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Baltic Sea Philharmonic

The **Baltic Sea Philharmonic** takes the orchestral concert experience to a new dimension. Every performance is a voyage of musical discovery, as the musicians perform the entire programme from memory, creating a one-of-a-kind artistic journey. Each concert is a unique spectacle of sound, light, choreography, visual art and technology, and under the electrifying baton of Music Director and Founding Conductor Kristjan Järvi every performance is an electrifying experience that fizzles with infectious energy.

As a community of musicians from ten Nordic countries, the Baltic Sea Philharmonic transcends boundaries and has become a movement for bringing people together. Embodying all that is innovative and progressive about the Nordic region, this visionary ensemble is taking the traditional orchestral model further than ever before. 'It is a living breathing creature, with boundless energy and enthusiasm for the new – an adventure in itself,' says Kristjan Järvi.

Bringing together musicians from Norway to Russia, the Baltic Sea Philharmonic started life in 2008, initiated by the Usedom Music Festival. Immediately acclaimed for its performances and its powerful message of unity in a historically divided region, it was soon playing at renowned festivals and in the most prestigious concert halls in Europe and abroad, including the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg and the Dubai Opera. In 2015 the European Culture Foundation 'Pro Europe' honoured the orchestra's achievements with the prestigious European Culture Prize. The world's finest artists, including Julia Fischer, the late Kurt Masur, Gidon Kremer and Max Richter, as well as British indie pop band Bastille, all performed with the orchestra. Concerts of the Baltic Sea Philharmonic are broadcast globally. The orchestra's albums for Sony include *Wagner – The Ring, An Orchestral Adventure, Sleeping Beauty, Nutcracker* and a collaboration with Swiss violinist David Nebel. Marking the orchestra's debut on Deutsche Grammophon is Max Richter's album *EXILES* with the Baltic Sea Philharmonic and Kristjan Järvi.

In 2022, at the Usedom Music Festival, members of the orchestra played side by side on stage with the New York Philharmonic as part of the American orchestra's exclusive European residency. Education and training have, alongside international touring, always been at the heart of the orchestra's mission, with a commitment to develop the musicians' professional skills and expand

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their musical horizons, especially in the area of memorised performance. The creation of the Baltic Sea Music Education Foundation in 2013 consolidated a burgeoning education programme, which includes chamber music coaching and special concerts for school students.

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic is an orchestra that challenges and provokes, that dares to be different. It is well known for innovative programmes that throw classical music conventions out of the window, and which represent a new attitude and vision, a way to metaphorically fly instead of walk. The groundbreaking 'Waterworks' (2017/18), in collaboration with Sunbeam Productions, celebrated the life-giving power of water, fusing music, light, sound design and projection art to spectacular effect. With 'Waterworks' the orchestra made its first tour outside Europe, to the United Arab Emirates. 'Midnight Sun' (2019), focusing on the beauty and power of Nordic landscapes, introduced a new model of performing the complete programme not just from memory but also without any breaks, thus creating a seamless flow of music. 'Nordic Pulse' (2018–20), inspired by the Northern Lights, is a signature programme of the Baltic Sea Philharmonic but also the title of a feature-length documentary released in 2020. The film explores the ambitious dreams of Kristjan Järvi and the Baltic Sea Philharmonic as they embark on a historic journey that poses the question: can an orchestra be more than an orchestra? What results is an examination of fear, trust, possibility, empowerment, and the revelation that our real potential lies in creation itself. 'Nordic Swans' (2021/22), a swan-inspired programme of music by Arvo Pärt, Sibelius and Tchaikovsky, featured bespoke concert outfits that enhance the swan theme. With 'Nutcracker Reimagined' (2022/23), the Baltic Sea Philharmonic brings the magical power of fairy tales to life.

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic is passionate about innovation in the digital landscape. Amid the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic the orchestra and Kristjan Järvi started 'Musical Chain', an ongoing series of original music remix videos giving classical gems a contemporary twist. Through this innovative project, the Baltic Sea Philharmonic is evolving from an orchestra into a band, with the musicians becoming producers as well as creators.

'I want to create transformational environments. The audience should feel as if they are suddenly entering a new dimension, a world where anything is possible'

Kristjan Järvi

'The members of the orchestra embody international understanding; they use music as a timeless language that can be understood across borders'

Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany

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'Musical Chain is a very own kind of orchestral music clips in perfect sound quality. Inspired by classical works. It is meant to commemorate when Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians formed a human chain over 600 kilometers in 1989 to demonstrate for their freedom. Now the orchestra members are the unifying force.'

Juliane Voigt, Northern German Broadcasting

'He calls his *Sleeping Beauty* a "dramatic symphony" and indeed the result is gripping, intoxicating, dazzlingly beautiful. With his highly motivated Baltic Sea Philharmonic, Järvi gives the orchestra the role of a narrator.'

Lars von der Gönna, West German General Newspaper

'Kristjan Järvi and his orchestra give a dramatically engaging account of the conductor's new arrangement of Tchaikovsky's ballet, which fizzes with energy.'

Robert Hugill, Planet Hugill

'Playing by heart undoubtedly welds the ensemble together both physically and mentally, and strengthens communication. The atmosphere was carnival-like and colourful, with Järvi inspiring his players like a circus ringmaster'

Hannu Lampila, Helsingin Sanomat

'Keeping Stravinsky's high-octane score from crashing under its own weight is no easy feat for an orchestra, let alone one with all the notes in front of the players' noses. But by heart, like the rest of the almost two-hour, uninterrupted programme? As a kind of story ballet, in which groups of instruments or individuals wander across the stage, in which they dance in rhythm and the concertmaster takes off her pumps in the midst of all this excess energy? This is clearly a different league.'

Joachim Mischke, Hamburger Abendblatt

'In Kristjan Järvi's condensed, dramatic-symphony arrangement of Tchaikovsky's enormous score, the ballet numbers emerged as fireworks. The orchestra sprang from dance to dance, from waltz to polka to pas de deux, one eruption following another, creating a tumultuous sensation. That the musicians played this enormously difficult score completely by heart, while standing, dancing and smiling, and in constant interaction with each other, bordered on the miraculous – a new freedom, music-making from another universe.'

Cornelia Meerkatz, Ostsee Zeitung

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