



Thomas Agerfeldt Olesen

The Picture of Dorian Gray

*A choreographed opera in two acts
based on Oscar Wilde's novel*

English libretto by Alasdair Middleton

Musical direction **Joachim Gustafsson**
Stage direction and Choreography **Marie Brolin-Tani**
Set design **Johan Kølckjær**
Lighting design **Mårten K. Axelsson**
Video design **Hobi Jarne**
Sound design **Jens Hørsving**



Dacapo is supported by the Danish Arts Foundation **DANISH ARTS FOUNDATION**

DORIAN GRAY

Andrew Radley, countertenor | **Maximilian Schmid**, dancer

LORD HENRY WOTTON

Jonathan Best, bass | **Johan Ohlson**, dancer

BASIL HALLWARD

James Bobby, actor | **Björn Nilsson**, dancer

JAMES VANE

James Bobby, baritone | **David Price**, dancer

SYBIL VANE

Jenny Thiele, folk singer | **Siri Wollthoorn**, dancer

THE INNER

Sigrid Kandal Husjord, dancer

MRS. VANE, SIBYL'S MOTHER

Bolette Bruno Hansen, alto | **Henrietta Wallberg**, dancer

A BUTLER

Andrew Radley, actor | **Erik Nyberg**, dancer

AN OPIUM DEALER

Susanne Vinther, mezzo-soprano | **Erik Nyberg**, dancer

A PROSTITUTE

Bolette Bruno Hansen, alto | **Katya Nielsen**, dancer

COUNTESS OF MONMOUTH

Birgitte Skarby Riddell, soprano | **Marjolaine Cazalis**, dancer

TWO SERVANTS, DANCE CHOIR

Andrew Radley, countertenor & **Jonathan Best**, bass
Jesper Nilsson, dancer & **Anna Stamp Møller**, dancer

CHILDREN AT THE THEATRE

Sophia Frederikke Kasten Eivindson, **Sylvia Katariina Gahl**
Liv Metzдорff Slavensky, **Signe Louise Sørensen**
Kristine Weinreich & **Alba Nørgaard Zachariasen**
(Ballet children of the Ballet Academy of Aarhus)

Chorus of the Danish National Opera

Aarhus Symphony Orchestra

Joachim Gustafsson, conductor

The premiere of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* took place on 22 August 2013 at Concert Hall Aarhus and was seen everywhere as one of the big events in Danish musical life.

The Danish National Opera was not unfamiliar with the idea of venturing beyond the ordinary. In particular the complete production of Richard Wagner's demanding *The Ring of the Nibelung* in 1987 had placed Denmark's second-largest city on the musical world map. But when former opera director Giordano Bellincampi took up the challenge of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* a decade and a half later, it almost seemed a rash decision.

He said yes to a music drama by a young composer with no experience of other operas; indeed, a music drama based on Oscar Wilde's most controversial novel – and with no singers on the stage!

Judging by the early reviews, the house also seems to have won a Pyrrhic victory. The reviewers in the national press didn't quite know which leg to stand on. They used words like "different and exciting", "ambitious opera project", "easy to be entertained by" and went home again. Confusion on a higher plane, one might say.

But as is often the case with Thomas Agerfeldt Olesen's music, the opera was later to grow in the awareness of the Danes to become decidedly memorable. Not least thanks to the great efforts of Bellincampi's successor as opera director, Annilese Miskimmon – a vital and dedicated factor throughout Danish National Opera's successful production. At first we are confused by his crossing of genres, by the midget and the modern dancers, by the hidden singers and the outbreaks of 'musical' – but slowly the frustration grows into enjoyable wonder and then into a kind of admiration. In short, his works begin as a confusing foreign language with no known dictionary and not rarely end up as an expression of something familiar.

Oscar Wilde's horror story is played out among the British upper class in the age of Queen Victoria.

Basil is a painter and takes a fancy to Dorian Gray – a nonchalant, good-looking narcissist. Dorian has his portrait painted by Basil and falls in love with the finished painting.

He then meets the hedonistic, somewhat Mephistophelian Lord Henry and becomes obsessed with the idea of eternal youth; and in a way the idea becomes reality: the portrait begins to age and decay instead of himself.

Dorian now lives 18 years with no sign of aging and can plunge into the night life in earnest. But a number of men as well as the actress Sibyl suffer from his lack of conscience. He sees his portrait again in its terrifyingly decayed condition, cannot accept the consequences of his actions, and decides to kill the painting.

The Picture of Dorian Gray clearly has homosexual overtones. But the sexuality is explicitly thematized neither in Wilde's novel nor in Agerfeldt Olesen's opera. Oscar Wilde himself was gay and his aesthetic ideals were a matter of course in his life. He suffered no fewer than two trials for 'sodomy', went into exile after the final verdict and two years in prison, and remained profoundly surprised and terribly disillusioned over all these events.

Wilde's own life rather resembled the fate he gave Dorian Gray. He was born in Ireland and was educated at first at Trinity College in Dublin. Although he never had an academic career, he would have been able enough to have one. But he quickly fell for London's society life and became known as one of Britain's most colourful artistic figures.

When he was short of money he spent his evenings at restaurants. The Victorian couples at the tables faced each other in respectable boredom. The celebrity could go over



and sit with them, fill his belly at their expense and in return entertain them for hours with his brilliant conversation and affability.

The Picture of Dorian Gray was his only novel. He embarked early on the writing of plays and became world-famous with the comedy *The Importance of Being Earnest* from 1894. Wilde fell in love with women several times, including with Florence, who later married the author of *Dracula*, Bram Stoker – and had two children with his wife, Constance. But he was also semi-open about his homosexuality and for years had his fellow writer Lord Alfred Douglas as his regular partner. In the end the verdict sent him to prison for two years and made his subsequent emigration to Paris necessary. He died in 1900, world-famous and poverty-stricken.

Oscar Wilde is said to have portrayed himself in all the main characters of the book: "Basil is what I think I am. Lord Henry is what the world thinks of me. Dorian is what I would like to be," he said.

The novel and the opera both place all the more emphasis on one of the most important currents of the late nineteenth century: Symbolism. The world could only be described indirectly and in hints. Art was therefore full of metaphors and hints. And the phenomenon of the double played a major role. There is a direct line from "the shadow" in Hans Christian Andersen and the "doppelgänger" in Dostoyevsky to the painting in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

Thomas Agerfeldt Olesen's opera also has death as its theme. Death is "the true goal of our life," as Mozart said. For if one is not aware of the brevity of our time on earth, one possesses the gift of neither creativity nor conscience. Beings with eternal life would not write so much as a note and would lose an important motive for good behaviour.

But the relationship between art and reality is also about culture versus nature – as is particularly evident from a well known anecdote from the world of painting.

Claude Monet painted innumerable pictures of his garden in Giverny in northern France. A large tree stood a little asymmetrically on the lawn and never appeared in the paintings. So when he grew old and was unable to paint any more it appears that he went out and felled the tree. The art had to trump the reality, and had now definitively become the true image of the garden.

The same subject has preoccupied Thomas Agerfeldt Olesen for many years. The composer attended a Rudolf Steiner school as a boy, and was influenced by Anthroposophy with its poetic-romantic view of nature. Stones, clouds, trees and all other aspects of nature seem to be animated by spirit in Steiner's universe. And not rarely, the art of Anthroposophy takes on life-like or 'biomorphic' forms. Thomas Agerfeldt Olesen has that relatively diffuse boundary between art and reality flowing in his veins.

A strong feature of the stage work *Victor's Golgotha* from 2004 was the orchestra's 'artificial' imitations of the 'natural' human voice. One frequently hears hints of actual words being spoken. That is, even though the sounds come from instruments!

Thomas Agerfeldt Olesen has made the most important roles in the work as different as possible: Dorian is to be sung by a soaring countertenor; Henry by a diabolically deep bass; Sybil by a pop singer. All the solo singers stand with the orchestra and thus must not be seen by the audience.

The crucial element of dance in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* also has allusions to Anthroposophy – more specifically the so-called *Sprachgestaltung*: a narrator may for example recite a poem and at the same time clarify the individual words with gestures. Movements in *Sprachgestaltung* thus have relatively specific meanings. They are not only there to be beautiful; they also tell a more or less translatable story.

Dance in the music drama context has on the whole had a rather neglected but long history. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is part of a proud tradition!

Historically, the chorus in the ancient Greek tragedies probably performed dances. We know of similar practices from the Japanese tradition and from the ancient Sanskrit drama of the Indians.

