



Amsterdamse Hogeschool voor de Kunsten



Hk Hogeschool der Kunsten
Den Haag University
of the Arts The Hague

**Amsterdamse Hogeschool voor de Kunsten
Hogeschool der Kunsten Den Haag**



Dutch National Opera Academy

Limited Study Programme Assessment

March 2013

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Introduction

This is the assessment report of the Master degree programme Opera (Dutch National Opera Academy, DNOA) offered by the conservatoires of Amsterdamse Hogeschool voor de Kunsten and the Hogeschool der Kunsten Den Haag. The assessment was conducted by an audit panel commissioned by the Amsterdamse Hogeschool voor de Kunsten and the Hogeschool der Kunsten Den Haag. The panel has been approved prior to the assessment process by NVAO.

In this report the audit panel gives account of its findings, considerations and conclusions. The assessment was undertaken according to the Assessment *frameworks for the higher education accreditation system, Program Assessment (limited, 22 November 2011)* of NVAO.

The site visit took place on 11 and 12 January 2013.

The audit panel consisted of:

Gavin Henderson (chairperson, representative profession/discipline)

Lynne Dawson (representative profession/discipline)

Klaus Bertisch (representative profession/discipline)

Brigitte van Hagen (student member)

Nel Gobel acted as secretary of the panel.

The study programme offered a critical reflection; form and content according to the requirements of the appropriate NVAO assessment framework. The panel studied the critical reflection and visited the study programme. Critical reflection and all other (oral and written) information have enabled the panel to reach a deliberate judgement. In order to be able to judge the quality of the students the audit panel attended four opera performances by students from the first and second year.

The panel declares the assessment of the study programme was carried out independently of the institutions involved.

Utrecht, March 2013

Panel chairman



Gavin Henderson

Panel secretary



Nel Gobel

Summary

The Dutch National Opera Academy (DNOA) is a collaborate Master programme of the Conservatorium van Amsterdam and the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague. The two year full time course prepares students for the operatic profession. The DNOA expects vocalist to stand out for their ability to deliver a performance of a high calibre in both musical and theatrical terms. The staging of two opera productions each year is the central feature of the curriculum.

The panel has assessed the quality of the Master programme and comes to the overall judgement that the programme is of **excellent** quality.

Standard 1

The DNOA competences reflect the requirements of a professional opera singer. DNOA meets the requirements of the National Qualification Framework as well as the internationally accepted criteria set out in Polifonia/Dublin Descriptors. The DNOA strives for excellence in international environment. DNOA fits this profile very well as it reflects the international professional practice. The audit panel agrees with the DNOA on the importance of offering students a wide range of repertoire in order to prepare them for the professional practice. The audit panel was impressed by the fact that the DNOA is able to produce two fully staged opera productions each year. Through this students are offered a professional environment which is even more enhanced by the collaboration with professional companies such as the Residentieorkest, the ASKO|Schönberg Ensemble and the Nationaal Jeugd Orkest. The collaboration with De Nederlandse Opera will no doubt offer students excellent opportunities.

According to the audit panel DNOA offers more than an opera studio. Based on above mentioned considerations the audit team comes to the judgement **excellent**.

Standard 2

The audit panel finds the subjects that are dealt with highly relevant. Students are offered a variety of subjects in which musical (ensemble class, vocal lessons, individual coaching, master classes), theatrical (drama, stage movement, languages, movement techniques) and theoretical (research, role study, historical development) aspects are covered in equal measures. During the master classes students are prepared for the more entrepreneurial side of their careers: career management and audition techniques. The audit panel appreciates the subjects and would like to add German as an important language.

The concept of a production-based programme works out very well. Each year consists of four periods: two periods with lessons and two periods preparing a production. The audit panel highly appreciates the fact that students are involved in four fully staged opera productions, with professional conductors and directors. This way students get prepared for the professional practice in the best possible way. Students have to research their part in an opera in order to be able to give their own interpretation of the role. The audit panel appreciates the fact that as of this year students will be required to produce a research paper, in which they describe the process of interpreting a role in more detail.

The diversity of teaching methods - individual teaching and coaching, group lessons, ensembles and productions - which are employed, is admirable, according to the audit panel.

The audit panel was very much impressed by the thoroughness and the quality of the admission procedures. Next to the vocal auditions candidates also have to show their ability in movement drama and collaboration with a coach. Only six students are admitted each year.

The audit panel has every confidence in the teachers who all have a very high professional standard. There is good rapport between students and teachers, whom the students greatly value. The fact that almost all the teachers combine their teaching appointments with active careers enhances their ability to provide meaningful guidance for students preparing to enter the profession. Unmistakably the key figure in the DNOA is the artistic director

The combination of the buildings and facilities of both conservatoires provide students with the best possible environment in preparation of the professional practice. The audit panel highly appreciates the fact that students work with orchestras and ensembles from both conservatoires as well as with professional orchestras.

The audit panel considers the DNOA a high quality programme with a unique character and a very professional approach. Based on above mentioned considerations the audit team comes to the judgement **excellent**.

Standard 3

The assessment system matches both the didactical approach and the intended level of the programme. The productions play a key role in the curriculum. Each production is evaluated by the teachers and the final production is also evaluated by an external examiner. According to the audit panel the inter-subjective deliberations of the teachers and the examiners is a valid instrument for reaching consensus on the achievements of the student. Especially as all the teachers have distinguished track records in the professional field. Furthermore students get the feedback in writing and the artistic leader discusses the outcome with every student.

