

## **Magnificent symphonies side by side with new classics at the annual Baltic Sea Festival**

STOCKHOLM (26 March 2015) - Magnificent, symphonic music is set to dominate the thirteenth Baltic Sea Festival. Tjajkovskij, whose anniversary is one of the many celebrated this year, is honoured with an orchestral version of the Nutcracker performed by the Mariinskij Theatre Orchestra with conductor Valery Gergiev. The Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra with Kent Nagano recognises the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Nielsen and Sibelius, but newer music also features with the Swedish premiere of Esa-Pekka Salonen's *Karawane*. The festival this year also recognises the 80th anniversary of composer Arvo Pärt. Schönberg's *Gurrelieder* performed by two symphony orchestras and four choirs provides a grand finish to the festival week.

"We are proud to also this year present fantastic artists and orchestras from around the whole Baltic Sea region as well as world-class music experiences," said Michael Tydén, festival director and cofounder of the Baltic Sea Festival. "Environment, leadership and music represent the key pillars of the festival, and we are looking forward to seeing the Baltic Sea Festival increasingly become an active meeting place for the cooperation over national borders that we are striving after. The Baltic Sea, our mutual and highly vulnerable inland sea, represents the whole region's circulatory system and unites us across national borders. Here, cooperation and dialogue are the key to our future."

The Baltic Sea Festival opens on 24 August by the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, conducted by principal guest conductor Kent Nagano. The programme celebrates the 150-year anniversary of Nielsen and Sibelius, with Martin Fröst as soloist in Nielsen's *Clarinet Concerto*. Kent Nagano is considered one of the true authorities on Richard Strauss' music and after the break we hear his interpretation of *Ein Heldenleben*.

The 175-year anniversary of Tjajkovskij is greatly celebrated during the festival with two concert evenings with the Mariinskij Theatre Orchestra conducted by Valery Gergiev. On 25 August a concert with the five young musicians who won this year's Tjajkovskij competition in Moscow is held. The programme will be presented later. On 26 August an orchestral version of *The Nutcracker* – one of Tjajkovskij's most beloved works – is performed.

New music has always represented an important part of the Baltic Sea Festival. On 27 August Esa-Pekka Salonen conducts – for the first time in Sweden – his own work *Karawane* together with the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Swedish Radio Choir. The premiere was in Zurich in September 2014.

On 28 August the festival is visited by the Nordic Symphony Orchestra, with young musicians from the countries around the Baltic Sea. Together with conductor Anu Tali, they perform Vasks and Sjostakovitj.

The Kiev Chamber Choir was a great success when they last visited the festival, and now they return with a concert at Sofia Church on 29 August with Ukrainian and Russian Orthodox music by Sylvestrov and Poleva, amongst others.

Yet another anniversary is celebrated during the festival – 80 years of the living legend and future classic Arvo Pärt. On 29 August the Wrocław Philharmonic Orchestra performs Pärt's symphonies and *Swansong*, conducted by Tõnu Kaljuste.

The conclusion to this year's festival is set to be magnificent with Schönberg's *Gurrelieder* performed by a symphony orchestra compiled of musicians from the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, together with four choirs, at Stockholm Concert Hall on 30 August. This is the first time since 1999 that the work will be performed in Sweden – it is also the first time that the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra perform together. Conductor is Esa-Pekka Salonen, and a total of 300 artists will be present on the stage.

### **Music, environment and leadership**

Several seminars will be held during the week about the festival's three key pillars – music, environment and leadership. A special programme with focus on a sustainable blue economy is held by the festival's partners Swedish World Wildlife Fund WWF in cooperation with Stockholm Resilience Centre and the Raoul Wallenberg Academy. The fundraising initiative "Help us help the Baltic Sea" will continue.

A new partner to the Baltic Sea Festival is the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI), which is organising a seminar during the festival with the theme Russian cultural politics. The seminar has its roots in the research project Art and Protest in Putin's Russia.

Children from El Sistema and the young Baltic Sea Quartet return to the festival this year. More programme details will be presented later in the spring.

The Baltic Sea Festival 2015 takes place over seven days, 24–30 August. Tickets are released on 27 March. For detailed programme, press photos and further information, visit:

[www.balticseafestival.com](http://www.balticseafestival.com)

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Photos from the press conference: Micke Grönberg/Sveriges Radio:

<http://sverigesradio.se/press/bilder/bwh/150326/index.html>

*The Baltic Sea Festival is an annually recurring international music festival, which was founded in 2003 by Michael Tydén, former director of Berwaldhallen in Stockholm, Esa-Pekka Salonen, conductor and composer, and Valery Gergiev, conductor and director of the Mariinskij Theatre in St. Petersburg. The Baltic Sea Festival acts within three key areas – music, environment and leadership – with the aim of creating a better future for the Baltic Sea region. [www.balticseafestival.com](http://www.balticseafestival.com)*