We also find the phenomenon in several of Karlheinz Stockhausen's works: *Inori* from 1974 is for a large orchestra and two gesticulating soloists. And all the main figures in the seven-evening long *Licht* can appear in three ways – as singers, as musicians and as dancers. Similarly, several of Per Nørgård's works from the latter half of the 1970's can be performed with dancing – so for instance *Twilight* (1976–77; rev. 1979).

The dance steps in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* were conceived by the Danish-Swedish choreographer Marie Brolin-Tani. She calls the drama a choreographic opera and sees the dance as an extension of the voice of the singer. The individual dancer must not only play the role he or she represents – but must also know very thoroughly the way the specific singer sings the same role. The result is a kind of 'Dogma dance': each performer has had his or her freedom restricted and can thus come closer to the special nature of the role. The dance steps of the opera can in that sense be seen as a directly sensual interpretation of the action and conflicts of the opera.

Professionally, Thomas Agerfeldt Olesen has a background as a musician on the bowed instrument the cello. His works are relatively few in number, but seem very expertly put together – and surprisingly varied. Although he has created music with singing before, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is so far his only opera.

Nor does it resemble his other works much. The style quite consciously inclines towards a principle one could call eclectic: the listener can sense impulses from Richard Strauss at one moment and from the popular musical the next.

But not because Agerfeldt Olesen cannot make up anything himself! The echoes of the music of others build on a carefully calculated wish for clarity in the emotional. The work consistently balances between reality with a frightening character and the imaginary with a more dreaming tone. And the dreaming world thus has sounds from the world of yesterday: "The dream draws sustenance from the past, because it contains the only images we know," he has said.

Søren Schauser is classical music editor on the Danish national daily Berlingske

SYNOPSIS by Thomas Agerfeldt Olesen

ACT ONE

Scene 1 – In a studio in London Basil Hallward is painting the most successful portrait of his career. As a viewer of the creative process, his friend, the bon viveur and hedonist Lord Henry Wotton (Harry) walks around the room, until the subject of the portrait, the handsome young Dorian Gray, enters and immediately falls for Lord Henry's magical attraction. The meeting between the two does not happen with the good will of the enamoured Basil, and from the first moment Henry fills Dorian's soul with his ideas, to the great chagrin of Basil. Henry preaches that youth and beauty are everything, and that Dorian, at any cost, must pursue the dreams that his beauty permits him to live out.

Dorian is dismayed at the thought of growing old and expresses a wish that the portrait could take his aging and sins upon it. Basil is shocked by how willingly Dorian is enmeshed by Lord Henry's words. The fateful meeting makes Basil threaten to destroy the portrait, but after a dramatic scene he is persuaded not to and finally presents Dorian with the picture.

Scene 2 – In a theatre in the East End a mother lectures her young daughter, the actress Sybil Vane, on the lessons she has learned from life: that one cannot trust men and should actually only get involved with them if they have money. But Sybil does not care and loves a beautiful young man whom – not knowing his name, Dorian Gray – she calls "Prince Charming". Despairing that the girl is taking no heed of her words, Mrs. Vane asks James, Sybil's brother, to talk some sense into her. The brother talks to his sister out of a profound mistrust of human beings and swears to kill anyone who harms a hair of his sister's head. Sybil tries – too late – to instil some trust in his and her own future in her brother, for James is about to go off to seek his fortune in Australia.

Scene 3 – Dorian confides in Harry and Basil about his love of Sybil. The men listen, Harry with some detachment. The three agree to meet at the theatre the same evening.

Scene 4 – At the theatre Dorian's two friends see Sybil for the first time. As if a spell has been cast on her, Sybil's acting just does not work – all the magic has left her, and Dorian is ashamed in front of his friends, who are seeing Sybil for the first time. After the performance, alone with Sybil in her dressing-room, Dorian gives her short shrift and breaks up with her: he loved her as Ophelia, Juliet and Portia, not as an untalented loser. Sybil is serene and believes her love of Dorian has released her from living her life through her roles. Now she can live as herself, and the magic of acting has been lost to her. In reply Dorian announces that he will forget her name and her face. He leaves Sybil alone, and she implies a fatal decision with a quotation from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

Scene 5 – Back home, Dorian compares his reflection with the portrait. Small changes have appeared.

ACT TWO

Scene 1 – Sybil has committed suicide, and Dorian's conscience struggles with a dawning detachment from the consequences of his actions. Harry finds this detachment fascinating, recognizing it from his own ideas and gives it theoretical sustenance that pushes Dorian out on the last stretch of the road towards cynicism.

Scene 2 – Symbolic sequence: Dorian's Credo and images from his Dionysian lifestyle. The scene changes to:

Scene 3 – Symbolic sequences in brothels and ballrooms: uninhibited sexual activity which at Dorian's incitement turns into rape and murder.

Scene 4 – Basil visits Dorian, whom he has not seen for several years, to tell him what is being said about him around town. Basil insists on doing so despite Dorian's unwillingness – he wants to hear Dorian deny the rumours, and Dorian's smouldering hatred of Basil, whom he now blames for the state of his own soul, gives him the sudden whim to show him the picture. They go up to the loft, where Dorian has hidden the picture away, and Basil now gets to see his greatly transformed picture. Basil cannot believe what he sees, but when the truth sinks in, he pathetically invokes Dorian's conscience and God. Now that all is revealed, Dorian goes all the way and murders Basil.

Scene 5 – James returns after 18 years in Australia. Grief over his sister's death and over his shattered Australian dreams drives James into an opium den to forget. The only thing he has not forgotten is his vow to kill the man who drove his sister to suicide. When one of the hostesses calls a new guest "Prince Charming", James remembers the name and attacks the guest, who is Dorian. Dorian illuminates his face and James believes he is mistaken, since the face does not look older than Sybil was when she took her own life. Dorian escapes, but the hostess can tell James that she saw Dorian for the first time 18 years before. Prince Charming still looks just as he did then.

Scene 6A – Dorian feels trapped by the curse of the picture and weighed down by the burden of his actions.

Scene 6B – At a subsequent masked ball (with Harry and Dorian present), James sneaks in, takes off his mask, draws a pistol which, through the intervention of some unknown power, he points at himself and fires. The guests see it as a suicide, and only Dorian realizes the true facts of the matter.

Scene 7 – Dorian longs to escape the curse of the picture and tells Harry that he will be good. Harry thinks he is already good, and that he should move to the countryside if he wants to resist the temptations of life. He thinks that Dorian has a fantastic life, in which he has drunk the cup to the full. Dorian is furious to see how little Harry understands and how ignorant Harry is of his own guilt. Dorian sends Harry away and is left alone. He goes to his horrific portrait. In Wilde's novel he stabs the picture and dies, but the opera chooses a more open ending.

DANCE AS THE EXTENSION OF THE VOICE

Marie Brolin-Tani interviewed by Lars Wallenberg

The internationally acclaimed Swedish/Danish choreographer Marie Brolin-Tani is well known for her expressive modern dance idiom, which often leaves it up to the audience themselves to draw the final conclusions. But why and how does this formal idiom work in her staging of the opera *The Picture of Dorian Gray*?

You call the production a choreographic opera. What kind of formal expression is it that you want to convey to the audience?

The phrase 'choreographic opera' refers to the way the dance functions here as an extension of the singer's voice – as a kind of communicator of the inner emotions and thoughts that result in the actions and choices of the various characters in the opera. The text, the singers and the music are the focus, and the dancers then take their cue from these physical impulses. This should be seen in connection with the fact that we live in an age when we are used to relating to body language. The choreographic language that I have chosen simply intensifies the characters and the dramaturgy they follow.

*You go a step further with the story by making *The Picture of Dorian Gray* about the fear of old age. You also make this production about the fear of death itself and of not being remembered. Why is that?*

Age, decay and death are closely connected. Dancers in particular know all about that. I have therefore worked a lot with the libretto, in which is inscribed a great fear of disappearing from the earth, a fear of not being remembered. Dorian Gray's inability to love and feel means that his actions become a mix of aggression and coldness, for he will do anything to be noticed and remembered.

In your view, what kind of atmospheric and formal expression do the 18 dancers bring to the story that the libretto or the narrative do not directly give it?

The dancers can create a universe on the stage that is artificial and far from the realism that you get an impression of when you read the original book, see the film or read the libretto. In that connection Thomas Agerfeldt Olesen and I spoke, right from the first time we met, about incorporating ideas from puppet theatre and cartoon films in the actual opera. This also means that the characters are intensified and elaborated from scene to scene – something I also take my cue from in terms of costumes, lighting and set design.

In your staging you use elements from the ancient Greek tragedy, where the chorus has a commentary role.