The audit panel considers the quality and the professionalism of the dramatic and singing performances of the students and alumni as outstanding. The DNOA Master course presents students with an upper studio experience and rises above the level of a Master's study. The audit panel welcomes the addition of a research paper that current students will have to write. This emphasises a more academic research approach in the master programme. The audit panel concludes that the DNOA has reached her aim that "the graduated DNOA student is able to take his/her place in the operatic profession at the highest international level and is capable of dealing with the many artistic and physical challenges posed by its interdisciplinary demands". Alumni do well in the professional field.

Based on these considerations and especially on the quality of the graduates the audit panel comes to the judgement **excellent**.

Contents

1	Basic data of the study programme	Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.
2	Assessment	Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.
	Standard 1 Intended learning outcomes	Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.
	Standard 2 Teaching-learning environment	Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.
	Standard 3 Assessment and achieved learning outcomes	Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.
3	Final judgement of the study programme	Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.
4	Recommendations	Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.
5	Annexes	Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.
	Annex 1: Final qualifications of the study programme	Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.
	Annex 2: Curriculum overview	Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.
	Annex 3: Program for the site visit	35
	Annex 4: Documents examined	39
	Annex 5: Summary theses	41
	Annex 6: Resumes of the panel members	42

1 Basic data of the study programme

Administrative data of the study programme

1. Name study programme as in CROHO	Master Opera
2. Registration number in CROHO	49105
3. Orientation and level study programme	Hbo-master
4. Number of study credits	120
5. Graduation courses / 'tracks'	Opera
6. Variant(s)	Fulltime
7. Location(s)	Amsterdam and 's-Gravenhage
8. Previous year of audit visit and date decision NVAO	Previous visit: April 2008 Decision NVAO: July 17, 2008

Administrative institutional data

9. Name institutes	Amsterdamse Hogeschool voor de Kunsten Hogeschool der Kunsten Den Haag
10. Status institute	Funded body for higher education
11. Result institutional audit	Institutional review planned for 2013

Quantitative data regarding the study programme

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Incoming students	6	7	7	7	5	6
Graduates	5	7	6	7	4	4
Dropouts	1	0	1	0	1	
Output	83%	100%	86%	100%	80%	67%

The conservatoires consider an output of 75 percent as acceptable. They are very much aware of the reasons for students that left the course: mostly financial or job offers.

The students-staff ratio is 4:1.

2 Assessment

At the start of the Dutch National Opera Academy (DNOA) it was the ambition to become a leading international opera training programme. Unlike in many other countries, in the Netherlands there are no (longer) opera studios. The DNOA's ambition is therefore to gear the programme directly to the professional practice. To achieve a professional approach the DNOA has an educational model, called the production model. The central feature of this model is the realisation of fully staged opera productions.

The audit panel describes the findings, considerations and conclusions for each standard of the NVAO assessment framework. The final judgement concerning the study programme will be presented in chapter 3.

Standard 1 Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes of the programme have been concretised with regard to content, level and orientation; they meet international requirements.

Findings

The aim of the DNOA programme is: "The graduated DNOA student is able to take his/her place in the operatic profession at the highest international level and is capable of dealing with the many artistic and physical challenges posed by its interdisciplinary demands." (*Management review for the accreditation of the Master of Opera programme, Conservatorium van Amsterdam and Royal Conservatoire The Hague, December 2012*). Vocalists are expected to stand out for their ability to deliver a performance of a high calibre in both musical and theatrical terms.

Students from the DNOA are trained to be able to perform in professional productions ranging from a 17th century opera with recitatives, a Mozart opera or a well-known opera from the romantic repertoire to a multidisciplinary musical theatre production. To achieve this wide range of repertoire from tradition to innovation the DNOA sometimes chooses unusual repertoire, e.g. operas written for the DNOA by composition students. During the site visit the panel attended the opening performance of two such operas (ref. Standard 3).

There is a national professional profile 'Opera' which was formulated in collaboration with representatives from the professional practice, and the national education profile 'Music', developed in cooperation with representatives from the professional practice. These profiles are the basis for the learning objectives, formulated in the form of competences: research skills, creative skills, artistic expression, collaborative skills, learning skills, craftsmanship, entrepreneurial skills, communication skills and the capacity for critical reflection (ref. Appendix 1).

The competences are at the basis of the learning objectives (ref. Standard 2). During the programme students gain the required knowledge through study and research in all elements of the opera practice. Starting from the Bachelor's level that has already been attained, DNOA's curriculum will extend and deepen the student's artistry in singing and acting, adding the element of teamwork. Alongside musical and artistic qualities, DNOA's programme develops other skills for which a basis was laid in the Bachelor's programme, including reflective practice, working as a team and presentational skills. In a wider context, skills learned also cover facets of career planning such as hiring an agent, taking part in auditions, building a network and deciding whether or not to take part in a particular production.

Due to a substantial decrease of government funding to the performing arts in the Netherlands a number of smaller opera companies where graduates could start their career, will disappear and already have disappeared. This makes it even more important that the DNOA supports the students to embrace the widest possible spectrum of repertoire and styles to an international standard. This enhances students' prospects of finding paid work in the professional field. Up till now alumni from DNOA succeeded in this respect.

Because of the level required the conservatoires involved decided to offer the opera specialisation at Master's level only. The standard that every student and teacher must aim at, is the level required to function as a professional opera singer. The DNOA programme complies with international standard for a Master, such as the Dutch National Qualification Framework and the Polifonia/Dublin Descriptors (ref. Appendix 1). The audit panel has studied the competences and the Polifonia/Dublin Descriptors and concludes that the Master's level is well recorded.

The DNOA qualifications reflect the international professional practice of musicians. Students of many different nationalities attend the programme and are taught by Dutch and foreign (guest)teachers with international careers. The DNOA creates an international environment for students through international cooperation and offers master classes with international artists.

