

Press Release

Berlin 6 May 2020. The **Baltic Sea Philharmonic** continues to face an unprecedented situation with the global COVID-19 pandemic. Owing to national and international travel restrictions, social distancing measures and bans on large public gatherings, the orchestra has regrettably had to postpone its first major European tour of 2020, '**Midnight Sun**'. Originally planned to run between 20 June and 1 July, with concerts in Szczecin (Poland) and Berlin, at the Kissinger Sommer Festival in Germany, and in St. Petersburg and Chelyabinsk in Russia, the tour has been rescheduled for **March 2021**. 'Midnight Sun' concerts are now set to take place in **Szczecin** on 12 March, at the Elbphilharmonie in **Hamburg** on 14 March, and in **Berlin** on 15 March.

While the Baltic Sea Philharmonic and **Kristjan Järvi** are still scheduled to undertake their '**Nordic Pulse**' tour of Germany, Italy and Sweden in September 2020, the orchestra is constantly monitoring the COVID-19 situation and consulting regularly with concert presenters. Until further notice, planning for the tour concerts at the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg on 5 September, the Beethovenfest Bonn on 5 and 6 September, the Merano Music Festival on 10 September, the Usedom Music Festival on 12 September and a concert in Stockholm on 13 September will continue.

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic is not silently waiting for live performances to resume. Beginning this month, it will launch a range of innovative online projects which showcase the creativity, the musical energy, and the solidarity of this unique international ensemble. From Music for Peace, a virtual orchestra of 108 musicians in lockdown performing Shostakovich's epic 'Leningrad' Symphony, to Musical Chain, a series of special musical-chain performances featuring members of the orchestra and artistic collaborators, the Baltic Sea Philharmonic and Kristjan Järvi will harness the latest audio and video technologies to bring the unique atmosphere of their live performances into homes around the world.

'Midnight Sun' to shine again in 2021

'Midnight Sun' is a spectacular reinvention of the concert experience, inspired by the Nordic summertime phenomenon of the never-setting sun. The programme features an eclectic selection of works by composers including Rautavaara, Pärt, Kristjan Järvi, Stravinsky and Tchaikovsky. With no music stands on stage, and the musicians able to stand and move and interact with each other, the orchestra uses memorisation and choreography to achieve a wholly transformative

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freedom and energy in performance. When 'Midnight Sun' debuted in Berlin in 2019, the Baltic Sea Philharmonic was acclaimed by audiences and critics for the originality of its presentation, with the musicians praised for the commitment and joy of their playing. Although this year's 'Midnight Sun' tour sadly cannot go ahead as planned, 'Midnight Sun' will return in March 2021 with three performances in Poland and Germany; further performances in this period may be possible, but are not yet confirmed. Tickets already purchased for the 23 June 2020 'Midnight Sun' performance at the Berlin Philharmonie will be valid for the new Berlin date (15 March 2021), or they can be returned for refunds.

New online projects offer light in dark times

Subject to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the months ahead, the Baltic Sea Philharmonic and Kristjan Järvi are still planning to tour Germany and Italy this September with 'Nordic Pulse', an exhilarating exploration of music by Nordic composers past and present. But until the orchestra can definitely take to the stage again, it will continue its musical mission of international collaboration online, with a series of innovative digital projects. The first of these is **Music for Peace**, an ambitious 15-minute 'virtual orchestra' performance of an excerpt from the first movement of Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony, the 'Leningrad'. This project has been produced in collaboration with the Open Sea Foundation to mark the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe, and will premiere online on 8 May. In place of a live performance of the 'Leningrad' Symphony that was set to take place at the Berlin Konzerthaus on 9 May, the new digital production brings together sound and video recordings by 108 musicians in their homes. Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony, which was performed in the besieged city of Leningrad on 9 August 1942, quickly became popular in the Soviet Union and the West as a symbol of freedom and hope in the face of oppression and occupation. The Baltic Sea Philharmonic's new recording brings together musicians from 18 countries, and carries a message of peace and solidarity with the millions of people in lockdown around the world.

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic and Kristjan Järvi, in collaboration with Sunbeam Productions, are also working on another new digital project called **Musical Chain**, to be launched in the early summer. This dedicated online campaign is inspired by historic human chains, such as the Baltic Way, which was a peaceful political demonstration on 23 August 1989 when around two million people joined hands to form a human chain across the three Baltic states. Musical Chain will

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feature musicians from the Baltic Sea Philharmonic joining with creative collaborators for a series of musical-chain videos, in which, for example, a piece of music is transformed by one performer after another, or new pieces are composed by different musicians on the same theme. The project continues the Baltic Sea Philharmonic's inspirational journey of bringing people together and exploring new ideas and innovative formats.

Links to these online projects will be available on the Baltic Sea Philharmonic's website and social media channels.

Baltic Sea Philharmonic – a revolution in music and culture

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic takes the orchestral concert experience to a new dimension. Every performance is a voyage of musical discovery, as the musicians perform the entire programme from memory, creating a one-of-a-kind artistic journey. Each concert is a unique spectacle of sound, light, visual art and technology, and under the electrifying baton of Music Director and Founding Conductor Kristjan Järvi every performance has a special energy that's absolutely infectious. But even more than this, as a community of musicians from ten Nordic countries, the Baltic Sea Philharmonic transcends 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.