

BASSEM AKIKI

CONDUCTOR AND COMPOSER

‘Under Bassem Akiki’s precise and quietly controlled direction, Britten’s chamber scoring is realised with remarkable clarity, every line cleanly articulated and every shifting colour keenly felt’

Keith McDonnell, Music OMH, The Turn of the Screw, The Royal Opera

Lebanese-Polish conductor and composer Bassem Akiki combines a creative flair with academic intellect, which he brings when performing both canonical works and new music. With a specialism and fascination in contemporary music, and informed by his own work as a composer, Akiki conducts operatic and symphonic works by today’s leading and emerging composers. He regularly collaborates with festivals, orchestras and opera companies around the world, and since the start of the 2026-27 season, Akiki is Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Polish Radio Orchestra in Warsaw.

Informed by his own work as a composer, Akiki is a specialist in contemporary repertoire and has conducted many world premieres. In opera, recent premieres include Philip Venables’ *We Are the Lucky Ones* and Alexander Raskatov’s *Animal Farm* at Dutch National Opera, which won the 2023 OPER! Award for world premiere of the year. At La Monnaie/De Munt, he has conducted world premieres of Björk’s *Medúlla*, *Orfeo and Majnun* (also at Festival d’Aix-en-Provence), Mark Grey’s *Frankenstein* and Philippe Boesman’s *On purge bébé*. He recently made debuts with The Royal Opera, Opéra de Lille, Royal Danish Opera and Finnish National Opera and this season works with Staatsoper Stuttgart, Opéra de Lyon, Dutch National Opera and Opéra National du Rhin among others. He also conducts the premiere of his first opera, *Atatürk*, at Staatsoper Stuttgart.

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 conducted titles ranging from Britten’s *The Turn of the Screw* and Strauss’s *Die Frau ohne Schatten* to Prokofiev’s *The Fiery Angel*; as well as 20th-century works such as Penderecki’s *Die schwarze Maske* and Adès’ *Powder Her Face*.

Akiki recently made his debuts with, Ruhrtriennale, Warsaw Philharmonic, Rotterdam Philharmonic and Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra, and this season works with Royal Scottish National Orchestra for the first time..

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.

MAESTRO^{ARTS}

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*.