The DNOA has many contacts with the professional practice. There is a permanent partnership with the Residentieorkest (The Hague Philharmonic) and the Nationaal Jeugd Orkest (National Youth Orchestra). As a result the DNOA has produced several operas with these orchestras since 2010. A recent addition is an agreement with De Nederlandse Opera (DNO) which will lead to closer collaboration between DNOA and DNO in the future.

Considerations and conclusion

The audit panel is convinced that the DNOA programme reflects what is required of a qualification at Master's level. The DNOA meets the requirements of the National Qualification Framework as well as the internationally accepted criteria set out in Polifonia/Dublin Descriptors. The competences reflect the requirements of a professional opera singer.

The DNOA strives for excellence and in international environment. DNOA fits this profile very well. The collaboration with DNO will no doubt offer students excellent opportunities. The DNOA reflects the international professional practice. The audit panel agrees with the DNOA on the importance of offering students a wide range of repertoire in order to prepare them for the professional practice. The audit panel was impressed by the fact that the DNOA is able to produce two fully staged opera productions each year. By this students are offered a professional environment which is even more enhanced by the collaboration with professional companies such as the Residentieorkest, and the Nationaal Jeugd Orkest.

According to the audit panel DNOA offers more than an opera studio. Based on above mentioned considerations the audit team comes to the judgement **excellent**.

Standard 2 Teaching-learning environment

The curriculum, staff and programme-specific services and facilities enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Findings

The DNOA offers a two-year programme with places for a maximum of twelve students. An average of six students are admitted each year. The staging of two opera productions each year is the central feature of the curriculum. The DNOA is convinced that this realistic learning environment is the best place to prepare students for the profession of opera singer. Because of the alternating periods with lessons and periods with productions students learn, practice and reflect, individually and in the group, at the same time. Students quickly become used to the project-driven method of working and the strict discipline, the way of living and the devotion the study requires.

The contents of the programme

Each curriculum component has several specific learning objectives that together lead to the competences and the overall aim of the programme. The audit panel has seen the descriptions of all the modules and the learning objectives that are listed there. Although the programme has not linked these learning objectives directly to the competences, this is clarified in the explanation of the Dublin Descriptors in relation to the competences.

DNOA students are trained as all-rounder's and are prepared to perform across the entire spectrum of the international profession at the highest level. The point of departure for the learning process is that students actually perform in a critical context and that they reflect on their own development. The DNOA's curriculum balances subjects in which musical (ensemble class, vocal lessons, individual coaching, master classes), theatrical (drama, stage movement, languages, movement techniques) and theoretical (research, role study, historical development) aspects are covered in equal measures. During the master classes students are prepared for the more entrepreneurial side of their careers: career management and audition techniques. Furthermore DNOA invites agents to performances.

The committee selects twelve candidates on:

- whether the candidate can communicate with the public through lyrics and music;
- whether the candidate has the vocal capacity to perform the role;
- the technical standard of singing;
- the vocal quality (suitability for opera);
- pronunciation.

The twelve candidates attend three workshops. The workshops for stage movement and drama are intended to shed more light on the candidate's potential talent for musical theatre. The third workshop explores the vocal talent of the candidate in more detail. The selection for the six available places is made by the staff and the artistic director who have all worked with the candidates or observed them during the workshops.

The audit panel is impressed by the thorough admission procedure. The students value this procedure as well, because of the fact that they can really show the audition panel what their qualities are. The panel thought the number of applicants rather low in comparison with other international institutions and the high level the DNOA offers. With some free publicity from the alumni, together with more intensive use of web casting and social media, the number of applicants could increase, according to the audit panel.

Staff

The DNOA's artistic director and the co-directors of the two conservatoires are primarily responsible for safeguarding the quality of staff. A part of the curriculum is given by permanent staff members who have developed a specific method for teaching opera, such as the subject of movement techniques. Other teachers, such as the vocal studies teachers or ensemble teachers, are attached to one of the conservatoires. Students can either choose a vocal studies teachers from one of the conservatoires or someone from outside those institutes. Students have the possibility to work with five different repertoire coaches during their two year studies. The audit panel has seen that the expertise of the staff covers the entire spectrum of the opera practice: opera singer, stage director, music director, répétiteur and experts in drama and stage movement. Most of them have a lot of international experience.

Teachers must have a distinguished track record in the profession. All teachers are still involved in professional practice. When new teachers are appointed, they are asked to give a series of trial lessons, a workshop or a master class to demonstrate their teaching competence and their pedagogical skills. Students and alumni value their teachers highly, as they mentioned during the interviews. During the visit the audit panel has met a very strong teaching staff.

An important element of the programme's concept is working with leading guest lecturers from the professional opera world. This allows students to create a network in the international opera community. A diverse teaching staff means that students can learn from 'masters' from different backgrounds and can choose the supervision that suits them best.

The artistic leader usually knows the guest lecturers and is capable of monitoring the quality of their work during productions, workshops and other activities. In the production model, they work with students in a way closely resembling professional practice. These teachers are expected to explain to the students the customs and standards that prevail in the professional practice and provide guidance where necessary. The list of guest teachers is varied and could be given an impulse by inviting renowned international drama teachers.

There are sufficient teachers for the programme. The size of the teaching staff is approximately 3.5 FTEs. With a student population of 12, this represents a ratio of four students to each permanent staff member.

Supervision and counselling

The programme constantly monitors students' progress in the programme. There is individual supervision on an almost daily basis because of the contact of the artistic director and the staff with the students. It is immediately noticed if students are falling behind. DNOA students can make use of the services of both conservatoires' student counsellors and study advisors. However most study problems are directly discussed with the artistic director who in that case functions as coach, counsellor and study advisor, or with another member of the teaching staff.

