

## Biographies

### Intendant

**Johan Gijsen** (1975) started organising concerts in his home village of Roggel at the age of sixteen. From 2000 to 2016 he worked as music programmer at Utrecht's Tivoli pop music centre, and subsequently at TivoliVredenburg. In 2007 he joined his childhood friend Bob van Heur in establishing the Utrecht-based international festival Le Guess Who?, of which he is currently the director. Gijsen was also closely involved in the establishment of the festival Into The Great Wide Open on the island of Vlieland. Readers of the newspaper AD Utrechts Nieuwsblad selected him as Utrecht Citizen of the Year in 2016. In the guise of his alter-ego Wiekes, he also performed as DJ at festivals including Lowlands, Pinkpop and Best Kept Secret.

Gijsen is a fellow member of the ISPA (International Society for the Performing Arts), member of the festivals commission of the Creative Industries Fund NL, chair of the foundations Wanderlöss and Meindert Talma, and board member at De Basis Nijmegen.

### Experts

**Annemieke Keurentjes** has been active in the world of (international) performing arts in a variety of roles. Following a career in dance and after studying art policy and management at the University of Amsterdam, she spent a number of years working in production, PR and sponsor recruitment. She has worked for Holland Festival since 2005, taking the position of programming director in 2018, in which capacity she is responsible for the programming choices with respect to (mainly) theatre and dance.

**Guy Coolen** (1966) studied German Philology at the University of Antwerp and Theatre and Communication Sciences at the University of Ghent. Since 1994 he is the General and Artistic Director of Muziektheater Transparant (Antwerp), a production house with several composers, singers and theatre makers in residence which produces highly acclaimed international music-theatre projects. Muziektheater Transparant has been invited to numerous international venues and festivals: Capitals of Culture in 2008 and 2018, the Holland Festival, Festival d'Avignon, Edinburgh and Singapore International Festival, Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Melbourne and Sydney Festival. Since 2008, Coolen is also the artistic director of the annual music-theatre festival Operadagen Rotterdam, nominated as best opera festival in 2015 in London and for the 'Innovation Award' of Classical Next. Operadagen Rotterdam and Muziektheater Transparant are committed to the same goal: to stimulate innovative forms of opera and music-theatre. Guy Coolen is a member of many organisations. He is member of the European Cultural Parliament, chair of the International Theatre Institute (ITI)'s Music-theatre Committee and of ITI Belgium-Flanders, chair of ITI Music Theatre Now Network, committee member of CVN (Cultural Treaty Flanders-Netherlands), board member of theatre group Laika and chair of the baroque ensemble B'Rock.

**Jolanda Spoel** graduated from the HKU Utrecht University of the Arts in 1997. Since then she acted and danced extensively with several companies, to eventually concentrate on directing performances. She was programmer at the Cosmic Theater in Amsterdam until 2002, and the artistic leader of the Rotterdam youth theatre company Rotterdams LEF! and the youth theatre company Theatergroep Siberia.

Spoel currently works as head of theatre, programmer and director at Maas Theatre and Dance in Rotterdam. She also sits on the board of the Amsterdam Arts Council and is chair of the committees for Dance and for Cultural Centres.

**Martijn Buser** (Zevenaar, 1980) studied social-cultural work at the HAN University of Applied Arts. From 2005 to 2011 he was programmer of contemporary music at Theater Kikker in Utrecht. Since January 2011 he has worked as programmer and coordinating producer for the Gaudeamus Music Week in Utrecht and the Gaudeamus concert series throughout the year. He has acted as co-curator for the Rewire Festival in The Hague since 2015, and in 2016 he was Music Chair for the International Computer Music Conference in Utrecht, jointly organised by Gaudeamus with the Music & Technology department of HKU Utrecht University of the Arts. He spent two years working for the Council for Culture as a performance visitor, and has also acted as committee member of the Amsterdam Arts Council and the Performing Arts Fund.

**Piet Menu** (Roesbrugge, 1977) is the artistic leader of Het Zuidelijk Toneel. As a Belgian working in the Netherlands, his trajectory so far has taken him from the Flemish cultural centre De Brakke Grond to Festival Cement, to Huis van Bourgondië and back to De Brakke Grond. Piet is therefore well-accustomed to reaching out across borders. At HZT he also works with makers from both the Netherlands and from Belgium, and from within the world of theatre and from beyond.

**Rakesh Kanhai** started DJ'ing when he was 15 and never stopped. This passion quickly translated in developing live shows for his performing friends. Shows with which he won many awards. After finishing his masters he went to work with charity organisations as salesmanager and coach, somewhat ignoring the strong call off music, until he finally dove in deep and never looked back.

Fast Forward ten years and he is the go-to guy for a wide variety of artists. These ten years have taught him to work as artist developer, music director, art director and producer with a tendency towards people-oriented projects that seem impossible but thrilling.

**Samuel Wuersten** (Gstaad, Switzerland, 1961) enjoyed a diversified career as a contemporary repertory dancer, created self-produced as well as commissioned work as a choreographer and is a sought after teacher of contemporary dance around the world. He is the artistic and executive director of the renowned Holland Dance Festival, executive co-director of Codarts Arts University Rotterdam as well as the artistic director of the Bachelor and Master Dance programs at Zurich Arts University in Switzerland.

He regularly serves as a jury member and consultant to various dance and arts organizations. For over a decade, he was the artistic co-director of the Steps International Dance Festival in Switzerland, a member of the artistic committee of the Prix de Lausanne as well as the competition's contemporary teacher. From 2013 to 2018, Samuel Wuersten was the international curator of Diana Vishneva's CONTEXT festival in Moscow and St Petersburg.

Samuel Wuersten was born and raised in Gstaad, Switzerland. He had his formal dance training at the Hamburg Ballet School as well as at Codarts Arts University Rotterdam. He is currently based in The Netherlands. In 2011 he was honoured with a knighthood in the Dutch order of Orange-Nassau. In the same year he was admitted to the French Order of Arts and Letters as Chevalier dans l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres.