

Press Release

Baltic Sea Philharmonic and Kristjan Järvi complete acclaimed ‘Nordic Pulse’ tour of Baltic States, Finland and Russia, including remarkable 70-minute memorised world premiere

- **Musicians played new concert suite from Tchaikovsky’s *The Sleeping Beauty* by heart – a world-premiere performance**
- **Violinist David Nebel and singer-songwriter Mick Pedaja joined orchestra for special collaborations**
- **Orchestra travelled 1,100 km and performed to 4,500 concert goers**
- **‘Midnight Sun’ tour of Germany in June and July to feature performances at Philharmonie in Berlin and Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg**

Berlin, 22 March 2019. The **Baltic Sea Philharmonic** and **Kristjan Järvi** completed their first major tour of 2019 on 21 March with a special concert at the historic Catherine Palace nearby St. Petersburg. The ‘**Nordic Pulse**’ tour, which began in Palanga, Lithuania, on 11 March, featured six performances in eleven days. Joined by Swiss violin soloist **David Nebel** and Estonian singer-songwriter **Mick Pedaja**, the orchestra travelled more than 1,000 km on its journey from Palanga to St. Petersburg, via Riga, Tallinn and Helsinki. Around 4,500 concert goers experienced the Baltic Sea Philharmonic’s unique spirit and energy in venues including the Alvar Aalto-designed Finlandia Hall in Helsinki and the Mariinsky II, the newest part of the Mariinsky Theatre complex in St. Petersburg. Audiences also witnessed the orchestra perform, **completely from memory**, a new 70-minute concert suite drawn from Tchaikovsky’s ballet masterpiece *The Sleeping Beauty*.

‘Nordic Pulse’ – an exhilarating Baltic adventure

The orchestra’s 68 musicians came together in the Lithuanian resort town of **Palanga** for five days of intensive rehearsals ahead of the opening tour concert. The Baltic Sea Philharmonic’s debut performance at the Palanga Concert Hall took place on a national holiday in Lithuania, with the country celebrating its Restoration of Independence Day. From Palanga, the orchestra travelled to **Riga** to perform in the Great Guild Hall, where it had last played in 2010 and where it gave its first ever concert, in 2008. The tour continued in **Tallinn**, the city of Kristjan Järvi’s birth, with a sold-out concert at the Estonia Concert Hall, before moving on to Helsinki and a debut performance at Finlandia Hall. ‘Nordic Pulse’ concluded with not one but two concerts in **St. Petersburg** – the first

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at the ultra-modern Mariinsky II, and the second at the grand, Rococo-style Catherine Palace with its famous Amber Chamber. Alongside the 'Nordic Pulse' tour, the Baltic Sea Philharmonic also held a parallel **Talent Tour**, auditioning top music students in Palanga, Riga, Tallinn, Helsinki and St. Petersburg, with the aim of recruiting the best talent from across the region to join the orchestra on future tours.

Playing by heart – a Tchaikovsky world premiere

A major highlight of the 'Nordic Pulse' tour was the unveiling of a new concert suite, arranged by Kristjan Järvi, of music from Tchaikovsky's *The Sleeping Beauty*. The 70-minute suite was performed **entirely from memory**. The musicians of the Baltic Sea Philharmonic have been playing pieces by heart since 2017, and have performed whole concerts from memory, but *The Sleeping Beauty* was the orchestra's longest single memorised work so far. 'The suite is a condensed version of the whole ballet,' explains Järvi, 'and comprises 3,056 bars of music. It takes what we've been doing in the realm of memorisation to a new level once again.' As on previous tours, the memorised performances proved a revelation for audiences, with one concert goer, Massimo Nunzi, enthusing: 'This is a completely new way to approach classical music. This is the future.' It certainly is the future for the Baltic Sea Philharmonic, which for its upcoming 'Midnight Sun' tour to Berlin and Hamburg in June and July 2019 will perform the entire programme from memory.

Inspired by nature – and focused on the environment

'Nordic Pulse' took inspiration from nature and at the same time underlined the orchestra's commitment to the environment. The musical programme was infused with themes of renewal and fresh life, evident in Kristjan Järvi's *Aurora* for violin and string orchestra – a work inspired by both the warmth of spring and the lights of the aurora borealis – and in the awakening of Princess Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty*. Sensitivity to the Nordic landscape shone through in both Pēteris Vasks's second violin concerto *Vientuļais Eņģelis* (Lonely Angel) and the 2018 Violin Concerto by Lithuanian composer Gediminas Gelgotas, all performed together with violinist **David Nebel**. Special guest **Mick Pedaja** added a mystical dimension with songs directly inspired by his natural surroundings, especially the forests of Estonia. Pedaja described his collaboration with the Baltic Sea Philharmonic as 'very special', adding, 'It's amazing to have this orchestra with me on stage. I feel very open and fearless when I perform with these musicians.'