The DNOA programme is an intensive programme to which students have to get used. There is a high number of contact hours and during production periods students are present for much of the day. Students do not complain of the work load as they realise that this level of preparation is necessary if they are to succeed in the profession. Alumni agree that this busy schedule represents the actual opera world. According to the students the internal communication is very good. They value the constant feedback they receive from the teachers and the artistic director. On the other hand, when asked by the audit panel, students thought it might be a good idea to have someone to represent them in a more anonymous way.

DNOA students are registered in the digital student tracking systems that are in use in both conservatoires. The conservatoire in which the students are enrolled (depending on the vocal studies teacher they choose) takes responsibility of keeping the data up to date. A paper file of each student is kept on documentation of entrance, study progress, evaluation documents and a copy of the diploma. Students feel they belong to the DNOA, it makes no difference in which conservatoire they are enrolled.

Buildings and facilities

The curriculum is performed partly in The Hague and partly in Amsterdam. The facilities of the two conservatoires are complementary. The Hague has a fully-equipped opera studio including theatre staff. Amsterdam has rehearsal rooms, a black box theatre hall, a recital hall and a concert hall. Students can use the libraries and ICT services of both conservatoires. In a few years time the Royal Conservatoire will move into new building where they will have to share a theatre hall with a professional orchestra and a professional dance company. The audit panel would like to stress the importance and necessity of a fully-equipped theatre hall,

with orchestra pit, for the DNOA. According to the management there will be more space and facilities available in the new situation.

The DNOA is integrated into the internal quality assurance systems used by both conservatoires. Students and teaching staff are invited to participate on a regular basis in surveys on student satisfaction and teaching staff satisfaction, as well as alumni questionnaires. Furthermore the Royal Conservatoire hands out surveys to external examiners. Information from the DNOA examinations has been collected during the academic year 2011-2012 for the first time. Both conservatoires have quality assurance plans and improvement plans as the audit panel has seen.

Organisational structure

The terms of the collaboration between the two conservatoires were laid down in a founding agreement within the meaning of Article 8.1 of the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW). In this agreement are laid down agreements on tasks, objectives, education, selection and collaboration. The principles of the conservatoires are the co-directors of the DNOA. The day-to-day management is in the hands of the artistic director.

The audit panel is convinced that with the current directors (artistic director and the two directors of the conservatoires) the organisation is in good hands. On the other hand, the audit panel would like to see more guarantees that the DNOA will be protected in future as well. A small, independent board, or a group of trustees, especially for DNOA could be helpful in this regard.

Considerations and conclusion

The audit panel is impressed by the programme of DNOA. The work of the DNOA is of international importance and could be more widely promoted. The orchestral support makes the programme even more special. But it all starts with the admission of new students. The audit panel was very much impressed by the thoroughness and the quality of the admission procedures. Next to the vocal auditions candidates also have to show their ability in movement drama and collaboration with a coach.

The concept of a production-based programme works out very well. The audit panel highly appreciates the fact that students are involved in four opera productions. This way students get prepared for the professional practice in the best possible way. The audit panel finds the subjects that are dealt with highly relevant. The audit panel interviewed students and alumni and furthermore saw productions on DVD and on stage. The audit panel was impressed by the performances where students succeed in performing their roles convincingly. According to the audit panel this shows that the research students have carried out adequately supports their interpretation of the part. The audit panel is pleased with the more academic research approach that has been introduced in the master programme. It appreciates the fact that as of this year students will be required to produce a research paper, in which they describe the process of interpreting a role in more detail. The diversity of teaching methods - individual teaching and coaching, group lessons, ensembles and productions - which are employed, is admirable.

The audit panel has every confidence in the teachers who all have a very high professional standard. There is good rapport between students and teachers, whom the students greatly value. The fact that almost all the teachers combine their teaching appointments with active careers enhances their ability to provide meaningful guidance for students preparing to enter the profession. Unmistakably the key figure in the DNOA is the artistic director. He is always available for consultation by students and by teachers. He has feedback sessions with students and teachers. He knows everyone and he knows everything that goes on. His succession will be a challenge.

The combination of the buildings and facilities of both conservatoires provide students with the best possible environment in preparation of the professional practice. The audit panel highly appreciates the fact that students work with orchestras and ensembles from both conservatoires as well as with professional orchestras.

The audit panel considers the DNOA a high quality programme with a unique character and a very professional approach. Based on above mentioned considerations the audit team comes to the judgement **excellent**.

Standard 3 Assessment and achieved learning outcomes

The programme has an adequate assessment system in place and demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

The rules relating to the assessments and examinations are laid down in the Education and Examination Regulations of the Royal Conservatoire and the Conservatorium van Amsterdam. During the spring of 2011 the Royal Conservatoire has reviewed the functioning of the Examination Committee and revitalised the committee by appointing a secretary and several new members, including a staff member of the DNOA. At the Conservatorium van Amsterdam the DNOA is represented in the Examination Board by the head of classical music. According to the management of both conservatoires the Examination Committee functions according to the regulations.

All DNOA students are assessed in the same way and according to the same criteria. The DNOA does not adopt different rules for students of the two conservatoires. The competences and the learning objectives (ref. Standard 2) serve as the main criteria for assessment. Assessment takes place through an inter-subjective method of evaluation with a committee of examiners. The chairman is the artistic director who safeguards the connection between the evaluation process and the programme competences. The examination boards of both conservatoires have the responsibility to ensure that this process is properly executed.

The main test to which all singers are subject in each role is the extent to which they can convince the public, colleagues and critics. Besides the synthetic evaluation each semester, the lessons for each element of the programme conclude with an evaluation. Essentially, these involve enquiring whether the students are capable of drawing on all competences during the performance of an opera in front of an audience. This is the point of departure of the evaluation meetings every six months.

