

featuring
THE TIMPANISTS AND
PERCUSSIONISTS OF THE
ROYAL CONCERTGEBOUW ORCHESTRA

NICK WOUD
HERMAN RIEKEN
MARK BRAAFHART
BENCE MAJOR
TOMOHIRO ANDO

A film by
CARMEN COBOS

THE ROYAL REPUBLIC

produced by
KEES RIJNINKS



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THE ROYAL REPUBLIC

a film by Carmen Cobos

“... A feel-good film about friendship, craftsmanship and music...”



In *The Royal Republic* Spanish-Dutch filmmaker Carmen Cobos is given exclusive access to a group of musicians within the Dutch Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra that rarely receives attention, but would be badly missed if not present: the timpani and percussion section. It's a pleasure to get to know these five men; to discover the love for the profession, the care for their instruments and the appreciation of their mutual connection. This beautifully presented documentary is a feel-good movie about friendship, craftsmanship and music.

Short synopsis

In *The Royal Republic* Spanish-Dutch filmmaker Carmen Cobos is given exclusive access to a group of musicians within the Dutch Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra that is completely indispensable, yet hardly ever in the limelight: the percussionists and timpanists of the rhythm section. This group is so exclusive, that in the 135 years since the orchestra's first concert only 26 players were deemed good enough to become a member. Their special status gives them the freedom to select their own instruments, to manage their own space and to interpret the music in their own way. It's a pleasure to get to know the group through this beautifully presented documentary; to discover the love they share for their profession; the care they nurture for their instruments and the appreciation they feel for their mutual connection. Engaging and entertaining, *The Royal Republic* is a feel-good movie about friendship, craftsmanship and music.



Long synopsis

"... A feel-good movie about friendship, craftsmanship and music ... "

In *The Royal Republic* Spanish-Dutch filmmaker Carmen Cobos is given exclusive access to a group of musicians within the Dutch Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra: the percussion and timpani section. They play a supporting role, yet they are totally indispensable. Never in the limelight, the audience mainly notices them during loud musical passages. But there is more to these talented men at the back of the podium than meets the eye. The skills of this group are so diverse and unique, that in the 135 years of the orchestra's existence only 26 musicians were regarded virtuoso enough to become part of the team. Their special status gives them the freedom to select their own instruments, to manage their own space and to interpret the music in their own way. That's why the world-renowned conductor Bernard Haitink named them "*The Republic of the Percussion*".


It's a pleasure to get to know the group through this beautifully crafted documentary. To discover how much they love their profession, how much they care for their instruments and how deeply they appreciate their mutual connection. But the looming retirement of the first timpanist threatens to unsettle their exclusive existence. A new group member, who has to match them in every possible way, will need to be found, adding extra pressure to a season already marred by Covid-19 and cancelled concerts. Engaging and entertaining, *The Royal Republic* is a feel-good movie about friendship, craftsmanship and music.

Director: Carmen Cobos | Producer: Kees Rijninks | Duration: 85min

Languages: Dutch and English spoken with Dutch, English and Spanish subtitles



CREDITS:

COBOS FILMS presents in co-production with  avrotros

THE ROYAL REPUBLIC

a film by Carmen Cobos

with

NICK WOULD

HERMAN RIEKEN

MARK BRAAFHART

BENCE MAJOR

TOMOHIRO ANDO

&

KONINKLIJK CONCERTGEBOUWORKEST

written & directed by

Carmen Cobos

written & produced by

Kees Rijninks

research

Carmen Cobos & Kees Rijninks

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concertgeluid

Everett Porter

post-production supervisor

Rob J Maas

grading

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commissioning editor AVROTROS

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FONDS21

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CV Carmen Cobos



Photo by Serge Ligtenberg

CARMEN COBOS was born in Southern Spain. In 1991 she started working as researcher for the BBC. In 1997 she moved to The Netherlands where she started in 2001 her own production company **Cobos Films BV**, producing internationally renowned cinema & television documentaries. Her productions have been shown by the main public broadcasters in The Netherlands and abroad. Several feature documentaries were released in cinemas and on DVD in The Netherlands, United Kingdom, Germany, USA, Switzerland, Japan Canada, France and Poland. Her films have been shown in more than 100 film festivals around the world.

Her award-winning credits as producer include **The Player** and **The Last Victory** by John Appel, **Comrade Couture** by Marco Wilms, **Forever** and **El Olvido** by Heddy Honigmann, and more recently **Wrong Time Wrong Place** by John Appel, which opened the 25th edition of IDFA 2012. Two years later her production **Around the World in 50 Concerts** opened IDFA 2014. She received the *Stimulans for Success* Award in 2006, 2008, 2010 & 2014.

Carmen has been a regular tutor for EDN workshops and for other European and Latin-American organizations. She has also been an expert for several European AV Funds (MEDIA, Jan Vrijman – IDFA Bertha Fund, IDFA Summer Academy) and a jury member for the San Sebastian Film Festival (2013), Seminci (Valladolid 2010-2019), the Seville Film Festival (2009), Punto de Vista (Navarra 2008), IDFA (Joris Ivens Award, 2005), the Infinity Festival (2005) and Docs Lisboa (2004). She is a member of the European Film Academy. In 2009 she was chosen Producer-on-the-Move for the Cannes Film Festival. Carmen has special expertise in international coaching in co-productions, financing and producing for cinema & television. In May 2015 Cineteca Madrid organised a retrospective of Carmen's work where she show-cased eleven feature-length documentaries she produced.

