5U>

THE QUEEN WITHOUT A COUNTRY

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OWTemhsf6A4&t=25s>

AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD (Symphony n°1)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SeKsFXi_2Ak&t=377s

OBOE CONCERTO (Empty Mind I)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nkkfvqESYIQ&t=387s>

MEMENTO MORI + interview

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SltpyMe-Bcg&t=127s>

WIM ON SPOTIFY

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/17BuyoY0YVI6mvb2qFltjP?si=1f2b658a5c4e431c>

BIOGRAPHIES:

WIM HENDERICKX

Wim Henderickx works as a composer, percussionist and professor of composition. He studied composition and percussion at the Royal Conservatoire in Antwerp and sonology at IRCAM in Paris and at the Conservatoire of Music in The Hague. His compositions are often inspired by other cultures. Between 2004 and 2010, he worked on the *Tantric Cycle*, a seven-part composition series based on Oriental philosophy and Buddhism. *Requiem* was commissioned by Opera Ballet Vlaanderen in 2017, a collaboration with choreographer Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui. *Cello Concerto (Sangita)* premiered with Jean-Guihen Queyras and the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra at the Cello Biennale Amsterdam in 2018. His work *Blossomings* for mixed choir, trumpet and electronics premiered in London with the BBC Singers in 2016 and had an Estonian premiere at the World Music Days Tallinn 2019 with the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir. Also in 2019 *Enigma VII* premiered at the Royal Albert Hall in London with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and conductor Martyn Brabbins. *Songs of Nature* received an online world premiere at the Klarafestival 2021 in Brussels, a live premiere in Shanghai in China and in 2022 this production won the prestigious Chinese GanLan Art Award. In May 2022 the big opera *The Convert* will premiere at Opera Ballet Vlaanderen, a co-production with Opéra de Rouen Normandie and Muziektheater Transparant. Wim Henderickx has been Composer-In-Residence at Muziektheater Transparant since 1996. He joined the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra as an Artist-In-Residence in 2013. The full double CD (2016) with four of his works recorded by this orchestra, received international acclaim including five stars in BBC Music Magazine. His scores are published by Norsk Musikforlag in Oslo. He received various national and international prizes and in 2015 he was appointed member of the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium (KVAB) for Sciences and Arts. He was also nominated for the 'Composer of the Year' prize in 2017 by the Norwegian Music Publishers Association. He is a professor of composition at the conservatories of Amsterdam and Antwerp. Finally, he is the main coach of the annual SoundMine summer-composition course for young composers at Musica, Impulse Centre for Musi

HANS OP DE BEECK

Hans Op de Beeck was born in Turnhout in 1969. He lives and works in Brussels and Gooik, Belgium. He produces large installations, sculptures, films, drawings, paintings, photographs and texts. Op de Beeck has shown his work extensively in solo and group exhibitions around the world, being invited for the Venice Biennale, Venice, IT; the Shanghai Biennale, Shanghai, CN; the Aichi Triennale, Aichi, JP; the Singapore Biennale, Singapore, SG; Art Summer University, Tate Modern, London, GB; the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, IN, Art Basel Miami Beach, and many other art events. Op de Beeck also increasingly works as a designer and director for theatre, dance and opera. Hans Op de Beeck created the scenography for Don Carlos, directed by Johan Simons in the fall of 2019 for Opera Ballet Vlaanderen. He directed Herzog Blaubarts Burg at Staatsoper Stuttgart and Eric Schleichim's world creation The Valley (An apocalypse) for Muziektheater Transparant. www.hansopdebeeck.com

KRYSTIAN LADA

Polish stage director Krystian Lada is establishing himself as one of the major artists of his generation. He is the first recipient of the «Mortier Next Generation Award», and he was a finalist and prizewinner in the 2021 Ring Award. Krystian's current and future commitments include: *Il ritorna d'Ulisse in patria* for Theater Basel; *Nabucco* and *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* for Nationaltheater Mannheim; *Król Roger* for Staatstheater Cottbus; the World Premiere of Iain Bell's *Confort Starving* for the Bach Festival in Swidnica and the Opera Rara Festival, Krakow and *The Mysteries of Desire* – a pastiche- created for the Royal Danish Opera in collaboration with the World Pride Festival.

Further into the future, Krystian will direct new productions for Göteborg Opera Kunstfest Weimar, Teater St. Gallen and La Monnaie Brussels.

PHOTOS (© Tim Coppens)





