

## **BASSEM AKIKI**

CONDUCTOR AND COMPOSER

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

*Shirley Apherthorp, Financial Times, Animal Farm, Dutch National Opera*

Bassem Akiki is a Lebanese–Polish conductor and composer whose individuality and creative flair have taken him to theatres, festivals and orchestras around the world. Recent collaborators include Dutch National Opera, La Monnaie, Philharmonie de Paris, Festival d’Aix-en-Provence, Teatr Wielki Opera Narodowa and Sinfonia Varsovia.

Informed by his own work as a composer, Akiki is a specialist in contemporary repertoire and has conducted the world premieres of many new works. Recent successes include Philip Venables’ *We Are The Lucky Ones* and Alexander Raskatov’s *Animal Farm* at Dutch National Opera, which won the OPER! Award for world premiere of the year in 2023. He regularly works at La Monnaie/De Munt, where he has conducted world 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’ *Slow Man* at Malta Festival Poznań, Zdzisław Mrożkowiak’s *Hémon* and Simon Steen-Anderson’s *Don Giovanni’s Inferno* at Opéra National du Rhin.

Akiki recently made his debuts with Warsaw Philharmonic, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Danish Opera and Finnish National Opera. Forthcoming debuts and returns include The Royal Opera, Ruhrtriennale, Staatsoper Stuttgart, Opéra de Lille, Opéra de Lyon, Dutch National Opera, Opéra National du Rhin, Théâtre du Châtelet and Teatr Wielki Opera Narodowa among others.

He made his professional conducting debut aged 24 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 from Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* and Strauss’s *Die Frau ohne Schatten* to Prokofiev’s *The Fiery Angel*, Adès’ *Powder Her Face* and Penderecki’s *Die schwarze Maske*.

Aside from conducting, Akiki is a scholar in the music of East and West and their mutual influence, giving lectures on the subject, and his interest in astronomy and prime numbers has influenced his recent compositions. He has led masterclasses in institutions such as Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel of Waterloo, Opera Academy of La Monnaie, and Swarthmore College, Philadelphia, where he also performed Barbara Wysocka and Michał Zadara’s *Chopin Without Piano*.