

Full-scale Peer Gynt

The 2024 Bergen International Festival opens with a performance that highlights both the writing and the music of the Norwegian icon Peer Gynt.

'Norway's two greatest cultural giants of all time are Ibsen and Grieg, and *Peer Gynt* is their mutual masterpiece. Despite this, the play is rarely performed the way the two had planned, with both the play and the music performed live from the same stage. We decided to do something about this, together with Grieg's own orchestra and Ibsen's theatre,' says Lars Petter Hagen, director of the [Bergen International Festival](#).

This adaptation of *Peer Gynt* is a co-production between the Bergen International Festival and [Nationaltheatret](#). It will premiere at [the opening of the Bergen International Festival on 22 May 2024](#).

'We saw an opportunity to give the audience a performance that holds the power of both the theatre and the music world. Here, you will experience a full-blooded production with the very best that Norway has to offer in music and contemporary theatre,' says Kristian Seltun, theatre director at Nationaltheatret.



The role of Peer Gynt is played by Herbert Nordrum (pictured), known for his performance in the Oscar-nominated film *The Worst Person in the World* (2021) and *Hamlet* (2021) at Nationaltheatret. The play is directed by one of Norway's leading theatre directors, Johannes Holmen Dahl, who, together with set and costume designer Nia Damerell, has staged a number of critically acclaimed plays, including *Hamlet* (2021) and *Tid for glede* (2022). The music is performed by Grieg's orchestra – the [Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra](#) – with a large choir, and is conducted by [Thomas Søndergård](#). [Ragnhild Hemsing](#), who plays the Norwegian national instrument Hardanger fiddle, will have an extended musical role in the production.

'In this performance, artists, art forms, the past and the future are all connected. This meeting across traditional dividing lines is one of the Bergen International Festival's main strengths and characteristics,' says festival director Hagen.

Many would say that *Peer Gynt* is about what it means to be yourself, and the work is considered both a stinging satire and achingly romantic.

'Much interesting lies within the contrast and tension that exists between Grieg's magnificent music and Ibsen's sharp social criticism. This production allows us to put our finger on – and discuss – a lot of what is actually problematic and challenging about the national symbol Peer Gynt,' Seltun believes.

After its premiere at the 2024 Bergen International Festival, the production will be performed at the [Norwegian Opera & Ballet](#), Nationaltheatret and other venues.

For more information, please contact:
Silje Vestvik, communications manager, Bergen International Festival
siljev@fib.no / + 47 94 31 94 39

Press photos: fib.no/presse
Photo: Erika Hebbert/Nationaltheatret