

Press Release



Baltic Sea Philharmonic and Kristjan Järvi enthralled audiences in sold-out concerts in Sweden, Italy and Germany

- **Performed for 11,000 people over 11 days across Sweden, Germany and Italy for ‘Baltic Folk’ and ‘Waterworks’ tours in August 2017**
- **World-premiere memorised performance of Stravinsky’s *The Firebird***
- **Cutting-edge ‘Waterworks’ concert shows fused music, light, visual art, sound design and fashion**
- **Collaborations with Absolute Ensemble, violinist Mikhail Simonyan and pianist Alexander Malofeev**
- **Wiesbaden ‘Baltic Folk’ and Elbphilharmonie ‘Waterworks’ concert recordings available online**

Berlin, 1 September 2017. In one of the most intense and exciting fortnights in its history, the Baltic Sea Philharmonic completed not one, but two international tours in August. In the space of just eleven days, the orchestra, which comprises leading young musicians from the ten countries surrounding the Baltic Sea, performed for 11,000 people in seven cities.

The ‘Baltic Folk’ tour took the ensemble first to Visby, on the Swedish island of Gotland, where on 19 August **Kristjan Järvi**, Founding Conductor and Music Director, conducted the opening performance of a folk-inspired programme of music by Pärt, Rachmaninoff and Stravinsky. ‘Baltic Folk’ continued with sold-out concerts at the Rheingau Music Festival in Wiesbaden, Germany (20 August) and the Merano Music Festival in Merano, Italy (23 August).

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic and Kristjan Järvi then returned to Germany to resume their groundbreaking ‘Waterworks’ tour, which they had begun in May with concerts in Hattingen, Germany, and Copenhagen and Aarhus in Denmark. A spectacular fusion of music, light, visual art, sound design and fashion, ‘Waterworks’, which featured original arrangements of Handel’s *Water Music* and a new orchestration of Philip Glass’s *Agua da Amazonia*, thrilled audiences in the sold-out Berlin Konzerthaus (25 August), the sold-out Peenemünde Kraftwerk (26 August), the open-air concert in Lutherstadt Wittenberg (27 August) and the sold-out Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg (29 August).

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Livestreams of the 'Baltic Folk' concert in Wiesbaden and the 'Waterworks' concerts at Berlin's Konzerthaus and Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie are still available online.

World-premiere: Stravinsky's *The Firebird* from memory

One of the highlights of the 'Baltic Folk' tour was the orchestra's performance, at all three concerts, of Stravinsky's *The Firebird*, in its 1945 orchestral suite version. In a world first, the musicians played the score without sheet music, entirely from memory.

Critics praised the orchestra's thrilling interpretation. Writing in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Guido Holze said: 'The interaction between the players worked out amazingly smoothly in the rhythmically difficult work. The Russian fairytale about the fight between good and evil was given a vivid, multi-faceted performance.'

In preparation, the orchestra had received intensive coaching in memorisation and memorised performance techniques from violinist and strings coach Jan Bjøranger, the founder and artistic director of the innovative string ensemble 1B1 in Stavanger, Norway. For **Kristjan Järvi**, a conductor known for his daring and visionary approach to musical performance, the results were both striking and liberating: 'Not only is performing *The Firebird* this way creating history. It is also incredibly empowering. It has been a great achievement for all of the musicians, to break through their limitations, to cast aside their doubts and fears, and to immerse themselves in a realm of possibilities and freedom.'

Innovative concert experience

With its 'Waterworks' tour, the Baltic Sea Philharmonic introduced a radical new style of performance presentation, combining music with cutting-edge lighting design, projection art and sound design. A 14-strong team from Sunbeam Productions, including lighting designer Bertil Mark, projection artist Philipp Geist and sound designer Ruben Ferdinand, transformed the musical performance into a fully immersive concert experience.

The musicians also sported an exciting new look for 'Waterworks', courtesy of a clothing collaboration with Estonian fashion house Baltika Group. Designers from Monton, one of Baltika's five international brands, created 13 different outfits for the men, and nine different outfits for the

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women, all of which were styled to reflect the water theme of the concert programme.