In 2012 Carmen started to also work as a director. Her debut documentary **IMPERFECT HARMONY** (AvroTros, 76 mins, 2014), about the musical clash between Holland's avant-garde composer Louis Andriessen and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra's chief-conductor Mariss Jansons, was chosen by IDFA for one of its high-profile, special screenings. **NELSONS N°5** (AvroTros, 71 mins, 2015) is her second film about a conductor, Andris Nelsons, and his unique way of conducting Shostakovich's Symphony No.5. Her third feature-length documentary **DANIELE GATTI – Overture to a Conductor**, (AvroTros, 78 mins, 2016) portrays the Italian conductor as the new Maestro of the RCO.

After these 3 music documentaries Carmen started to make more personal films. In 2018 the documentary **Cat Stories** (KRO-NCRV, 73 mins) about her love/hate relationship with cats. Then followed **SAMEN** (*Together*, HUMAN, 78 mins, 2019) in which her own life was the arena for a hearth-warming look at how couples deal with the intrusion of an incurable disease in their relationship. Between 2020 and 2022 she filmed and post-produced **The Royal Republic** (AvroTros, 85 mins, 2022). Presently she is filming for her seventh documentary **THE CURE** and develops **THE TABOO** for production in 2023. All her films have been released in the Dutch cinemas.

PROTAGONISTS: the percussion and timpani section of The Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra

Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra

The Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra is regarded as one of the absolute best in the world. At the praised sound of the orchestra, the special acoustics of The Concertgebouw play an important role. The influence of the orchestral musicians and the seven chief conductors to date: Willem Kes, Willem Mengelberg, Eduard van Beinum, Bernard Haitink, Riccardo Chailly, Mariss Jansons and Daniele Gatti.

In June 2022, it was announced that Klaus Mäkelä is joining the orchestra as an artistic partner with from the 2022/2023 season, and as chief conductor from 2027. The Concertgebouworkest annually about 80 concerts in the Concertgebouw and 40 on other important stages. In addition, it reaches music lovers worldwide with videos, streams, radio and TV broadcasts and many hundreds of CDs and DVDs. The Academy of the Concertgebouw Orchestra trains talented young musicians for the orchestral profession. Concertgebouworkest Young brings together hidden talents aged 14 to 17 from all over Europe. The Concertgebouw Orchestra is co-financed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Municipality of Amsterdam, sponsors, funds and many donors worldwide. The largest part of the income is generated by concert revenues at home and abroad.

The percussion and timpani section

Nick Woud (09 Apr 1955, timpani) started his percussion studies at the age of eight at the Zaanse Music School. By playing in local drum and wind orchestras, he was able to fulfill his dream of playing timpani from the age of twelve. After high school he studied timpani and percussion at the Conservatory of Amsterdam. At that time, he frequently performed as a percussionist with the Concertgebouw Orchestra and all other major Dutch orchestras. In 1977 he was appointed percussionist-timpanist with the Radio Philharmonic Orchestra and six years later as solo timpanist. In 2003, after being a member of the Radio Philharmonic Orchestra for twenty-five years, Nick was appointed principal timpanist of the Concertgebouw Orchestra "... All three, Mark, Bence and Tomo, were my students. They are in the prime of their lives and can play anything fantastic, whatever you put in front of them..."

Herman Rieken (18 July 1961, percussion) was born in Bussum and started playing drums at the age of five as a member of a drum band led by his aunt. He studied for a year at the conservatory in Hilversum and in his second year he went to the Conservatorium van Amsterdam to study with Jan Labordus and Jan Pustjens. He graduated there in 1985. Herman started working as a substitute at the RCO in 1981. In the same period, he also worked for the Amsterdam Percussion Group and the Metropole Orchestra. In 2002 he became a permanent member of the percussion section and chairman of the Association 'Het Concertgebouworkest', the association that represents the interests of members and employees of the orchestra. "... Playing percussion is great fun, but it consists largely of waiting. It is the art of a percussionist to do your own thing at the right moment, and these are often the highlights in music..."

Tomohiro Ando (12 Jan 1991, timpani) was born in 1991 in Tokyo. He started at the age of 10 as percussionist with his primary school orchestra and from that moment on dreamed of becoming a timpanist in a symphony orchestra. To make his dream come true, Tomohiro applied to the Conservatory of Amsterdam. Among his teachers were his current colleagues Nick Woud, Mark Braafhart and Bence Major. All three were convinced of Tomohiro's phenomenal talent. After working as solo timpanist with the Arnhem Philharmonic Orchestra, in 2017 he was appointed solo timpanist with the Concertgebouw Orchestra. "...I dreamed of becoming a timpanist. In Tokyo I saw the Concertgebouw Orchestra and was impressed by Nick Woud. That's how I wanted to learn to play. I took the risk and came to Amsterdam..."

Mark Braafhart (21 Jan 1983, percussion) studied at the Conservatory of Amsterdam with Jan Pustjens and Nick Woud. During his studies he regularly worked as a substitute with the Concertgebouw Orchestra and in 2008 he joined as a permanent member to replace his former teacher Jan Pustjens. Now Braafhart also teaches at the Conservatory. "... We have excellent instruments in the orchestra. All percussion instruments are the result of years of collecting and a critical search for the right sound and color for our orchestra. For example, we have the most beautiful triangle in the world..."

Bence Major (20 September 1989, percussion) was appointed in August 2014 as first percussionist at the Concertgebouw Orchestra. After completing his studies in Hungary, he studied at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam with his current colleagues Nick Woud and Mark Braafhart. Major traded regularly as a substitute with the Concertgebouw Orchestra, with the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra and the Budapest Festival Orchestra. Major also joined the Conservatorium van Amsterdam in 2014, where he teaches percussion, having worked there as an assistant teacher.



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