

Press Release



Baltic Sea Philharmonic and Kristjan Järvi celebrated special anniversaries on acclaimed concert tour of Italy, Germany and Poland

- **'Nordic Pulse' tour marked 100th anniversary of independence for Baltic States, Finland and Poland, and Baltic Sea Philharmonic's tenth anniversary**
- **Orchestra performed for 4,000 people in five cities over eight days**
- **Performances included opening concert of 25th Usedom Music Festival in Peenemünde in presence of German Chancellor Angela Merkel**
- **Orchestra played works by Sibelius and Kalniņš entirely from memory**
- **Debut collaboration with Norwegian violinist Mari Samuelsen**

Berlin, 26 September 2018. The Baltic Sea Philharmonic and **Kristjan Järvi** completed a special anniversary tour of Italy, Germany and Poland with a concert the day before yesterday in Gdańsk. The eight-day **'Nordic Pulse'** tour was a double celebration for the Baltic Sea Philharmonic: it marked ten years since the orchestra's creation and also the 100th anniversary of independence for Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Finland and Poland. Composers from all five countries were represented on the programme: Wojciech Kilar from Poland; Lithuanian Gediminas Gelgotas; Arvo Pärt and Kristjan Järvi from Estonia; Finland's greatest composer Jean Sibelius; and Imants Kalniņš from Latvia.

The orchestra reinforced its commitment to **memorised performance** by playing a special concert suite from Sibelius's *The Tempest* arranged by Kristjan Järvi, as well as the first movement of Kalniņš's 'Rock' Symphony and two encores, completely by heart. Norwegian violinist **Mari Samuelsen** joined the orchestra for the first time as soloist in Arvo Pärt's *Fratres* and Kristjan Järvi's *Aurora*, a violin concerto inspired by the iconic Northern Lights.

'Nordic Pulse' – a vibrant journey through Europe

The orchestra's 65 musicians, drawn from the ten countries of the Baltic Sea region, prepared for the tour with six days of intensive rehearsals in the Bavarian village of Pielenhofen. There they gave a public dress rehearsal before setting off for the opening 'Nordic Pulse' concert in Merano, Italy, on 17 September – the start of an eight-day tour in which the musicians would travel more than 1,800 km across Europe and play to around 4,000 concert goers.

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The performance in Merano was the orchestra's third appearance at the **Merano Music Festival**. On 18 September the Baltic Sea Philharmonic made its debut in **Munich** with a concert in the Bavarian capital's beautiful Hercules Hall. Staying in Germany, the orchestra performed in **Halle (Saale)** on 20 September, in a concert in memory of the late former German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who in 2015 presented the Baltic Sea Philharmonic with the European Culture Award at a ceremony in Dresden.

The orchestra next gave the opening concert of the 25th **Usedom Music Festival** in Peenemünde on 22 September. The sold-out concert was attended by 1,300 people, including the German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who in her opening address praised the orchestra's 'depth and elegance' and said: 'The culture of the Baltic Sea region has gained a whole new sound, and the orchestra over the years much, much appeal.' She also recognised the Baltic Sea Philharmonic's contribution to uniting people across the region: 'The members of the orchestra embody international understanding; they use music as a timeless language that can be understood across borders.'

The Peenemünde concert was streamed live to 5,000 viewers on the Baltic Sea Philharmonic's Facebook page, and was also recorded by Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR) for a later broadcast. The orchestra's 'Nordic Pulse' tour ended in **Gdańsk** at the Polish Baltic Philharmonic concert hall on 24 September with a concert to mark the 100th anniversary of the formation of the Polish state.

Critical and public acclaim

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic's signature memorised performances on the 'Nordic Pulse' tour made a striking impression on both critics and concert goers alike. In his review of the Munich concert for the online music magazine KlassikInfo, Klaus Kalchschmid praised the excitement generated by the orchestra's playing from memory: 'Free to move and express themselves physically, without the restriction of chairs and music stands, every musician performed visually as well as sonically. They gave an inspired performance, and were 100 per cent in the music while still connecting with the audience in the hall. Järvi himself was electrifying as conductor.'

Writing about the climax of the same concert for the Süddeutsche Zeitung, Michael Stallknecht commented: 'The brass let rip such that the "Rock" Symphony could probably have been heard outside in the Court Garden. Inside, the musicians were dancing and Järvi's audience was swept

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up in applauding the encores.’

Debora Nischler, a concert goer who was in the audience in Merano, wrote on Facebook afterwards: ‘It is great that you have the courage to go beyond the limits and conventions of a classical music performance. Now the last step is to transform the concert into a true standing concert – not just on stage but also for the audience. Believe me, it’s hard to stay in your seat and keep that “I’m at a cultural event so I have to behave seriously” expression when every inch of your body is vibrating. There were two elderly women sitting next to me and I was wondering which of us would be the first to jump up and throw her hands in the air.’

Still more to come in 2018

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic has one more special tour which will cap its landmark tenth year: in November 2018 the orchestra will perform its groundbreaking ‘Waterworks’ programme in collaboration with Sunbeam Productions in Abu Dhabi and Dubai on its first ever tour of the United Arab Emirates.

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.

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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