In this context the chorus is a dancing chorus, consisting of the dancers who in the scene in question do not have a defined role. It's quite right that the inspiration comes from the Greek chorus tragedies where the chorus played a commentary role. In short, the presence of many people who at the same time speak about or comment on the same action



reinforces and intensifies the situation. The chorus, in this case the dancing chorus, can predict or comment on what will happen or has just happened.

In your staging you work with the unspoken in the plot itself. In that connection you have added non-speaking roles like the figure 'The Inner' – just to mention one example. What did you want to achieve with this?

The concept of "The Inner" gives me the opportunity to work with each character's inner conflicts. People – including the characters in the opera – do not always act as they feel, or vice versa. And this brings nuances and shades to the opera so that, in our efforts to be clear and tell the story, we hopefully do not end up with clichés. With the concept "choreographic opera" I have tried to find a formal expression that can communicate this work – a kind of expression that probably would not fit in any other artistic context. The dancers have had special restrictions imposed on their various ways of moving, and their work has consisted of among other things standing facing 'their' singers in the rehearsal hall, in order to read off and learn the individual singer's attack, pauses, breathing and way of singing. But the choreography alone cannot create this universe. In reality it is the whole scenic picture that bears the story of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Stage design, lighting, costume and video design are in a constant interplay with the physical expression. It has been a highly collective process that has led to what we see on the stage today – in many ways a raw-nerved story of frailty and vulnerability in our short life. The 18 dancers (12 adults and 6 children) each with their own artistic qualities, have been chosen precisely to convey this formal expression – or statement, you could say.

© Lars Wallenberg is a theatre and ballet critic for the newspaper Børsen

Den Jyske Opera (Danish National Opera) is Denmark's national touring opera company. Funded by the Danish Ministry of Culture and proudly based in Aarhus, Denmark's second city and European Capital of Culture 2017, it tours across the whole country with both traditional and innovative opera for all ages, tastes and experiences. It is a distinctive, pace-setting part of the Danish cultural scene and for decades has presented productions of the highest artistic quality. With a fulltime chorus as part of 60 artistic, administrative and technical staff it performs regularly at the Royal Danish Opera in Copenhagen and collaborates with the Danish regional symphony orchestras including Aarhus Symphony Orchestra.

jyske-opera.dk

Thomas Agerfeldt Olesen trained as a cellist and composer at the Royal Academy of Music, Aarhus. In recent years he has become a particularly sought-after composer, and he works with many prominent Danish and foreign ensembles and musicians including WDR Radiosinfonieorchester Stuttgart, Aarhus Symphony Orchestra, Danish National Symphony Orchestra, Helsinki Philharmonic, Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen, Danish National Opera, Rolf Hind, Thomas Hell and Danish String Quartet. Agerfeldt Olesen's music has been performed throughout Europe as well as in Chile and USA. In 2011, Thomas Agerfeldt Olesen was awarded the Carl Nielsen Prize, the largest artistic prize for a Danish artist, and in 2013 he received the Danish Arts Foundation's prize for Musical Drama for *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, which in 2014 was also nominated for 'Best Opera 2013' at the Reumert Awards.

The Swedish choreographer **Marie Brolin-Tani** is a pivotal performer within modern Scandinavian dance, and for years she has had a special connection to Aarhus, where she at first worked as a dancer at the Danish National Opera and Aarhus Theatre. In Aarhus during the 1990's, she was the founder of MBT Danseteater which became one of the leading dance companies in Denmark. Since she became head of the internationally esteemed Skånes Danseteater. Marie is especially known for her work with young dancers at the beginning of their careers at The Young Dance Company in the Oresund Region, and Young Fuse Dance Company in Jönköping, Sweden. She is currently continuing this work as artistic director at Black Box Dance Company in Holstebro. Several of Marie's choreographies have been nominated for a Reumert Prize as was *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and The Funen Opera's production *Andre Bygninger*, directed by Marie, was awarded a Reumert in 2015.

After his studies in Vienna, the Swedish conductor **Joachim Gustafsson** has established himself as one of the most exciting Nordic conductors. He has worked with most of the Swedish opera houses and orchestras, and in Germany he has had engagements at Staatstheater Darmstadt and Ulmer Oper. His operatic debut was at the Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm in Verdi's *Otello*. Joachim Gustafsson is even an experienced concert conductor with, among others, Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, and he has had recurring collaborations with Malmö Opera and Copenhagen Phil.

The British playwright and librettist **Alasdair Middleton** has written plays and more than 12 opera libretti for productions often in collaboration with the choreographer Will Tuckett and with the opera composer Jonathan Dove, performed at, among other places, at Royal Opera House in London, Opera North, Birmingham Opera Company and New York City Opera.

German dancer **Maximilian Schmid** was educated at IWANSON International School of Contemporary Dance in Munich where he has featured in several modern dance productions under, among others, Minka-Marie Heiß and Katja Wachter. Schmid has since been working at Regjonteatret Väst i Borås, with Danish National Opera in Aarhus, and most recently with Domenico Strazzeria's 'Strado Compagnia Danza' in Ulm, Germany.

British countertenor **Andrew Radley** studied music at Clare College, Cambridge, and later went to the Royal Academy of Music. He specializes in the great opera roles by Handel and other leading composers of the 17th and 18th centuries. Radley is a busy concert singer, having performed principle roles with Welsh National Opera, Opera North, Scottish Opera and the Danish National Opera.

Bass **Jonathan Best** was educated at St John's College, Cambridge, and at the Guildhall School of Music. He made his operatic debut in 1983 with the Welsh National Opera and has since sung with all the major British opera companies. Best covers a wide operatic repertoire and has also had engagements throughout Europe. With the Danish National Opera he most recently appeared in *Così fan tutte* in 2015.

The Swedish dancer **Johan Ohlson** graduated from The Swedish National Ballet School, Gothenburg, in 2008. He has since appeared in productions at The Gothenburg Opera, Granhøj Dans, Aarhus, and with Archaz Youth Company, where he also was choreogra-

pher and manager. Ohlson was assistant to Palle Granhøj in the Reumert-awarded production *Men&Mahler* from 2013.

British baritone **James Bobby** read music at Cambridge University, studied singing at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London and was a member of Les Jeunes Voix du Rhin in Strasbourg. Bobby works mainly within 20th century and contemporary repertoire. Since 2013 he has been a part of the ensemble at the Saarländisches Staatstheater in Saarbrücken.

The Swedish dancer **Björn Nilsson** trained at London Studio Centre and went to The Young Dance Company under Marie Brolin-Tani, before he danced under Tim Rushton and Danish Dance Theatre from 2010-14. Björn has since worked freelance in Denmark and in Sweden at Norrdans with choreographers such as Roy Assaf, Lenka Vagnerova and Fernando Melo.

Jenny Thiele is a German singer-songwriter. She took her formal training in the Netherlands and is now based in Cologne. She released her first solo album 'Home' in 2012 and has been involved in collaborations with, among others, the duo Tom and Jenny as well as Irene Novoa and Julius Oppermann under the name Nunuk. Jenny's role in *Dorian Gray* was her first appearance with a symphony orchestra.

Dancer **Siri Wolthoorn**, from Aarhus, Denmark, graduated from Hogeschool voor de Kunsten in Amsterdam, and has worked with Batsheva Ensemble, Yossi Berg & Oded Graf, Recoil Performance Group, Danish Dance Theatre, Mute Dance Company, Marie Brolin-Tani, Ari Rosenzweig, Edhem Jesenkovic and Itzik Galili. Siri is currently freelancing as well as teaching Gaga and Pilates in Copenhagen and abroad.

David Price made his debut as a professional dancer at 15 years of age and later trained at the Danish National School of Contemporary Dance. He has been a dancer with Young Fuse Dance Company and has moreover worked with Melody Putu, Martin Forsberg, Linda Forsman, Lotte Sigh, Kim Brandstrup, Bo Madvig, Morten Intrad, Jannik Elkjær and Eske Holm.

The mezzo-soprano **Bolette Bruno Hansen** trained at the Royal Academy of Music, Aarhus, and later in Mannheim. She is a member of the Chorus of the Danish National Opera and is an experienced lied singer and a soloist with the regional orchestras in Denmark. At the Danish National Opera she has appeared in several productions through the years.

Norwegian-born actress and dancer **Sigrid Kandal Husjord** was educated at The Commedia School in Copenhagen and Lee Strasberg Film & Theatre Institute in New York. She made her debut in *Hamlet* at Gladsaxe Ny Teater and has siden worked at Aveny-T, Danish National Opera, Østre Gasværk and she has appeared on tv. In 2011 she received a Reumert award for her role in *Oliver with a twist* on Nørrebro Teater.

