

Press release 08.05.2020

Bergen International Festival launches a re-imagined programme for 2020

'The 2020 Bergen International Festival happens where you are,' says CEO and artistic director Anders Beyer.

When the Norwegian government extended the ban on cultural events until mid-June in order to stop the further spread of the corona virus, the announced programme for the 2020 Bergen International Festival was cancelled.

Now CEO and artistic director Anders Beyer is pleased to announce [a re-imagined festival programme](#), with about 60 different events. A number of new concerts and performances can be enjoyed online, and recordings from the two last festivals are also being made available. The online programme will be enhanced with outdoor events in the city centre.

'What we are presenting with barely concealed pride is a festival with an extent and an artistic diversity which means that our large national and international public, from the 'front row' in their homes, can experience the cornucopia of options that has always been a hallmark of the Bergen Festival, says the festival director.

The 2020 Bergen International Festival will begin with a [grand opening concert](#) broadcast from Bergen's famous Grieghallen on Wednesday 20 May. The artists include the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Wardruna's Einar Selvik, Edvard Grieg Choir, pianist Leif Ove Andsnes and violinists Ludvig Gudim and Eldbjørg Hemsing. The concert is hosted by Arild Erikstad from NRK, the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation, and soprano Mari Eriksmoen.

H.M. the King of Norway is the Bergen International Festival's high patron, and the Royal Family is usually represented at the festival's opening day. This year H.M. Queen Sonja and H.R.H. Crown Prince Haakon will send a video greeting to the audience at the opening concert.

The new festival programme is free and broadcast on the [Bergen International Festival's home page](#) and social media. Several concerts will also be broadcast by the NRK, media outlet Bergens Tidende and other partners. The physical indoor events will not be open to the public.

'We want this year's festival to be a manifestation of the best Norwegian practitioners of international art. We want to give artists and cultural workers commissions, and thus help to keep the wheels in motion in our sorely tried sector. But most of all we wish to give the public the music and events they had been looking forward to, and also hope to open a window for some who have not visited the festival before, says Beyer.

The first Bergen International Festival took place in 1953, and it is the largest curated festival of its kind in the Nordic countries.

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