

# Press Release



## **Baltic Sea Philharmonic and Kristjan Järvi return from sold-out second tour, celebrating discovery and freedom**

- **Covered five sea ports in five cities in five countries**
- **Performed for 3,500 audience members**
- **Played to 4,000 Danish school children**
- **New collaborations with Gidon Kremer and Lidia Baich**
- **Members of Kremerata Baltica embedded in orchestra**
- **Two concerts celebrated 25th anniversary of the German–Polish Treaty of Good Neighbourship**

**Berlin, 26 September 2016.** The 75 members of Baltic Sea Philharmonic are on their way home from an exciting and enthusiastically received series of concerts across the southern part of the Baltic Sea region. Their 'Baltic Sea Discovery' tour lasted 14 days, including 3 days of rehearsal in Kintai, Lithuania, and covered nearly 2,000 km, with the players travelling from Klaipėda in Lithuania to Peenemünde in Germany, stopping in five seaports along the way. The tour is the group's second since it was founded in 2015 and follows its April 'Baltic Sea Landscapes' journey across the northern part of the region.

### **Voyage of discovery**

Under the baton of Kristjan Järvi, Founding Conductor and Music Director, the players, who come from the ten Baltic Sea states, performed to around 3,500 audience members, selling out their concerts in Lithuania and Germany, and presenting 16 encores. They discovered new music and made new friendships, performing Weinberg's rarely played Violin Concerto with Lidia Baich in Klaipėda and Kaliningrad, and with Gidon Kremer in Gdańsk, Copenhagen and Peenemünde. Another groundbreaking collaboration was to have five members of Gidon Kremer's renowned Kremerata Baltica lead the string sections of the orchestra from the Gdańsk concert onwards, offering their seasoned experience to the younger professional players.

In addition to the Weinberg, other musical explorations included Kristjan Järvi's own symphonic version of *Swan Lake*, which surveys the lesser-known themes of Tchaikovsky's much-loved ballet, as well as favourite ones, and Arvo Pärt's *Swansong*. The orchestra continued its tradition of performing folk music as encores, bringing the audiences to their feet in dance at the end of the concerts.

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## **Reconnecting with nature**

The group convened for rehearsals three days before the start of the tour in Kintai, Lithuania, and the natural surroundings supported one of the missions of the orchestra, which is concern for the environment. Kristjan Järvi described the rehearsal period: ‘When we practised in Kintai, we reconnected with nature. Half the orchestra thought I was out of my mind taking them from civilisation into the Baltic jungle. But I told them, “If you realise that this is actually what inspired the music you’re playing, and actually created everything you know about our cultures, then you start to realise that the hierarchy of things is nature, then culture and society, and there are limitless possibilities.” A lot of people think I’m a little crazy because I’m an idealist, but if you don’t idealise things you don’t get anything done. We come from the soil and the sea and the air around us. Once we’re in tune with that, everything starts to fix itself.’

## **A celebration of freedom**

There was also a historic edge to the tour, with the concerts in Gdańsk and Peenemünde dedicated to freedom in Europe and to celebrating the 25th anniversary of the German–Polish Treaty of Good Neighbourship. The Gdańsk concert took place in the impressive European Solidarity Centre, which houses a museum dedicated to the history of the solidarity movement, and many of the players visited the powerful exhibition before the concert. The evening was attended by Nobel Peace Prize winner Lech Wałęsa, who co-founded and headed the Polish Solidarity movement and led the country to peace in the 1980s, and gave a speech at the start of the evening.

The closing concert in Peenemünde at the Usedom Music Festival marked a return to the venue where the concept of the orchestra originated in 2008, and was given under the patronage of German Chancellor Angela Merkel. In his closing speech, Kristjan Järvi explained some of his motivation behind forming the orchestra: ‘We have a very particular mission, and that is to empower the musicians to do things that normally they’d be scared to do. The way we perform is to play around spontaneously. They don’t know what I’m going to do and I don’t know what they’re going to do, but do you know how much fun that is? That’s what life is about – not knowing what’s going to happen. This machine behind me is an unbelievable self-empowerment vehicle.’

## **Changing lives**

Cor anglais player Ivana Jenesova explained this sense empowerment during the tour: ‘I think we’re discovering each other and also ourselves, because we have lots of opportunities to play

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better than we played the day before. I can hear it. When we play together, it's a bit different every time. I can hear how it's changing me.' The orchestra also took this sense of discovery and empowerment to new generations through the five concerts it performed for 4,000 Danish youngsters, in Sønderborg, where they took part in Danish Radio's 'Into the Music' project.

## **Baltic Sea Philharmonic – a new era in performance and presentation**

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic is a new force in music and culture. Taking the traditional orchestral model further than it's gone before, the orchestra is becoming a whole social movement, with a vision for the Nordic region that encompasses the environment, culture and society. It does not just play music: it brings people of all cultures and traditions together; it campaigns for the environment; it searches for future audiences for classical music; it creates compelling concert hall experiences; and it builds a sustainable future for both its members and audiences. And like traditional orchestras, it also plays a wide range of repertoire beautifully, with energy and imagination. Bringing together musicians from the ten countries of the Baltic Sea region – Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden – the orchestra offers hope not only for the future of classical music, but for the future of the planet.

### **Press contact**

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### **Notes to editors:**

#### **'Baltic Sea Discovery' Tour**

+Thursday, 15 September 2016, 6.00 pm, Klaipeda Concert Hall, Lithuania

+Friday, 16 September 2016, 6.00 pm, Cathedral of Kaliningrad, Russia

\*Sunday, 18 September 2016, 7.00 pm, European Solidarity Centre, Gdansk, Poland

\*Tuesday, 20 September 2016, 5.00 pm, Copenhagen (DR Concert Hall), Denmark

\*Saturday, 24 September 2016, 8.00 pm, Peenemünde/Usedom (Kraftwerksmuseum), Germany

### **Programme**

Baltic Sea Philharmonic

Kristjan Järvi, conductor

\*Gidon Kremer, violin

+Lidia Baich, violin

Arvo Pärt: *Swansong* (Littlemore Tractus) for orchestra

Mieczysław Weinberg: Violin Concerto in G minor, Op. 67

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P.I. Tchaikovsky: *Swan Lake* Ballet Music (Arr. K. Järvi)

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## **About the Baltic Sea Philharmonic**

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic is the sister orchestra of the Baltic Sea Youth Philharmonic (BYP), which was founded in 2008 as a joint initiative of the Usedom Music Festival and Nord Stream AG, who have continued to support the orchestra ever since. BYP was awarded the European Culture Prize 2015 in recognition of its exceptional achievements in developing creativity and innovation, and influencing the young classical scene across the Baltic Sea region. Both ensembles bring together orchestra musicians from the ten countries of the Baltic Sea region and share the same ambitions towards culture, society and the environment, upholding the principle that music can unite people of all nationalities and backgrounds and change society for the better, especially in a region that has historically been divided. Baltic Sea Philharmonic was founded in 2015 as the more public-facing side of the Baltic Sea Music Education Foundation, coming together several times a year to tour specific projects across Europe, and beyond, while BYP remains a high-level orchestra that trains musical and social skills in talented young performers and composers. Both orchestras are run by the Baltic Sea Music Education Foundation e. V. based in Berlin, Germany. [www.bmef.eu](http://www.bmef.eu)