

Press Release



Baltic Sea Philharmonic and Kristjan Järvi kick off 'Nordic Pulse' tour on 17 September at the Merano Music Weeks in Italy

- **New programme marks 100th anniversary of independence for Finland, Baltic States and Poland, and ten years since the creation of Baltic Sea Philharmonic**
- **Orchestra to play music by Sibelius and Kalniņš entirely from memory**
- **Norwegian violinist Mari Samuelsen is featured soloist in works by Arvo Pärt and Kristjan Järvi**
- **Orchestra will open 25th Usedom Music Festival in Peenemünde in presence of German Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel, and perform in Merano, Munich, Halle (Saale) and Gdansk**

Berlin, 12 September 2018: The Baltic Sea Philharmonic and **Kristjan Järvi** will start their '**Nordic Pulse**' tour on 17 September with a concert at the Merano Music Weeks, the third of a total of four international tours in the orchestra's anniversary year. The 'Nordic Pulse' programme focuses on leading composers from the Baltic Sea region, both past and present. The orchestra will then travel from Merano to Germany, where it will perform for the first time in Munich on 18 September. After a performance in Halle (Saale) on 20 September, the Baltic Sea Philharmonic will open the 25th Usedom Music Festival in Peenemünde in presence of the German Chancellor Dr. **Angela Merkel** on 22 September. The tour will conclude with a performance in Gdansk (Poland) on 24 September.

'Nordic Pulse': a celebration of freedom and identity

'Nordic Pulse' is a double celebration for the Baltic Sea Philharmonic. It marks ten years since the orchestra's creation and 100 years of independence for the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as well as Finland and Poland. Under its Estonian-born conductor Kristjan Järvi, the orchestra brings together music by composers from all five countries, in a programme that celebrates the energy, strength and natural wonders of these proud Baltic Sea nations.

Representing Poland is **Wojciech Kilar**, whose *Orawa* for chamber string orchestra is inspired by the highland folklore and landscapes of the Tatra Mountains. Contemporary Lithuanian composer **Gediminas Gelgotas** captures the power of nature in *Mountains. Waters. (Freedom)*, an uplifting and majestic piece that the Baltic Sea Philharmonic premiered in 2015. Norwegian violinist **Mari**

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Samuelsen joins the orchestra to perform two works by Estonian composers: *Fratres* by **Arvo Pärt** and *Aurora*, a violin concerto by **Kristjan Järvi** which is inspired by the iconic Northern Lights. Finland is represented by its most famous composer, **Sibelius**, whose concert suite from 'The Tempest' is considered by some to be one of his greatest achievements. The programme closes with the propulsive first movement of Latvian composer **Imants Kalniņš's** 'Rock' Symphony from 1972, its driving rhythms and rock elements combining in a powerful expression of protest against the authorities of the time.

Järvi sees strong parallels between the declaration of independence by the Baltic States and the birth of the Baltic Sea Philharmonic. 'These nations saw the opportunity to assert themselves a century ago,' he says. 'People came together to create a nation, a new identity. We created the Baltic Sea Philharmonic with the same spirit. By bringing together musicians from all around the Baltic Sea, the orchestra has always stood for unity.'

Playing by heart, from the heart

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic made history on its 2017 'Baltic Folk' tour by becoming the first orchestra to perform Stravinsky's *The Firebird* – in its 1945 orchestral suite version – **completely from memory**. For 'Nordic Pulse', the musicians will once again set aside their stands and sheet music to give memorised performances of the final two works on the programme, Sibelius's concert suite from 'The Tempest' and the first movement of Kalniņš's 'Rock' Symphony.

Norwegian violinist and long-time Baltic Sea Philharmonic strings instructor **Jan Bjøranger** will coach the orchestra in advanced memorisation and performance techniques, as he did ahead of the 'Baltic Folk' tour in 2017. Kristjan Järvi described the experience of performing *The Firebird* by memory for the first time ever as 'incredibly empowering', adding that 'it was 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.'

Historic return to Usedom

The **Usedom Music Festival** celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2018. The festival, which is dedicated to music from around the Baltic Sea, has a special significance for the Baltic Sea Philharmonic, because it was through an initiative of the festival and its director Thomas Hummel that the orchestra was created in 2008. This year, as the Baltic Sea Philharmonic celebrates its

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tenth anniversary, the orchestra has the honour of opening the 25th edition of the Usedom Music Festival with 'Nordic Pulse'.

Baltic Sea Philharmonic – a revolution in music and culture

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic, which celebrates its tenth anniversary in 2018, is a new paradigm for music making in the 21st century. Its concerts are a unique spectacle of sound, light, projection art and choreography; its passion for playing orchestral works from memory transforms the musical experience for both players and audiences; and its performances, under the electrifying baton of Music Director Kristjan Järvi, have a special passion and energy that's infectious. But even more than this, as a community of musicians from ten Nordic 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.

Press contact

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Notes to editors:

'Nordic Pulse' – September 2018

Monday, 17 September 2018, 8.30 pm, Merano (Merano Music Festival), Italy
Tuesday, 18 September 2018, 8.00 pm, Munich (Herkulesaal), Germany
Thursday, 20 September 2018, 7.30 pm, Halle/Saale (Händel Halle), Germany
Saturday, 22 September 2018, 8.00 pm, Peenemünde (Usedom Music Festival), Germany
Monday, 24 September 2018, 5.00pm, Gdansk (Polish Baltic Philharmonic), Poland (without soloist)

Baltic Sea Philharmonic
Kristjan Järvi
Mari Samuelsen

Wojciech Kilar: *Orawa*
Gediminas Gelgotas: *Mountains. Waters. (Freedom)*
Arvo Pärt: *Fratres* for violin, percussion and string orchestra
Kristjan Järvi: *Aurora* for violin and orchestra
Jean Sibelius: 'The Tempest' concert suite (arranged by Kristjan Järvi)
Imants Kalniņš: 'Rock' Symphony (Symphony No. 4), first movement

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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. In 2018 the Baltic Sea Philharmonic celebrates its tenth anniversary. The orchestra 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 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 Vlioger. In 2017 the Baltic Sea Philharmonic made history by becoming the first orchestra to perform Stravinsky's *The Firebird* from memory. The orchestra continues its commitment to innovation and to the environment in 2018 with an immersive, water-themed concert show that features cutting-edge visual art, lighting and sound design. www.baltic-sea-philharmonic.eu