In preparation of the evaluation meetings, all teachers involved are expected to write short reports on the progress of the students in their specific field. These reports are compiled into individual dossiers, which are discussed during staff meetings. The evaluation meetings take place within a few weeks after the production. Students are mainly assessed on their performance in the opera production, but during the meeting the assessment encompasses how students have applied various aspects of the curriculum in their role and performance. The teacher assess whether students have given a convincing stage performance in which text, voice, acting and presence are in balance. The students' professionalism is also evaluated.

The artistic director discusses the outcome of the assessment with each student individually. He distinguishes between the progress in the student's development and the performance in the opera. There will almost always be specific points which the student will have to improve on in the subsequent period. The audit panel has seen evaluation reports from the past four years which show that every student is discussed on his or her performance and on how they are doing in the lessons as well as how students have prepared themselves. In the student dossiers the audit panel found the feedback forms for the students as well as the 'uitslagformulier' in which the credits are listed and the competences are graded.

The final exam is the moment for evaluation of the students' work during the whole course. Each year's second production serves as a final examination project for the final exam candidates. For the final examination the committee of examiners is expanded to include an external examiner and the directors and vocal studies teachers from both conservatoires. The audit panel appreciates the inclusion of external examiners and would like to advise the DNOA to make use of an external professional for the assessment of the other productions as well to gain more impartiality.

The committee of examiners decides whether or not each final candidate can graduate with the qualification Master of Opera. The examination criteria are the intended competences (ref. Standard 1 and Appendix 1). In general the student has to show a natural and convincing combination of singing and acting wherein the elements of craftsmanship, musicality, artistic quality, dramatic expression and stage presence must be clearly present.

The final examination demands are:

- students have followed all the subjects in full and have learned at least six complete roles for their voice type;
- students must have built up a comprehensive audition repertoire for their voice type;
- students have taken part in two to four fully staged productions;
- students have presented a written component of their research into the roles they have performed during their studies at DNOA (as of the academic year 2012-2013).

Realisation of the intended learning outcomes

In the Management Review profiles of former students are included which show that these alumni are well able to support themselves as professional singers, both as independent opera performers or soloists and as members of opera companies, early music ensembles or vocal ensembles.

In the productions the students perform on a professional level. The *Pulcinella* in collaboration with the Residentieorkest is not only staged as a DNOA production but is also programmed three times in the programme of the orchestra. For the design, costumes and the make up the DNOA collaborates with for instance the Theatre School of the Amsterdamse Hogeschool voor de Kunsten or with a ROC.

Alumni keep in touch with the DNOA. According to the alumni they can always consult the artistic director or teacher for advice.

Representatives of the professional field will ask students and alumni from the DNOA for productions, such as community projects. Although students are trained for opera houses they perform very well in community projects as well. According to these professionals the students are utterly responsive, well prepared and very professional. All DNOA productions are of a very high standard.

Included in the documents for the audit visit there was a DVD with a compilation of seven opera productions of the last four years. All the productions are recorded so the audit panel had ample opportunity to assess the quality of the students. During the audit visit the audit panel attended the live performance of four short operas. The audit panel was impressed by the professional quality. The students showed high levels of dramatic skill sets – they relate well to each other on stage, movement was appropriate to their role, they were animated and effective performers and voices were on the whole very well schooled. They understood performance energy and the level of performance was very high for a Postgraduate Programme compared to other international Master programmes. Two newly written operas showed the possibility of students to apply their classical trained voices to the requirements of modern music. The level of English pronunciation could be improved upon – there were too many diphthongs and vowels were not clear or consistent. In *Pulcinella* a lot of dancing was requested which the students executed with admirable commitment and excellence. They showed enormous fitness and great coordination capabilities. Although the standard of English in the spoken text could be improved on, the quality of the singing and acting was excellent.

Some members of the audit panel attended the evaluation meeting that was held two weeks after the production and the audit visit. The audit panel concluded that this meeting is carefully executed. The teachers involved came prepared. Every student was discussed on his or her progress, performance and what could be improved. The competences a student should have acquired are discussed. In the performances the competences on creativity, craftsmanship, powers of expression and collaborative skills can be seen and discussed. Research skills and the capacity of critical reflection is less visible in productions but from the interviews and the feedback reports the panel could infer that students acquire these competences as well.

Considerations and conclusion

The assessment system matches both the didactical approach and the intended level of the programme. The productions play a key role in the curriculum. Each production is evaluated by the teachers and the final production is also evaluated by an external examiner. According to the audit panel the inter-subjective deliberations of the teachers and the examiners is a valid instrument for reaching consensus on the achievements of the student. Especially as all the teachers have distinguished track records in the professional field. Furthermore students get the feedback in writing and the artistic leader discusses the outcome with every student. Recently the role of the Examination Committee was strengthened. The functioning of the Examination Committee is now in line with the Dutch law for higher education.

The audit panel has seen students and alumni perform in opera productions on DVD. During the visit the audit panel attended a production of four short operas in which most students were cast. The audit panel considers the quality and the professionalism of the dramatic and singing performances of the students and alumni as outstanding. The DNOA Master course presents students with an upper studio experience and rises above the level of a Master's study. The audit panel welcomes the addition of a research paper that current students will have to write. This emphasises a more academic research approach in the master programme (ref. Standard 2).

The audit panel concludes that the DNOA has reached her aim that "the graduated DNOA student is able to take his/her place in the operatic profession at the highest international level and is capable of dealing with the many artistic and physical challenges posed by its interdisciplinary demands" (ref. Standard 1). Alumni do well in the professional field.

Based on these considerations and especially on the quality of the graduates the audit panel comes to the judgement **excellent**.

