

# Press Release

## **Baltic Sea Philharmonic and Kristjan Järvi to tour Italy, Slovenia, Germany and Poland in September 2021 with new concert experience ‘Nordic Swans’**

- **Orchestra’s first major European tour since September 2020 will feature concerts in Merano, Verona, Ljubljana, Peenemünde and Szczecin**
- **Swan-inspired programme includes Arvo Pärt’s *Swansong*, Sibelius’s *The Swan of Tuonela*, and Tchaikovsky’s *Swan Lake* arranged by Kristjan Järvi**
- **Musicians to perform complete programme from memory, with special choreography and bespoke concert outfits to enhance swan theme**
- **Dynamic lighting and real-time digital sound design will complement unique musical performance**

**Berlin 29 June 2021.** After 12 months of unprecedented interruptions to live performance, the **Baltic Sea Philharmonic** and **Kristjan Järvi** are set to return to European touring in September 2021. The orchestra’s **‘Nordic Swans’** tour of Italy, Slovenia, Germany and Poland from **3–12 September** will feature performances in **Merano, Verona, Ljubljana, Peenemünde/Usedom** and **Szczecin**. All concerts will depend on the progress of the pandemic.

Following two days of rehearsal in Bucharest, where the orchestra is making its debut at the Enescu Festival on 30 and 31 August, the Baltic Sea Philharmonic will begin the ‘Nordic Swans’ tour at the Merano Music Festival (3 September). The orchestra’s next concert is at Verona’s Teatro Filarmonico (4 September), where it last played in 2015. A debut for the ensemble in Ljubljana follows on 6 September, before the musicians travel to Germany for the Usedom Music Festival celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Peenemünde Historical-Technical Museum on the Baltic Sea island of Usedom (11 September). The tour will conclude with a livestreamed debut for the orchestra at Szczecin’s strikingly designed Philharmonic Hall (12 September).

### **‘Nordic Swans’ – celebrating a Baltic bird of beauty**

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic’s new programme is inspired by one of nature’s noblest creatures – the swan. This majestic bird is often visible on the Baltic coast, especially at sunset. For the Romantics, the swan was a symbol of loyalty, purity and elegance. A swan draws the hero’s boat in Wagner’s opera *Lohengrin* and appears in the Finnish national poetry epic *Kalevala*.



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Kristjan Järvi explains his fascination with the bird: 'Swans are creatures of great purity and beauty, and all the Nordic countries have them in their culture, which is why we're focusing the repertoire in this way.' The programme opens with **Arvo Pärt's** hymn-like and contemplative **Swansong**, and continues with the most well-known of **Sibelius's** *Four Legends from the Kalevala*, **The Swan of Tuonela**. The programme climaxes with the world's most popular music on the theme of swans, **Tchaikovsky's** ballet **Swan Lake**, in a special reworking by Kristjan Järvi. Explaining his aim was to 'highlight the brilliance of Tchaikovsky's epic work' and also 'keep the music alive for younger generations', Järvi arranged the score as a Dramatic Symphony that combines the composer's famous melodies with more rarely heard sections of the original ballet. The Baltic Sea Philharmonic's recording of Järvi's similarly inspired arrangement of Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* was released on Sony Classical in November 2020 and nominated for the Opus Klassik 2021 in the categories 'Ensemble/Orchestra of the Year' and 'Symphonic Recording of the Year'.

## **A unique spectacle of multisensory dimensions**

For Kristjan Järvi, the swan also inspires a sense of wonder, and of being transported to a different dimension. 'It is the symbol of a majestic feeling of infinity,' he says. 'And this is what I try to instil in people with everything that I do – to think with a sense of the infinite.' The Baltic Sea Philharmonic embodies this ambition in its innovative approach to performance presentation, offering audiences a transformative, multisensory experience that throws classical concert conventions out of the window.

For its 'Nordic Swans' concerts, the orchestra will perform the entire 90-minute programme from memory and without an intermission, with most of the musicians standing up and able to move freely without the constraints of music stands and scores. Specially devised choreography and bespoke half-black and half-white concert outfits will subtly combine to conjure an impression of swans dancing and moving on dark water. Dynamic lighting design will add to the vivid atmosphere, and the musical performance will feature elegantly crafted digital sound effects. All these elements aim to inspire in audiences a deeper and more immediate understanding of the music, and they also reflect the Baltic Sea Philharmonic's innovative and experimental approach and its desire to add an extra dimension to every performance.



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## **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, technology, choreography and playing by heart, and under the electrifying baton of Music Director and Founding Conductor Kristjan Järvi every performance has a special energy that is 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 Swans', September 2021**

Friday, 3 September 2021, 8.30pm, Merano (Merano Music Festival), Italy

Saturday, 4 September 2021, 8.00pm, Verona (Teatro Filarmonico), Italy

Monday, 6 September 2021, 7.00pm, Ljubljana (Congress Square), Slovenia

Saturday, 11 September 2021, 8.00pm, Peenemünde (Usedom Music Festival), Germany

Sunday, 12 September 2021, 5.00pm, Szczecin (Philharmonic Hall), Poland

### **Baltic Sea Philharmonic**

Kristjan Järvi

Arvo Pärt: *Swansong*

Jean Sibelius: *The Swan of Tuonela*

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

### **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



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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's growing discography with Kristjan Järvi includes three acclaimed recordings for Sony Classical, the most recent of which was Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty*, newly arranged by Järvi as a dramatic symphony, and released in November 2020. In 2021 the Baltic Sea Philharmonic will continue its innovative digital project 'Musical Chain', launched in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This unique series of classical remix videos brings musicians from the orchestra together with international artists and creative collaborators. The orchestra plans to return to live performance in summer 2021 with a Romanian debut at the Enescu Festival in Bucharest in August and a tour of Italy, Slovenia, Germany and Poland in September.

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