

Barbara Schilstra

Dutch lyric soprano Barbara Schilstra studied piano at the Artez Conservatory in Zwolle before moving to Amsterdam. In 2007 she graduated from the Amsterdam Conservatory with her Bachelor degree in classical singing. Barbara has followed masterclasses and coaching lessons with Theodore Coresi, Nelly Miricioiu and Peter Nilsson. Since 2009 she has been guided by the American tenor James McCray, thanks to financial support from Fonds Podium Kunsten.

As a soloist Barbara has performed with many different ensembles, orchestras and choirs: she has sung solo parts in Brahms' Ein Deutsches Requiem, Beethoven's 9th symphony and in the Gelders Orchestra's production of Grieg's Peer Gynt (Solveigh). In 2011 and 2012 she was a finalist in the Vox Artis International Concours, Romania, and was the winner in 2012 of the Pygmalion Theater Prize. In 2013 Barbara made her debut as Saffi (Zigeunerbaron, Strauss) in Vienna and Germany.

"I love Barbara, I loved her from the first day I saw her in the audition, because she's got an individuality and I always fall in love with individualities" Nelly Miricioiu

"Barbara Schilstra war eine wunderbare Saffi: mit ihrem runden warmen Sopran und viel spielerischer Hingabe." Solinger Tageblatt, Germany

Juan Zurutuza

Mexican pianist Juan Zurutuza has given concerts throughout Europe and North America. His musical education began at the age of 4 with Susana Avendaño and Gastón Lafourcade, with whom he studied piano and harpsichord. For two years he was a student of Guadalupe Parrondo in Mexico City. With the support of a major scholarship from Alejandro Nogués, Roalcom NEXTEL, Juan was able to continue his studies in the Netherlands, where he has been based since 2001. He obtained his Master's degree in 2008 from the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague under the tutelage of Rian de Waal. Subsequently he studied for a year with American pianist Edith Grosz-Lateiner.

Having followed masterclasses and worked with many of today's eminent musicians, those who have deeply influenced Juan's playing include Miroslav Brejcha, Ivan Moravec, Igor Roma, Leslie Howard, Godfried Hoogeveen, Charles Rosen and James McCray.

In addition to regular recitals in the Netherlands, Juan performs both solo and chamber music concerts annually at the Peter de Grote Festival, Groningen, where he is also a member of the teaching faculty. Juan's career in Europe would not have been possible without the generous support he has received from Cora and Herman Labberté (Stichting Labberté-Hoedemaker Fonds). Since 2011 he has had a beautiful grand piano on loan to him from the Nationaal Muziekinstrumenten Fonds Amsterdam.

"This 'above-board' romantic places the notes in colourful waves with fantasy" De Telegraaf, the Netherlands

"Juan a toutes les qualités pour espérer en une grande carrière de pianiste, tant par ses ressources instrumentales -exceptionnelles- que par ses dons musicaux absolument surprenants". Aldo Ciccolini