

Pilot 'Animateurs' within the framework of Yo! Opera Festival

Stichting Yo! was set up in November 2003. The aim is to contribute to the international development of youth opera in the form of a biennial festival (the Yo! International Youth Opera Festival) and special projects. The third edition of the Yo! Festival will be held from Wednesday 12 till Sunday 16 October 2005 in Utrecht. There will be special contemporary performances in two theaters, but also operas in city busses, in an apartment building and on several other surprising sceneries. With this project Yo! literally wants to remove opera from the ivory tower of theatre and set it in the here and now. More information on Yo! can be found on: www.yo-festival.nl

Opera in the Bus

Opera in the Bus is a large-scale community project and is an unprecedented co-operation between professional opera makers, a bus company, school children, amateur singers, residents of different boroughs, etc. The project is based on the stories of six bus routes and destinations. It takes up two full days of the festival (Sat 15 and Sun 16 October) and consists of: a choral composition for bus drivers and the audience; six bus operas (bus 1, 3, 5, 8, 11 and 27); six projects in different boroughs (Overvecht, Zuilen, Kanaleneiland, Lunetten, Wilhelmina Childrens Hospital, and Leidsche Rijn) and an Open Opera evening.

With this *community opera project* Stichting Yo! Wishes to investigate what community opera can actually mean for young audiences, youth opera and opera education in the Netherlands. Involved in this research is the Lectorate Lifelong Learning in Music. The lectorate will assimilate "Opera in the bus" as a pilot project and will look into the significance of the project for the (professional) practice of the participating students and musicians.

Contents of the pilot project "Animateurs"

A number of vocal students of the Royal Conservatoire The Hague take part in the pilot "Animateurs" on bus 5 to Kanaleneiland. Bus 5 is the "sing-a-long bus": vocal students will stimulate the boarding audience to join in and to obtain a pleasant musical experience. For approximately 20 vocal students a day of training will take place at the Royal Conservatoire on September 22, 2005. This day will be lead by vocalists Nia Lynn and Natalie Williams, both graduated at the Professional Development Department of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. The training day will take place under supervision of Sean Gregory (member of the team of knowledge experts).

This day serves several aims: every student takes a useful and completed workshop, in which aspects of animateurship have a central place. At the end of the afternoon a short presentation/workshop will be held on a location to be determined later.

From the students attending, Jos Zandvliet (community musician; former Dogtroep) and Gerda van Zelm (Vocal teacher at the RC and NNC) will select 10 participants who will work together with Jos in October as a preparation for the Bus project. This takes place in the studio of Yo!, situated at the Biltstraat in Utrecht. These days will be filled with musical exploration in the morning. The afternoons will be used for working outside the building and trying out (developing skills in communication, connected to ideas for lyrics and musical material for songs). Contexts/places for the presentation can be: prison, nursing home, cemetery, bus drivers' garage, asylum seekers centre, supermarket. Out of these 10 participants eventually four singers will be chosen to really take upon themselves the role as animateur in the bus, in the weekend of the "Opera in the Bus".

Member of the team of knowledge experts Ninja Kors will, for the benefit of the description for the lectorate and the case study, monitor and describe the project and its preamble.

The 10 participants will keep a journal. The final reports of the four participants chosen to be animateurs will give input for a curriculum for this kind of work (action research). The six singers who don't have an active role as animateur will be present during the weekend as well: they will travel along as passengers in the busses and will reflect on the project as a result of a number of questions.

Results for the lectorate will be: a (evaluative) case study (including the monitoring of the process) and a description of the skills for animateurs. Herewith the professional development of the singers is broadened.