



23 MAY — 06 JUNE  
2018



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## A Festival in faith and doubt

**Artistic virtual reality, spirituality and a host of new theatrical productions are amongst the ingredients of the 2018 Bergen International Festival.**

‘With a free [VR lounge](#) and performances focusing on the digital age the Festival expands its artistic field. We’re building a Festival for the future, piece by piece,’ says Festival director Anders Beyer.

The 2018 Bergen International Festival will take place in and around Norway’s second city from 23 May to 06 June. Concentrated prize-winning performances of music and theatre experienced through VR goggles and headsets augment a programme of hundreds of live concerts, performances and other events. With ‘faith and doubt’ as a theme running through the programme, the Festival director wishes to focus on issues looming large in society. Spirituality, migration, racism, revenge porn, prostitution and insanity in the arts are among the subjects raised.

‘What can we believe in today? The arts are a powerful guideline for established and nonchalant attitudes alike, pointing to the importance of legitimising doubt, ambiguity and complexity. In the Festival we present many alternatives, but no alternative facts or set answers,’ says Anders Beyer, who has been director of the Festival since autumn 2012.

### New theatrical productions

This year’s programme contains no fewer than seven world premieres, ten Scandinavian premieres and five Norwegian premieres alongside other new music.

‘Much of the programme is so fresh that even I don’t know exactly how all the corners of the Festival will sound and look in the end. Many productions are being created right now, and there will be an explosion of innovation, creativity, energy and joy,’ says Beyer.

Among the new productions are an exhibition and [performance by artists Vegard Vinge and Ida Müller](#), who will be taking over a repurposed community swimming pool throughout the festival period. Other major initiatives include the world premiere [The Road Is Just a Surface](#) by singer-songwriter Anja Garbarek and choreographer Jo Strømgren, and the closing performance [Life is a Dream](#) by British dance company Rambert, choreographer Kim Brandstrup and American filmmakers the Quay Brothers.

### Classical star power

The music programme is influenced by Festival composer [Sofia Gubaidulina](#) (born 1931). The Russian grande dame will be present at concerts featuring accordion-player [Geir Draugsvoll](#) and violinist



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[Gidon Kremer](#) as soloists. Other classical stars include bass-baritone [Sir Bryn Terfel](#), tenor [Joseph Calleja](#), violinists [Janine Jansen](#) and [Charlie Siem](#) and pianists [Sir Andrés Schiff](#) and [Leif Ove Andsnes](#), many of whom also perform in ensembles with younger musicians.

The opening concert, [Berlioz's Grande messe des morts](#), a work that requires such vast musical resources that it is rarely performed, is presented by the Bergen International Festival, [Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra](#) and [Bergen National Opera](#). At the other end of the scale, the homes of composers Edvard Grieg, Ole Bull and Harald Sæverud have long been the Festival's most atmospheric venues for chamber music. This year another home is added to the list – Landås Lystgård, the place where the young Edvard Grieg spent his summers.

'Along with our many partners in Norway and abroad we create room for what is different, and offer a space in everyday life where the mind can drift and thoughts can roam,' says Beyer.

### More than 50 venues

This year's festival, the 66th in line, unfolds at more than 50 venues in and around Bergen. The concert series [Nordvegen](#) by Ivar Bjørnson and Einar Selvik is a musical journey in Norwegian history from past to present, and will visit [Ullensvang](#), [Bekkjarvik](#), [Os](#) and [Moster](#) with Faroese singer-songwriter Eivør as guest artist.

'Forget common notions, right and wrong, and dress for celebration, tears and laughter. The Festival contains all this and more,' says Festival director Beyer.

### Facts: Bergen International Festival (Festspillene i Bergen)

- The first festival took place in 1953.
- This year the Festival dates are 23 May–06 June.
- The Festival presents a variety of genres, with the main focus on music and stage arts.
- His Majesty King Harald of Norway is the patron of the Bergen International Festival, and Her Majesty Queen Sonja will be present at the opening of this 2018 Festival.

[Read the entire Festival programme here](#)

[Download press photos](#)

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