Swedish dancer **Henrietta Wallberg** graduated from The Royal Swedish Ballet School in Stockholm, and has since worked as dancer, actor, performer and singer. She has worked at NorrlandsOperan, Stockholms Stadsteater, Danish National Opera and Riksteatret in Norway, and has worked with choreographers such as Lotta Melin, Susanne Jaresand, Virpi Pakkinen, Marie Brolin-Tani, Ola Stinnerbom and Jimmy Meurling.

Danish mezzo-soprano **Susanne Vinther** graduated from the Royal Academy of Music, Aarhus. She has featured in several productions at the Danish National Opera, where she also is a permanent member of the opera chorus.

Swedish dancer **Erik Nyberg** graduated from The Royal Swedish Ballet School in Stockholm and has been with the The Young Dance Company and Dansk Dance Theatre. Erik has worked with choreographers such as Oluf Berg, Susanne Jaresand, Tim Rushton, Marie Brolin-Tani, Virpi Pakkinen, Val Suarez, Alexander Ekman and Alexandra Campbell.

The soprano **Birgitte Skarby Riddell** was educated as both a singer and a pianist at the Royal Academy of Music, Aarhus, and today she is a member of the Chorus of the Danish National Opera. As a soloist, she has appeared in several productions at the Danish National Opera and has featured in leading roles in operas such as Bent Lorentzen's *Orfeo* and Benjamin Britten's *Albert Herring*.

Faroese dancer **Katya Nielsen** graduated from The Danish National School of Contemporary Dance in 2011 and is working with Danish Dance Theatre. Before that she worked with Black Box Dance Company, Danish National Opera, Copenhagen International Theatre and choreographers such as Tim Rushton, Edhem Jesenkovic, Marie Brolin Tani, amongst others.

French dancer **Marjolaine Cazalis** was educated at École Nationale Supérieure de Danse de Marseille Pietragalla and then at École-Atelier Rudra Béjart, Switzerland. She is performer of both classical ballet and contemporary work, having worked with, among others, Alvin Ailey & American Dance Theater, Marie Brolin-Tani and Tim Rushton.

Jesper Nilsson is a Swedish dancer currently freelancing in France. He graduated from Oslo National Academy of the Arts in 2015. During his education he worked with choreographers such as Ingunn Bjørnsgaard, Alan Lucien Øyen, Dimitri Jourde, Christopher Arouni, Stian Danielsen, Lise Tiller Sikkeland and Anne Grete Eriksen.

The Danish dancer **Anna Stamp Møller** was previously a part of the Archauz U-Company in Aarhus and Danceworks in Germany. Until recently she attended the pop-up company Shechter Junior at Hofesh Shechter Company in London, one of the world's leading dance companies. Currently Anna works freelance.

Aarhus Symphony Orchestra is a regional orchestra that gives more than 100 concerts a year, tours and collaborates with several institutions. The core of the orchestra's activities are the symphonic concerts which are held at the Symphonic Hall at Musikhuset in Aarhus. Aarhus Symphony Orchestra gives school concerts and collaborates with the Danish National Opera playing the special performances and other major productions in Aarhus. Apart from concert activities, CD recordings are an important part of Aarhus Symphony Orchestra's work during a season.

The Chorus of the Danish National Opera consists of 24 professional singers who mainly appear in the Danish National Opera's dramatic productions but also concerts such as the out-door event 'Opera in Rebild' and the Christmas concerts with the Prince's Music Corps. The singers are first and foremost an ensemble in the productions of the Danish

National Opera but also take on solo parts in both operas and at concerts. The opera choir has as a comprehensive philharmonic concert activity in collaboration with the Danish symphony orchestras and regional ensembles.

The Danish set designer **Johan Kølckjær** graduated from the Danish School of Design and has made designs for *The Illegal Trilogy* at Mute Comp/Republique, *Med lov skal vand tygges* at Københavns Musikteater, *1001 nat* at Teatret Zeppelin and *Stupid Man* at Bellevue Teatret. He was set designer on the ballet production *Cinderella* at the Royal Danish Theater in 2008.

Åsa Gjerstad from Sweden has a background as a fashion designer with collections in her own name. In recent years she has created costumes for theatre, film, TV, contemporary circus and dance productions, among other things for *The Soldier's Tale* at the Danish National Opera. Åsa has worked with choreographers such as Marie Brolin-Tani, Virpi Pakhinen, Melody Putu and Tim Rushton.

The Swedish video designer **Hobi Jarne** has previously worked as a scriptwriter, pedagog and lighting designer. He has created video designs for *La Fanciulla del West* at both Oper Frankfurt and the Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm as well as projections for *Peter Pan och Wendy* at Stockholms Stadsteater and for *Rusalka* at The Gothenburg Opera.

Lighting designer **Mårten K. Axelsson** from Sweden graduated in 2009 from the National Danish Theatre School (today The Danish National School of Performing Arts) and has since designed light for more than 40 productions in Scandinavia, Germany, Brazil and USA. He has worked at, among others, the Royal Danish Theatre, Schauspiel Frankfurt, Aarhus Teater, Danish National Opera, Aalborg Teater and Malmö Stadsteater.

Jens Hørsving is a composer, artistic entrepreneur and sound director. He graduated in composition and music theory from the Royal Danish Academy of Music. Hørsving has made sound designs for several theatre and stage productions. As a sound director he has produced a vast number of concerts and been a sound engineer and producer on numerous CD recordings.

The choreographer **Melody Putu** was born and raised in South Africa where he, as a dancer, was engaged in Soweto Dance Project, Johannesburg Youth Ballet and State Theatre Dance Company. Since 2002 he has been a part of Skånes Dansteater as both dancer and choreographer, and he has made choreographies for Malmö Opera and Skillinge Teater.

KUNST ER OGSÅ VIRKELIGHED af Søren Schauer

Premieren på *The Picture of Dorian Gray* fandt sted 22. august 2013 i Musikhuset Aarhus og blev alle steder set som en af de store begivenheder i dansk musikliv. Den Jyske Opera var ikke uvant med satsninger ud over det sædvanlige. Især den samlede opførelse af Richard Wagners krævende *Nibelungens ring* i 1987 havde sat Danmarks næststørste by på musikens verdenskort. Men da daværende operachef Giordano Bellincampi gav sig i kast med *The Picture of Dorian Gray* halvandet årti senere, virkede det nærmest dumdrigtigt:

Han sagde ja til et musikdrama af en ung komponist uden erfaringer fra andre operaer. Endda et musikdrama over Oscar Wildes mest kontroversielle roman. Og uden sangere på scenen!

At dømme efter de tidlige anmeldelser havde huset vel også vundet en pyrrhussejr. Kritikerne i de landsdækkende dagblade vidste ikke altid, hvilket ben de skulle stå på. De brugte ord som "anderledes og spændende," "ambitiøst operaprojekt", "let at lade sig underholde af" og tog hjem igen. Forvirrede på et højere niveau, som man siger.

Men som det ofte går med Thomas Agerfeldt Olesens musik: Operaen skulle siden vokse i danskernes bevidsthed og blive decideret mindeværdig. Ikke mindst takket være en stor indsats fra Bellincampis afløser i operachefstolen, Annilese Miskimmon - en væsentlig og engageret faktor gennem hele den succesfulde produktion. Vi forvirres først over hans arbejde på tværs af genrene, over dværgen og de moderne dansere, over de skjulte sangere og indbruddene af musical - men frustrationen vokser langsomt til lystfuld undren og videre til en art beundring. Hans værker begynder kort sagt som forvirrende fremmed-sprog uden kendt ordbog og ender ikke sjældent som udtryk, der føles hjemmevante.

Oscar Wildes gyser udspiller sig i den britiske overklasse på Dronning Victorias tid: Basil er maler og brænder varm på Dorian Gray - en ubekymret narcissist med kønt ydre. Dorian lader sig portrættere og forelsker sig omvendt i det færdige maleri.

Han møder så den livsnydende og ikke så lidt luciferiske Lord Henry og bliver besat af tanken om evig ungdom. Og tanken bliver på en vis måde virkelig: Portrættet begynder at forfalde i stedet for han selv.

Dorian får nu 18 år uden tegn på ældning og kan for alvor kaste sig ud i nattelivet. Men både en række herrer og skuespillerinden Sibyl lider under hans mangel på samvittighed. Han genser så sit portræt i forfærdende dårlig stand, kan heller ikke acceptere den konsekvens af sine handlinger og beslutter sig for at slå maleriet ihjel.

The Picture of Dorian Gray ejer åbenlyst homoseksuelle overtoner. Men seksualiteten tematiseres hverken i Wildes roman eller Agerfeldt Olesens opera. Oscar Wilde selv var bøsse og har haft sine æstetiske idealer som noget selvfølgeligt i livet. Han fik hele to sager for "sodomi" på halsen, gik i landflygtighed efter den endelige dom og to års fængsel og forblev dybt forundret og frygteligt desillusioneret over begivenhederne.