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Beyond the music of the tour, two of the Baltic Sea Philharmonic's concerts were directly focused on the environmental cause. The performance in Helsinki was a benefit concert for the John Nurminen Foundation, which directs projects dedicated to protecting the waters of the Baltic Sea. The Foundation's Secretary General, Annamari Arrakoski-Engardt, commented: 'It is wonderful that we can bring people together to support the protection of the Baltic Sea in a natural way through culture and music. The musicians of the Baltic Sea Philharmonic are impressive and credible ambassadors for this cause.' The final concert of the tour, at the Catherine Palace nearby St. Petersburg, was a special performance for delegates to the 20th annual Baltic Sea Day, an international forum that focuses on ways to protect the Baltic Sea environment.

Acclaim from critics and audiences

The irrepressible energy of the Baltic Sea Philharmonic's playing in Helsinki impressed the reviewer from the *Helsingin Sanomat*, Hannu Lampila, who wrote: 'In an entertaining first half, Järvi's *Aurora* captured the joyous dance of the sun, and seemed to call all the nations of the Baltic Sea together in a merry midsummer celebration.' The same reviewer praised the orchestra's unique memorised performance of *The Sleeping Beauty*: 'Playing by heart undoubtedly welds the ensemble together both physically and mentally, and strengthens communication. The atmosphere was carnival-like and colourful, with Järvi inspiring his players like a circus ringmaster.'

Latvian national composer **Pēteris Vasks** was in the audience at Riga's Great Guild Hall to hear his violin concerto *Lonely Angel*. He commented after the concert: 'Who cannot like Kristjan Järvi? He has such a youthful spirit, and carries all the young musicians with him. He's also looking for new methods of presenting orchestral music, and new ways to attract young people to experience symphony orchestras. It's a miracle.'

'Midnight Sun' tour to come

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic's **'Midnight Sun'** tour of Germany in June and July 2019 is the next step on the orchestra's journey to realise hitherto unseen and unheard concert experiences. The tour is inspired by the phenomenon of the sun never setting at night, and will feature Norwegian violinist **Mari Samuelsen** and **Mick Pedaja**. The debut of 'Midnight Sun' will be on 26 June at the



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Berlin Philharmonie. A second performance will follow at Hamburg's **Elbphilharmonie** on 2 July.

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; 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:

Upcoming tour: 'Midnight Sun' – June/July 2019

Wednesday, 26 June 2019, 8.00 pm, Berlin (Philharmonie), Germany

Ticket sale: https://www.ticketmaster.de/event/313997?camefrom=de_va_05389

Tickets: 29 EUR | 24 EUR | 17 EUR

Tuesday, 2 July 2019, 8.00 pm, Hamburg (Elbphilharmonie), Germany (sold out)

Programme 'Midnight Sun'

Baltic Sea Philharmonic

Kristjan Järvi

Mari Samuelsen and Mick Pedaja

Einojuhani Rautavaara: *Cantus Arcticus* Op. 61

Kristjan Järvi: *Aurora* for violin and orchestra

Arvo Pärt: *Fratres* for violin, percussion and string orchestra

Pēteris Vasks: *Vientulais Engelis* (Lonely Angel), Meditation for violin and string orchestra

Max Richter: *Dona Nobis Pacem*

Igor Stravinsky: *The Firebird* (1945)

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



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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's achievements were honoured with the prestigious European Culture Prize by the European Culture Foundation 'Pro Europe'. Newly renamed the Baltic Sea Philharmonic, in 2016 the orchestra collaborated with Gidon Kremer and the Kremerata Baltica, and in 2017 became the first orchestra to perform Stravinsky's *The Firebird* from memory. The Baltic Sea Philharmonic celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2018 and also 100 years of independence for Finland, the Baltic States and Poland with 'Nordic Pulse', a programme of music by leading Nordic composers which the orchestra toured to Switzerland, Italy, Germany and Poland. The orchestra continues its commitment to memorised performance in 2019 with a new programme, 'Midnight Sun', which will be performed entirely from memory. www.baltic-sea-philharmonic.eu