



Press Release

Baltic Sea Philharmonic returns to stage with successful 'Nordic Pulse' tour and sends a strong message of unity

- **Orchestra and Kristjan Järvi gave sold-out concerts at Merano Music Festival and Usedom Music Festival, adhering to all COVID-19 safety regulations**
- **Ensemble of 39 musicians performed entire programme from memory, with featured soloists drawn from orchestra**
- **Music by composers from across the Baltic Sea region, from Grieg and Beethoven to Gelgotas and Järvi**
- **Merano and Usedom concerts both recorded for radio broadcast**

Berlin 14 September 2020. After an unprecedented break from live performance because of the COVID-19 crisis, the **Baltic Sea Philharmonic** and **Kristjan Järvi** returned to the stage this month with three hugely successful concerts in Italy and Germany. The orchestra's '**Nordic Pulse**' tour, curtailed from a planned total of six concerts because of the pandemic, went ahead with performances at the **Merano Music Festival** on 10 September and the **Usedom Music Festival** on 12 September. With social distancing regulations in place, around 500 concert-goers attended the sold-out performance in Merano, and around 400 attended each of two sold-out concerts in Peenemünde, Usedom. The Baltic Sea Philharmonic safely followed all relevant COVID-19 protocols, and toured as a smaller-sized ensemble numbering 39 musicians. The orchestra's exhilarating performances of music by Nordic composers past and present drew enthusiastic ovations from audiences at both venues.

Return to favourite festivals

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic's concert at the Merano Music Festival was its **fourth acclaimed performance** there in as many years. In Peenemünde, where the Baltic Sea Philharmonic has performed every year since its formation in 2008, the orchestra gave two concerts in the same evening. The later event was a special concert of the Usedom Music Festival to mark the **30th anniversary of German reunification**, and was attended by the Prime Minister of Mecklenburg Western Pomerania, Manuela Schwesig. This concert, and the performance in Merano, were both



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recorded for future radio broadcast. Deutschlandfunk Kultur will broadcast the Peenemünde concert on 20 October at 8pm.

'Nordic Pulse' – an innovative celebration of the North

The 'Nordic Pulse' programme took the audiences on an exciting musical journey through the Baltic Sea region. Composers from countries all around the Baltic Sea were represented, including Beethoven (with three movements from his Symphony No. 5), Tchaikovsky (scenes from *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake*, arranged by Kristjan Järvi), Stenhammar (*Mellanspel*), Nielsen ('Aladdin's Dream' from the *Aladdin Suite*), Gediminas Gelgotas (*To the Skies*), and Kristjan Järvi (*Aurora, Nebula* and 'Midnight Snow' from *White Dragon*). The musicians performed the entire 70-minute-plus programme from memory, and as a single unbroken stream of music, with individual pieces intertwined. With no music stands on stage, and most of the 39 players standing and free to move and interact with each other and the conductor, the Baltic Sea Philharmonic looked and felt like an ensemble of soloists. A tailor-made projection underlined the 'Nordic Pulse' theme in the Usedom concerts. Members of the ensemble took the soloist roles in several pieces, including the violinists Evgenia Pavlova and Ksenia Ivakina in 'Aurora', violist Maximilian Procop in 'Midnight Snow' from *White Dragon* and clarinetist Alexey Mikhaylenko and bassoonist Arseniy Shkaptsov in *To the Skies*.

For conductor Kristjan Järvi, 'Nordic Pulse' sends a message of unity at a time when countries should be working together to tackle global problems, from COVID-19 to climate change. In an interview for Deutschlandfunk Kultur ahead of the concerts in Peenemünde, he said: 'The programme is reflecting why we are actually doing what we are doing in this orchestra. And that is not only to play music, but that we have chosen to come together from these different countries, overlooking all of our histories and differences and embracing our unity at a time when the world seems to be lacking in humanity. We are trying to escape and come together in something that is truly a vehicle of togetherness and love. We are celebrating Beethoven's legacy this year, and he was somebody who stood for all these same things 250 years ago.'

Acclaim from critics and concert-goers

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic's 'Nordic Pulse' performances were warmly received by audiences and critics alike. After attending a full dress rehearsal in the German spa town of Bad



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Schussenried, where the orchestra gathered to prepare for the tour, the reviewer for the Schwäbische Zeitung wrote: 'A shimmering, sensuous and extremely sensual hour with this sparkling ensemble was poignant proof of the boundlessness of music.' The Ostsee-Zeitung critic wrote of the Usedom concerts: 'The irrepressible joy of playing was transformed into a breathtaking sonic experience.' Also attending the concerts in Peenemünde was Cornelia Pieper, the German consul general in Gdańsk, Poland. She commented afterwards: 'It is simply incredible what these young musicians are achieving.' And posting on Facebook, Usedom concert-goer Fred Martin said: 'An unforgettable event. Conductor and orchestra fused to a unity and a wonderful harmony of sound.'

Online innovation continues with 'Musical Chain' videos

With many of their planned concerts unfortunately postponed or cancelled in the last six months, the Baltic Sea Philharmonic and Kristjan Järvi have been busy producing innovative online music experiences. The next release in the orchestra's '**Musical Chain**' series of remix videos is '**Beethoven's Twilight**', with music written and produced by Kristjan Järvi, based on Beethoven's Symphony No. 5. The video will be available on the Baltic Sea Philharmonic's social media channels later this month.

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.

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Notes to editors:

'Nordic Pulse' – September 2020

Thursday, 10 September 2020, 8.30 pm, Merano (Merano Music Festival), Italy

Saturday, 12 September 2020, 5.00 pm and 8.00 pm, Peenemünde (Usedom Music Festival), Germany

Programme 'Nordic Pulse'

Baltic Sea Philharmonic

Kristjan Järvi

Henryk Górecki: *Three Pieces in Old Style* (1st movement)

Robert Koch: *Liquid*

Carl Nielsen: 'Aladdin's Dream' from *Aladdin Suite*

Ludwig van Beethoven: Symphony No. 5 (selections)

Edvard Grieg: 'Mountain King' from *Peer Gynt Suite No. 1*

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky: *The Sleeping Beauty* – Dramatic Symphony arranged by Kristjan Järvi (selections)

Wilhelm Stenhammar: *Mellanspel*

Edvard Grieg/Kristjan Järvi: *Midnight Mood*

Gediminas Gelgotas: *To the Skies*

Kristjan Järvi: *Aurora*

Kristjan Järvi: *Nebula*

Sven Helbig: *Bell Sound Falling Like Snow*

Kristjan Järvi: 'Midnight Snow' from *White Dragon*

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky: *Swan Lake* – Dramatic Symphony arranged by Kristjan Järvi (Finale)

Jean Sibelius: 'Song of Praise' from *Swanwhite*

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 since then has toured innovative programmes that throw classical music conventions out of the window and enable audiences and the musicians alike to experience new musical dimensions. After becoming the first orchestra in the world to perform Stravinsky's *The Firebird* from memory, the Baltic Sea Philharmonic is now widely known for its commitment to playing entire programmes by heart. The orchestra and Kristjan Järvi started 2020 with an exciting collaboration, performing with British indie band Bastille at Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie. Further performances this year will take the ensemble to Germany and Italy. The Baltic Sea Philharmonic's second recording for Sony Classical was released in May, featuring violinist David Nebel and Kristjan Järvi together with the London Symphony Orchestra. In July the orchestra and Kristjan Järvi launched 'Musical Chain', a new online format with a unique series of remix videos, featuring musical gems recut for the 21st century. www.baltic-sea-philharmonic.eu