



## KREMERATA BALTICA

Twenty years ago Gidon Kremer created the ideal conditions for a musical revolution. The internationally acclaimed violinist unveiled his compelling new initiative at Austria's Lockenhaus Festival in the summer of 1997, giving life to what was destined soon to become one of the world's finest chamber orchestras. Kremerata Baltica - comprising twenty-three outstanding young musicians from Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia - captivated its first audience with playing of unrestrained joy and exuberance and with the variety and vitality of its programming. Those qualities remain essential to its identity as the ensemble enters its 20th anniversary season.

Kremerata Baltica was conceived as Gidon Kremer's 50th birthday present to himself. The new orchestra, which immediately embodied its founder's tireless energy and visionary artistry, arose from the Latvian artist's determination to share the fruits of his rich experience as a soloist and chamber musician with young colleagues from the Baltic States and to enhance the region's cultural life. The learning process allowed no room for artistic compromise; in fact, the ensemble's ethos has been ruled from the beginning by ideals of artistic excellence and adventure. Its outlook has also drawn on an innovative approach to programming, one open to artistic experiment, creative daring and bold challenges to convention.

When interviewed by the New York Times in 1999, Gidon Kremer described Kremerata Baltica as a musical democracy: "open-minded, self-critical, a continuation of my musical spirit". Its performances, he continued, should always deliver "a sense of spontaneous music-making that makes a concert dramatic and sensuous, a continuation of the creative process". His high aspirations for the ensemble have been realised with striking consistency ever since.

The headline events in Kremerata Baltica's history and the achievements of

its members, past and present, contain ample material for a book-length study. Since the turn of the 21st century, the orchestra has performed in over 50 countries, appeared in more than 600 cities and given over 1,000 concerts. It has secured lasting support from the governments of its three home nations. In addition, it has created a discography of over two dozen albums, including the 2002 ECHO Klassik and Grammy Award-winning *After Mozart* on Nonesuch Records and other critically acclaimed titles on the Deutsche Grammophon and ECM labels. The ensemble's albums of works by Georges Enescu and Mieczysław Weinberg were both nominated for Grammy Award, while its recent recording of Shostakovich's piano concertos with Anna Vinnitskaya for Alpha Classics won the ECHO Klassik 2016 in the category of "Concert Recording (Music of the 20th/21st Centuries)".

Kremerata Baltica is set to celebrate its 20th anniversary and Gidon Kremer's 70th birthday year throughout 2016-2017. The milestone season's highlights include a nine-concert tour of the United States in January and February and an Anniversary Tour with almost 40 concerts across Europe, opening in Vilnius on 18 February, progressing through the Baltic States, travelling to Germany, Switzerland, Spain, the United Kingdom, France, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Czech Republic, The Middle East, the Netherlands and concluding with Asia tour in May. All tours will be led by Gidon Kremer, who will be joined by celebrity soloists such as Martha Argerich, Khatia Buniatishvili, Tatiana Grindenko, and several young "rising stars" such as Clara Jumi Kang, Lucas Debargue, Pablo Ferrandez, and Martynas Stakionis. The orchestra's 2016-17 season opens in September with the annual Kremerata Baltica Festival in Jūrmala and closes next May with a tour of Asia.