Wildes eget liv kan minde lidt om det, han gav Dorian Gray. Han stammede fra Irland og blev først uddannet på Trinity College i Dublin. Selv om han aldrig fik nogen akademisk karriere, havde han været dygtig nok til det. Men han faldt hurtigt for Londons societyliv og gjorde sig kendt som en af Storbritanniens mest farverige kunstnerskikkelser.

Når det var småt med penge, henlagde han sine aftner til restauranter. De victorianske ægtepar sad ved bordene og kedede sig bravt med hinanden. Kendissen kunne så sætte sig hen til dem, fylde legemet på deres bekostning og som modydelse underholde i timevis med begavet konversation og belevede manerer.

The Picture of Dorian Gray blev hans eneste roman. Han kastede sig tidligt over dramaet og blev verdensberømt med komedien *The Importance of Being Earnest* fra 1894. Wilde var flere gange forelsket i kvinder – herunder den Florence, der senere giftede sig med draculaforfatteren Bram Stoker – og fik to børn med hustruen Constance. Men han var også halvåben om sin homoseksualitet og kom i årevis fast sammen med digterkollegaen Lord Alfred Douglas. Dommen sendte ham to år i fængsel og gjorde den efterfølgende udvandring til Paris nødvendig. Han døde i år 1900, verdensberømt og ludfattig.

Oscar Wilde skal have portrætteret sig selv i alle bogens hovedskikkelser: "Basil er den, jeg tror jeg er. Lord Henry er den, verden tror jeg er. Dorian er den, jeg gerne ville være," sagde han.

Både romanen og operaen lægger desto større vægt på en af forrige århundredskiftets vigtigste strømninger: Symbolismen. Verden kunne kun beskrives indirekte og ad anelsens vej. Kunsten blev derfor fuld af metaforer og antydninger. Og fænomenet fordobling fik en hovedrolle. Der går en lige linje fra "skyggen" hos H.C. Andersen og "dobbeltgænger" hos Dostojevskij til maleriet i *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

Thomas Agerfeldt Olesens opera har også døden som emne. Døden er "det sande mål for vort liv", som Mozart sagde. For hvis man ikke er bevidst om tidens knaphed, ejer man hverken kreativitetens eller samvittighedens gave. Væsener med evigt liv ville ikke skrive så meget som en tone og miste et vigtigt motiv for god opførsel.

Men forholdet mellem kunst og virkelighed handler også om kultur versus natur – særlig åbenlyst i en kendt anekdote fra maleriet verden:

Claude Monet malede talløse billeder af sin have i nordfranske Giverny. Et stort træ stod en smule asymmetrisk på plænen og kom aldrig med på malerierne. Så da han var blevet gammel og ikke kunne male mere, gik han vistnok ud og fældede træet. Kunsten måtte lade virkeligheden vige for sig og var nu endegyldigt blevet det sande billede af haven.

Samme emne har optaget Thomas Agerfeldt Olesen i mange år. Komponisten gik på Rudolf Steiner-skole som dreng og er rundet af antroposofien med dens poetisk-romantiske natursyn. Sten, skyer, træer og al anden natur virker besjælet i Steiners univers. Og antroposofiens kunst antager ikke sjældent livlignende eller "biomorfe" former. Thomas Agerfeldt Olesen har den relativt udviskede grænse mellem kunst og virkelighed rullende i sine årer.

Et stærkt træk ved sceneværket *Viktors Golgatha* fra 2004 var orkestrets "kunstige" efterligninger af menneskets "naturlige" stemme. Man kunne ikke sjældent ane egentlige ord blive udtalet. Selv om lyden altså kun kom fra instrumenter!

Thomas Agerfeldt Olesen har gjort værkets vigtigste roller så forskellige som muligt: Dorian skal synges af den skyhøje kontratenor, Henry af en djævelsk dyb bas, Sybil af en popsanger. Alle solosangere står sammen med orkestret og skal altså ikke ses af publikum.

Også det afgørende element af dans i *The Picture of Dorian Gray* har allusioner til antroposofien – nærmere bestemt den såkaldte Sprachgestaltung: En oplæser kan for eksempel deklamere et digt og samtidig tydeliggøre de enkelte ord med gestik. Bevægelser i Sprachgestaltung har altså relativt konkrete betydninger. De skal ikke bare være smukke, men fortæller også en mere eller mindre oversættelig historie.

Dans i musikdramatisk sammenhæng har i det hele taget en lidt overset, men lang historie. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* indskrives sig i en stolt tradition!

Allerede koret i antikkens græske tragedier kastede sig formentlig ud i dans. Man kender lignende tiltag både i japansk tradition og i teater på indernes urgamle sanskrit.

Fænomenet findes også i flere af Karlheinz Stockhausens værker: *Inori* fra 1974 er for stort orkester og to gestikulerende solister. Og alle hovedpersoner i den syv aftner lange *Licht* kan træde frem på tre måder – som sangere, som musikere eller som dansere. Flere

af Per Nørgårds værker fra de senere 1970'ere kan ligeledes opføres med dans, bl.a. *Twilight* (1976-77, rev. 1979)

Trinene i *The Picture of Dorian Gray* er udtænkt af dansk-svenske Marie Brolin-Tani. Hun kalder dramaet for en koreografisk opera og ser dansen som sangerens forlængede stemme. Den enkelte danser skal ikke bare spille den rolle, han eller hun repræsenterer – men også kende den konkrete sanger i samme rolle ret indgående. Resultatet er en art dogmedans: Hver udøver har fået indskrænket sin frihed og kan på den måde nærme sig det særlige ved sin rolle. Operaens trin kan i den forstand ses som en umiddelbart sanselig fortolkning af operaens handling og konflikter.

Thomas Agerfeldt Olesen har rent fagligt en baggrund som musiker på strygeinstrumentet cello. Hans værker er relativt fåtallige men virker yderst rutineret skruet sammen – og forbløffende forskellige. Selv om han har skabt musik med sang før, er *The Picture of Dorian Gray* foreløbigt hans eneste opera.

Den ligner heller ikke hans øvrigt værker ret meget. Stilen hælder helt bevidst mod det princip, man kalder eklektisk: Lytteren kan fornemme impulser fra Richard Strauss det ene øjeblik og musical det næste.

Men ikke fordi Agerfeldt Olesen ikke kan finde på noget selv! Ekkoernes af andres musik bygger på et nøje kalkuleret ønske om klarhed i det emotionelle. Værket balancerer hele tiden mellem virkeligheden med en skræmmende karakter og det forestillede med en mere drømmende. Og den drømmende verden har så klange fra verden af i går: "Drømmen henter næring i fortiden, fordi den indeholder de eneste billeder, vi kender," har han sagt.

Søren Schausser er klassisk musikredaktør på Berlingske

FØRSTE AKT

Scene 1 – I et atelier i London maler Basil Hallward på sin karrieres mest vellykkede portræt. Som tilskuer til skabelsesprocessen slentrer vennen, livsnyderen og hedonisten Lord Henry Wotton (Harry) omkring, indtil portrættets genstand, den smukke og unge Dorian Gray træder ind og straks opfanger Lord Henrys magiske tiltrækningskraft. Mødet mellem de to sker ikke med den forelskede Basils gode vilje, og fra første øjeblik hælder Henry sine tanker ned i Dorians sjæl, til Basils store fortrydelse. Henry prædiker, at ungdom og skønhed er alt, og at Dorian, koste hvad det vil, skal forfølge de drømme, hans skønhed giver ham lov til at udleve.

Dorian forfærdes over udsigten til at blive gammel og udtaler ønsket om, at portrættet skal bære hans alderdom og synder. Basil forfærdes over, hvor let Dorian fanges ind af Henrys ord. Skæbnemødet får Basil til at true med at odelægge portrættet, og efter et dramatisk optrin overtaler han til at lade være og forærer til sidst Dorian sit billede.

Scene 2 – I et teater i East End belærer en mor sin unge datter, skuespillerinden Sybil Vane, om sine erfaringer: at man ikke kan stole på mænd og egentlig kun bør indlade sig med dem, hvis de har penge. Men Sybil er da ligeglad og elsker denne unge smukke mand, som hun – da hun ikke kender hans virkelige navn, Dorian Gray – kalder "Prince Charming". Fortvivlet over, at barnet ikke tager ordene til sig, beder Mrs. Vane James, Sybils bror, om at tale hende til fornuft. Broderen taler til sin søster ud fra en dyb mistro til mennesker og sværger at slå enhver ihjel, der krummer et hår på søsterens hoved. Sybil prøver – for sent – at pøde sin bror med tillid til hans egen og hendes fremtid, for James står overfor at skulle prøve lykken i Australien.

