

Press Release

Baltic Sea Philharmonic makes acclaimed return to live performance with concerts at Enescu Festival in Bucharest

- **Romanian debut for orchestra after 12 months away from the stage due to Coronavirus pandemic**
- **Kristjan Järvi conducted two programmes – ‘Aurora’ and ‘Nordic Swans’ – featuring first-time collaborations with pianist Maria João Pires and violinist Viktoria Mullova**
- **Orchestra played ‘Nordic Swans’ programme of music by Arvo Pärt and Tchaikovsky completely from memory, in livestreamed performance**
- **Baltic Sea Philharmonic next takes ‘Nordic Swans’ on tour to Italy, Slovenia, Germany and Poland from 3 to 12 September**

Berlin 1 September 2021. The **Baltic Sea Philharmonic** celebrated its long-awaited return to the stage with an acclaimed Romanian debut at the prestigious **George Enescu International Festival** in Bucharest. The orchestra’s two concerts with **Kristjan Järvi** at the Romanian Athenaeum concert hall on 30 and 31 August were the ensemble’s first live performances since September 2020, after an enforced break due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The Baltic Sea Philharmonic was collaborating in Bucharest for the first time with renowned pianist **Maria João Pires** and leading violinist **Viktoria Mullova**. Pires was the soloist in Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 9, which together with Kristjan Järvi’s *Aurora* and Enescu’s Symphony No. 2 comprised the 30 August programme, ‘**Aurora**’. The second programme, ‘**Nordic Swans**’, featured Mullova as soloist in Arvo Pärt’s *Fratres* and the *Passacaglia* for violin, vibraphone and strings, alongside Pärt’s *Swansong* and Kristjan Järvi’s arrangement of Tchaikovsky’s *Swan Lake* as a dramatic symphony. Around 1,000 concert-goers experienced the Baltic Sea Philharmonic’s electrifying performances, and the ‘Nordic Swans’ concert was livestreamed on the Enescu Festival website.

A festival of firsts

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic’s debut at the Enescu Festival was much anticipated by the orchestra’s musicians, who were coming together for the first time in almost a year. A total of 81 players arrived excitedly in Bucharest six days before the first concert, ready for an intensive rehearsal period. Most of the musicians had already played many times in the orchestra, but some were joining the ensemble for the first time as new members. Together with the musicians of the Baltic Sea Philharmonic, this year’s 25th edition of the Enescu Festival (28 August to 26 September 2021) features some 3,400 performers, including some



Press Release

of the greatest orchestras in the world

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic performed both its concerts in the Romanian Athenaeum concert hall, a landmark venue in the centre of Bucharest. Opened in 1888, the ornate domed building is the city's main concert hall and is home to George Enescu Philharmonic and the George Enescu International Festival. The Baltic Sea Philharmonic paid tribute to the great Romanian composer himself in its concert on 30 August, with a performance of his Symphony No. 2 – the first time that the orchestra had performed a work by Enescu. Kristjan Järvi said of the symphony: 'This piece has been a real discovery for me. Neither I nor anyone in the Baltic Sea Philharmonic had performed it before, so it was a complete adventure to play it.'

The orchestra played its 'Nordic Swans' programme on 31 August entirely from memory – an exciting approach to orchestral performance that has become the signature style of the Baltic Sea Philharmonic. Mullova and the orchestra played Pärt's *Passacaglia* and *Fratres* without a break, turning the pair of pieces into a mini violin concerto. At the concerts, the orchestra greeted standing ovations from the audience with two favourite encores: Sibelius's noble 'Song of Praise' from the *Swanwhite* Suite, and Kristjan Järvi's atmospheric *Midnight Sun*.

'Nordic Swans' goes on tour

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic and Kristjan Järvi will now take '**Nordic Swans**' on tour to **Italy, Slovenia, Germany** and **Poland** from 3 to 12 September. A new programme for the tour will enhance the swan theme, with Sibelius's *The Swan of Tuonela* featuring alongside Pärt's *Swansong* and Järvi's dramatic-symphony arrangement of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*. After two days of rehearsals in Bucharest, the orchestra will begin its 'Nordic Swans' tour on 3 September in Italy at the Merano Music Festival, with the next concert following a day later at the Teatro Filarmonico in Verona. The tour will include the orchestra's Slovenian debut at an outdoor concert in Ljubljana on 6 September; this performance will be livestreamed on the Ljubljanafestival.si website. After a special concert at the Usedom Music Festival on 11 September, 'Nordic Swans' will conclude in Szczecin, Poland, on 12 September, with the orchestra's first performance in the strikingly designed Szczecin Philharmonic Hall.



Press Release

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.

Press contact

Alexander Datz, Press Officer, Baltic Sea Music Education Foundation e.V.

Mobile: +49 176 741 61 157

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

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 – [Livestream](#)

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 Kremer and the Kremerata Baltica, and since then has toured innovative programmes that throw



Press Release

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 returned to live performance in summer 2021 with a Romanian debut at the Enescu Festival in Bucharest in August, ahead of a major tour of Italy, Slovenia, Germany and Poland in September. www.baltic-sea-philharmonic.eu