3 Final judgement of the study programme

Assessments of the standards

The audit team comes to the following judgements with regard to the standards:

Standard	Assessment
1 <i>Intended learning outcomes</i>	Excellent
2 <i>Teaching-learning environment</i>	Excellent
3 <i>Assessment and achieved learning outcomes</i>	Excellent

Considerations and conclusion

Weighing of the judgements with regard to the three standards based on the justification for the standards and according to the assessment rules of NVAO:

- The final conclusion regarding a programme can only be "excellent" if at least two standards are judged "excellent"; one of these must be standard 3.

The audit panel assesses the quality of the Dutch National Opera Academy of the Amsterdamse Hogeschool voor de Kunsten and the Hogeschool van de Kunsten Den Haag as **excellent**.

4 Recommendations

1. The audit panel would like to see that students get the opportunity to learn German. German could be an important language for the students because of the many opera houses in Germany.
2. The audit panel welcomes the research paper current students will have to write. DNOA herewith emphasises a more academic research approach in the master programme.
3. The audit panel would like to see a mechanism whereby students can appoint a student representative to give feedback to management.
4. The audit panel would like to see more guarantees that the DNOA will be protected in future. A small, independent board specially for DNOA could be a good choice.
5. The audit panel appreciates the inclusion of external examiners and would like to advice the DNOA to make use of an external professional for all productions as.

5 Annexes

Annex 1: Final qualifications of the study programme

COMPATIBILITY OF THE 'POLIFONIA/DUBLIN DESCRIPTORS', THE DNOA COMPETENCES AND THE DNOA CURRICULUM

Matrix 'Polifonia/Dublin Descriptors' - DNOA competences - Curriculum

'Polifonia/Dublin Descriptors' for 2 nd cycle studies' ¹ Qualifications that signify completion of the second cycle in higher music education are awarded to students who:	Competences as formulated in the profile of the DNOA	The curriculum components that are relevant for the development of the required competences
<p>Knowledge and understanding</p> <p>have demonstrated skills, knowledge and artistic understanding in the field of music that build upon training undertaken within or concurrently with general secondary education, are typically at a level of advanced study and, in the principal study area, are informed by the experience and knowledge of those at the forefront of their field;</p>	<p>Creative skills</p> <p>The opera singer is capable of giving his own (unique) interpretation of an operatic role based on a well-founded artistic vision and combining it with the wishes and demands of the director and the conductor. Consequently, he makes an original contribution to an opera production and to the practice of opera.</p> <p>Research skills</p> <p>By researching the role, the opera, the composer and the history of the work, the opera singer acquires a deeper understanding of the role and of the character he is playing or of the character's function in the dramatic context.</p> <p>Capacity for critical reflection</p> <p>The opera singer has formed a considered opinion about the profession of opera singer and is able to contemplate, analyse, interpret and assess his own work and that of others.</p>	<p><i>Applied in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Staged productions</i> <p><i>Prepared in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Individual singing lessons</i> ▪ <i>Drama</i> ▪ <i>Ensemble class</i> ▪ <i>Master classes and workshops</i> ▪ <i>Stage movement</i> ▪ <i>Individual coaching</i> <p><i>Applied in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Staged productions</i> <p><i>Prepared in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Historical development</i> ▪ <i>Role Study</i> ▪ <i>Master classes and workshops</i> ▪ <i>Individual coaching</i> <p><i>Applied in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Staged productions</i> <p><i>Prepared in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Individual coaching</i> ▪ <i>Historical development</i> ▪ <i>Role Study</i>

¹ From 'Tuning Educational Structures in Europe – Reference points for the design and delivery of Degree Programmes in Music', Tuning Project & European Association of Conservatoires (AEC), Bilbao July 2009.

<p>Applying skills, knowledge and understanding</p> <p>can apply their skills, knowledge and artistic understanding in the field of music in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and have competences demonstrated practically/creatively as well as through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study;</p>	<p>Craftsmanship</p> <p>The opera singer possesses the ability to apply a wide range of vocal, theatrical and dramatic skills and technical know-how efficiently and effectively.</p> <p>Powers of expression</p> <p>The opera singer has acquired a mature artistic persona and is capable of conveying his own artistic concepts convincingly and repeatedly to the public.</p> <p>Collaborative skills</p> <p>The opera singer is capable of making a personal contribution to an operatic production and to the rehearsal process and fosters the staging of the production in a team effort.</p>	<p><i>Applied in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Staged productions</i> <p><i>Prepared in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Individual singing lessons</i> ▪ <i>Drama</i> ▪ <i>Ensemble class</i> ▪ <i>Master classes and workshops</i> ▪ <i>Stage movement</i> ▪ <i>Movement technique</i> ▪ <i>Individual coaching</i> ▪ <i>Italian</i> <p><i>Applied in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Staged productions</i> <p><i>Prepared in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Individual singing lessons</i> ▪ <i>Drama</i> ▪ <i>Ensemble class</i> ▪ <i>Master classes and workshops</i> ▪ <i>Individual coaching</i> ▪ <i>Movement technique</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Staged productions</i> ▪ <i>Drama</i> ▪ <i>Ensemble class</i>
<p>Making judgements</p> <p>have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within the field of music) to inform judgements within their practical /creative activity that include reflection on artistic and, where relevant, social, scientific or ethical issues;</p>	<p>Capacity for critical reflection</p> <p>The opera singer has formed a considered opinion about the profession of opera singer and is able to contemplate, analyse, interpret and assess his own work and that of others.</p> <p>Research skills</p> <p>By researching the role, the opera, the composer and the history of the work, the opera singer acquires a deeper understanding of the role and of the character he is playing or of the character's function in the dramatic context.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Individual coaching</i> ▪ <i>Historical development</i> ▪ <i>Role Study</i> <p><i>Applied in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Staged productions</i> <p><i>Prepared in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Historical development</i> ▪ <i>Role Study</i> ▪ <i>Ensemble class</i> ▪ <i>Master classes and workshops</i> ▪ <i>Stage movement</i> ▪ <i>Individual coaching</i>

