



Press Release

Opera premiere for Wallander

Collegium Musicum at the University of Tübingen to bring Henning Mankell's Wallander to the stage with the opera premiere "W – The Truth Beyond" in July 2016

Dr. Karl Guido Rijkhoek
Director

Antje Karbe
Press Officer

Phone +49 7071 29-76788
+49 7071 29-76789

Fax +49 7071 29-5566
karl.rijkhoeck[at]uni-tuebingen.de
antje.karbe[at]uni-tuebingen.de

www.uni-tuebingen.de/aktuell

Tübingen, 08/06/2015

In summer 2016, the University of Tübingen will bring policeman Kurt Wallander from Henning Mankell's Swedish crime novels to the opera stage for the first time. The opera "W – The Truth Beyond" will be composed by Fredrik Sixten from Sweden. The libretto is written in English by Swedish dramatist Klas Abrahamsson and the project is spearheaded by University Music Director, Philipp Amelung.

"It was not difficult for me to say yes to this fascinating project", says Composer Fredrik Sixten. "Opera Wallander has, through Klas Abrahamsson ingenious libretto, everything a composer can dream of. With many strong emotions, an exciting crime drama, a message for our time and thus many opportunities for my expressive music to present itself in its full width."

Under the creative direction of Philipp Amelung, Collegium Musicum, the University Music Society and students from Musikhochschule Stuttgart will perform the opera. Actor and television presenter Malte Arkona will direct the stage performance. Project cooperation partners and sponsors include the Institute of Musicology, the Departments of Media, German and Scandinavian Studies at the University of Tübingen, and the towns of Tübingen and Ystad, Wallander's home town. The premiere will be performed on 15 July 2016 in Tübingen and accompanied by Württembergische Philharmonie from Reutlingen. The Swedish premiere will be held on 13 August 2016 in Ystad theatre accompanied by the orchestra La Banda modern.

"I became acquainted with Fredrik Sixten's compositions some time ago and I have always loved the Wallander novels – it seemed a natural idea to put the two together," explains Amelung on his inspiration for the project. Henning Mankell met Amelung personally in 2013 and gave his support for the project. Mankell, who is also a lover of music advised Ame-

lung: "You need to find your own way to use the story that is appropriate to your medium."

"The project is an incredible creative challenge," says Amelung. Wallander's character has many facets and the aging policeman struggles with alcohol abuse and loneliness. The opera follows on from "The Troubled Man" where Wallander is diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. At Wallander's retirement celebration, the policeman is approached by Tobias Jonsson. Jonsson, who Wallander convicted for the murder of his own father 15 years ago, assures Wallander of his innocence. This awakens Wallander's curiosity and he agrees to reopen the case.

"One insight I have gained during the work is how similar the crime novel and the world of opera is", says librettist Klas Abrahamsson. "Both deal with the violent death, strong feelings and incredibly cruel scenes. From that point of view, it's almost surprising that - as far as I know - there are no more operas based on contemporary crime novels written yet!"

The Wallander novels have been filmed by Swedish television and the BBC over the last two decades. Between 2005 and 2014, the crime series "Mankells Wallander" was filmed as a German-Swedish co-production. However, this is the first Wallander opera.

In the winter semester 2015/16, the University of Tübingen will offer an interdisciplinary seminar to accompany the opera which will examine the novels, films and music. A documentary is being filmed to record the progress of the production from the creative process to the performance.

About the artists

Composer Fredrik Sixten is one of the leading church musicians in Scandinavia. He was an organist at Härnösand Cathedral in Sweden and Nidarosdom in Trondheim, Norway. In 2010 he was awarded "Composer of the Year" by the Stockholm Music Association. Sixten, who is a free musician since mid-2014, has mainly composed oratorios, a requiem, a St. Mark passion and a Christmas oratorio.

Librettist: Klas Abrahamsson regularly writes scripts for film and television. He also wrote the screenplay for the Wallander novel "The Midsummer murder". In Germany, he is known for his play "Das Wunder von Schweden. Eine musikalische Möbelsaga". In March 2015, he was awarded the Swedish Ibsen prize.

Creative director: Philipp Amelung has been University Music Director at the University of Tübingen since 2011. Previously, he was the acting choral director of the Munich Bach Choir and the director of Schola Cantorum, Leipzig.

Stage director: Malte Arkona has performed in several Munich operas such as Engelbert Humperdinck's "Hansel and Gretel" and was awarded the Echo Klassik in 2013 and 2014 as a narrator for orchestral audiobooks. Arkona, who is also a television presenter, has been studying at the Institute of Musicology at the University of Tübingen since 2010.

Photos you will find here: http://www.pressefotos.uni-tuebingen.de/UT_20150906_PM-Opera_W.zip

Watch a video about the project: <http://polr.me/1y5>

Contact:

Philipp Amelung

University of Tübingen

Universitätsmusikdirektor

Schulberg 2 · 72070 Tübingen

Phone: +49 7071 29-75300

philipp.amelung[at]uni-tuebingen.de