



August 18, 2009

Pitre, Odekirk, Altay, Mastrone, McLeod Will Join Sjöholm and Watson in *Kristina* Concerts

By Andrew Gans



Complete casting has been announced for the upcoming Carnegie Hall concerts of Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus' *Kristina*, with English lyrics by Herbert Kretzmer, which will play the famed Manhattan venue Sept. 23-24.

As previously reported, Helen Sjöholm, who originated the title role in the Swedish production of *Kristina*, will repeat her work for New York audiences at Carnegie Hall, where she will be joined by internationally renowned tenor Russell Watson in the role of Karl Oskar.

Newly announced for the two evenings are *Mamma Mia!*'s Louise Pitre as Ulrika and *Les Miserables*' Kevin Odekirk as Robert; Odekirk played the role of Robert in the New York workshop presentation of *Kristina*.



The company will also feature Derin Altay, Chris Bohannon, Jane Brockman, Walter Charles, Rebecca Eichenberger, Osborn Focht, Blythe Gruda, Liz Griffith, Joy Hermlyn, David Hess, Michael James Leslie, T. Doyle Leverett, Rob Lorey, Frank Mastrone, Raymond Jaramillo McLeod, Linda Muggleston, Jan Neuberger, Robert Ousley, Sal Sabella, Greg Stone, Jessica Vosk and Kathy Voytko.

Lars Rudolfsson will direct the concerts; Paul Gemignani will conduct a 50-piece American Theatre orchestra.

Louise Pitre and Kevin Odekirk

Universal Music's Decca Records will record both evenings and will release a CD at a future date.

The show's plot is based on four novels by Swedish author Vilhelm Moberg. *Kristina from Duvemala* premiered at the Malmo Music Theatre on Oct. 7, 1995, and has played Gothenburg's Opera House and Stockholm's Cirkus Theatre, among others.

In October 2005 Ulvaeus had this to say about *Kristina*: "It's about immigrants going from the south of Sweden in the 1850s to America," Ulvaeus told Playbill.com. "It's about their lives. It's an epic saga really. We did that in Sweden successfully — ran for about three years in various cities. . . . And then we wanted to translate it [into English] because we thought it was American history as well. It's really more American history than Swedish. Herbert Kretzmer did [the translation] with me, and we did a workshop here in New York in March to find out what people didn't understand, what the weaknesses were and what it would be like to do it in English. And, we really learned a lot from that."

Björn Ulvaeus and Benny Andersson also collaborated on the rock musical *Chess* (with lyricist Tim Rice), and their songs are heard in the international hit *Mamma Mia!*

Tickets for the fall concerts are available by visiting the Carnegie Hall Box Office (57th Street and Seventh Avenue), by calling (212) 247-7800 or by logging on to www.carnegiehall.org.

For more information visit www.kristinathemusical.com.



August 18, 2009

Headlines: Louise Pitre and Kevin Odekirk Join Complete Cast of *Kristina*

by Broadway.com Staff



Louise Pitre

Tony Award nominee Louise Pitre and Kevin Odekirk have joined the complete cast of the upcoming concert performances of Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus' musical *Kristina*. The show, directed by Lars Rudolfsson, will be performed at Carnegie Hall on September 23 and 24 featuring a 50-piece orchestra conducted by Paul Gemignani.

Pitre and Odekirk join previously announced stars Helen Sjöholm, who originated the title role in the Swedish production of *Kristina*, and internationally renowned tenor Russell Watson. The 27-member cast also includes Derin Altay, Chris Bohannon, Jane Brockman, Walter Charles, Rebecca Eichenberger, Osborn Focht, Blythe Gruda, Liz Griffith, Joy Hermllyn, David Hess, Michael James Leslie, T. Doyle Leverett, Rob Lorey, Frank Mastrone, Raymond Jaramillo McLeod, Linda Mugleston, Jan Neuberger, Robert Ousley, Sal Sabella, Greg Stone, Jessica Vosk and Kathy Voytko.

Kristina features music and lyrics by ABBA songwriting partners Andersson and Ulvaeus, who also created the musical *Chess* and the worldwide sensation *Mamma Mia!*, and English lyrics by Ulvaeus and Herbert Kretzmer. Originally titled *Kristina från Duvemåla*, the musical premiered in the creators' native Sweden in 1995 and ran for almost four years, winning four Guldmasken Theatre Awards (Sweden's Tony). Based on *The Emigrants* series of novels by Vilhelm Moberg, *Kristina* tells the epic story of a family's migration from Sweden to America in the mid-19th century. A concert version was performed in Swedish in 1996 in Minneapolis, where many events in the novels take place.

Pitre received a Tony nomination for her Broadway debut performance in Andersson and Ulvaeus' *Mamma Mia!*. A Toronto audience favorite, she has starred in *Les Misérables*, *Edith Piaf*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Song and Dance*, *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*; *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*; *The World Goes 'Round*; *Blood Brothers*; *Tartuffe*; *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf?*; *The Roar of the Greasepaint*, *The Smell of the Crowd*; *Applause* and *Rock 'n' Roll*.

