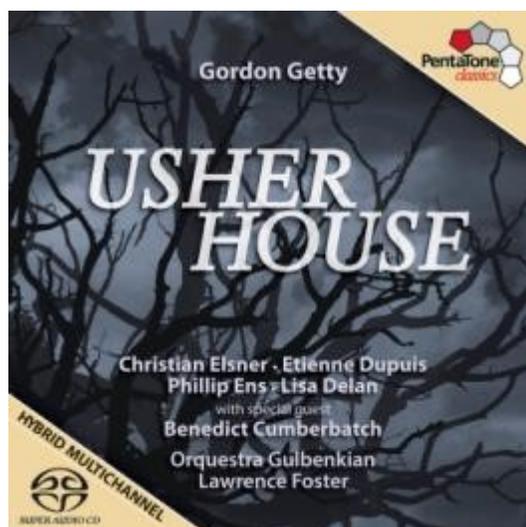


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**USHER HOUSE – GORDON GETTY’S OPERA  
BASED ON EDGAR ALLAN POE’S  
“THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER”**



**HYBRID MULTI-CHANNEL SACD  
RELEASED ON THE PENTATONE CLASSICS LABEL**

Composer Gordon Getty’s opera *Usher House*, with libretto by the composer after Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Fall of the House of Usher,” will be released on the PentaTone Classics label on June 13, 2013.

Poe’s quintessential gothic tale serves as the loose basis for Getty’s opera. As Mr. Getty explains, “I found myself taking liberties. To start, I have made Poe himself the narrator who lives to tell the tale. More radically, I have conceived him and the doomed siblings as types of an antebellum warmth and gallantry which hardly exist anywhere in the prose of the real Poe, and must be counter to his purposes here. I have added other gothic staples – forbidden knowledge, a Faustian pact, ghostly ancestors – and have shifted all into a tale of good and evil and redemption. Good means Poe and the siblings, evil means Primus and the ancestors, and Madeline becomes the agent of redemption.”

*Usher House* features conductor Lawrence Foster leading the Orquestra Gulbenkian, with tenor Christian Elsner, baritone Etienne Dupuis, bass Phillip Ens, and soprano Lisa Delan, with special guest, actor Benedict Cumberbatch, on a hybrid multi-channel SACD.

*Usher House* will receive its staged premiere by Welsh National Opera on June 13, 2014 and performed by the San Francisco Opera in 2015.

Contents of the CD

PentaTone Classics (PTC 5186 451)

**GORDON GETTY (1933)**

***USHER HOUSE***

Libretto by the composer after “The Fall of the House of Usher” by Edgar Allan Poe

**Orquestra Gulbenkian**

**Lawrence Foster, conductor**

Christian Elsner, tenor – Edgar Allan Poe

Etienne Dupuis, baritone – Roderick Usher

Phillip Ens, bass – Doctor Primus

Lisa Delan, soprano – Madeline Usher

*With special guest **Benedict Cumberbatch** as the *Attendant**

**Opera in One Act**

1. Prologue – During the whole of a dull, dark and soundless day
2. Scene 1 – Can it be five years, my friend?
3. Scene 1 – Where is my lady, o where is she gone?
4. Scene 1 – She was my model in writing
5. Scene 2 – Lady Hellane Usher
6. Scene 3 – And now it is time to bid our silent farewells
7. Scene 4 – We are particularly honored to receive our guest
8. Scene 5 – Roderick, I must speak

**Total playing time = 67:00**

A video about *USHER HOUSE* can be seen at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KBgeNPFHcI0>

*USHER HOUSE* is available for purchase online at [www.pentatonemusic.com](http://www.pentatonemusic.com),  
[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and [www.arkivmusic.com](http://www.arkivmusic.com), and on iTunes.

**Gordon Getty (Composer / Librettist)**

The music of the American composer Gordon Getty has been widely performed in North America and Europe in such prestigious venues as New York’s Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, London’s Royal Festival Hall, Vienna’s Brahmsaal, and Moscow’s Tchaikovsky Hall and Bolshoi Theatre, as well as at the Aspen, Spoleto, and Bad Kissingen Festivals. In 1986, he was honored as an Outstanding American Composer at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and he was awarded the 2003 Gold Baton of the American Symphony Orchestra League.

