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# Audiences came streaming to the Bergen International Festival

**On its final day, the Bergen International Festival 2020 has registered close to 450 000 streams in 116 countries during the festival period.**

‘Now, we are tired, grateful and most of all incredibly happy to have produced a somewhat different kind of festival,’ says festival director Anders Beyer.

This year's Bergen International Festival has been streamed for free on the internet and recorded without live audiences due to COVID 19 contagion measures. On its final day, 448 800 started streams in 116 countries have been registered.

‘The purpose of the Bergen International Festival is to organise artistic events at a high national and international level, and we have done this even under the exceptional circumstances of this year. To have reached a broad audience internationally is very gratifying. However, we are very aware that streaming numbers are not the same as audience numbers or the number of tickets sold, just as watching a concert on a screen cannot be compared to experiencing it in a concert hall’, says the festival director.



*Violinist Miriam Helms Ålien and pianist Christian Ihle Hadland during the recording of a concert in Håkonshallen. Photo: Thor Brødreskift*

On Wednesday 03 June the final event will be broadcast. The [closing concert with the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra and pianist Leif Ove Andsnes](#) will be recorded in Oslo. Andsnes has been central to several of this year's concerts, including the opening concert from Grieghallen. Along with concerts by [Einar Selvik](#) and [the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and Edvard Grieg Kor & Vikingur Ólafsson](#), the opening concert is among the top three most viewed events so far.

About 230 artists have been involved in the festival, and the feedback from reviewers and the audience has been good.

‘Being able to stream the festival directly into peoples’ living rooms has also had its advantages. We have received many grateful messages from people who, for various reasons, cannot visit us normally and now excitedly take a seat in front of the screen where we come to them instead, says Beyer.

The festival director is grateful to all artists and partners who have stepped up in such a challenging situation, and greatly appreciates that commercial, private and public supporters have chosen to stand by agreements for financial contributions. The festival's commercial main partners DNB, Equinor and Bergens Tidende all continued their support.

'It exemplifies what is possible to achieve when we work together. I am humbled and delighted that our supporters quickly saw the value in a different kind of festival. Without their sustained support, the result would have been something quite different,' says Anders Beyer.

The events were streamed via the [Bergen International Festival website](#) and social media in the period from 20 May through 3 June, and some events were also broadcast on NRK2 and streamed on bt.no. Most events will be available on fib.no until November.

'I hope people will use this opportunity because such a free offer is probably a one-time event,' says Beyer.

The preliminary figures are based on the number of initiated streams on the festival's website and social media, and bt.no. Figures from Vimeo show that 49% of viewers were in Norway, and 51% in other countries. The United States, Germany and United Kingdom are the individual countries with the most streams. In addition, the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation NRK reports viewing figures of 126 000 for their festival broadcasts.

The original Bergen International Festival programme was cancelled in April because of the COVID 19 infection prevention and control measures. In May, the festival director was able to launch [a new and almost entirely digital programme with a total of 60 different events](#). The revised programme consisted of new events recorded in Bergen's famous venues, reunions with productions from the past two years and an outdoor programme that took the infection prevention seriously, both professionally and artistically. The new programme also allowed the festival the opportunity to reengage many of those whose contracts were terminated earlier this year.

#### Facts / The Bergen International Festival

- The Nordic region's largest curated festival for music and performing arts.
- The programme focuses on art music and performing arts.
- The first Bergen International Festival was organised in 1953.
- This year's festival took place from 20 May to 03 June and was mainly digital.

[For more press photos, click here.](#)

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