Odekirk originated his role in the New York workshop presentation of *Kristina* after making his Broadway debut as Marius in *Les Misérables*. He has performed in concert alongside singers that include Barbra Streisand, Bernadette Peters, Angela Lansbury, Brian Stokes Mitchell and Josh Groban.

Universal Music will release a cast
its Decca Records label.

BONEAU / BRYAN-BROWN

recording of *Kristina* through

August 18, 2009

**Kevin Odekirk, Louise Pitre, Helen Sjöholm, Russell Watson to Star in
Kristina at Carnegie Hall**

By: Dan Bacalzo · New York



Russell Watson
(© David Venni Photography)

Kevin Odekirk, Louise Pitre, Helen Sjöholm, and Russell Watson will headline the cast of *Kristina*, a musical with a score by Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus (and English lyrics by Herbert Kretzmer), which will be performed in a concert presentation at Carnegie Hall on September 23 and 24. Paul Gemignani will conduct a 50 piece symphony orchestra, and Lars Rudolfsson will direct.

Based on the novels of Swedish author Vilhelm Moberg, the show tells the epic story of a family's migration from Sweden to America in the mid-19th Century. It premiered in Sweden in 1995, ran for almost four years, and won four Guldmasken Theatre Awards (Sweden's Tony Awards). The concert will mark the first presentation of the show in English.

The cast will also feature Derin Altay, Chris Bohannon, Jane Brockman, Walter Charles, Rebecca Eichenberger, Osborn Focht, Blythe Gruda, Liz Griffith, Joy Hermlyn, David Hess, Michael James Leslie, T. Doyle Leverett, Rob Lorey, Frank Mastrone, Raymond Jaramillo McLeod, Linda Muggleston, Jan Neuberger, Robert Ousley, Sal Sabella, Greg Stone, Jessica Vosk and Kathy Voytko.

Andersson and Ulvaeus are best known as the co-founders of the pop group *ABBA*. Their Broadway credits include *Chess* and *Mamma Mia!* Odekirk originated the role of Robert in the New York workshop of *Kristina*, and has appeared on Broadway as Marius in *Les Miserables*. Pitre, who will play Ulrika, received a Tony nomination for *Mamma Mia!* and will soon be featured in the Canadian premiere of *The Toxic Avenger*. Sjöholm originated the title role of *Kristina* in Sweden, and has also starred in *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Les Miserables*, *Chess*, and *The Threepenny Opera*. Watson, who will play Karl Oskar, is widely known as "The Peoples Tenor" in the UK, and was the first ever British male to simultaneously occupy a No.1 spot in the UK and American classical charts; he has also won four classical BRIT Awards.

Tickets are now on sale at the Carnegie Hall Box Office, or by calling 212-247-7800 or visiting www.carnegiehall.org.



August 18, 2009

Pitre, Odekirk Join 'KRISTINA' Carnegie Hall Concerts - Full Casting Announced

by BWW News Desk



Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus' upcoming Carnegie Hall concert presentation of the new musical KRISTINA has announced full casting.

Tony Award® nominee Louise Pitre returns to the New York stage after originating the role of "Donna Sheridan" in the composing team's global smash hit musical MAMMA MIA! on Broadway.

Kevin Odekirk originated the role of "Robert" in the New York workshop presentation of KRISTINA after making his Broadway debut in Les Misérables.

Previously announced stars Helen Sjöholm, who originated the title role in the Swedish production of KRISTINA, and internationally renowned tenor Russell Watson, lead a 27 member cast featuring Derin Altay, Chris Bohannon, Jane Brockman, Walter Charles, Rebecca Eichenberger, Osborn Focht, Blythe Gruda, Liz Griffith, Joy Hermllyn, David Hess, Michael James Leslie, T. Doyle Leverett, Rob Lorey, Frank Mastrone, Raymond Jaramillo McLeod, Linda Mugleston, Jan Neuberger, Robert Ousley, Sal Sabella, Greg Stone, Jessica Vosk and Kathy Voytko.

Directed by Lars Rudolfsson and featuring the 50 piece American Theatre Orchestra conducted by Tony Award® winner Paul Gemignani, KRISTINA will be performed in concert for two performances only at Carnegie Hall on September 23 and 24, 2009. This will mark the first presentation in English with lyrics by Björn Ulvaeus and Herbert Kretzmer.

Originally titled Kristina från Duvemåla, the musical premiered at the Malmo Music Theatre in Sweden in 1995 to great acclaim from critics and audiences alike. The musical ran for almost four years, winning four Guldmasken Theatre Awards (Sweden's Tony!) and was seen by more people than any other musical in Swedish history. In 1996, a concert version of KRISTINA was performed (in Swedish) at Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis, Minnesota; a part of the country where many of the events in the Moberg novels took place. The Minneapolis Star Tribune called the concert "engaging, emotionally charged and haunting."