Getty has recently devoted considerable attention to a pair of one-act operas, *Usher House* (derived from Edgar Allan Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher*) and *The Canterville Ghost* (after Oscar Wilde's tale). The former will be premiered in 2014 by the Welsh National Opera. Getty's first opera, *Plump Jack*, involving adventures of Shakespeare's Sir John Falstaff, was premiered by the San Francisco Symphony in 1984 and has been revived by the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, and London Philharmonia, among other ensembles. In 2011 the Munich Radio Orchestra and an international cast conducted by Ulf Schirmer performed a new concert version of *Plump Jack*, which was simulcast on Bavarian Radio and released by PentaTone Classics.

Getty, who studied at the San Francisco Conservatory, has produced a steady stream of compositions since the 1980s, beginning with *The White Election* (1981), a much-performed song cycle on poems by Emily Dickinson. It has been recorded twice—by Kaaren Erickson for Delos and by Lisa Delan for PentaTone—and has been performed in Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall and the Morgan Library (in New York), the Kennedy Center and National Gallery of Art (in Washington, D.C.), and the Hermitage Theatre (in St. Petersburg, Russia), among many other venues. His three-song cycle *Poor Peter* (2005) was included by Lisa Delan and pianist Kristin Pankonin on their PentaTone recital *And If the Song Be Worth a Smile*, which features songs by six contemporary American composers.

Poetry from the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries has often inspired Getty in his vocal compositions. His choral works *Victorian Scenes* (1989, to texts by Tennyson and Housman) and *Annabel Lee* (1990, to a poem by Poe) were premiered by the Los Angeles Master Chorale and Sinfonia at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. Michael Tilson Thomas led the San Francisco Symphony and Chorus in *Annabel Lee* in 1998 and 2004, on the latter occasion also premiering Getty's *Young America* (2001), a cycle of six movements for chorus and orchestra to texts by the composer and by Stephen Vincent Benét. *Joan and the Bells*, a cantata portraying the trial and execution of Joan of Arc, has been performed widely since its 1998 premiere, notably in a 2004 revival in St. George's Chapel of Windsor Castle, under the baton of Mikhail Pletnev. In 2005, PentaTone released a CD of Getty's principal choral works up to that time, performed by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and Chorus (Michael Tilson Thomas conducting) and the Eric Ericson Chamber Choir and Russian National Orchestra (conducted by Alexander Verdernikov). Getty has recently completed choral works based on Keats' *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Match Girl*, and an original poem that he modeled on Masfield, *The Old Man in the Night*. He has written a new setting of the traditional text *Hodie Christus Natus Est* for children's chorus or women's chorus accompanied by chamber ensemble, and is currently expanding that into a triptych of similarly scored Christmas pieces.

Although most of Getty's works feature the voice, he has also written for orchestra, chamber ensembles, and solo piano. In 2010, PentaTone released a CD devoted to six of his orchestral pieces, with Sir Neville Marriner conducting the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, and in 2013 it followed up with a CD of the composer's solo-piano works played by Conrad Tao. Currently in preparation is a PentaTone CD of his chamber music, which will include a string-quartet version of his *Four Traditional Pieces*, a work that was performed in a string-orchestra arrangement by Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg and the New Century Chamber Orchestra in 2012. Other recent performances of particular note featured his ballet *Ancestor Suite*, which in 2009 was given its premiere staging, with choreography by Vladimir Vasiliev, by the Bolshoi Ballet and Russian National Orchestra at the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow, and was then presented at the 2012 Festival del Sole in Napa, California.

Of his compositions Getty has said: "My style is undoubtedly tonal, though with hints of atonality, such as any composer would likely use to suggest a degree of disorientation. But I'm strictly tonal in my approach. I represent a viewpoint that stands somewhat apart from the twentieth century, which

was in large measure a repudiation of the nineteenth and a sock in the nose to sentimentality. Whatever it was that the great Victorian composers and poets were trying to achieve, that's what I'm trying to achieve."

