

**ESTONIAN FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA  
2018 TOUR HIGHLIGHTS  
BBC PROMS (13 AUGUST) & ELBPHILHARMONIE (15 AUGUST)**

*“Flags of blue, black and white were waved enthusiastically around the Royal Albert Hall and with good reason. Estonia celebrates 100 years of independence this year and this concert marked the first time any Estonian orchestra had visited the BBC Proms. Paavo Järvi founded the Estonian Festival Orchestra seven years ago, resident at the Pärnu Music Festival and combining Estonians with players from top international orchestras Järvi conducts around the world. The result was **an impressive debut, offering fresh, lively interpretations of appropriately Nordic-Baltic repertoire.**”*

Bachtrack.com (London)

*“Under the baton of Paavo Järvi, dynamic and resourceful heir to a conducting dynasty, the Estonian Festival Orchestra came to London to celebrate the centenary of the first phase of the nation’s independence from Russian rule – a freedom lost in 1940 and not fully reclaimed until 1991. Yet Järvi steered not a corny carnival of patriotic uplift but a thoughtfully balanced compilation of works drawn from around the Nordic and Baltic coasts ... In his sure hands, and with the support of this strikingly impressive ad hoc band that combines young local players with visiting luminaries from top European orchestras, **this was a programme that both ravished the ear and exercised the mind.**”*

The Arts Desk

*“**This all-Nordic programme, performed by the excellent Estonian Festival Orchestra under one of the most admired conductors of the day, Paavo Järvi, has long promised to be one of this season’s special Proms.**”*

The Guardian

*“Yet another summertime scratch band but a very good one. Since 2011 the always-peripatetic Paavo Järvi has touched base at the Pärnu Festival, overseeing its evolution into a kind of alternative Lucerne for Estonian musical talent while drawing in guest players from more venerable European ensembles.”*

Classicalsource.com

*“... **young, youthful and remarkably adept.**”*

The Sunday Times

**Arvo Pärt Symphony No. 3**

*“To Arvo Pärt’s stylistically transitional Third Symphony **the super-group brought passion as well as transparency.** It is music that now seems to sit quite comfortably with other quiescent, vaguely postludial Symphonies from the Soviet bloc and if this account could not replicate the sheer strangeness of Neeme Järvi’s 1989 UK it was stronger and fuller and almost as hypnotically compelling.”*

Classicalsource.com

*“.. an excellent choice of home produce for the Proms debut of Paavo Järvi’s seven-year-old Estonian Festival Orchestra. They gave it **a committed performance ... scrupulously sculpted, polished and placed.** On the platform at the end, Pärt received a hero’s welcome with rapturous applause.”*

The Times

*“In a precise performance of a complex, mysterious piece, **Järvi and his players captured the seething menace that repeatedly erupts alongside the threat of stasis.**”*

The Evening Standard

*“Järvi’s control was clear and benign, and his trumpet, timpani and bassoon soloists stood out.”*

The Guardian

## Grieg Piano Concerto

*“From her express-train introduction onwards, Buniatishvili offered plenty of old-school drama and lyricism (more so, perhaps, than any Nordic pianist these days). For me, though, the beating heart of the performance arrived with the adagio, where **she conjured up a radiant, sunset stillness perfectly offset by the Estonians’ gorgeous strings**”.*

The Arts Desk

*“.. as expected Khatia Buniatishvili presented this often performed work both intimately and powerfully ... As much as she evidently liked the speed of the first movement, she also happily played with the romantic dreamy themes and, together with the orchestra, made them very soft which only increased the joyful expectation of the quiet second movement and its creative freedom in the long drawn out threads ...”*

Bachtrack.com (Hamburg)

## Sibelius Symphony No 5

*“Some performances of Sibelius’ mighty Fifth Symphony are hewn from granite or sculpted from marble. The Estonians’ account was carved from pine, crisp and fresh, surging with energy and athleticism. Järvi, pulling long, fluid baton shapes, encouraged supple string playing and splendid woodwind articulation. A cantabile bassoon crooned his song over swarming strings; grainy trumpets sent their rising figures aloft joyously. Pizzicatos in the second movement landed softly like drops of melting snow rather than icy pin-pricks, while the finale’s great “swan theme” rocked nobly in the horns against spiccato double bass snaps. **Invigorating stuff and the highlight of the evening ...**”*

Bachtrack.com (London)

*“The performance of Sibelius’s Fifth Symphony created a palpable sense of majestic structure growing from tiny cells. The opening movement’s momentum gave way to the subtlety of the second movement’s pizzicatos, then, as the music strove for its climax — an evocation of flying swans followed by six of the mightiest chords in music — Järvi favoured restraint over hyperbole.”*

The Evening Standard

*“Järvi served Sibelius’s Fifth Symphony as a lovingly-prepared signature dish ... He eschewed broad-shouldered grandeur in favour of supple and shapely phrasing that gave all the players – bassoon or trumpet as much as the all-important horns – their chance to shine. With the ear attuned by Pärt, even by Grieg, you registered the slow, painful work of building a shelter of sound against nothingness ... **Far from playing Sibelius as a grandiose done deal, a known quantity, the Estonians bracingly shared the doubt and dread that never leaves this music – written, in frequent sorrow, during and after the Great War.**”*

The Arts Desk

*“... the festival orchestra has a very special tone. It is dark, homogeneously mixed and slender, but when it comes down to it, it also unfolds a deep inner glow. As in the case of the horns in the third movement, in which Sibelius suddenly opens up a heavenly yearning dream. A magical moment, performed by the brass with great devotion and warmth of heart. It remains as the musical and emotional highlight of a memorable evening.”*

Hamburger Abendblatt

*“... Järvi and the orchestra built up the tension like a giant ocean wave that washed away the audience.”*

Bachtrack.com (Hamburg)