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Based on The Emigrants series of novels by Swedish author Vilhelm Moberg (The Emigrants, Unto a Good Land, The Settlers, and The Last Letter Home), KRISTINA tells the epic story of an extended family's migration from Sweden to America in the mid-19th Century.

Universal Music is proud to promote the concert alongside Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus. A cast recording will follow, released through Universal Music's Decca Records.

Best known as the song-writing partners of ABBA, Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus are also the composers of the stage musicals Chess and Mamma Mia!

Louise Pitre (Ulrika) made her Broadway debut and earned a Tony Award® nomination for her role as "Donna Sheridan" in Mamma Mia! when the hit musical opened at the Winter Garden Theatre in 2001, where she starred for two years. A Toronto audience favorite, she has starred as "Fantine" in Les Misérables, as the title role in Edith Piaf and in Annie Get Your Gun, Song and Dance, Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris; I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change; The World Goes 'Round; Blood Brothers; Tartuffe; Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf?; The Roar of the Greasepaint, The Smell of the Crowd; Applause and Rock 'n' Roll. She is the winner of three Dora Mavor Moore Awards, the National Broadway Touring Award, a New York Theatre World Award, a San Francisco Critics' Circle Award and a Bessie Award all for best performance by a leading lady in a musical. She can be seen this fall as the host of CTV's new series "Star Portraits" beginning September 12 on Bravo!. Other television: Lifetime's "A Christmas Wedding," "Recipe for a Perfect Christmas," CBC's "MVP," and as Celine Dion's mother "Therese" in the CBC biopic "Celine". Louise is the recipient of honorary degrees from the Royal Conservatory of Music, Humber College and an Honorary Doctorate of Music from her alma mater The University of Western Ontario. She has recorded four studio albums. www.louisepitre.com

Kevin Odekirk (Robert) is thrilled to once again sing the role of "Robert" in Kristina, a part he originated in the NYC workshops. A native of Southern California, Kevin got his start in Hollywood with roles in such television shows as "Unhappily Ever After" and "Clueless," before moving to New York and making his Broadway debut as "Marius" in the long running hit musical Les Misérables. From Lincoln Center to The Hollywood Bowl and everywhere in between, Kevin has been privileged to perform with some of the worlds best entertainers including Barbara Streisand, Bernadette Peters, Angela Lansbury, Brian Stokes Mitchell, Josh Groban and many more. Most recently, Kevin joined the amazing Julie Andrews as one of five soloists in her long awaited return to the concert stage in The Gift of Music. Keep an eye out for the release of his debut CD "Unheard Of," a collection of previously unreleased works by major composers such as Stephen Schwartz, John Bucchino, Eric Whitacre, and more. www.KeinOdekirk.com.

HELEN SJÖHOLM (Kristina) one of Sweden's most celebrated stage performers, began singing at a young age in a chorus in her hometown of Sundsvall and made her professional debut in 1988 touring with the entertainment troupe "Just for Fun." For many Swedes, she will always be known for her major breakthrough performance as "Kristina" in Kristina från Duvemåla. The hit musical by Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus was seen by over one million Swedes. Helen also played "Hodel" in Fiddler on the Roof and "Fantine" in Les Miserables. She starred in the Swedish production of Chess, as "Polly Peachum" in The Threepenny Opera and is currently playing "Eliza" in My Fair Lady at the Oscars Theatre in Stockholm. Helen has performed solo concerts on radio, television and on stages around the country. She is a lead vocalist in the Benny Andersson Band, whose song "You Are My Man" has topped the Swedish charts for five years.

RUSSELL WATSON (Karl Oskar) Adored by the UK public and widely known as "The Peoples Tenor," Russell Watson offers a rare glimpse at a remarkable Tenor who has a unique ability of delivering both Classical and Pop Music. 2001: Watson was the first ever British male to simultaneously occupy a No.1 spot in the UK and American classical charts, as well as being the first artist to have a classical album at the No.1 spot in the UK classical charts for an entire year. Having released 9 albums to date and sold over 6 million records worldwide, he has won four classical BRIT Awards and is recognized as the UK's biggest selling classical artist of the 21st century. 2001: Sang the opening theme of star trek, enterprise, "where My Heart Will Take Me", 2006: Watson played Parson Nathaniel in the stage adaptation of Jeff Wayne's musical Version of The War of the Worlds. He has performed for the President of the United States, the UK Prime minister, the Emperor of Japan and the Pope. He has collaborated with varying artists such as Cliff Richards, Lulu, Lionel Ritchie, Mel C (of Spice Girls fame) and Meatloaf.

Tickets for KRISTINA are available at the Carnegie Hall Box Office (57th Street & Seventh Avenue), via phone at 212-247-7800 or online at www.carnegiehall.org.

For more information visit, www.KristinaTheMusical.com.

Photo credit: David Leyes

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