<p>Communication</p> <p>can communicate artistic understanding, ideas, information, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences;</p>	<p>Communication skills</p> <p>The opera singer can present, explain and account for the results of his work in relation to his own artistic vision.</p> <p>Powers of expression</p> <p>The opera singer has acquired a mature artistic persona and is capable of conveying his own artistic concepts convincingly and repeatedly to the public.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Staged productions</i> ▪ <i>Historical development</i> ▪ <i>Individual coaching</i> <p><i>Applied in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Staged productions</i> <p><i>Prepared in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Individual singing lessons</i> ▪ <i>Drama</i> ▪ <i>Ensemble class</i> ▪ <i>Master classes and workshops</i> ▪ <i>Individual coaching</i> ▪ <i>Movement technique</i>
<p>Learning skills</p> <p>have developed those learning and practical/creative skills that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy.</p>	<p>Learning skills</p> <p>The opera singer is capable of constantly improving and deepening his own professionalism, both vocally and dramatically.</p> <p>Entrepreneurial skills</p> <p>The opera singer can use his knowledge, understanding and experience to establish an autonomous position within the discipline.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Individual singing lessons</i> ▪ <i>Drama</i> ▪ <i>Master classes and workshops</i> ▪ <i>Individual coaching</i> ▪ <i>Movement technique</i> ▪ <i>Historical development</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Master classes and workshops</i> ▪ <i>Individual coaching</i> ▪ <i>Historical development</i>

Annex 2: Curriculum overview

code	form	Dutch National Opera Academy	Year 1	Year 2
Master of Opera 2012-2013				
KC-M-OP- Main subject				
SP		Staged productions	20	20
		Subtotal	20	20
KC-M-OP- Research, Theory and Practical work				
IS		Individual singing lesson	10	10
EC		Ensemble class	4	4
IC		Individual coaching	10	10
SM		Stage movement	4	4
DS		Drama	2	2
RS		Role study	2	2
MM		Movement technique	2	2
MW		Master classes and workshops	2	2
IT		Italian	2	2
HD		Historical development	2	2
		Subtotal	40	40
Total per year			60	60
Total				120

Annex 3: Program for the site visit

Visit schedule panel visit DNOA January 11 and 12th 2013

Friday January 11th 2013: Royal Conservatoire, The Hague, Room SON 03

Note: names under reservation.

Time schedule	Auditees	Auditors	Topics
10.00 – 13.00		audit panel	Preparatory meeting of audit panel members, incl. lunch
13.00 – 14.00	School Board and Programme Management: Henk van der Meulen (director RC The Hague) Martin Prchal (vice-director RC The Hague) Janneke van der Wijk (director CvA) Michel Dispa (vice-director and head dept. classical music CvA) Alexander Oliver (artistic director DNOA)	audit panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - check on today's and tomorrow's programme - mission & strategy - developments in professional field - market position / competitive position - education performance / success rate - interaction with professional field / customer relationship management - international focus - (applied) research & development - personnel management / staff policy - quality assurance
14.00 – 15.00	Programme co-ordinators, study coaches, examination board Javier Lopez Pinon (examination board member KC) Michel Dispa (examination board member CvA) Alexander Oliver (panel member exam committees DNOA) Peter Nilsson (panel member exam committees DNOA) Saskia Roos (programme co-ordinator)	audit panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - curriculum development - study coaching - education performance / success rate - interaction with professional field - international focus - (applied) research & development - quality assurance learning assessment - authority of the examination board - relation to the management - assessment: involvement of the professional field - assessment expertise
15.00 – 15.15	Break		
15.15 – 16.00 parallel	I. Consultation Hour	audit panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - students or staff members are invited to bring forward issues to the audit panel - review of additional documents
	II. Document study		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - retrospective - review of additional documents

16.00 – 16.45	Students: 1 st years: Charlotte Janssen Florike Beelen Vincent Spoelتمان 2 nd years: Ella Rombouts Lucas Zeman Hannah Bradbury	audit panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - quality of teachers - information and communication facilities - learning assessment / feedback - tutoring (incl. practical periods) - feasibility and workload - educational facilities - final projects/exams - degree of student participation in the school's decision making
16.45 – 17.30	Teaching staff members: Peter Nilson – coaching Natalie Doucet – musical coaching Javier Lopez Pinon – drama and research Gusta Gerritsen - drama Sasja Hunnego - voice	audit panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - involvement professional field - intrinsic backbone of the programme's contents - distinctive features of the programme - practical components - learning assessment (methods, standards, parties involved, scoring & feedback) - tutoring - (applied) research & development - education performance / success rate - interaction with the management
17.30 – 19.30	Break with dinner	audit panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - retrospective - dinner
19.30 – 22.30	Performance DNOA project	audit panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - quality of assessments - application of standards

Saturday January 12th: Conservatorium van Amsterdam, Room 445

Time schedule	Auditees	Auditors	Topics
09.15 u	Travelling to Amsterdam – transportation by mini bus will be arranged		
10.30 – 11.00	- preparatory meeting	audit panel	
11.00 – 12.00	<p>Alumni/Field representatives</p> <p>Alumni: Judith van Wanroij Francis van Broekhuizen Laurent Deleuil Kristina Bitenc</p> <p>Field representatives: Roberta Alexander (opera singer) Anthony Heidweiler (opera maker) Richard Egarr (conductor)</p>	audit panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - overall quality of the programme & its graduates - practical relevance of curriculum - involvement in quality assurance
12.00 – 12.30 (parallel sessions)	Short tour of the facilities	audit panel	- assessment of educational facilities for the DNOA
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch and preparation of feedback	audit panel	
13.30 – 14.30	<p>School Board and Programme Management</p> <p>Henk van der Meulen (director RC The Hague) Martin Prchal (vice-director RC The Hague) Janneke van der Wijk (director CvA) Michel Dispa (vice-director and head dept. classical music CvA) Alexander Oliver (artistic director DNOA)</p>	audit panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brief feedback session - Pending issues, if any
14.30 – 15.30	Preparation of conclusions	audit panel	
15.30 – 16.00	<p>Open to everyone invited by the school Room: Sweelinckzaal</p>	audit panel	- brief feedback to the school and follow up arrangements

Annex 4: Documents examined

Student dossiers from the student administration offices, of both 1st and 2nd year students and alumni.

