

# TRAWLER



An opera by  
**Camille van Lunen**

After the book by  
Redmond O'Hanlon





## An opera about the sea

Mystical fascination of a threatening world  
98% of its depths unexplored  
Harsh life of deep-sea fishermen today

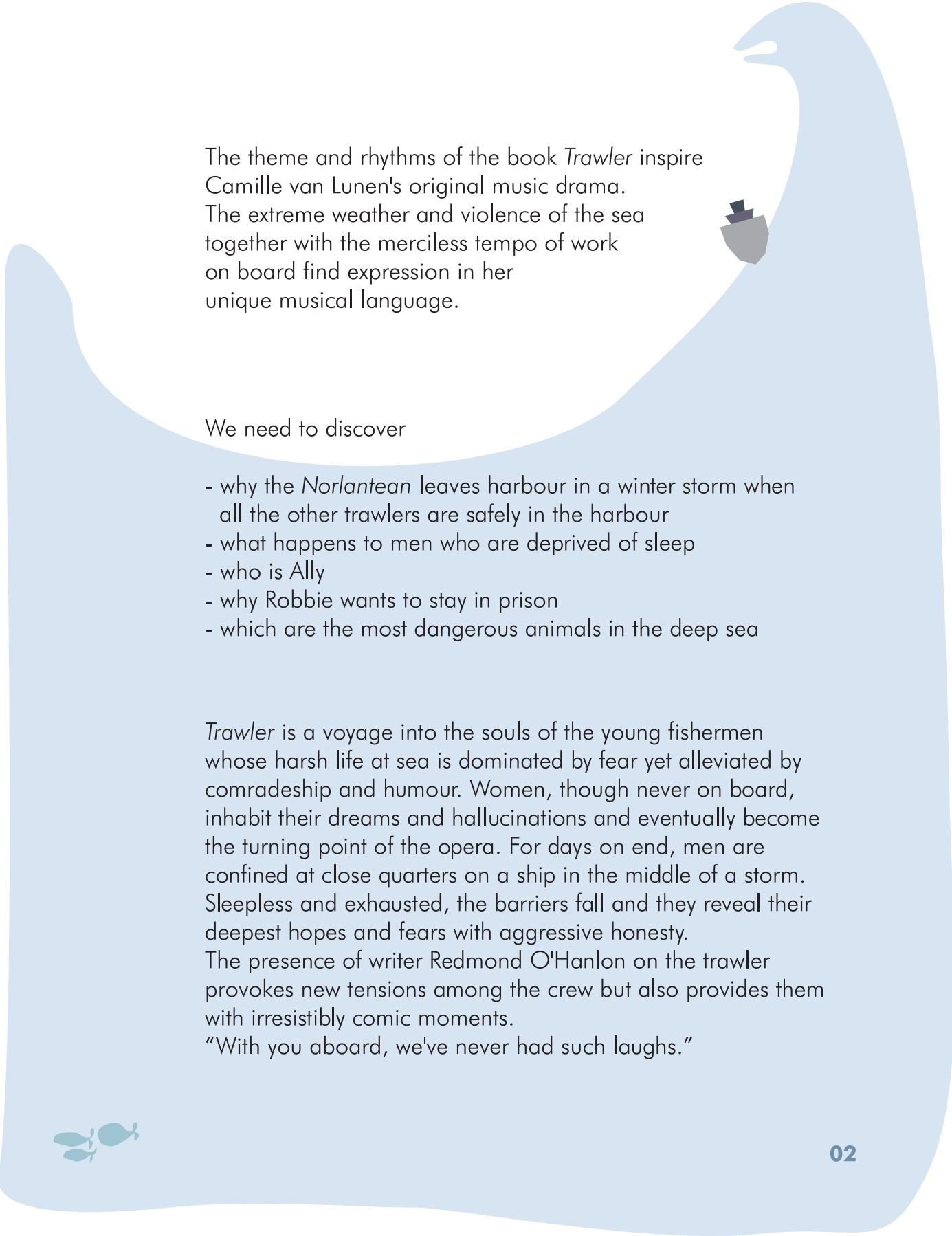
## The story

A vivid account of daily life on board a trawler  
World-wide popularity  
Translated into many languages

## Who is Redmond O'Hanlon?

Star of the TV series *Beagle: In Darwin's Wake*  
Author of weird and wonderful adventure stories  
A very funny man indeed





The theme and rhythms of the book *Trawler* inspire Camille van Lunen's original music drama. The extreme weather and violence of the sea together with the merciless tempo of work on board find expression in her unique musical language.

We need to discover

- why the *Norlantean* leaves harbour in a winter storm when all the other trawlers are safely in the harbour
- what happens to men who are deprived of sleep
- who is Ally
- why Robbie wants to stay in prison
- which are the most dangerous animals in the deep sea

*Trawler* is a voyage into the souls of the young fishermen whose harsh life at sea is dominated by fear yet alleviated by comradeship and humour. Women, though never on board, inhabit their dreams and hallucinations and eventually become the turning point of the opera. For days on end, men are confined at close quarters on a ship in the middle of a storm. Sleepless and exhausted, the barriers fall and they reveal their deepest hopes and fears with aggressive honesty.