Scene 3 – Dorian betror Harry og Basil sin kærlighed til Sybil. Mændene lytter, Harry let distanceret. De tre aftaler at mødes i teatret samme aften.

Scene 4 – I teatret ser Dorians to venner Sybil for første gang. Som ved et trylleslag fungerer Sybils skuespil ikke – al magi har forladt hende, og Dorian skammer sig over for sine venner, der jo ser Sybil for første gang.. Efter forestillingen, alene med Sybil i hendes garderobe, gør Dorian kort proces med Sybil og slår op: han elskede hende som Ofelia, Julie og Portia, ikke som en talentløs taber. Sybil er afklaret og føler, at hendes kærlighed til Dorian har befriet hende fra at leve sit liv gennem sine figurer. Nu kan hun leve som sig selv, og skuespillers magi er tabt land for hende. Som svar på det meddeler Dorian hende, at han vil glemme hendes navn og glemme hendes ansigt. Han efterlader Sybil alene, og hun antyder her med et citat fra Shakespeares *Romeo og Julie* en fatal beslutning.

Scene 5 – Hjemme hos sig selv sammenligner Dorian sit spejlbillede med portrættet. Små forandringer er dukket op.

ANDEN AKT

Scene 1 – Sybil har begået selvmord, og Dorians samvittighed kæmper med en gryende distance til konsekvenserne af hans handlinger. Harry finder distancen fascinerende, genkender den fra sine egne forestillinger, tager fat i den og giver den teoretisk næring, der skubber Dorian det sidste stykke hen mod det kyniske.

Scene 2 – Symbolsk sekvens: Dorians Credo og billeder fra hans dionysiske livsførelse. Scenen forvandles til

Scene 3 – Symbolsk sekvens i bordeller og balsale: uahæmmet seksuel udfoldelse, der med Dorians tilskyndelse udarter sig til voldtægt og mord.

Scene 4 – Basil opsøger Dorian, som han ikke har set i flere år, for at fortælle ham, hvad der siges om ham i byen. Basil insisterer trods Dorians uvilje – vil høre Dorian dementere rygterne, og Dorians lurende had mod Basil, som han tilskriver ansvaret for sin egen sjælelige forfatning, giver ham den pludselige indskydelse at afsløre billedet for ham. De går op på loftet, hvor Dorian har gemt billedet af vejen, og Basil får sit nu meget forandrede billede at se. Basil tror ikke det, han ser, men da sandheden trænger ind, anråber han patetisk Dorians samvittighed og Gud. Nu, da alt er afsløret, går Dorian linen ud og myrder Basil.

Scene 5 – James vender efter 18 år hjem fra Australien. Sorgen over sin søsters død og over sine knuste, australske drømme driver James ind i en opiumshule for at glemme. Det eneste, han ikke glemmer, er sit løfte om at slå den mand ihjel, som drev søsteren til selvmord. Da en værtinde kalder en ny gæst for "Prince Charming", husker James navnet og farer i kødet på gæsten, som er Dorian. Dorian oplyser sit ansigt, og James tror, han tager fejl, da ansigtet ikke ser ældre ud end Sybil var, da hun tog sit liv. Dorian undslipper, men værtinden kan fortælle, at hun så ham for første gang for 18 år siden. Prince Charming ser ud, som han gjorde dengang.

Scene 6A – Dorian føler sig fanget af billedets forbandelse og føler byrden af sine gerninger.

Scene 6B – Ved et efterfølgende maskebal (Harry og Dorian er til stede), sniger James sig ind, tager sin maske af, trækker en pistol, som han ved en ukendt krafts mellemkomst retter mod sig selv og affyrer. Gæsterne ser det som et selvmord, og kun Dorian aner, hvordan det hænger sammen.

Scene 7 – Dorian længes efter at slippe for billedets forbandelse og fortæller Harry, at han vil være god. Harry synes, han allerede er god, og at han bør flytte på landet, hvis han vil fornægte livets fristelser. Han mener, at Dorian har et fantastisk liv, hvor han har tømt livets bæger fuldtud. Dorian bliver rasende over at mærke, hvor lidt Harry forstår, og hvor uvidende Harry er om sin egen skyld. Dorian sender Harry bort og er alene. Han går til sit hæslige portræt. I Wildes roman dolker han billedet og dør, men operaen vælger en mere åben slutning.

DANSENS FORLÆNGENDE STEMMEFØRER

Marie Brolin-Tani interviewet af Lars Wallenberg

Den internationalt anerkendte svensk/danske koreograf Marie Brolin-Tani er kendt for sit ekspressive og moderne danseudtryk, der ofte lader det være op til publikum selv at drage de sidste konklusioner. Men hvorfor og hvordan fungerer dette formudtryk i forhold til hendes iscenesættelse af operaen *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

Du kalder forestillingen for en koreografisk opera. Hvad er det for et form-udtryk du her ønsker at videregive til publikum?

Udtrykket koreografisk opera dækker over, at danseren her fungerer som sangerens forlængede stemme. En slags formidler af de indre følelser og tanker, der resulterer i de handlinger og valg, som de forskellige karakterer træffer i operaen. Teksten, sangerne og musikken er omdrejningspunktet, og danserne tager så deres udgangspunkt i disse fysiske impulser. Det skal ses i sammenhæng med, at vi lever i en tid, hvor vi er vant til at forholde os til kropssprog. Det koreografiske sprog, jeg har valgt, skærper bare karaktererne og den dramaturgi, de følger.

*Du går et skridt videre med historien ved ikke blot at lade *The Picture of Dorian Gray* handle om angsten for alderdom. Du lader også denne produktion handle om angsten for selve døden og for ikke at blive husket. Hvorfor det?*

Alderdom, forfald og død er tæt forbundet med hinanden. Det kender ikke mindst dansere til. Jeg har derfor arbejdet meget med librettoen, hvor der er indskrevet en stor angst for at forsvinde fra jorden, en angst for ikke blive husket. Dorian Grays manglende evne til at elske og føle betyder at hans handlinger bliver et miks af aggressivitet og kulde, for han vil gøre hvad som helst for at blive bemærket og husket.

Hvad er det for et stemnings- og formudtryk, de 18 dansere tilføjer historien, som librettoen eller fortællingen efter din mening ikke umiddelbart gør?

Danserne kan skabe et univers på scenen, der er kunstigt og langt fra den realisme, som man kan få indtryk af, eksisterer, når man læser originalbogen, ser filmen eller læser librettoen. I den forbindelse talte Thomas Agerfeldt Olesen og jeg, allerede første gang vi mødtes, om at indarbejde ideer fra dukketeater og tegnefilm i selve operaen. Det betyder også, at karaktererne skærpes, næsten udpensles fra scene til scene. Noget jeg også tager udgangspunkt i, i forhold til kostumer, lys og scenografi.

I din iscenesættelse bruger du elementer fra de gamle græske tragedier, hvor koret har en kommenterende rolle.

Koret er i denne sammenhæng et dansekor, bestående af de dansere, der i den pågældende scene ikke har en defineret rolle. Inspirationen er ganske rigtig hentet fra de græske kor-tragedier, hvor koret havde en kommenterende rolle. Ved at være mange, der på samme tid siger eller kommenterer samme handling, forstærker og skærper man kort og godt situationen. Koret, eller som her dansekor, kan forudsige eller kommentere det, der vil ske eller lige er sket.



I din iscenesættelse arbejder du med det udsagte i selve handlingen. I den forbindelse har du indlagt udsagte roller som f.eks. figuren "Det indre" – bare for at nævne et eksempel. Hvad ønsker du at opnå med det?

Begrebet "Det indre" giver mig mulighed for at arbejde med hver karakters indre mod-sætninger. Mennesker handler ikke – og heller ikke operaens personer – altid, som vi fører – eller omvendt – og det giver nuancer og farver til operaen, så at vi, i vores stræben efter at være tydelige og fortællende, forhåbentlig ikke havner i klicheer. Jeg har med begrebet "koreografisk opera" forsøgt at finde et formudtryk, der kan formidle dette værk – et udtryk, der sikkert ikke ville passe ind i nogen som helst anden kunstnerisk sammenhæng. Danserne har fået specielle begrænsninger i hver deres måde at bevæge sig på, og arbejdet har bl.a. bestået i at stå lige over for hver "deres" sanger i prøvesalen, for så at aflæse og lære sig den enkelte sangers anslag, pausering, vejtrækning og måde at synge på. Men koreografien alene kan ikke skabe dette univers. Hele det sceniske billede er reelt det, der bærer fortællingen *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Scenografi, lys, kostume og video-design spiller i den grad sammen med det fysiske udtryk. Det har været en meget kollektiv proces, der har ført frem til det, som vi ser på scenen i dag, nemlig en på mange måder hudløs fortælling om skrøbelighed og sårbarhed i vores korte liv. De 18 dansere (12 voksne og 6 børn) er, med hver deres kunstneriske kvaliteter, valgt til at netop at videregive dette formudtryk eller udsagn, om man vil.