Studied exam performances on DVD:

L'Incoronazione di Poppea (Claudio Monteverdi)
Conductor: Glen Wilson, Regie: Javier López Piñón (January 2009)

Albert Herring (Benjamin Britten)
Conductor: Jonathan Berman, Director: Alexander Oliver (January 2010)

La Clemenza di Tito (Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart)
Conductor: Richard Egarr, Director: Floris Visser (June 2010)

L'Elisir d'Amore (Gaetano Donizetti)
Conductor: Kenneth Montgomery, Director: Javier López Piñón (January 2011)

Il Signor Bruschino (Gioacchino Rossini)
Conductor: Richard Egarr, Director: Floris Visser (August 2011)

Where the Wild Things Are (Oliver Knussen) and L'Enfant et les Sortilèges (Maurice Ravel)
Conductor: Antony Hermus, Director: Timothy Nelson (January 2012)

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW AND MODULE DESCRIPTIONS ACADEMIC YEAR 2012-2013

OER of both Conservatories

CV's teaching staff DNOA

Informatiebrochures van beide conservatoria

Kwaliteitsplannen van beide conservatoria

Attended opera production during panel visit:

Dutch National Opera Academy
Conservatorium van Amsterdam - Koninklijk Conservatorium
Residentie Orkest

FOURSTELLING

RAUTHE
T.W. Tidrow


MAVRA
I. Stravinsky

Pulcinella
I. Stravinsky

MOSKINKING
G. Sztojanov

LES

Vr 11, za 12, zo 13 januari 2013
Koninklijk Conservatorium, Den Haag
www.residentieorkest.nl

Annex 5: Summary theses

The audit panel has seen graduating students performing in productions from 2009-2012. During the audit visit the audit panel attended a performance of four short operas in which the students performed. Furthermore the panel has seen the dossiers of graduates and students.

Annex 6: Résumés of the panel members

Gavin Henderson (chairperson, representative profession/discipline):

Dhr. G.Henderson (1948) is Directeur van de Central School of Speech & Drama (University of London) (www.cssd.ac.uk)

De heer Henderson leidt de internationaal gerenommeerde, brede theaterschool Central School of Drama and Speech (vergelijkbaar met Ned. HBO niveau). Daarvoor was hij van 1994 – 2006 directeur van de Trinity College of Music te London. Hij heeft dus jarenlange ervaring met kunstvakonderwijs. Hij is verder oprichter/bestuurslid van de Youth Music en the oprichter/bestuurder van de Arts Council England, waarin jarenlang zittende voorzitter van het panel muziek was.

Als directeur van een theaterschool leidt de heer Henderson een internationale school. Verder was hij President van de European Festival Association. In die functie en in vele van zijn andere functies heeft hij in direct contact gestaan met de internationale beroepspraktijk.

Lynne Dawson (representative profession/discipline):

Mw. L. Dawson (1956) is (opera)zangeres en Hoofd van de School of Vocal Studies van de Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester (www.rncm.ac.uk)

Mevrouw Dawson werkt al ruim 30 jaar als professioneel (opera)zangeres. Zij is nu Hoofd van de School of Vocal Studies van het Conservatorium te Manchester (vergelijkbaar met Ned. HBO niveau), dus zij heeft ruime ervaring met het muziekvakonderwijs op het gebied van zang en opera. Daarnaast geeft Mw. Dawson masterclasses op het gebied van zang en opera. Zij treedt ook nog steeds op over de hele wereld als (opera)zangeres.

Mevrouw Dawson leidt de internationale School of Vocal Studies. Verder staat zij nog steeds in de internationale beroepspraktijk als (opera)zangeres; zij geeft ook dit jaar concerten op grote podia zoals in Parijs, Moskou, Japan en St.Petersburg. Door deze werkzaamheden volgt zij de internationale ontwikkelingen in de opera en zangpraktijk op de voet.

Klaus Bertisch (representative profession/discipline):

Dhr. Klaus Bertisch is regisseur, docent dramaturgie aan de Opera Studio Nederland en de UvA en dramaturg bij De Nederlandse Opera. (www.dno.nl)

De heer Bertisch maakt als dramaturg van De Nederlandse Opera (sinds 1990) en als regisseur bij diverse (inter)nationale operahuizen de ontwikkelingen op het gebied van opera op het hoogste niveau mee. Daarvoor was hij dramaturg bij verschillende andere operahuizen. Hij geeft les aan de Opera Studio Nederland en de Universiteit van Amsterdam. Hij heeft dus ervaring met en kennis van het hoger en academisch onderwijs en de actuele operaberoepspraktijk. De heer Bertisch werkt met de actuele top van de internationale operaberoepspraktijk bij De Nederlandse Opera.

Brigitte van Hagen (student member):

Mw. Brigitte van Hagen (1986) is tweede jaars student Master Zang aan het Codarts Conservatorium. Daarnaast heeft zij uitvoeringservaring op professionele podia als (opera)zangeres.