Getty's music is published by Rork Music.

[www.gordongetty.com](http://www.gordongetty.com)

### Christian Elsner – Edgar Allan Poe

Christian Elsner was born in Freiburg im Breisgau, and later studied voice with Martin Gründler, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Neil Semer. After winning prizes at various international competitions, he was invited to sing the major lyric tenor roles at opera houses in Heidelberg, Darmstadt, Weimar, Oslo, Munich, and Paris, as well as at the Salzburg Festival.

As a lieder singer partnered by pianists Hartmut Höll, Graham Johnson, Charles Spencer, Gerold Huber and his steady duo partner, Burkhard Kehring, and as a concert singer, Christian Elsner is a regular guest at many international festivals and at all the major concert halls in Europe, the U.S. and Asia. He has received invitations from conductors such as Christoph Eschenbach, Carlo Maria Giulini, Riccardo Chailly, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Marek Janowski, Mariss Jansons and Christian Thielemann, and has made a number of television broadcasts and CD recordings, including Paul Hindemith's *Das lange Weihnachtsmahl* with the RSB and Marek Janowski in 2004.

Apart from singing, Christian Elsner enjoys writing children's books: *Lennie und die Zauberflöte*, *Lennie in der Wolfsschlucht*, and most recently *Lennie und der Ring des Nibelungen*. He also holds a teaching post at the Conservatoire in Würzburg.

### Etienne Dupuis – Roderick Usher

A rising star on the international stage, Canadian baritone Etienne Dupuis has performed in opera, concerts and recitals throughout Canada and Europe. He recently made his debut at Deutsche Oper Berlin with the role of Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and Zurga in *The Pearl Fishers* and has appeared in the roles of Marcello in *La Bohème* in Vancouver Opera, André Thorel in Massenet's *Thérèse* with Festival de Radio France in Montpellier, and Valentin in *Faust* with Opéra de Montréal. Previously, his portrayals of Papageno, Guglielmo, Silvio, Marcello, Enrico, Mercutio, Lescaut, Valentin, Zurga, John Sorel and Figaro captivated the audiences of Opéra de Montréal, Opéra de Québec, Vancouver Opera, Opéra de Paris, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Operade Montpellier, Opéra de Tours, Opéra de Marseille and Monte Carlo Opera. He will soon make his debut at the Glyndebourne Festival.

### Phillip Ens – Doctor Primus

Since making his operatic debut with the Manitoba Opera in 1985, Canadian bass Phillip Ens has developed an international career performing with major orchestras and opera companies throughout Europe and North America.

From 1993-1997, Mr. Ens was principal bass with the Staatsoper Stuttgart, performing numerous roles including Sarastro (*The Magic Flute*), Banquo (*Macbeth*), Pimen (*Boris Godunov*), and Fafner and Hunding in their new production of the "Ring" cycle. Other European credits during this period include the role of Ramfis in Robert Wilson's new production of *Aida* with La Monnaie in Brussels, Sarastro with Staatsoper Hamburg and Staatsoper Berlin, Colline (*La Bohème*) at the Bayerische Staatsoper, Padre Guardiano (*La Forza del Destino*) for the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Claggart (*Billy Budd*) for the Welsh National Opera, and Hunding (*Die Walküre*) with Teatro Real de Madrid. Numerous orchestral credits include appearances with the BBC Proms series and the festivals of Salzburg and Edinburgh.

Important debuts in the past decade include his Metropolitan Opera debut as Hunding under the baton of James Levine, under whose direction he returned for two new productions as Commendatore (*Don Giovanni*) and Wurm (*Luisa Miller*), as well as Tiresias (*Oedipus Rex*) with Valery Gergiev. Other credits include the Opéra de Paris (Bastille), the Royal Opera House in London's Covent Garden, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and at San Francisco Opera as Claggart, a role he also performed at the Bayerische Staatsoper, Houston Grand Opera, and in Glyndebourne's first-ever production of *Billy Budd*, the DVD production of which received a Grammy® Award nomination as best opera recording of 2012.

