

Press Release

New Baltic Sea Philharmonic and Kristjan Järvi album *Nutcracker*, recorded for Sony Classical completely from memory, released on 2 December 2022

- **Kristjan Järvi conducts orchestra in his arrangement of Tchaikovsky's beloved ballet as a Dramatic Symphony**
- **Sony Classical will also release two singles from the album – 'Coffee: Arabian Dance' and 'Evergreen Forest in Winter' – and the focus track 'Overture'**
- **Album is orchestra's fourth recording for Sony Classical, after *The Ring: An Orchestral Adventure* (2016), *Stravinsky and Glass Violin Concertos* (2020) and *Sleeping Beauty* (2020)**

Berlin 4 November 2022. The Baltic Sea Philharmonic's new *Nutcracker* album for Sony Classical, which the orchestra recorded completely from memory, will be released on 2 December. **Kristjan Järvi** conducts his own arrangement of Tchaikovsky's final ballet as a Dramatic Symphony. This fresh and imaginative reworking revitalises *Nutcracker's* most popular dances and lets the brilliance and inventiveness of the ballet's less familiar numbers shine through. The musicians of the Baltic Sea Philharmonic recorded this new version of *Nutcracker* entirely by heart in Tallinn in September 2022, at the end of their 'Meresillad' tour of Germany and Estonia. As well as releasing the complete album on 2 December, Sony will release two singles and one focus track showcasing celebrated scenes from the ballet – 'Coffee: Arabian Dance' (4 November), 'Evergreen Forest in Winter' (18 November) and 'Overture' (2 December).

From ballet to Dramatic Symphony

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic's new *Nutcracker* joins Järvi's previous Tchaikovsky releases on Sony – *The Snow Maiden*, *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty* – in revitalising great theatrical pieces for contemporary audiences. Järvi says: 'There is a tendency today to see classical music as some kind of precious relic that has to be treated with white gloves, almost with an archaeologist's care, and the idea of even thinking about arranging a piece is somehow bad. But making arrangements, especially of theatre music, used to be much more prevalent, with composers playing around with new music and popularising it, as a way of making it part of mainstream culture.' With his *Nutcracker* arrangement, Järvi wanted to give some of Tchaikovsky's most well-

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known numbers a context that shows there is more great music in this celebrated ballet. 'When creating this Dramatic Symphony version, I didn't make musical choices according to the popularity of certain movements. Instead my choices were based on what material and movements I thought would be most interesting and riveting to listen to in sequence. I wanted music that would hold the listener's attention throughout, so I reorchestrated and rewrote some elements, and created new transitions', he continues.

Recording *Nutcracker* from memory

The Estonian Public Broadcasting Studio 1 in Tallinn where *Nutcracker* was recorded was set up to recreate the atmosphere of the orchestra's celebrated live concerts, in which the musicians play the entire programme from memory and create a unique energy. Subtle stage lighting, a smoke machine, decorations and lounge furniture gave the studio a club concert vibe. With no music stands, the musicians were mostly standing up, spread out and not in their sections, free to move and even dance to the music. Gertrud Leopard, an Estonian percussionist in the orchestra who was familiar with the studio in Tallinn, having recorded there twice before, says: 'Recording from memory is a unique experience for me. It means I can focus more on the music, without having to concentrate on the score. With the special atmosphere in the studio, it really feels like we are performing and we are building a unique connection within the orchestra.'

That connection extends to the creative exchange with conductor Kristjan Järvi. Blessed with the studio time to allow experiments with the smallest of details in his arrangement, Järvi frequently invited the musicians to join him in the sound engineer's booth to listen back to takes and talk about adjustments in interpretation, tempo or dynamics. Järvi says: 'The beauty of working with the Baltic Sea Philharmonic is that we have the time to experiment, to try out changes to what's written and see if they improve the musical results. Normally with an orchestra this is simply not possible because everybody's time is so precious. In this sense, the Baltic Sea Philharmonic is truly an ensemble of co-creators, as opposed to an ensemble of musical executioners.'

A growing Sony Classical discography

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic's new *Nutcracker* album joins the orchestra's burgeoning discography on Sony Classical. The orchestra and Kristjan Järvi's first recording for the label was *The Ring: An Orchestral Adventure*, an arrangement for orchestra of Wagner's *Ring Cycle* (2016).



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An album of Stravinsky and Glass violin concertos (2020) featured 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.' The Baltic Sea Philharmonic's recording of Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* arranged by Järvi as a Dramatic Symphony (2020) received rave reviews in Germany and Sweden and was nominated for an OPUS Klassik award in 2021.

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

Mobile: +49 176 741 61 157

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

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Notes to editors:

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky 1849–1893

NUTCRACKER · NUSSKNACKER

DRAMATIC SYMPHONY ARRANGED BY KRISTJAN JÄRVI

Sony Classical 19658769082

Total time: CD: 62:10

Available as of 2 December 2022

Singles

[Track 15] Coffee: Arabian Dance

Victor Sjögren (Oboe)

Kseniia Sitnikova (English Horn)

Alexey Mikhaylenko (Clarinet)

Jakob Peäske (Bassoon)

Marnisch Haderlein-Ebner (Tambourine)

Available as of 4 November 2022

[Track 10] Evergreen Forest in Winter

Available as of 18 November 2022

Focus track

[Track 2] Overture

Kristīne Beitika (Flute)

Alexey Mikhaylenko (Clarinet)

Available as of 2 December 2022

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 on the joint initiative of the Usedom Music Festival. 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'. In 2016 the orchestra was renamed the Baltic Sea Philharmonic. Since then it 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 addition, Max Richter's album *EXILES*, recorded by the Baltic Sea Philharmonic and Kristjan Järvi, was released in August 2021 on Deutsche Grammophon. In 2022 the Baltic Sea Philharmonic will continue its innovative digital project 'Musical Chain', which it launched in 2020 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. In 2022 the Baltic Sea Philharmonic once again travelled thousands of kilometres around Europe, beginning in March with a tour of 'Nordic Swans' to Belgium, Germany and Poland. In July and August the orchestra and Kristjan Järvi performed special concerts at the Pärnu Music Festival and the Birgitta Festival in Estonia. In the second half of 2022 the Baltic Sea Philharmonic will once more bring the magical power of fairy tales to life with Kristjan Järvi's reworking of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* as a Dramatic Symphony, a new arrangement that showcases the quintessential colour and drama of the great Russian composer's theatre music. The programme including the *Nutcracker* among others will be performed at the Usedom Music Festival and in Tallinn in September as well as on a tour of Germany and Switzerland in December. The orchestra's new



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album *Nutcracker* is set for release on Sony Classical on 2 December 2022. www.baltic-sea-philharmonic.eu