The presence of writer Redmond O'Hanlon on the trawler provokes new tensions among the crew but also provides them with irresistibly comic moments.

"With you aboard, we've never had such laughs."



## About the composition

First, an enormous wave. A sound wells up and comes roaring in from the North Atlantic.

The orchestration evokes the strangeness and mysterious beauty of the fish inhabiting the ocean's depths.

Camille van Lunen at her best: lashings of energy, colour and powerful poetry put into service of the drama, a drama developing both in the sea and in the souls of the men on board.

An original instrumentation:

3 horns sit opposite 3 celli. A flute, a bass clarinet and an accordion in their middle are set against a canvas of multiple percussion.

The composer does not hesitate to explore unusual techniques, for example using the stage set as an instrument.

Van Lunen weaves several traditional Scottish folk songs, sung with great verve by the fishermen, into her contemporary composition.

Scoring:

6 soloists: two tenors, three baritones, one bass

2 ghost voices (off-stage): two sopranos

Chamber orchestra:

Flute (doubling piccolo)

Bass clarinet

3 Horns

3 Celli

Accordion

Percussion (two players)

Libretto: Roderick Shaw, Camille van Lunen

Duration: 90 minutes



## CAMILLE VAN LUNEN



Camille van Lunen was born in Amsterdam to Dutch and French parents and studied at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague.

An accomplished singer, she is also a successful and active composer. Her work is full of wit and colour and she often treats social themes of our time.

Her first major opera, "Der Felsenjunge" (The Rock Boy), based on a book by Jan Michael, was commissioned by the city of Leverkusen (Germany) and enjoyed four successful performances there in 2005.

This was followed by a further 18 performances in a new production at the Bonn Opera in 2008/09.

The dramatic oratorio "Star over Amsterdam" (premiered in Amsterdam in 2007), also based on a book by Jan Michael, retells the nativity story set in modern times and is scored for 6 soloists, mixed choir and 12 instrumentalists.

In the opera "Der Mantel" (2010) based on a Gogol short story, the composer explores the combination of a symphony orchestra with prerecorded electronic sounds.

Camille van Lunen has written for mixed choir, children's choir, solo voice, organ and various chamber music ensembles (piano trio, string quartet, wind quintet).

Her works are published by Furore Verlag in Kassel (Germany).

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# ACT I

## Prologue

Luke's voice on the phone. Redmond should join him immediately in Stromness harbour. He's found a trawler which will go out in gale force 12 and agrees to take them aboard.



## Scene 1 - The harbour

Vivid dialogue between Luke, the marine biologist and Redmond, the author. Redmond hadn't realised what he was embarking on. Luke tells Redmond about his new girl Ally.

## Scene 2 - On board

Redmond meets members of the crew. Bryan, first mate, is scolding Sean and Robbie for arriving late and being in a fight again.

## Scene 3 - On deck

Redmond asks Bryan where they are heading to and as the waves turn into "lumps" he starts to feel very seasick.

## Scene 4 - In a cabin

Redmond's restless sleep between seasickness, nightmares, cracks, bangs and roars from the ship's hull in the storm. He worries about Luke.

## Scene 5 - On deck

The first haul. The men at work. Fantastic and frightening fish are brought up from great depths into the nets. Gutting the fish, Robbie is quick with the knife.



## ACT II

Scene 1 - On the bridge  
First encounter with the skipper Jason at the height of the hurricane. Stories about crews drowning every year.  
Is Jason really crazy?

Scene 2 - In the galley  
Comic conversation about fish (is sea bream transsexual?) and about women.

Scene 3  
Robbie's story.  
Life in the cold and dark is hell, prison is paradise.

Scene 4 - On deck  
Sleep deprivation and exhaustion lead to hallucination (women's voices are heard as sirens) and aggression.  
Robbie attacks Luke for flirting with "his Ally".  
Luke, pursued by Robbie, falls overboard. At that moment, the ship's alarm sounds.

Scene 5  
Robbie jumps into the sea to rescue Luke. All the men are on deck, struggling to heave both men back on board.  
Will Luke survive?



## The Crew

**Bryan** (First Mate)

*You can trust your life to Bryan, he won't let you down.*

*He's like a dog - a St Bernard - big and fluffy, and he gets hungry.*

**Luke** (Ambitious biologist)

*Extraordinary creatures! Pre-historical species! A rabbit-fish, a sea-bat, a hag-fish! The weirdest thing in the whole sea!*

*That Luke. His head, it's stuffed with fish!*

**Robbie** (Seaman, the fastest gutter)

*I tapped two policemen. I smacked them in the face. I knocked them out, pompf!*

*If Robbie's bin drinking, keep out of the way, leave the bar, leave town.*

**Redmond** (Unhinged writer)

*What's wrong? I'm going to be sick.*

*Redmond, can you get our women, the ones we fucking love, to understand what happens out here?*

**Jason** (Skipper-owner)

*It's lonely being two million pounds in debt.*

*Maybe it's true, what they say, maybe Jason is crazy...*

**Sean** (The cook, youngest crew member)

*Fuck the North Sea! Horrible place, one big bad trip, the North Sea!*

*If you want to pick a really big girl, never say you work on a trawler.*

