



Press Release

Wallander Opera is ready

Libretto and music complete - Julia Riegel to direct performance - Rehearsals start in May

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The Opera "W – The Truth Beyond" based on the Swedish policeman Wallander is finished. As Philipp Amelung, creative director of the project, reported on Tübingen on Thursday both the libretto and music are complete. "The musical rehearsals will start in May and the stage rehearsals will begin in June," announced the University Music Director at the University of Tübingen in a press conference. He also introduced Julia Riegel as the new stage director.

The completion of his work was a proud moment for Swedish composer Fredrik Sixten in Tübingen on Thursday: "Now it's ready! My first opera, 'The Truth Beyond', is a musical drama full of expressive emotions. It's been an adventure of a lifetime. I have high expectations. I'm proud, pleased and happy with my work and I can't wait for it to be premiered this following summer".

Julia Riegel joined the project team in the previous fall after actor and presenter Malte Arkona became unable to direct the performance as originally planned due to time constraints but was able to suggest Julia Riegel for taking on her role. "The project is incredibly exciting for me", says Riegel, "It is a premiere and crime opera, whichever way you look at it there is something special about it – a fantastic opportunity but also a great responsibility to bring such a production to the stage for the first time. Also the collaboration with teaching staff and students at the University of Tübingen and the singers from the State University of Music and the Performing Arts Stuttgart that give such verve to the production is a wonderful, inspiring input." Riegel reports that the team are currently working with Media Studies students at the University of Tübingen on the stage and video design. "We are still auditioning for singers, but we have already found some extremely talented and fascinating young singers for most of the roles."

In "W- The Truth Beyond" policeman Kurt Wallander makes his opera debut. Librettist Klas Abrahamsson reflects on the unique character of the crime opera: "When I first got the proposition I was terrified. A crime opera! With Kurt Wallander as the main character! Whoever came up with this idea must be either impressively brave or just simply insane. Then I remembered a conversation I had many years ago with Henning Mankell, who I had the privilege to meet a couple of times. Among other things we discussed that even the most conscientious policeman probably sometimes makes fatal mistakes. As I thought of that, suddenly a story started to evolve in my head. Soon I heard the voice of a victim, the despair of somebody who was proved guilty and sentenced, and then I also felt Wallander's doubts... I still don't know if this project is brave or insane, maybe it's both. I'm extremely happy that I had the opportunity to be a part of it. And though I still am a bit terrified, I'm also incredibly proud of our work and very excited about the result."

Several auditions were conducted at the beginning of the project and most of the soloists were cast including: Matias Bocchio as Kurt Wallander, Lisbeth Rasmussen as Linda Wallander, Gunta Cēse as Christina Berglund and Johannes Fritsche as Anders Jonsson. Another audition for the tenors will be held during February. Julia Riegel will be assisted by Kristina Eveling and students from the Institute of Media Studies will implement the stage design. Professor Susanne Marschall (Institute of Media Studies) and PD Dr. Jörg Rothkamm (Institute of Musicology) will be working with students on different parts of the project. Different project groups will be responsible for press relations, the performance program and the website. The Institute of German Studies and the Institute of Scandinavian Studies at the University of Tübingen will also be working on the project.

The musical rehearsals will begin in May and the first stage rehearsals will start in June. On Saturday February 6 at 2 p.m., creative director Philipp Amelung, composer Fredrik Sixten and Librettist Klas Abrahamsson will be presenting the opera concept in the Pflegehofsaal at the University of Tübingen. The premiere of the Wallander opera will take place on Friday July 15, 2016 at 19:15 in the Festsaal of the University of Tübingen (Neue Aula, Geschwister Scholl Platz, 72074 Tübingen). Further performances will be held on July 16 and July 18. On August 8, the opera will move to the Swedish town of Ystad, the original setting of the Wallander novels, where another eight performances are planned. Tickets are available online for the Tübingen performances at www.reservix.de from February 10. Depending on the category, ticket prices range between 15 and 50 euros.

Amelung says he is particularly satisfied with the collaboration with the musicians and the studying of the music. "The past twelve months were unbelievably intensive. Klas Abrahamsson began working on the libretto a year ago and now the music is complete. There were many discussions with the composer and librettist, with the senior management and institutes of the University of Tübingen, Henning Mankell's publishers, the cultural offices of Ystad and Tübingen and various sponsors. It was a very rewarding experience for me". Amelung's encounter with Henning Mankell before the author sadly passed away last year was also a particularly emotional experience.

A detailed press folder including photos of the cast and production members is available for download on the website at www.wallander-opera.de. The project's PR team can answer further questions via e-mail: pr.wallander-oper@uni-tuebingen.de

Homepage: <http://wopera.wallander-opera.de>

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