

Press Release

Baltic Sea Philharmonic's Digital Talent Tour concludes after live video-conference auditions for 91 applicants from all around the Baltic Sea region

- **Orchestra moved recruitment drive entirely online in 2020 in response to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions**
- **Live virtual auditions in front of Baltic Sea Philharmonic principals followed first-round video auditions from over 200 candidates**
- **Applicants and orchestra musicians praise opportunity for live interaction through innovative audition process**

Berlin 2 February 2021. The **Baltic Sea Philharmonic** has completed its first-ever [Digital Talent Tour](#), having moved its 2020 recruitment drive online because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the week of 18–22 January 2021, the orchestra held **live video-conference auditions** for 91 candidates from the entire Baltic Sea region. These 91 musicians were selected from more than 200 candidates who had applied between 15 October and 30 November 2020 and had submitted recorded video performances. The live virtual auditions were held in front of a jury comprising ten Baltic Sea Philharmonic principal musicians and conductor **Kristjan Järvi**, with the candidates given 15–20 minutes to tell the jury about themselves and perform selected repertoire that they had prepared. Following the live virtual auditions, the jury made a final selection of **70 musicians**, who will now join the Baltic Sea Philharmonic's pool of outstanding players for upcoming international tours and exciting opportunities on stage, in the studio and online.

A new kind of audition process for unprecedented times

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic constantly strives to refresh and expand its roster of musicians, and was set to run its Talent Tour 2020 audition programme alongside its planned '**Midnight Sun**' tour of Poland, Germany and Russia in June and July 2020. When that tour was postponed because of the pandemic, the Baltic Sea Philharmonic immediately started to develop innovative digital projects and solutions. Recognising that there was a significant hunger among musicians to showcase their talents and artistic personality at a time of drastically reduced performance opportunities, the orchestra launched a two-stage Digital Talent Tour combining video and online technology with an in-person virtual audition.

Like the regular Talent Tour, the Digital Talent Tour was open to applicants aged 18 to 28 from, or

Press Release

studying in, one of the ten countries around the Baltic Sea – Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden. The orchestra always aims to recruit musicians who share the same qualities and spirit that make the Baltic Sea Philharmonic unique in the orchestral world: a fearlessness, a willingness to push boundaries and embrace new levels of freedom and ways of performing, and a passion for storytelling in their music making and in their communication with audiences and their fellow musicians. The 91 applicants selected for the live virtual auditions represented the full spectrum of orchestral instruments, with 36 string players, 12 brass players, 24 woodwind players, 7 harpists, 6 percussionists and 6 pianists.

Empowering musicians on both sides of the screen

In common with the Baltic Sea Philharmonic's other digital initiatives of recent months, including the innovative ['Musical Chain'](#) series of classical remix videos, the Digital Talent Tour aims to connect, unite and empower musicians amid an extremely challenging landscape for the performing arts. The orchestra's principals had important responsibilities throughout the entire Digital Talent Tour audition process, from helping to choose the audition repertoire, to assessing the initial video applications, and then conducting the live virtual auditions. By helping to appraise and interview their peers, these experienced members play a key role in shaping and developing the unique personality of the orchestra as a whole.

As jurors, the principals felt it was important at the live auditions to create a supportive atmosphere for the candidates. Principal flautist **Kristine Beitika**, from Latvia, said: 'When I listened to the applicants I wanted them to succeed and feel confident and happy about their playing. Having had this experience I know that it will help me for my own auditions. It was important for applicants to realise that there is not much to worry about when you're at an audition, that the jury definitely knows how it feels to play an audition and that they will do everything they can to make you feel at ease.' Principal violist **Marzena Malinowska**, from Poland, added: 'Because of traditions and the need for efficiency, standard auditions tend to be anonymous, brutal, mechanical and sometimes even traumatising. So it's a privilege to be given the responsibility to design an audition ourselves, and I very much enjoyed interacting with the applicants, and simply trying to treat them the way I'd wish to be treated myself.'

Applicants who were selected for the second round certainly valued the opportunity to perform in a

Press Release

live virtual audition in front of a jury. Spanish clarinetist **Alejandro Lobato**, who is studying in Sweden, said: 'An online audition is the best idea right now, because I consider that an audition has to be live and direct, and not just based on a video recording. During the online audition all the jurors were very professional and polite, and it was a good experience to share some music with them and also tell them about my own experience. The Baltic Sea Philharmonic is an excellent fit with my own philosophy: I like the fact that the orchestra approaches every concert as a new experience, and that is what I've always wanted to do in concerts – to create something different with every performance.' Lobato was one of the second-round candidates chosen by the jury to join the Baltic Sea Philharmonic's pool of talented musicians, and the orchestra looks forward to working with him and all the other successful applicants in the near future.

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.

Press contact

Alexander Datz, Spokesperson, Baltic Sea Music Education Foundation e.V.

Mobile: +49 176 741 61 157

alexander.datz@bmef.eu, www.bmef.eu

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

Press Release

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 started 2020 with an exciting collaboration, performing with British indie band Bastille at Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie. In July, with the COVID-19 pandemic halting live performances, the orchestra and Kristjan Järvi launched 'Musical Chain', a new online format with a unique series of classical remix videos. The Baltic Sea Philharmonic returned to the stage in September 2020, touring Italy and Germany with a new 'Nordic Pulse' programme. Sony Classical released two albums by the orchestra in 2020: in May, a recording of Stravinsky's *Violin Concerto* featuring David Nebel; and in November, Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty*, newly arranged by Kristjan Järvi as a dramatic symphony. In 2021 'Musical Chain' will continue with special collaborations and guest artists, and depending on the progress of the pandemic, the Baltic Sea Philharmonic is planning to perform at the Usedom Music Festival in September among others. www.baltic-sea-philharmonic.eu