



## With Ole Bull's Hardanger fiddle to Bergen

For Ragnhild Hemsing, the violin and Hardanger fiddle are equally important. Now, she becomes Artist in residence at the Bergen International Festival in Norway.

‘Since the beginning, the Bergen International Festival has been a place where folk culture meets classical music. We are delighted to be able to present an Artist in residence who has one foot in each of these traditions and who moves seamlessly between them, says festival director Lars Petter Hagen.



Ragnhild Hemsing is a Norwegian violinist, organiser and festival director, and the first Hardanger fiddle player to become Artist in residence at the Bergen International Festival, the flagship of music and theatre festivals in the Nordic countries.

‘It is great fun and incredibly inspiring. The Hardanger fiddle and the violin are both part of my musical identity, and I am keen to use and develop our musical traditions in new and vibrant ways, Ragnhild Hemsing says.

With her, Hemsing brings a tangible part of Norway's cultural heritage. The Hardanger fiddle she plays was made for none other than the great Norwegian violinist and composer Ole Bull. During the Bergen International Festival, the instrument will return to Bull's old house on the island of Osterøy, just outside of Bergen, where she will perform a concert alongside jazz musicians Mathias Eick and Mats Eilertsen.

‘Here, we'll get very close to history. There are also significant similarities between the freedom found in folk music and the improvisation that is typical of jazz, says Hemsing, who also writes her own music.

During the festival, which takes place from 22 May until 5 June 2024, she will perform in an impressive number of projects, including concerts at the homes of composers [Edvard Grieg](#) and [Ole Bull](#) and the theatrical production and [opening performance of Peer Gynt](#).

‘There will be classical, baroque, improvisation, folk music, new music, Beethoven, Bull, Grieg and Lindeman. And in the premiere of my new artistic project about [Vivaldi's Four Seasons](#), the work is presented in a brand-new tonal suit and performed on the Hardanger fiddle for the first time. Here I play together with Barokkanerne and use the Hardanger fiddle as a baroque instrument, with ornaments and prills hailing from my folk music tradition from Valdres. For me, it is liberating to use many genres, says the versatile artist.

Ragnhild Hemsing was born in Valdres in rural Norway to a mother who was a district musician and a father who was a mountain inspector and a langeleik player. The whole family was active in the folk music scene, and Hemsing started playing the violin and fiddle almost simultaneously.

'You could say that I grew up musically bilingual, but for a long time, I thought that as an artist, I had to choose between the violin and the Hardanger fiddle. A lot fell into place when I realised that I could do both, says the Artist in residence.

Since then, many more artistic projects have found new paths between classical, folk and new music. Hemsing's version of *Peer Gynt*, together with Trondheimsolistene, saw its first performance during the 2021 Bergen International Festival and was released as an album the following year to brilliant reviews. Another example is her album *Vetra* (2023), which consists of Hemsing's own compositions and folk tunes from Valdres collected by L.M. Lindeman and performed by improvisational musicians, folk musicians and a string trio.

'Ragnhild Hemsing has an artistic drive and curiosity that creates a fantastic universe of encounters between different genres, traditions and artistic expressions. She is both a bearer of tradition and an innovator, a modern visionary artist and a solid craftsman, says Hagen.

In addition to Ragnhild Hemsing's concerts, the Bergen International Festival has now launched most of the classical music programme coming up in 2024. Norwegian artists such as [Vilde Frang](#), [Leif Ove Andsnes](#) and [Trio Mediæval](#) are joined by international musicians such as pianists [Yuja Wang](#), [Bertrand Chamayou](#) and [Isata Kanneh-Mason](#) and cellists [Sheku Kanneh-Mason](#) and [Mischa Maisky](#).

#### Facts/Ragnhild Hemsing

- Born 1988 in Valdres, Norway
- Studied at the Barratt Due Institute of Music and with Professor Boris Kuschnir in Vienna
- Made her concert debut as a 14-year-old performing Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and Trondheim Symphony Orchestra.
- Is considered a highly versatile artist with an extensive repertoire on classical violin and lesser-known works for the Hardanger fiddle
- Has led the Hemsing Festival together with her sister Eldbjørg Hemsing since 2013
- Has released albums such as *Vetra* (2023), *Bruch + Tveitt* (2023), *Peer Gynt* (2022), *Røta* (2021) and *Beethoven's Testaments of 1802* (2020)

#### For mer information, please contact:

Silje Vestvik, communications manager, Bergen International Festival/+ 47 94 31 94 39

Press photos: [fib.no/presse](http://fib.no/presse)

Photo: Kaupo Kikkas

