

## Jan Willem de Vriend

conductor



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

### ⦿ Biography

Jan Willem de Vriend, formerly principal conductor of the Residentie Orkest The Hague (from 2015 to 2019), is now principal guest conductor of the Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona i Nacional de Catalunya, Orchestre National de Lille and Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra. He is also Artist in Residence at the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra and makes regular guest appearances with such ensembles as the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and Rotterdam Philharmonic.

De Vriend first established an international reputation as artistic director of the Combattimento Consort Amsterdam, which he established in 1982 and led from the violin until 2015. Specialising in music of the 17th and 18th century, and applying historically informed practice on modern instruments, the consort gave new life to many rarely heard works and Gramophone magazine praised its players as "accomplished... with technical finesse and a lively feeling for characterisation". Its collaborative spirit lives on in de Vriend's approach as he explores and energises the symphonic repertoire, in particular the music of Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms and Johann Strauss.

From 2006 to 2018, he was chief conductor of the Netherlands Symphony Orchestra (Het Orkest van het Oosten), based in the city of Enschede. Early in his tenure he made a major impact with Mahler's Symphony No 1 in the 1893 Hamburg version, subsequently recorded for Challenge Classics. Gramophone magazine wrote: "Don't miss this one... The music-making is winningly fresh and vigorous". De Vriend and the orchestra went on to record a substantial Beethoven catalogue for Challenge Classics, embracing the complete symphonies and concertos (with Hannes Minnaar and Liza Ferschtman among the soloists). Classic FM praised the interpretation of Symphony No 7 for "a bounding flair that does real justice to the composer's capacity for joy". Further landmarks in the Challenge Classics catalogue are the complete Mendelssohn symphonies, again with the Netherlands Symphony Orchestra, and the complete symphonies of Schubert, recorded with the Residentie Orkest, also De Vriend's orchestra for a Decca recording of Mendelssohn's complete works for piano and orchestra. The Konzerthausorchester Berlin was the choice for a Berlin Classics album of Schumann's complete works for piano and orchestra.

From 2008 to 2015 Jan Willem de Vriend was principal guest conductor of the Brabant Orchestra (now the South Netherlands Philharmonic) and he has made guest appearances with, among others, the Belgian National Orchestra, SWR Symphony Orchestra Stuttgart, Royal Flanders Philharmonic Orchestra, Luxembourg Philharmonic Orchestra, Wiener Kammerorchester and Hong Kong Philharmonic. His future plans include engagements with the Rotterdam Philharmonic, MDR Leipzig Radio Symphony Orchestra and NDR Radiophilharmonie.

In the field of opera, in both Europe and the USA, de Vriend and Combattimento Consort Amsterdam gave performances, of works by Monteverdi, Haydn, Handel, Telemann, and J.S. Bach (the 'Hunting' and 'Coffee' cantatas at the Leipzig Bach Festival), all in stagings by the director Eva Buchmann. Operas by such composers as Mozart, Verdi and Cherubini featured in his seasons with the Netherlands Symphony Orchestra, which included a visit to Switzerland with productions of Don Giovanni and Rossini's La Gazzetta, again directed by Eva Buchmann. De Vriend has also conducted opera in Amsterdam (Nederlandse Reisopera), Barcelona, Strasbourg, Luzern, Schwetzingen and Bergen.

In the Netherlands he has presented several television series and is well known for his appearances on a variety of other programmes about music. In 2012 he received a prize from the national station NPO Radio 4 for his creative contribution to classical music.

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