

Press Release

Innovative Estonian bagpiper Mari Meentalo will join Baltic Sea Philharmonic's 'Midnight Sun' tour

- Summer tour of the **Baltic Sea Philharmonic** and **Kristjan Järvi** from **21–23 June 2023** at the **Berlin Philharmonie, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg** and **Kissinger Sommer**
- Programme inspired by the Nordic phenomenon of the midnight sun features music by **Sibelius, Pärt, Kristjan Järvi, Georgs Pelēcis** and **Stravinsky**, plus works by musicians from the orchestra
- Estonian bagpiper **Mari Meentalo** joins orchestra for the first time on tour
- **Baltic Sea Philharmonic** transforms concert experience into uninterrupted sonic thrills, with a programme played entirely from memory

Berlin, 31 May 2023. The **Baltic Sea Philharmonic** and **Kristjan Järvi** will put bagpipes and other traditional Estonian instruments in the spotlight as part of their '**Midnight Sun**' tour of Germany in June 2023. The Estonian bagpiper and multi-instrumentalist **Mari Meentalo** will accompany the orchestra for the first time on tour. She previously joined the ensemble for a performance at the 2022 Birgitta Festival in Tallinn and for a recording of Kristjan Järvi's *Midnight Sun* ([link](#)), the piece that shares this summer's tour name. Now listeners will get the chance to experience the bagpipes and mouth harp – two instruments rarely heard on concert stages – in this innovative music show. Including these traditional instruments is more evidence that the Baltic Sea Philharmonic and its pioneering conductor are always looking for new possibilities and creative combinations to realise their artistic visions.

The tour kicks off on **21 June** at **Berlin's Philharmonie** before moving on to the sold-out **Elbphilharmonie Hamburg** on **22 June** and concluding at the **Kissinger Sommer** on **23 June**. Audiences can expect an energised and deeply engaging musical journey into the Nordic lands of the never-setting midnight sun. In their unique, signature performance style, the musicians of the orchestra play without any breaks or intermission, and without the use of scores or music stands. The 'Midnight Sun' programme includes works by four orchestral musicians from Estonia, Lithuania and Poland, excerpts from Stravinskys *The Firebird* and **Sibelius's** Symphony No. 2, the second movement of the *Concertino bianco* by Latvian composer **Georgs Pelēcis**, and **Pärt's** *Da pacem Domine*. **Tickets** for the Berlin concert, held in collaboration with the Young Euro Classic international music festival in Berlin, are available [here](#). The 'Midnight Sun' tour is sponsored by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media.

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Experiencing the look and feel of Nordic landscapes

The uplifting, powerful sound of the bagpipes and other traditional Estonian instruments never fails to bring joy to listeners. A leading exponent of these instruments is Estonian bagpipe player and multi-instrumentalist **Mari Meentalo**. After discovering the Estonian folk music tradition as a teenager, she began playing bagpipes at age 15 and quickly earned a reputation for her unique personality and her skills as an instrumentalist and improviser. Since then, she has played at numerous festivals both in Estonia and abroad. On the 'Midnight Sun' tour, Mari accompanies the orchestra in *Midnight Sun*, *Runic Prayer* and *The Dream of Tabu-tabu* and is keen to introduce traditional Estonian instruments to the German audience. 'I think Kirstjan Järvi's non-conservative approach to classical music really amplifies it,' she says. 'It doesn't often happen that Estonian bagpipes or mouth harp gets a chance to be seen as an equal with orchestral instruments and I'm excited to see how the German audience reacts to the combination.' The sound of the Estonian bagpipes and mouth harp seem to reflect the countryside of Estonia, with its vast landscapes and places of exuberant natural richness. And in the 'Midnight Sun' concert the bagpipes and mouth harp give a vibrant accent to the orchestra's reinvention of runic song melodies.

Baltic Sea Philharmonic – a revolution in music and culture

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, visual art, technology, choreography and playing by heart, and under the electrifying baton of Music Director and Founding Conductor Kristjan Järvi every performance has a special energy that's absolutely infectious. But even more than this, 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.

Press contact

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Notes to editors:

'Midnight Sun'

Wednesday, 21 June 2023, 8.00pm, Philharmonie Berlin (Germany)
Thursday, 22 June 2023, 8.00pm, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg (Germany)
Friday, 23 June 2023, 7.30pm, Kissinger Sommer (Germany)

Mari Meentalo
Baltic Sea Philharmonic
Kristjan Järvi

Jean Sibelius / Kristjan Järvi: *Ascending Swans*
Kristjan Järvi: *Runic Prayer*
Maria Mutso: *Sireen*
Mintautas Kriščiūnas & Zuzanna Wąsiewicz: *Hollow in the tree*
Arvo Pärt: *Da pacem Domine*
Jean Sibelius: Symphony No. 2 (excerpts)
Kristjan Järvi: *Midnight Sun*
Georgs Pelēcis: *Concerto bianco*, second movement
Liis Jürgens: *The Dream of Tabu-tabu*
Igor Stravinsky: *The Firebird* (excerpts)

Ticket link Philharmonie Berlin: <https://www.eventim.de/event/baltic-sea-philharmonic-kristjan-jaervi-philharmonie-berlin-16707477/>

About the Baltic Sea Philharmonic

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic is a unique Nordic orchestra that brings together musicians from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden. The orchestra started life in 2008 as the Baltic Sea Youth Philharmonic on the initiative of the Usedom Music Festival. It quickly established an international reputation, not just for its acclaimed performances under the baton of Kristjan Järvi, but also with its powerful message of unity and cooperation in a historically divided region. In 2015 the orchestra's achievements were honoured with the prestigious European Culture Prize by the European Culture Foundation 'Pro Europe'. In 2016 the orchestra was renamed the Baltic Sea Philharmonic. Since then it has toured innovative programmes that throw classical music conventions out of the window and enable audiences to experience new musical dimensions. After becoming the first orchestra in the world to perform Stravinsky's *The Firebird* from memory, the Baltic Sea Philharmonic is now widely known for its commitment to playing entire programmes by heart. The orchestra's growing discography with Kristjan Järvi includes four acclaimed recordings for Sony Classical, the most recent of which is Järvi's own arrangement of Tchaikovsky's ballet *The Nutcracker*. Recorded by the orchestra completely from memory, *Nutcracker. A Dramatic Symphony* was released in December 2022. In addition, Max Richter's album *EXILES*, recorded by the Baltic Sea Philharmonic and Kristjan Järvi, was released in August 2021 on Deutsche Grammophon. In 2022 the Baltic Sea Philharmonic continued its innovative digital project Musical Chain, which it launched in 2020 in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. This unique series of classical remix and original music videos brings musicians from the orchestra together with international artists and creative collaborators. In 2023 the Baltic Sea Philharmonic will once again be able to travel thousands of miles across Europe, beginning in June with its first 'Midnight Sun' tour of Germany. With 'Midnight Sun', the orchestra captures the magic of midsummer nights by weaving the special colours and rhythms of Nordic composers into a total artistic experience combining music, choreography, light and sound design. In September 2023 the orchestra and Kristjan Järvi will give further concerts in Germany and Italy in a second 'Midnight Sun' tour, complete with a new programme. www.baltic-sea-philharmonic.eu