

# Press Release

## Sony Classical to release new Baltic Sea Philharmonic album

### *Sleeping Beauty* on 13 November 2020

- Kristjan Järvi conducts orchestra in his arrangement of Tchaikovsky's iconic ballet as a dramatic symphony
- Sony Classical to also release three singles from the album – 'Pas d'action: Desiré sees Aurora', 'Garland Waltz', and 'The Blue Bird and Princess Florine'
- Album is orchestra's third recording for Sony Classical, after *The Ring: An Orchestral Adventure* (2016) and *Stravinsky and Glass Violin Concertos* (2020)

**Berlin 9 October 2020.** The Baltic Sea Philharmonic's latest album *Sleeping Beauty* will be released on 13 November. The new Sony Classical recording sees **Kristjan Järvi** conducting the orchestra in his own arrangement of Tchaikovsky's fairytale ballet *Sleeping Beauty*. Condensing and transforming the near three-hour score into a dramatic symphony of around 70 minutes, Järvi gives new life to this most iconic of theatre music compositions. The musicians of the Baltic Sea Philharmonic performed this version of *Sleeping Beauty* entirely from memory during their March 2019 '**Nordic Pulse**' tour of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland and Russia, and the album was recorded in St. Petersburg at the end of the tour. Playing the score by heart transformed the musicians into storytellers who felt like they were telling the fairytale for the first time. ' As well as releasing the complete album on 13 November, Sony will release three singles showcasing celebrated moments and characters from the ballet – 'Pas d'action: Desiré sees Aurora' (9 October), 'Garland Waltz' (23 October) and 'The Blue Bird and Princess Florine' (6 November).

### **From ballet to dramatic symphony**

The new album follows in the spirit of Järvi's previous Tchaikovsky releases on Sony – *The Snow Maiden* and *Swan Lake* – in reshaping sublime fairytale pieces for contemporary audiences. Järvi believes that masterworks such as *Sleeping Beauty* have lost some of their appeal in the theatre world with the evolution of technology. 'Great music will always remain great music,' he says, 'but it constantly needs to be updated, not only interpreted. Making a dramatic symphony from a ballet is a step in this direction of constant reinvention, because times change and technology evolves. We need to keep these masterpieces alive by modernising them; we could call it a more involved



# Press Release

form of interpretation.'

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic is the perfect partner for Järvi's enterprising reinvention of Tchaikovsky's music. The ensemble is constantly renewing the musical heritage of the Nordic lands around the Baltic Sea which it calls home, and furthermore is reimagining what an orchestra can be in today's society. Challenging classical music conventions, the Baltic Sea Philharmonic creates unique concert experiences that fuse sound, light, visual art and technology, and performs entire programmes from memory, with the musicians able to stand, move and interact more freely with each other, the conductor and the audience. Järvi explains: 'Playing by heart is not done to impress, or show that we have the capacity to memorise complex scores, but to evolve the orchestra as an art form into a living, breathing organism where the main sensation is not reading music but expressing ourselves intuitively and building collective trust in our innate intelligence. This frees us from concentrating on prerequisites and allows us to focus on the delivery of the message, and on reaching to the emotional core of each other and our audience.'

## **Storytelling and the art of memorisation**

The musicians of the Baltic Sea Philharmonic were no strangers to memorising complex scores when they started working on Järvi's version of *Sleeping Beauty* ahead of the 'Nordic Pulse' tour in early 2019. However, for many of the players, this was the longest piece of music they had ever memorised. Adding to the challenge posed by the music's duration, some of the many sections in Järvi's adaptation were unlabelled in the score, offering the players no mental connection with characters or moments from the ballet. However, Polish principal violist **Marzena Malinowska** came up with a solution that helped both her and other musicians in the orchestra memorise the complete score. 'I knew I needed to make more connections and signposts in the score to be able to memorise the music,' she says. 'So I set about adding titles for the untitled sections. I sourced these titles from the original fairytale, but mostly from the ballet itself. Adding in the names of dances, or of the other fairytale characters from Act III, helped complete the picture in my mind, and gave me a route to follow. I think having all the titles was helpful for everybody, and I'm absolutely sure that I couldn't have memorised the whole piece without having the story connected to the music I had to play.'

Memorising the score and playing it by heart turned the Baltic Sea Philharmonic players into storytellers who felt like they were telling this famous fairytale for the first time. 'Performing from

## Press Release

memory changed our relationship with Tchaikovsky's music,' says Malinowska. 'When you're playing ballets and operas in an orchestra you're usually hidden in the pit, and the stars of the show are the dancers or singers, who are responsible for telling the story and making it strong. We knew it was our responsibility to be the storytellers. In that moment you feel incredibly connected to each other on stage, and to the audience. And you feel creative: you don't feel that you're recreating something that has been done hundreds of times already.'

### **A burgeoning Sony Classical discography**

*Sleeping Beauty* joins the Baltic Sea Philharmonic's growing discography on Sony Classical. The orchestra and Järvi's first recording for the label, released in September 2016, was *The Ring: An Orchestral Adventure*, an arrangement for orchestra of Wagner's *Ring Cycle*. In May of this year Sony Classical released an album of Stravinsky and Glass violin concertos featuring the young Swiss violinist David Nebel in his debut concerto recording, with Järvi conducting the Baltic Sea Philharmonic in Stravinsky's neoclassical Violin Concerto in D major and the London Symphony Orchestra in Glass's Violin Concerto No. 1. *Gramophone* praised Nebel's interpretation of the Stravinsky and the energetic playing of the Baltic Sea Philharmonic, with the magazine's reviewer concluding: 'This is a tremendously impressive debut album, and the Stravinsky performance is among the very best.'

### **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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# Press Release

## Notes to editors:

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky 1849–1893

### **SLEEPING BEAUTY · DORNRÖSCHEN**

A DRAMATIC SYMPHONY ARRANGED BY KRISTJAN JÄRVI

Sony Classical 19439786612

Total time: CD: 68.30

Available as of 13 November 2020

## Singles

### **[Track 28] Pas d'Action: Desiré sees Aurora**

Marius Malanetchi (Cello)

Annika Oser (English Horn)

Available as of 9 October 2020

### **[Track 13] Garland Waltz**

Available as of 23 October 2020

### **[Track 44] The Blue Bird and Princess Florine**

Kristine Beitika (Flute)

Ekaterina Kornishina (Flute)

Alexey Mikhaylenko (Clarinet)

Available as of 6 November 2020

## 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](http://www.baltic-sea-philharmonic.eu)