



REVIEW

Proms 2018, Estonian Festival Orchestra/Järvi review: Baltic pride takes centre stage

Complex and mysterious: Estonian Festival Orchestra's Prom is most compelling in the quiet (BBC/Chris Christodoulou)

Reviewed by **NICK KIMBERLEY**

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Evening Standard Arts In Association With



Our rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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bbc.co.uk/proms

When, in the Eighties, **Estonia** sought freedom from the Soviet Union,

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music was integral to the struggle that became known as the Singing Revolution. Now Estonian orchestras take pride in including something Estonian in every concert.

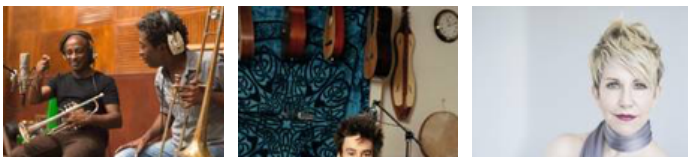
For the Estonian Festival Orchestra's Prom it was Arvo Pärt's Third Symphony, premiered in 1972 by conductor Neeme Järvi; here, his son Paavo presided. The work marks a transition from anguished modernism to the contemplative style that Pärt calls "tintinnabuli". In a precise performance of a complex, mysterious piece, Järvi and his players captured the seething menace that repeatedly erupts alongside the threat of stasis.

To follow, flamboyant Khatia Buniatishvili was the soloist in Grieg's Piano Concerto. She showed she had the required muscle but was most compelling in quiet passages. 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.



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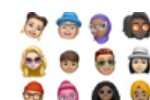
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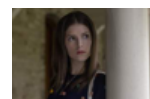
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