

# Press Release



## **Baltic Sea Philharmonic and Kristjan Järvi close out tenth-anniversary year with successful debut tour of United Arab Emirates**

- **Musicians performed entire concert programme from memory at Dubai Opera and Abu Dhabi's Emirates Palace, playing to more than 2,800 concert goers**
- **Spectacular 'Waterworks' programme featured cutting-edge lighting, sound design and projection art, in collaboration with Sunbeam Productions**
- **Tour marked launch of new partnership with UAE's Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development**

**Berlin, 16 November 2018.** The Baltic Sea Philharmonic and **Kristjan Järvi** have completed a historic tour of the United Arab Emirates. The 'Waterworks' tour, which featured performances in **Abu Dhabi** on 11 November and **Dubai** on 14 November, was the orchestra's first concert tour outside Europe and the final tour of its tenth-anniversary year. In another first for the Baltic Sea Philharmonic, the entire programme was performed from memory at both concerts.

### **'Waterworks': from the Baltic Sea to the Persian Gulf**

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic's landmark tour of the UAE involved 60 musicians, drawn from the ten countries of the Baltic Sea region. The players came together in Germany for three days of intensive rehearsals before making the 6,500km journey to Abu Dhabi. They attracted a total audience of more than 2,800 people at the **Dubai Opera** and a sold-out **Emirates Palace** in Abu Dhabi.

The orchestra's revolutionary 'Waterworks' programme, presented in collaboration with **Sunbeam Productions**, brought a new dimension to the concert experience. State-of-the-art lighting by Bertil Mark, sound design by Chris Ekers and cutting-edge projection art by Philipp Geist created an immersive environment in which sound and music were fused with light and images, to spectacular effect.

The water-inspired musical programme reflected the idea that the waters of the world connect the peoples of the world. The music brought together selections from Handel's *Water Music*, which was composed for a grand royal barge procession on the River Thames in London in 1717, with a new orchestration of *Agua da Amazonia*, a ballet suite written in the early 1990s by Philip Glass

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and inspired by the Amazon and its tributaries. Handel's music was framed by two contemporary pieces, *Drenched* by Charles Coleman and *Flux* by David Rozenblatt. The concert in Dubai also featured Glass's Violin Concerto No. 2 'The American Four Seasons', performed by Russian-born soloist Mikhail Simonyan. For both concerts, the orchestra was joined by three members of the New York-based Absolute Ensemble: trumpet player Charlie Porter, bassist Mat Fieldes, and percussionist and *Flux* composer David Rozenblatt.

On its recent tours in 2017 and 2018, the Baltic Sea Philharmonic has championed memorised performances of selected symphonic works; the ensemble made history in 2017 by becoming the first orchestra to perform Stravinsky's *The Firebird* by heart. The 'Waterworks' tour of the UAE took playing by heart to a new level, as the orchestra, for the first time in its ten-year history, performed the entire concert programme from memory.

Audience members were full of praise for the orchestra's performances. Julie Adrienne Troup, who attended the concert in Abu Dhabi, commented afterwards on Facebook: 'A performance of mesmerising inspirational beauty that resonated with us. Wow!' Another Abu Dhabi concert goer, Grace S. Thomson, wrote on Facebook: 'It was spectacular. Young musicians and a beautiful selection of masterpieces. We loved it!'

## **New partnership with UAE culture ministry**

The orchestra's 'Waterworks' tour marked the start of a new strategic collaboration with the UAE's Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development, one of the tour's principal supporters. The Baltic Sea Philharmonic and the Ministry anticipate that this successful tour will lay the ground for future cultural collaborations between the Baltic Sea countries and the United Arab Emirates.

As a celebration of the new partnership, the orchestra's concert at Abu Dhabi's Emirates Palace included a special collaboration with Emirati singer **Jasim Mohamed Abdullah**, who performed the traditional song 'Sayyidi ya sayyed saddati'. The UAE Minister of Culture and Knowledge Development, H.E. Noura Al Kaabi, attended the concert in Abu Dhabi.

## **A return to the Baltics in March 2019**

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic will begin its eleventh year of international touring in March 2019 with '**Nordic Pulse**', a tour of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland and Russia. Kristjan Järvi will conduct

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the orchestra in a programme including a memorised performance of his arrangement of the concert suite from Tchaikovsky's great ballet *The Sleeping Beauty*.

## **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**

Alexander Datz, Press Officer, Baltic Sea Music Education Foundation e.V.

Mobile: +49 176 741 61 157

[alexander.datz@bmef.eu](mailto:alexander.datz@bmef.eu), [www.bmef.eu](http://www.bmef.eu)

### **Note to editors:**

#### **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 began 2018 with a major new project called 'Nordic Pulse'. Inspired by the celebrations of the independence of the Baltic states Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, 'Nordic Pulse' also celebrated 100 years of independence for Finland and Poland, and ten years of the Baltic Sea Philharmonic. [www.baltic-sea-philharmonic.eu](http://www.baltic-sea-philharmonic.eu)