After the 'Waterworks' concert in Hamburg, the orchestra gave a special performance for hundreds of people outside the Elbphilharmonie, who had been watching the main concert on a giant screen. The impromptu mini-concert was a huge hit with both the audience and the local media. The *Hamburger Abendblatt* reported: 'What a special evening! As the musicians and Kristjan Järvi performed further encores for an enthusiastic audience in front of the Elbphilharmonie Hall, there was an almost Mediterranean atmosphere. When was this last seen in Hamburg?'

'Waterworks' audiences were enthralled by the new immersive style of presentation. As Mona Schalin, who was in the audience in Berlin, enthused afterwards on Facebook: 'The power of music is incredible. We felt this last night, experiencing the total integration of music, light, space and colour in the "Waterworks" concert.'

Jan Paersch, writing for German newspaper TAZ, summarizes the concert in Peenemünde – a historical venue where the Nazis developed the A4 rocket: 'The tremendous enthusiasm of these young classic-punks performing outstanding music also expelled all possibly remaining Nazi spirit from Peenemünde.'

Inspirational collaborations

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic welcomed an impressive range of musical partners for its tours in August. For 'Waterworks', three members of the New York-based **Absolute Ensemble** – trumpeter Charlie Porter, bassist Mat Fieldes and percussionist David Rozenblatt – were embedded in the orchestra. Russian-born violinist **Mikhail Simonyan** was the featured soloist in Philip Glass's Violin Concerto No. 2 'The American Four Seasons'.

Fifteen-year-old Russian pianist **Alexander Malofeev**, one of the most exciting talents of his generation, joined the orchestra on its 'Baltic Folk' tour to perform Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2. Looking back on the collaboration, he said: 'I had heard a lot about this unique orchestra and Kristjan Järvi's groundbreaking approach to performing, and I was looking forward to experience it first-hand. Kristjan has his own spectacular way of involving the audience in the emotional experience, and I was happy to be in the middle of this magic. I also loved performing

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with the musicians of the Baltic Sea Philharmonic, who are true professionals with a strong sense of team spirit.'

For the final 'Waterworks' concert, at Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie, the orchestra collaborated with the girls choir **Mädchenchor Hamburg** for a special encore performance of Arvo Pärt's *Kuus kuus kallike* (Lullaby Song).

Baltic Sea Philharmonic – a revolution in music and culture

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic is a new paradigm for music making in the 21st century. Its concerts are a unique spectacle of sound, light, projection art and choreography, and its performances, under the electrifying baton of Music Director Kristjan Järvi, have a special passion and energy that's infectious. But more than this, as a community of musicians from ten countries, the Baltic Sea Philharmonic transcends geographical and historical 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.

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Notes to editors:

'Baltic Folk' Tour 2017

20 August 2017, Rheingau Musik Festival (Wiesbaden, Kurhaus), Germany – recorded by Medici.TV
www.youtube.com/watch?v=RFJjUbK5E5w

'Waterworks' Tour 2017 – available concert recordings

25 August 2017, Berlin (Konzerthaus, Young Euro Classic), Germany – recorded by Arte
www.arte.tv/de/videos/077618-002-A/baltic-sea-philharmonic-young-euro-classic

29 August 2017, 8.00 pm, Hamburg (Elbphilharmonie), Germany – recorded by Elbphilharmonie
Will be broadcasted during the Hamburg Cruise Days from 8 to 10 September 2017 on a LED screen in front of the Elbphilharmonie concert hall and will be available as video-on-demand shortly:
www.elbphilharmonie.de/de/worldwide/waterworks/58

About the Baltic Sea Philharmonic

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic is a unique orchestra that brings together musicians from Denmark, Estonia,

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Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden. It started life in 2008 as the Baltic Sea Youth Philharmonic, a joint initiative of the Usedom Music Festival and Nord Stream AG. 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 region that has historically been divided. In 2015 the orchestra was awarded the prestigious European Culture Prize for its achievements in developing creativity and innovation, and influencing the cultural scene across the Baltic Sea region. Newly renamed the Baltic Sea Philharmonic, in 2016 the orchestra toured eight countries, collaborated with Gidon Kremer and the Kremerata Baltica, and celebrated the release by Sony Classical of its recording of Wagner's *Ring Cycle*, arranged by Henk de Vlieger. The orchestra continues its commitment to innovation and to the environment in 2017 with an immersive, water-themed concert show that features cutting-edge visual art, lighting and sound design. www.baltic-sea-philharmonic.eu