



## PRESS INFORMATION

# »BREAKING WAVES« ILLUMINATES THE ELBPHILHARMONIE HAMBURG

**Artist duo DRIFT from Amsterdam stages a highlight on the concert hall's facade in spring 2022 to mark the venue's fifth anniversary**

**Hamburg, 20 December 2021: With a spectacular light installation by the Dutch artist duo DRIFT, the Elbphilharmonie is sending a signal of joy and movement to the world in the year of its fifth anniversary. The work is called »Breaking Waves« and uses hundreds of illuminated drones. Choreographed to the second movement of Thomas Adès's Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, which is being performed in the anniversary concert in the Grand Hall on the evening of the anniversary, the moving luminaries playfully bring the concert hall's facade to life. The temporary installation lasts for around seven minutes and will be premiered at the concert hall on 28 April due to the pandemic. The work will also be shown after nightfall on the following three evenings and can be experienced from anywhere in the surrounding harbour area. »Breaking Waves« is realised in close coordination with the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, which is dedicating a four-month solo exhibition to the Dutch artist duo (»DRIFT: Moments of Connection«, 7 January to 8 May 2022).**

DRIFT was founded in Amsterdam by the visual artists Lonneke Gordijn and Ralph Nauta in 2007. Natural phenomena have always been an integral part of their work. In »Breaking Waves«, a piece commissioned by the Elbphilharmonie to mark its fifth anniversary, the artist duo explores the movement of the water that surrounds the Elbphilharmonie and connects that to the movement inside the venue. The relationship between the building, the water and the music constitutes a key element in how the DRIFT artists aim to synchronise visitors with this special Hamburg landmark. »As humans we are admissible to waves in different ways, and can become one with the movement,« says Lonneke Gordijn.

Christoph Lieben-Seutter, General and Artistic Director of the Elbphilharmonie and Laeiszhalle Hamburg: »I'm really looking forward to this artistic work, which will bring the Elbphilharmonie to life in spectacular style. At the Elbphilharmonie, architecture and music come together in a particularly inspiring way. »Breaking Waves« takes this dynamic and transfers it to the building's facade. The collaboration with DRIFT demonstrates once again the concert hall's openness to and interest in other forms of art beyond music.«

The sculpture accentuates DRIFT's mission of bringing art into public spaces so that it can reach a large and broad audience. The artists' core objective is to create physical installations that allow the audience to experience and feel the art with all their senses. Ralph Nauta: »Art should be accessible to as many people as possible. That's why we designed our installation for the public space. When we started working with the Elbphilharmonie, we both immediately agreed that we need to bring what's happening indoors to the outside, where people can see it.«

Hamburg residents and visitors can view the premiere of the installation, which wraps around the west, south and north sides of the building, live on 28 April (time tba) from the surrounding harbour



areas. Further performances will take place on 29 and 30 April, and 1 May. The accompanying music can be accessed via the website [www.elbphilharmonie.de](http://www.elbphilharmonie.de). The piece by Thomas Adès is being performed live at 20:00 on 11 January. The concert is broadcast as a live stream on Arte Concert and on the Elbphilharmonie's digital channels and will also be available free as a video on demand afterwards. The NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra is playing under the baton of its chief conductor Alan Gilbert, with Kirill Gerstein as the piano soloist. »Breaking Waves« was originally planned to accompany the anniversary festival in January 2022. Due to the seriousness of the coronavirus situation at present, the parties involved decided to postpone until the end of April in the hope that the performance can then have the large live audience for which it was created.

The installation is funded by Freundeskreis Elbphilharmonie + Laeiszhalle e.V. which primarily supports musical projects in the Elbphilharmonie and Laeiszhalle and enables its members to actively participate in concert life.

This commission has been organized in collaboration with Superblue.

## **The Elbphilharmonie**

Located in the middle of the Elbe River and surrounded on three sides by water, the Elbphilharmonie offers a unique overall experience of architecture and music. The building houses two concert halls, one large music education area, food & drink areas, the Westin Hamburg Hotel with 244 rooms, 45 private apartments and the publicly accessible Plaza, which provides access to all areas of the building and offers visitors a unique panoramic view of the whole city. The Swiss architectural firm Herzog & de Meuron placed a new glass structure on top of a brick warehouse from the 1960s – the boldly curving roof landscape reaches up 110 metres into the sky. The Elbphilharmonie appears impressive but not intimidating. It is designed for people. A house for everyone.

In the concert area, the foyers open up surprising perspectives and lines of sight and sharpen the senses for the enjoyment of excellently played music. The Grand Hall, where the audience is seated around the stage according to the vineyard principle, is the heart of the Elbphilharmonie, and it makes every live concert an intensive communal experience. There is such a close connection between the stage and the audience that it's impossible not to become completely engaged. The boundary between musicians and listeners becomes blurred, and a respectful feeling of community emerges. This inspires the artists to perform at their best and helps the audience to intuitively understand the music. Questions regarding the genre being performed, and whether the composition is famous or unknown, contemporary or classical, fade to the background. Its artistic programme is all about quality, diversity and breaking down genre boundaries. Lively interpretations of classical masterpieces are just as important as the discovery of contemporary music from various cultures.

## **The cultural city of Hamburg**

In the five years since the Elbphilharmonie first opened its doors, a new self-image has emerged in the cultural city of Hamburg. The city has a long and distinguished cultural tradition – and with the opening of the Elbphilharmonie, it now has a beacon that allows its diversity to shine far beyond the boundaries of the Hanseatic city. The Elbphilharmonie is a symbol for the special characteristics of Hamburg's cultural landscape: open to everyone, uniting contrasts, creating connections. Cross-genre collaborations within the Hamburg scene and a variety of festivals ensure that culture is everywhere in the city and can always be experienced in new and unexpected ways.



Info and tickets: [www.elbphilharmonie.de](http://www.elbphilharmonie.de)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/elbphilharmonie.hamburg](http://www.facebook.com/elbphilharmonie.hamburg)  
Twitter: [www.twitter.com/elbphilharmonie](http://www.twitter.com/elbphilharmonie)  
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Hashtag: [#5YearsofElbphilharmonie](#)  
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You'll find the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg press area, including current photos for editorial use, at [www.elbphilharmonie.de/presse](http://www.elbphilharmonie.de/presse).

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