Recent role debuts include Arkel (*Pelléas et Mélisande*) and Claudius (*Hamlet*) with Theater an der Wien and Fiesco (*Simon Boccanegra*) with the Canadian Opera Company.

### Lisa Delan – Madeline Usher

American soprano Lisa Delan has won acclaim as an outstanding interpreter of a vast repertoire and is recognized for her versatility and breadth of accomplishment in performance and on recording. She has performed on some of the world's leading concert stages and in festivals from Napa to Novgorod.

Ms. Delan feels privileged to collaborate with composers whose musical lives are still works in progress. She has performed and recorded the music of William Bolcom, John Corigliano, David Garner, Gordon Getty, Jake Heggie, Mikhail Pletnev, Louis Spratlan and Luna Pearl Woolf, among others. The joy of storytelling and sharing the range of human emotion with listeners drives her work both onstage and in the recording studio. She likens song to visual art: "We are all communicating in pictures, all the time; the words are the palette, and in this form music is the canvas and voice is the brush." The soprano particularly enjoys lingering in the subtle shadings and fine lines of musical portraits.

Ms. Delan's artistry can be experienced in recordings on PentaTone Classics: *Joan and the Bells* (2003), *And If the Song Be Worth a Smile* (2009), *The White Election* (2009), *Phenomenon* (2009) and *The Hours Begin to Sing* (2013). Her collaborative recording *Angel Heart* (co-created with composer Luna Pearl Woolf and also featuring Frederica von Stade, Sanford Sylvan, Dan Taylor, Zheng Cao, Matt Haimovitz and Uccello, with narrator Jeremy Irons) will be released on Oxingale Records (North America) and PentaTone Classics (Worldwide) in late 2013.

About Ms. Delan's recordings, critics have noted, "The performance by Lisa Delan reveals her to be a singer with an unusually versatile voice, ranging from rich operatic tones to Broadway belt, with excellent diction and imaginative characterization. Delan has the ability to tell a story through song very effectively..." (*International Record Review*); "I am not sure I have heard a finer American song album..." (*Audiophile Audition*); "Delan expertly dispatches the difficult demands of rhythm and range" (*Opera News*); and "The recitative is here the realm of the exquisite artistry of Lisa Delan" (*Scherzo*). After surveying Ms. Delan's recordings, *Sequenza 21* declared, "As a song interpreter she may well be unequaled."

*For more information please visit [lisadelan.com](http://lisadelan.com)*

### Benedict Cumberbatch – Attendant

Benedict Cumberbatch is one of the U.K.'s fastest-rising stars, famed for his award-winning, Golden Globe-nominated *Sherlock* (BBC). His numerous films include Stephen Spielberg's *War Horse*, Tomas Alfredson's *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, *Atonement*, *Starter for Ten*, *The Other Boleyn Girl* and *The Hobbit*. He will be seen next starring in *Star Trek Into Darkness*, *August Osage County* with Meryl Streep and *Twelve Years a Slave*. Benedict recently wrapped *The Fifth Estate* (Dreamworks)

starring as Julian Assange. In late 2013 he will star as Alan Turing in *The Imitation Game* and in 2014 will co-star in Guillermo del Toro's *Crimson Peak*.

LAMDA trained, his career began in theatre, most famously starring in Danny Boyle's *Frankenstein*, for which he won an Olivier Award, and *After the Dance* (both National Theatre). He also worked with Royal Court, Almeida and West End.

In television, he was recently seen in *Parade's End* (HBO) and *To the Ends of the Earth* (BBC) in starring roles, and in *Small Island* (BBC) and *Stuart a Life Backwards* (BBC), and was nominated for a BAFTA for his career-breaking role as Stephen Hawking in *Hawking* (BBC).

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**THE FOLLOWING IS NOT FOR PUBLICATION:**

For additional information, pronunciation guides, interview access, CDs and photos, please contact Nancy Shear Arts Services, National Press Representative, at 212/496-9418 or [sheararts@nancyshear.com](mailto:sheararts@nancyshear.com).