© Lars Wallenberg er teater- og balletanmelder for Børsen

Den Jyske Opera er Danmarks nationale turnerende operakompagni. Operaen støttes af Kulturministeriet og Aarhus Kommune, har hjemsted i Aarhus og turnerer rundt i hele Danmark med både traditionel og innovativ opera for alle aldre og for både operaelskere og operajomfruer. Den Jyske Opera har i næsten 70 år arbejdet passioneret og professionelt med at skabe og opføre operaforestillinger på højeste internationale niveau. Den Jyske Opera er Danmarks største turnerende operakompagni og har 60 ansatte fordelt på kunstnerisk personale - herunder et fuldtidsansat kor - administration, teknisk afdeling og skråddersal. På turneerne kommer operaen rundt til små og store spillesteder samt også Det Kongelige Teater i København og samarbejder med de fem landsdelsorkestre: Aarhus Symfoniorkester, Aalborg Symfoniorkester, Sønderjyllands Symfoniorkester, Odense Symfoniorkester og Copenhagen Phil.

jyske-opera.dk

Thomas Agerfeldt Olesen er uddannet som cellist og komponist fra Det Jyske Musik-konservatorium. Han er i de senere år blevet en mere efterspurgt komponist, og han samarbejder med mange danske og udenlandske ensembler og musikere, bl.a. WDR Radiosinfonieorchester Stuttgart, Aarhus Symfoniorkester, DR SymfoniOrkestret, Helsinki Philharmonic, Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen, Den Jyske Opera, Rolf Hind, Thomas Hell og Den Danske Strygekvartet. Agerfeldt Olesens musik er blevet opført rundt om i Europa samt i Chile og USA. I 2011 modtog han Carl Nielsen Prisen, Danmarks største kunstneriske hædersbevisning, og i 2013 fik han Statens Kunstfonds Pris for Musikdramatisk Komposition for *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, som i 2014 også blev nomineret til en Reumert for bedste opera 2013.

Den svenske koreograf **Marie Brolin-Tani** er en af de helt centrale figurer inden for moderne, skandinavisk dans, og har haft en særlig tilknytning til Aarhus, hvor hun først arbejdede som danser på Den Jyske Opera og Aarhus Teater. I Århus stod hun i 1990'erne bag MBT Dan-seteater, som var en af de førende dansekompanier i Danmark, og hun blev siden leder af det internationalt anerkendte Skånes Danseteater. Marie er særlig kendt for sit arbejde med unge dansere i begyndelsen af deres karriere; bl.a. på Det Unge Dansekompani i Øresundsregionen samt Young Fuse Dance Company i Jönköping. Dette arbejde forsætter hun aktuelt med som kunstnerisk leder af Black Box Dance Company i Holstebro. Flere af Maries koreografier har været nomineret til en Reumert, bl.a. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, og Den Fynske Operas forestilling *Andre Bygninger*, som hun instruerede, og som blev belønnet med en Reumert-pris i 2015.

Den svenske dirigent **Joachim Gustafsson** har efter sin studietid i Wien etableret sig som en af de mest spændende dirigenter i Norden. Han har arbejdet med de fleste svenske operahuse og orkestre, og i Tyskland har han bl.a. været engageret på Staats-theater Darmstadt og Ulmer Oper. Hans operadebut var på Kungliga Operan i Stockholm i Verdis *Otello*. Joachim Gustafsson er også en erfaren koncertdirigent bl.a. med Göteborgs Symfoniorkester og har tilbagevendende samarbejder med MalmöOperan og Copenhagen Phil.

Den britiske dramatikere og librettist **Alasdair Middleton** har skrevet skuespil og står bag mere end 12 operalibretti til produktioner ofte i samarbejde med koreografen Will Tuckett og sammen med operakomponisten Jonathan Dove, bl.a. på Royal Opera House i London, Opera North, Birmingham Opera Company og New York City Opera.

Den tyske danser **Maximilian Schmid** er uddannet fra IWANSON International School of Contemporary Dance i München, hvor han har medvirket i adskillige moderne danseforestillinger under bl.a. Minka-Marie Heiß og Katja Wachter. Han har siden været tilknyttet Regionteater Väst i Borås, Den Jyske Opera i Aarhus samt senest Domenico Strazzerias 'Strado Compagnia Danza' i Ulm.

Den britiske kontratenor **Andrew Radley** læste musik på Clare College, Cambridge, og gik siden på Royal Academy of Music i London. Han gør sig hovedsageligt i store operaroller af Händel og andre førende komponister fra det 17. og 18. århundrede. Radley er en flittig koncertsanger og har optrådt i hovedroller med Welsh National Opera, Opera North, Scottish Opera og Den Jyske Opera.

Bassen **Jonathan Best** er uddannet på St. John's College i Cambridge og på Guildhall School of Music i London. Han debuterede i 1983 på Welsh National Opera og har siden sunget med alle de britiske operakompanier. Best spænder over et bredt operarepertoire, som også har givet ham engagementer overalt i Europa. På Den Jyske Opera har han senest medvirket *Così fan tutte* i 2015.

Den svenske danser **Johan Ohlson** er uddannet fra Svenska Ballettskolan i Göteborg i 2008. Han har siden danset i produktioner hos bl.a. Göteborg Operaen, Granhøj Dans og Archauz-U kompaniet, hvor han også har fungeret som leder og koreograf. Ohlson var assistent for Palle Granhøj i den Reumert belønnede produktion *Men & Mahler* fra 2013.

Den britiske baryton **James Bobby** studerede musik på Cambridge University og sang på Guildhall School of Music and Drama i London, og han var siden medlem af Les Jeunes Voix du Rhin i Strasbourg. Bobby arbejder hovedsageligt med repertoire fra det 20. århundrede frem til i dag. Siden 2013 har han været fast medlem af ensemblet på Saarländisches Staatstheater i Saarbrücken.

Den svenske danser **Björn Nilsson** er uddannet fra London Studio Centre og var tilknyttet Det Unge Dansekompani hos Marie Brolin-Tani, inden han dansede hos Tim Rushton og Dansk Danseteater fra 2010-14. Siden har Björn arbejdet freelance i Sverige og Danmark bl.a. hos Norrdans med koreografer som Roy Assaf, Lenka Vagnerova och Fernando Melo.

Jenny Thiele er en tysk singer-songwriter. Hun tog sin uddannelse i Holland og har nu base i Köln. Hun udgav sit første soloalbum *Home* i 2012 og har været involveret i samarbejder med bl.a. duoen Tom and Jenny samt Irene Novoa og Julius Oppermann under navnet Nunuk. Jennys rolle i *Dorian Gray* var hendes første store optræden med et symfoniorkester.

Danseren **Siri Wolthoorn** fra Aarhus er uddannet fra Hogeschool voor de Kunsten i Amsterdam og har arbejdet med Batsheva Ensemble, Yossi Berg & Oded Graf, Recoil Performance Group, Dansk Danseteater, Mute Dance Company, Marie Brolin-Tani, Ari Rosenzweig, Edhem Jesenkovic og Itzik Galili. For tiden arbejder hun freelance og underviser i Gaga and Pilates i både København og i udlandet.

David Price debuterede som professionel danser i en alder af 15 og blev siden formelt uddannet fra Skolen for Moderne Dans på Statens Teaterskole (i dag Statens Scenekunstskole). Han har været danser i Unga Fuse Dance Company og har derudover arbejdet med bl.a. Melody Putu, Martin Forsberg, Linda Forsman, Lotte Sigh, Kim Brandstrup, Bo Madvig, Morten Intrad, Jannik Elkjær og Eske Holm.

Mezzosopranen **Bolette Bruno Hansen** er uddannet fra Det Jyske Musikkonservatorium og senere i Mannheim. Hun er fast medlem i Den Jyske Operas Kor og er en erfaren lied-sanger og solist med bl.a. landsdelsorkestrene. I foråret 2016 var hun solist i Schönbergs *Pierrot Lunaire* med musikere fra Aarhus Symfoniorkester, og på Den Jyske Opera har hun endvidere medvirket i en lang række forestillinger gennem årene.

