

## Biography

Stijn Saveniers is a versatile conductor, researcher, and coach.

He is the artistic director of *Volksopera*, an Antwerp-based initiative dedicated to comic opera. As a doctoral researcher, he is affiliated with the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp (ARIA) and the Orpheus Institute (docARTES), where his research explores the role of humour in theatrical music. Within the vocal department of the conservatoire, he is appointed as a repertoire coach, and he is also involved with the Study Centre for Flemish Music, contributing to the development of new critical music editions. Additionally, he was a member of *HERMESensemble*, Antwerp's leading collective for contemporary music, for nearly twenty years.

Stijn Saveniers studied at the conservatoires of Leuven and Maastricht, earning his Master's degrees under the tutelage of Mirel Iancovici (cello) and Edmond Saveniers (orchestral conducting). In Maastricht, he was awarded the Hustinckx Prize.

Since then, he has conducted a diverse range of productions, spanning opera, Operetta, ballet, symphonic and chamber orchestra repertoire, oratorio, and contemporary music.

His particular affinity for the human voice, combined with extensive experience as a répétiteur, led him to focus on music theatre. Recent highlights include the creation and tour of *Notwehr*, a chamber opera by Annelies Van Parys (commissioned by the Venice Biennale), and a music theatre production centred on the figure of Lange Wapper, featuring Clara Cleymans, Prince K. Appiah, and Casco Phil.

It was within the often-overlooked comic repertoire that his expertise flourished—where humour and music intertwine through a blend of spoken dialogue, parlando singing, and grand lyrical moments. He has conducted productions of *La Périchole*, *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*, *Les Bavards*, *Mr. Choufleuri restera chez lui*, *La fille du Tambour-Major* (Offenbach), *Der Vogelhändler* (Zeller), *Das Land des Lächelns* (Lehár), *Eine Nacht in Venedig*, *Die Fledermaus* (Strauss), *Clivia* (Dostal), *Les Mousquetaires au couvent* (Varney), and *La Belle de Cadix* (Lopez).

His growing affinity for the genre led him to uncover numerous forgotten works, a key motivation behind his founding of *Volksopera* in 2014. This initiative seeks not only to

preserve the musical integrity of the genre but also to innovate its presentation by engaging with contemporary theatrical paradigms.

*Volksopera* has staged productions of *Le Docteur Miracle* (Lecocq), *Cox and Box & The Zoo* (Sullivan), *The Idea* (Holst), *Alles Schwindel* (Spoliansky), *L'île de Tulipatan* (Offenbach), and an exploratory research project on *The Bear* (Walton).

In the coming months, his focus will be on the defence of his doctoral dissertation, accompanied by a performance of the Belgian Operetta *Brueghelkermis*.

[www.stijnsaveniers.com](http://www.stijnsaveniers.com)