

PAAVO JÄRVI ANNOUNCES THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL TOUR & CD RELEASE WITH THE ESTONIAN FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

The **Estonian Festival Orchestra** was founded by **Paavo Järvi** in 2011 and made its debut at the newly inaugurated **Pärnu Music Festival** as the resident summer orchestra on the Baltic coast. So far something of a secret to international audiences, visiting journalists to the festival have described the orchestra as "*on a power train*" (Der Standaard), "*begging comparison with the elasticity of Abbado's concerts with the Lucerne Festival Orchestra*" (The Arts Desk) and having "*brilliant clarity which suddenly gives way to an enormous emotional depth*" (Die Presse). The Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung commented on the orchestra's "*highly concentrated music making where all the details are worked out...Nothing is sweeping, nothing sleepy and nothing washed away.*"

Audiences in mainland Europe will have the opportunity to hear Paavo Järvi and the Estonian Festival Orchestra live when they make their first major international tour launching in **Tallinn** (16 Jan) and then going on to **Brussels** (18 Jan), **Zurich** (20 Jan), **Cologne** (21 Jan), **Berlin** (22 Jan), **Vienna** (23 Jan) and **Luxembourg** (24 Jan). This tour, which also celebrates the 100th anniversary of Estonian Independence, will include a new orchestral work by Estonian composer, **Erkki-Sven Tüür** which receives its international premiere in Brussels. Other repertoire on the tour includes **Arvo Pärt** *Cantus in Memory Benjamin Britten* and *Fratres*, **Shostakovich** Symphony No. 6, **Sibelius** and **Brahms** violin concertos (soloist **Viktoria Mullova**).

Coinciding with the tour, Paavo Järvi and the Estonian Festival Orchestra release their first CD on Alpha Classics in January 2018 featuring **Shostakovich Symphony No. 6** and **Sinfonietta** (Abram Stasevich's arrangement of Shostakovich's String Quartet No. 8 for string orchestra and timpani) both recorded at the Pärnu Music Festival.

Paavo Järvi commented: "*It has long been my dream to create an orchestra which grows out of the festival spirit with joy and unity at its core, and where young professional musicians from Estonia can make direct connect with leading musicians from around the world. When we started the Pärnu Music Festival the dream became a reality and now, six years later, the Estonian Festival Orchestra is a real living animal with a beating heart and an appetite for adventure. We are grateful to Estonia 100 and the Ministry of Culture who have granted their support for this tour and CD release.*"

**ESTONIAN FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA
PAAVO JÄRVI
EUROPEAN TOUR JANUARY 2018**



18 January

[Brussels Palais des Beaux Arts](#)

Pärt: Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten

Tüür: Mythos Symphony No. 9 -
international premiere

Pärt: Fratres

(version for orchestra and percussion)

Shostakovich: Symphony No. 6

22 January

[Berlin Philharmonie](#)

Brahms: Violin Concerto in D major

soloist: **Viktorija Mullova**

Pärt: Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten

Shostakovich: Symphony No. 6

20 January

[Zurich Tonhalle Maag](#)

Pärt: Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten

Sibelius: Violin Concerto in D minor

soloist: **Viktorija Mullova**

Pärt: Fratres

(version for orchestra and percussion)

Shostakovich: Symphony No. 6

23 January

[Vienna Konzerthaus](#)

Pärt: Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten

Sibelius: Violin Concerto in D minor

soloist: **Viktorija Mullova**

Pärt: Fratres

(version for orchestra and percussion)

Shostakovich: Symphony No. 6

21 January

[Cologne Philharmonie](#)

Brahms: Violin Concerto in D major

soloist: **Viktorija Mullova**

Pärt: Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten

Shostakovich: Symphony No. 6

24 January

[Luxembourg Philharmonie](#)

Brahms: Violin Concerto in D major

soloist: **Viktorija Mullova**

Pärt: Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten

Shostakovich: Symphony No. 6

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CD RELEASE ESTONIAN FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA - PAAVO JÄRVI



Dmitri Shostakovich:

Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Op. 54

Sinfonietta (Quartet No.8), Op. 110(B)
arrangement for string orchestra and
timpani by Abram Stasevich

Alpha Classics

international release: January 2018

Paavo Järvi's introduction to the CD: THE PÄRNU SPIRIT

Without Pärnu, the Estonian Festival Orchestra and this – our first album together – would not exist. Pärnu is a special place that embodies the history and spirit of the orchestra, my own family and Estonia as a whole. It is a quiet seaside resort on the Baltic coast, south of Tallinn, where all the Järvi family gathered for two months every summer. With its large and sheltered sandy bay, endless parks and surrounding birch forests, Pärnu has always been a favourite holiday destination and, during occupation, it was also the summer home of many Soviet artists including Dmitri Shostakovich and David Oistrakh who visited for the nearest thing to western tolerance and understanding in the Soviet Union. A holiday any closer to the West was not possible for any of us.