Den norskfødte skuespiller og danser **Sigrid Kandal Husjord** er uddannet fra The Commedia School i København og Lee Strasberg Film & Theatre Institute i New York. Hun fik sin debut i *Hamlet* på Gladsaxe Ny Teater i 2007 og har siden været engageret på Aveny-T, Den Jyske Opera, Østre Gasværk og Husets Teater; hun har desuden optrådt på tv. I 2011 modtog hun en Reumert for sin rolle i *Oliver med et twist* på Nørrebro Teater.

Den svenske danser **Henrietta Wallberg** er uddannet fra Den Kongelige Svenske Balletskole i Stockholm og har arbejdet som både danser, skuespiller, performer og sanger. Hun har arbejdet på NorrlandsOperan, Stockholms Stadsteater, Den Jyske Opera samt Riksteatret i Norge og med koreografer som Lotta Melin, Susanne Jaresand, Virpi Pahkinen, Marie Brolin-Tani, Ola Stinnerbom og Jimmy Meurling.



Mezzosopranen **Susanne Vinther** er uddannet fra Det Jyske Musikkonservatorium i Aarhus. Hun har medvirket i adskillige forestillinger på Den Jyske Opera, hvor hun også er fast medlem i operakoret.

Den svenske danser **Erik Nyberg** er uddannet fra Den Kongelige Svenske Balletskole i Stockholm og har været en del af af Det Unge Dansekompagni og Dansk Danseteater. Erik har arbejdet med koreografer som Oluf Berg, Susanne Jaresand, Tim Rushton, Marie Brolin-Tani, Virpi Pakhinen, Val Suarez, Alexander Ekman og Alexandra Campbell.

Sopranen **Birgitte Skarby Riddell** er uddannet sanger og pianist fra Det Jyske Musikkonservatorium og i dag fast medlem af Den Jyske Operas Kor. Som solist har hun medvirket i flere opsætninger på Den Jyske Opera og har optrådt i bærende roller i nyere operaer, bl.a. Bent Lorentzens *Orfeo* og Benjamin Brittens *Albert Herring*.

Den færøske danser **Katya Nielsen** er uddannet fra Skolen for Moderne Dans på den daværende Statens Teaterskole i 2011 og er i dag tilknyttet Dansk Danseteater. Tidligere har hun arbejdet hos Black Box Dance Company, Den Jyske Opera, Københavns Internationale Teater og koreografer som bl.a. Tim Rushton, Edhem Jesenkovic og Marie Brolin-Tani.

Danseren **Marjolaine Cazalis** er uddannet fra École Nationale Supérieure de Danse de Marseille Pietragalla og siden École-Atelier Rudra Béjart i Schweiz. Hun danser både klassisk ballet og moderne dans og har bl.a. arbejdet for Alvin Ailey & American Dance Theater, Marie Brolin-Tani og Tim Rushton.

Den svenske danser **Jesper Nilsson** arbejder for tiden freelane i Frankrig. Han er uddannet fra Kunsthøgskolen i Oslo i 2015. Under sin uddannelse har han arbejdet med koreografer som Ingunn Bjørnsgaard, Alan Lucien Øyen, Dimitri Jourde, Christopher Arouni, Stian Danielssen, Lise Tiller Sikkeland og Anne Grete Eriksen.

Den danske danser **Anna Stamp Møller** har tidligere været tilknyttet Archauz U-Kompagniet i Aarhus og Danceworks i Tyskland. Indtil for nylig var hun en del af pop-up-kompagniet Shechter Junior på Hofesh Shechter Company i London, som er et af verdens førende dansekompagnier. Anna arbejder for tiden freelance.

Aarhus Symfoniorkester er et landsdelsorkester med et omfattende aktivitetsniveau. Orkestret afholder koncerter, turnerer og samarbejder med en lang række institutioner. Kernen i orkestrets koncertarbejde er symfonikoncerterne, som afvikles i Symfonisk Sal i Musikhuset Aarhus. Aarhus Symfoniorkester giver skolekoncerter og samarbejder med Den Jyske Opera, hvor orkestret spiller til operaens særforestillinger og øvrige store forestillinger i Aarhus. Foruden koncertaktiviteterne udgør CD-indspilninger en væsentlig del af Aarhus Symfoniorkestrets aktiviteter i løbet af en sæson.

Den Jyske Operas Kor består af 24 professionelle sangere, som primært medvirker i Den Jyske Operas dramatiske produktioner foruden ved koncerter som f.eks. uden-dørsconcerten Opera i Rebild, julekoncerterne med Prinsens Musikkorps, m.m. Sangerne danner som udgangspunkt et ensemble i Den Jyske Operas opsætninger, men påtager sig også solistroller i både operaer og koncerter. Den Jyske Operas Kor

har i samarbejde med landets symfoniorkestre og landsdelsensembler en omfattende filharmonisk koncertvirksomhed.

Den danske scenograf **Johan Kølckjær** er uddannet på Danmarks Designskole og står bag scenografier til bl.a. *The Illegal Trilogy* på Mute Comp/Republique, *Med lov skal vand bygges* på Københavns Musikteater, *1001 nat* på Teatret Zeppelin, *Stupid Man* på Bellevue Teatret; han designede i 2008 den store scenografi til balletten *Askepot* på Det Kongelige Teater.

Svenske **Åsa Gjerstad** har en baggrund som modedesigner med kollektioner i eget navn. De seneste år har hun skabt kostumer til bl.a. teater, film, tv, nycirkus og danseproduktioner, bl.a. til Den Jyske Operas opsætning af *Historien om en soldat*. Udover Marie Brolin-Tani har hun arbejdet med koreografer som Virpi Pakhinen, Melody Putu and Tim Rushton.

Den svenske videodesigner **Hobi Jarne** har en baggrund som manuskriptforfatter, pædagog og lyddesigner. Han har lavet videodesign til bl.a. *La Fanciulla del West* på både Oper Frankfurt og Kungliga Operan i Stockholm, samt projektioner til *Peter Pan och Wendy* på Stockholms Stadsteater og til *Rusalka* på GöteborgsOperan.

Den svenske lysdesigner **Mårten K. Axelsson** er uddannet fra Statens Teaterskole (nu Statens Scenekunstskeole) i 2009 og har siden lavet lys til over 40 forestillinger i Skandinavien, Tyskland, Brasilien og USA. Han har arbejdet på bl.a. Det Kongelige Teater, Schauspiel Frankfurt, Aarhus Teater, Den Jyske Opera, Aalborg Teater, Malmö Stadsteater, Teater Grob og Dansescenen.

Jens Hørsving er komponist, kunstnerisk iværksætter og tonemester. Han er uddannet i komposition og musikteori fra Det Kgl. Danske Musikkonservatorium. Hørsving har lavet lyddesign til flere teater- og sceniske produktioner. Som tonemester har han afviklet et stort antal koncerter og været lydtekniker og producer på adskillige CD-produktioner.

Koreografen **Melody Putu** er født og opvokset i Sydafrika, hvor han som danser var engageret i Soweto Dance Project, Johannesburg Youth Ballet og State Theatre Dance Company, inden han fra 2002 blev tilknyttet Skånes Dansteater som både danser og koreograf. Han står også bag koreografier for Malmö Opera og Skillinge Teater.

CHORUS OF THE DANISH NATIONAL OPERA

Singers featured in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

SOPRANOS

Annette Dahl
Hanne Hohwü Houmøller
Pernille Stolting-Madsen
Birgitte Mosegaard Pedersen
Birgitte Skarby Riddell
Lina Valantiejute

ALTOS

Bolette Bruno Hansen
Estrid Molt Ipsen
Sine Algreen Møller
Eline Denice Risager
Susanne Vinther

TENORS

Morten Hesteng Byrialsen
Tue de Stordeur
Carsten Gottholt Hansen
Erik Bekker Hansen
Otte Ottesen

BASSES

Jens Bové
Lars Fentz Krogh
Thomas Christian Sigh
Robert Bøgelund Vinther
Morten Wang

Recorded live at Musikhuset, Aarhus, on 22, 24, 26 and 28 August 2013

General & Artistic director: Annilese Miskimmon
Musical director: Joachim Gustafsson
Stage director & Choreographer: Marie Brolin-Tani
Set designer: Johan Kølckjær
Lighting designer: Mårten K. Axelsson
Video designer: Hobi Jarne
Costume designer: Åsa Gjerstad
Sound designer: Jens Hørsving
Assistant choreographer: Melody Putu
Chorus master: Kaare Hansen

Cameras: Kenneth Dalby and Marcus Marcussen
Video producer and Video editor: Jacob Nielsen
Assistant producers: Klavs K. Hansen and Mathias M. Justesen
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