

Ragazze Quartet and Arturo den Hartog performing together in the production 'Normality No More' in 2024-2025.
Photo Andreas Terlaak

R | Ragazze
Quartet

Ragazze Quartet &
Arturo den Hartog present

Island Souls

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This concert programme focuses on the music of Caribbean composers. Each of them has, in their own way, explored the same fundamental questions. What happens after this life? What does it look like? Will there be peace over there? And why does that peace so often seem unattainable here?

In Errollynn Wallen's cycle *Are you also worried about the rising costs of funerals*, these questions are explored explicitly in their own unique way. In Jessie Montgomery's music, we may find answers through the spiritual path, in which hope, comfort and the longing for a better place are central. Eleanor Alberga's work, *The Glimpse*, also fits seamlessly into this quest.

The Caribbean perspective forms the heart of the programme, but the theme is universal. The music speaks of loss, hope and the human need for peace.



Arturo den Hartog and Ragazze Quartet performing a Surinam traditional for the Royal Family on King's Day 2026 (image Podium Klassiek/NTR).

PROGRAMMA

Jessie Montgomery - *I Want to Go Home*
For voice and string quartet (5')

Eleanor Alberga - *The Glimpse*
For voice and string quartet (10')

Roberto Sierra - *String Quartet No. 2*
String Quartet (17')

Errollynn Wallen - *Are You Also Worried About the Rising Cost of Funerals?*
Song Cycle for voice and string quartet (20')

Don Shirley - *Take My Hand, Precious Lord*
Arrangement for voice and string quartet (3')

Don Shirley - *God Be With You*
Arrangement for voice and string quartet (3')

Don Shirley - *I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free*
Arrangement for voice and string quartet (3')

TOTAL DURATION
60'
TOURING PERIOD
May -
October 2027

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Biographies composers

Jessie Montgomery is a Grammy Award winning American composer, violinist and teacher. Her music mixes classical tradition with vernacular music, improvisation, poetry and social themes. Her works are performed by major orchestras and ensembles worldwide. She served as Composer-in-Residence with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and was named Classical Woman of the Year 2025.

Errollyn Wallen is a British composer and performer born in Belize. She writes music across genres and for stage, film and concert performance. Wallen's career includes award winning compositions, she was the first black woman to write a piece for the BBC Proms and she has been described as a leading voice in contemporary British music. Her works features a wide range of musical styles and ideas. Wallen received an MBE in 2007 and a CBE in 2020 for services to music and was appointed Master of the King's Music in 2024.

Eleanor Alberga is a Jamaican born British composer with commissions from the BBC Proms, The Royal Opera and Covent Garden. With a substantial output ranging from solo instrumental works to full-scale symphonic works and opera, her music is performed all over the world.

Roberto Sierra is a Puerto Rican composer known for contemporary classical music that blends rhythmic energy with lyrical invention. Born in Vega Baja, he studied in Puerto Rico and Europe where one of his teachers was György Ligeti at the Hochschule für Musik in Hamburg, Germany. Sierra's works have been performed internationally. Sierra has won awards including a Latin Grammy

for Best Contemporary Classical Composition and his works have been part of the repertoire of many of the leading orchestras, ensembles and festivals in the USA and Europe.

Don Shirley was an American pianist and composer whose career spanned jazz and classical styles. Born in Pensacola, Florida, he performed frequently in the 1950s and 1960s and also recorded extensively. Shirley wrote classical works including concertos and chamber music while also performing and recording jazz influenced pieces. His life story was also made into a film, *Green Book*, in 2018.

Performers

Arturo den Hartog is a Surinamese-Dutch countertenor and winner of both the jury award and the audience award at the 2021 Princess Christina Competition. He began his musical journey as a solo singer in the church in Suriname and was among the first students of the Cathedral Choir School in Paramaribo. After moving to the Netherlands, he studied at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague with, among others, Rita Dams, Robin Blaze, Pascal Bertin and Peter Kooij. Arturo is a versatile performer with a strong affinity for opera, Lied, Baroque and contemporary music.

He recently made his solo recital debut in the Recital Hall of the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam with



Arturo den Hartog

pianist Daan Boertien and his operatic debut with Dutch National Opera and LOD Muziektheater Gent in *The Girl, the Hunter and the Wolf* by Vasco Mendonça. He has collaborated with ensembles such as Camerata RCO, Holland Baroque and La Sfera Armoniosa, and appeared at festivals including O. Festival and the Opera Forward Festival. Deeply committed to performing music by black composers and composers from Suriname, Arturo has appeared at Dutch National Opera, on *Podium Witteman* and at Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ, where he is currently artist-in-residence. Upcoming projects include new contemporary works, a solo concert with Ensemble Klang and his debut with the baroque orchestra Il Gardellino alongside Dame Sarah Connolly in the Concertgebouw.

The Ragazze Quartet is passionately committed to renewing and expanding the string quartet repertoire. Whether performing well-known classics, rediscovering unjustly forgotten composers or presenting new works, the quartet continually seeks new perspectives and sounds. Through adventurous productions, they address socially relevant themes such as climate change, the history of slavery, mourning and feminism, collaborating with artists and partners including Abel Selaocoe, Conny Janssen Danst, Via Berlin, Thomas Beijer, Nynke Laverman and the Kronos Quartet. They also play an active role in developing string quartet repertoire through commissions and arrangements, with new works by composers such as Caroline Shaw, Calliope Tsoupaki, Annelies Van Parys and Seung-Won Oh.

As one of the leading Dutch string quartets and a Channel Classics artist, the Ragazze Quartet has released ten critically acclaimed albums, including *But Not My Soul*, which presents a rediscovery of America from a more feminine perspective. The quartet performs regularly in major and smaller venues and festivals

in the Netherlands and abroad, with tours throughout Europe, Asia and the United States, and frequent appearances on radio and television. Founded in 2001, the ensemble consists of Rosa Arnold and Jeanita Vriens (violin), Annemijn Bergkotte (viola) and Nathalie Flintrop (cello). They curate the annual festival September Me. The Ragazze Quartet receives multi-annual support from the Performing Arts Fund NL and the Amsterdam Fund for the Arts.

If you would like to invite Arturo den Hartog and the Ragazze Quartet or if you have any questions, please contact Costa Peristianis for bookings in the UK (costa@ikonarts.com) or Frank van der Weij (frank@ragazzequartet.nl)



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