

Press Release



Baltic Sea Philharmonic makes Hungarian debut with acclaimed memorised performance at Müpa Budapest

- **Kristjan Järvi conducted orchestra in ‘Midnight Sun’ concert featuring music by Grieg and Stravinsky**
- **100-minute programme performed entirely by heart for 1,656 concert goers in sold-out hall**
- **Debut collaboration with Budapest-born pianist József Balog**

Berlin, 21 November 2019. The **Baltic Sea Philharmonic** gave its first ever performance in Hungary on 19 November, performing to a sell-out audience of 1,656 concert goers in the Béla Bartók Concert Hall at **Müpa Budapest**. Under the baton of Founding Conductor and Music Director **Kristjan Järvi**, the musicians played the entire 100-minute ‘Midnight Sun’ programme of music by **Grieg** and **Stravinsky** from memory. Budapest-born pianist **József Balog** joined the orchestra as soloist in Grieg’s Piano Concerto. The concert also included another of Grieg’s most celebrated works – the *Peer Gynt* Suite No. 1 – and Stravinsky’s 1945 orchestral version of *The Firebird*, a piece which the Baltic Sea Philharmonic became the first orchestra in the world to perform completely from memory, in August 2017 on the Baltic Sea island of Gotland.

A new kind of concert

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic wowed the Budapest audience with its dynamic music making and innovative presentation. With no music stands on stage, and with most of the players standing up and free to move, the orchestra had a striking look as well as a thrilling sound. The musicians not only performed the complete programme from memory, but also played it as a single continuous ‘track’, interweaving movements of the *Peer Gynt* suite with movements of the Piano Concerto.

The orchestra gave the enthusiastic audience in the Béla Bartók Concert Hall two special encores – the Finale from Tchaikovsky’s *Swan Lake*, and an Estonian folk song, *Arg Kosilane*, which the musicians sang and played in a rousing, joyous spirit.

A first collaboration with József Balog

The ‘Midnight Sun’ concert was Hungarian pianist József Balog’s debut with the Baltic Sea

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Philharmonic. A highly experienced performer, having given more than 1,000 concerts in the last 20 years as a soloist and chamber musician, he has previously collaborated with such orchestras as the Hungarian National Philharmonic Orchestra, the Aarhus Symphony Orchestra, the Ukrainian National Philharmonic and the Jerusalem Chamber Orchestra. Performing with the Baltic Sea Philharmonic in his home city, he was a superb partner in the Grieg concerto and embraced Kristjan Järvi's imaginative approach of surrounding the concerto's first movement with movements from the *Peer Gynt* suite.

Looking ahead to 2020

The performance in Budapest was the Baltic Sea Philharmonic's final concert of 2019. The orchestra and Kristjan Järvi begin 2020 with an exciting new collaboration with British indie band Bastille for 'Channel Aid – Live in Concert' at Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie on 4 January. Major European tours later in the year see the orchestra perform in Poland, Germany, Belgium, Italy and Russia.

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.

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Note to editors:

About the Baltic Sea Philharmonic

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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 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 new programmes 'Midnight Sun' and 'Divine Geometry', both of which it performed entirely from memory. www.baltic-sea-philharmonic.eu