

Press Release

Baltic Sea Philharmonic and Kristjan Järvi will start tour to Italy and Germany in two weeks with new ‘Divine Geometry’ programme

- **Tour features concerts at Merano Music Festival on 20 September and Usedom Music Festival on 21 September**
- **Programme explores connections between Baroque and minimalism**
- **Usedom Music Festival concert features German premiere of *Music for Ensemble and Orchestra* by Steve Reich**
- **Debut collaboration with American pianist Simone Dinnerstein**
- **Baltic Sea Philharmonic to perform entire programme from memory**

Berlin, 04 September 2019. The **Baltic Sea Philharmonic** and **Kristjan Järvi** will tour Italy and Germany this September with ‘**Divine Geometry**’, an adventurous new programme that imaginatively recasts Baroque masterworks alongside music by giants of American minimalism. Joined by US pianist **Simone Dinnerstein**, the orchestra will return to Merano in Italy on 20 September to give the closing concert of the **Merano Music Festival**. The Baltic Sea Philharmonic will then travel to Peenemünde, on the island of Usedom, to give the opening concert of the **Usedom Music Festival** on 21 September. The performance in Merano will be the orchestra’s third appearance at the Merano Music Festival in as many years. Usedom is the ensemble’s spiritual home, and was where the original idea for the orchestra was born in 2008. The Baltic Sea Philharmonic’s performance in Peenemünde this September will be its twelfth annual concert at the Usedom Music Festival.

‘Divine Geometry’ – Baroque brilliance and minimalist mastery

‘Divine Geometry’ explores the fascinating connections between Baroque music and minimalism, and exemplifies the Baltic Sea Philharmonic’s unique way of giving audiences a fresh perspective and a new kind of concert experience. The programme connects the past to the present by merging Baroque sensuality and minimalist modernism. It begins with one of the supreme monuments of the Baroque era, **Bach**’s Chaconne from the Partita No. 2 in D minor for solo violin, BWV 1004, in a contemporary orchestration by Arman Tigranyan. Music by another Baroque great, **Handel**, has been given a sparkling reinterpretation by conductor and composer **Kristjan Järvi** in *Too Hot to Handel*. Drawing from Handel’s Op. 3 and Op. 6 concerti grossi, this piece

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bridges orchestrations of Handel with original music by Järvi, and includes electric bass and electric piano in the scoring. 'It's kind of a Handel journey,' says Järvi. 'I hope that audiences don't see it as an old piece, but as a new piece by Handel, just written in the 21st century.'

Between the Bach and the Handel/Järvi, American pianist **Simone Dinnerstein** makes her debut with the Baltic Sea Philharmonic in the Piano Concerto No. 3 by master minimalist **Philip Glass**. Composed in 2017 for Dinnerstein, who is renowned for her interpretations of Bach's keyboard works, Glass's concerto is scored for piano and strings, a combination that has been rarely used since Bach's time.

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic's programme at the Usedom Music Festival adds another minimalist icon into the mix – **Steve Reich**. His *Music for Ensemble and Orchestra* (2018) was co-commissioned by the Baltic Sea Philharmonic together with the New York Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony, the London Symphony Orchestra and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Reich's first orchestral work in more than 30 years, *Music for Ensemble and Orchestra* will receive its German premiere at the Usedom Music Festival. Kristjan Järvi describes the piece as 'essentially a modern concerto grosso'. He says, 'Reich and Glass are writing in their own unique languages but you can hear the connections with Baroque music. This whole programme is a juxtaposition of the old and the new, and I think it's a great marriage.'

Playing by heart

In 2017 the Baltic Sea Philharmonic made history by becoming the first orchestra in the world to perform Stravinsky's *The Firebird* **completely from memory**, bringing a thrilling extra dimension to the performance. In Summer this year the ensemble evoked storms of enthusiasm by the audience in the Berlin Philharmonie and the Elbphilharmonie Hall in Hamburg by playing its 'Midnight Sun' programme (over 100 minutes of music) by heart. Performing without sheet music has since become a trademark of the ensemble, and this September the orchestra will play the entire 'Divine Geometry' programme by heart. 'Performing from memory is all about chemistry and communication,' says Järvi. Playing by heart intensifies the connection between the players, bringing them closer together, and is a natural reflection of the Baltic Sea Philharmonic's mission to unite people across the whole Nordic region.

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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 technology; 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:

'Divine Geometry' – September 2019

Friday, 20 September 2019, 8.30 pm, Merano (Merano Music Festival), Italy
Saturday, 21 September 2019, 8.00 pm, Peenemünde (Usedom Music Festival), Germany

Programme 'Divine Geometry'

Baltic Sea Philharmonic
Kristjan Järvi
Simone Dinnerstein

Johann Sebastian Bach: Chaconne, arranged by Arman Tigranyan
Steve Reich: *Music for Ensemble and Orchestra* (German premiere, Usedom only)
Philip Glass: Piano Concerto No. 3
George Frideric Handel: *Too Hot to Handel* Concerti Grossi Suite, arranged by Kristjan Järvi

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 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

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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 has continued its commitment to memorised performance in 2019 with a new programme, 'Midnight Sun', which it performed entirely from memory. www.baltic-sea-philharmonic.eu