It was here in 1973 that I met Shostakovich together with my father when I was ten years old, a moment captured on camera and which now sits proudly in the family photo album. Behind the camera was Gustav Ernesaks, the Estonian choral conductor and composer whose song, *Mu isamaa on minu arm*, became an unofficial national anthem for all Estonians during the Soviet occupation.



In 1980 we left for the States and for years to come, memories of childhood holidays in Pärnu became increasingly distant and nostalgic. Only after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the renewed Independence of Estonia were we eventually allowed to return home and, following my father's initiative in creating a conducting Masterclass Academy in Pärnu, we decided to expand the venture into a summer festival, celebrating the orchestra at its heart. In July 2011 the Pärnu Music Festival came into life and so did the Estonian Festival Orchestra, bringing together young Estonian players and top-league musicians from orchestras around the world, – musical colleagues with whom I have had the pleasure to work with on numerous occasions over the years. It was immediately clear that another family had been born with a hunger and energy for performing together which is a rare joy to find nowadays.

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Paavo Järvi's introduction to the CD: THE PÄRNU SPIRIT

An important component in creating the orchestra was to "match-make" the players. If you are a young player in Estonia, it doesn't matter how good you are, it's not often easy to make contact with a top player in the west. Now we can give these young musicians the advantage to play with elite players from abroad and get to know them as new friends. This spirit is what drives the orchestra and it is a delight each summer to see how those relationships have grown naturally, creating a melting pot of national and international talent where nationality is happily and importantly no boundary.

The week of the festival is intense and everyone gives their utmost in a schedule packed tight with rehearsals, master-classes and concerts, following which we gather together in what is now traditionally known as the "real festival headquarters" - the Passion Café, where friendships are forged and new plans for the future are hatched. It is a remarkable coincidence, and one which is never lost on me, that in the very same building where the Passion Café now stands there used to be a printing house where the manifesto for the Estonian Declaration of Independence was first printed in 1918.

It is often said that there is something in the Estonian air that is a mixture of Scandinavian, German and Russian influences and, even though we have our own very strong national identity, it is true that we also have a natural feeling for neighbouring cultures as a result of our historical and geographical position. So the idea for the Estonian Festival Orchestra is to explore music by composers from across the Baltic region, which naturally includes championing Estonia's own composers and music from the Nordic countries as well as music from Poland, Russia and Germany, countries with which our history is strongly interlinked.

For our first recording I have chosen the music of Shostakovich, not only because he is one of the giants of 20th century music but also because of his connection to Pärnu where he both stayed and composed. Symphony no. 6 is a masterpiece but it also differs from all of Shostakovich's other symphonies because it has an air of peculiar lightness. As the composer himself said "I wanted to convey in it the moods of spring, joy and youth." Despite that lightness the subtexts are grim and after the first casual listen one can sense the composer's struggle with the terror of living in the Soviet reality.

The "Sinfonietta" is a 1961 arrangement for string orchestra and timpani of Shostakovich's String Quartet No. 8 compiled by the composer's trusted friend, Abram Stasevich, and orchestrated with the composer's personal blessing. Premiered one year previously, the Quartet is a musical autobiography describing Shostakovich's life to that point, including citations of pieces that he had previously written and his own musical leitmotif - DSCH. It is a profound work dedicated "In memory of the victims of fascism and war" and which, when performed by the Borodin Quartet at his home in Moscow, left the composer in tears.

Performing and recording these works in Pärnu with a generation of musicians who can now enjoy both peace and freedom of movement across Europe's borders makes these works feel even more poignant. As the Estonian Declaration of Independence states:

"You stand on the threshold of a hopeful future in which you shall be free and independent in determining and directing your destiny! Begin building a home of your own, ruled by law and order, in order to be a worthy member within the family of civilized nations!"

Paavo Järvi, autumn 2017