



Michel van der Aa | Composer, Filmmaker, Stage Director

"Van der Aa is a master of many media... Rarely have modern techniques and ancient musical virtues coexisted more naturally."

Alex Ross, *The New Yorker*



Michel van der Aa is one of today's most sought-after composers and stage directors. Winner of the 2022 Best Digital Opera at the International Opera Awards, 2015 Johannes Vermeer Award and 2013 Grawemeyer award, van der Aa is a pioneer in the realms of new music and technology. His staged works – incorporating film and sampled soundtrack – are a seamless hybrid of musical theatre and multimedia. Alongside his stage works, many of his works are released on Disquiet Media, an independent multimedia label for his own work.

Van der Aa's imaginative music theatre works *The Book of Water* (2022), *Upload* (2020), *Blank Out* (2016), *Sunken Garden* (2012), *The Book of Disquiet* (2008), *After Life* (2005–06) and *One* (2002) have received critical and public acclaim internationally. Staging, film and music are interwoven into a collage of transparent layers, resulting in works that are part-documentary, part-philosophy. His repertoire also includes concert works and chamber music for small ensemble, soloists and soundtrack, such as his cross-media cello concerto *Up-close* (2010).

Van der Aa's most recent chamber music theatre work, *The Book of Water*, received its world premiere in September 2022 at the Biennale Musica Venice - International Festival of Contemporary Music. *The Book of Water* features Samuel West onstage with live string quartet, with his father Timothy West (actor) and Mary Bevan (soprano) being featured in the accompanying film and was co-commissioned by Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ, Amsterdam Sinfonietta, November Music, Philharmonie Cologne, Hong Kong Arts Festival, and Tongyeong Festival.

Other recent highlights include the premiere of a new virtual reality installation, *Eight*, featuring singer-songwriter Kate Miller-Heidke and the Nederlands Kammerkoor and was created in collaboration with designer Theun Mosk and virtual reality company The Virtual Dutch Men, van der Aa created a unique groundbreaking fusion of musical theatre, VR and visual art.

Netherlands-born, van der Aa maintains strong roots in his home country including close ties with the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, and the Holland Festival. Winner of numerous awards for his innovative work, van der Aa is also a regular guest of the world's most prestigious festivals and concert halls including Barbican Centre, Opera de Lyon, Lucerne Festival as composer-in-residence, Venice Biennale, Donaueschinger Musiktage, Festival d'Automne à Paris, LA Philharmonic New Music Series, Lincoln Centre Festival and Tokyo Suntory Summer Music Festival.

Intermusica represent Michel van der Aa projects worldwide.

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