

Biography

Jan Willem de Vriend

Conductor

www.janwillemdevriend.com



Jan Willem de Vriend is principal guest conductor of the Orchestre National de Lille and Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra. He makes regular guest appearances with such ensembles as the Belgian National, Bergen Philharmonic, Hong Kong Philharmonic, HR-Sinfonieorchester, Melbourne Symphony, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Orchestre National de Lyon, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, Warsaw Philharmonic and Yomiuri Nippon Symphony.

From 2015 to 2019 Jan Willem de Vriend was Principal Conductor of the Residentie Orkest Den Haag and from 2006 to 2017 he was Chief Conductor of Phion, Orkest van Gelderland & Overijssel. He was also Principal Guest Conductor of the Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona i Nacional de Catalunya from 2015 to 2021 and Principal Guest Conductor of the Brabant Orchestra (now South Netherlands Philharmonic) from 2008 to 2015. De Vriend and the Netherland Symphony Orchestra went on to record a substantial Beethoven catalogue for Challenge Classics, embracing the complete symphonies and concertos (with Hannes Minnaar and Liza Ferschtman among the soloists). Classic FM praised the interpretation of Symphony No 7 for "a bounding flair that does real justice to the composer's capacity for joy". Further landmarks in the Challenge Classics catalogue are the complete Mendelssohn symphonies, again with the Netherlands Symphony Orchestra, and the complete symphonies of Schubert, recorded with the Residentie Orkest, also de Vriend's orchestra for a Decca recording of Mendelssohn's complete works for piano and orchestra.

De Vriend first established an international reputation as Artistic Director of the Combattimento Consort Amsterdam, which he established in 1982 and led from the violin until 2015. Specialising in music of the 17th and 18th century, and applying historically informed practice on modern instruments, the consort gave new life to many rarely heard works and Gramophone magazine praised its players as "accomplished ... with technical finesse and a lively feeling for characterisation". Its collaborative spirit lives on in de Vriend's approach as he explores and energises the symphonic repertoire, in particular the music of Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms and Johann Strauss.

In the field of opera, in both Europe and the USA, de Vriend and Combattimento Consort Amsterdam gave performances of works by Monteverdi, Haydn, Handel, Telemann, and J.S. Bach (the 'Hunting' and 'Coffee' cantatas at the Leipzig Bach Festival), all in stagings by the director Eva Buchmann. Operas by such composers as Mozart, Verdi and Cherubini featured in his seasons with the Netherlands Symphony Orchestra, which included a visit to Switzerland with productions of Don Giovanni and Rossini's La Gazzetta, again directed by Eva Buchmann. De Vriend has also conducted operas in Amsterdam (Nederlandse Reisopera), Barcelona, Strasbourg, Luzern, Schwetzingen and Bergen.

In the Netherlands he has presented several television series and is well known for his appearances on a variety of other programmes about music. In 2012 he received a prize from the national station NPO Radio 4 for his creative contribution to classical music.

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