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## *Salome* opens the Bergen International Festival 2020

### Next year's festival opens with Richard Strauss' spectacular opera *Salome*.

The opening performance is a co-production between [Bergen International Festival](#), [Bergen National Opera](#) and [Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra](#).

'Erotic, murderous and biblical themes come together in *Salome* mirroring the human condition in a modern, complex world. We are proud to present this masterpiece alongside the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and Bergen National Opera', Festival Director Anders Beyer says.

The opera is known for its extreme drama. Princess Salome dances voluptuously in front of her stepfather, Herod and demands the head of John the Baptist on a silver platter as a reward. In the 1890s, Oscar Wilde took hold passionately of the biblical story. A few years after his death, Richard Strauss transformed Wilde's words into an intense opera that reaches its chilling climax in the course of just one act.

'*Salome* is an astonishing opera and a spectacular story told through revolutionary music. Together, we are creating a sensational event for the festival opening', Artistic & General Director of the Bergen National Opera, Mary Miller says.

The performance explores the appalling violence of specific biblical times and addresses the grotesque, forbidden, and psychotic. After the infamous «Dance of the Seven Veils» we hear dark, portentous orchestration as John the Baptist's head crashes to the floor.

'The Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra is thrilled to plunge into the great orchestral challenges of Strauss' phenomenal opera, under the baton of chief conductor Edward Gardner and with a brilliant soloist line-up', CEO Bernt E. Bauge says.

Award-winner Lloyd Wood directs this staged concert with the Bergen National Opera and the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra. Lithuanian soprano Ausrine Stundyte, much praised as Salome on opera stages in Berlin, Bologna and Vienna, will perform in Bergen for the first time.

Bergen International Festival, Bergen National Opera and Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra have a number of successful collaborations behind them, including the critically acclaimed *Berlioz: Grand messe des morts* in 2018 and *Peter Grimes* from 2017.

**Richard Strauss** music  
**Oscar Wilde** text  
**Lloyd Wood** director  
**Edward Gardner** conductor  
**Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra**  
**Ausrine Stundyte** Salome

***Salome*** opera in one act, [press photos here](#)  
Wednesday 20 May and Friday 22 May 2020  
Performed in German, subtitled in Norwegian and English  
Duration: 1 hour and 50 min, no intermission

This year's Festival ends on Wednesday 5 June 2019 with the [Closing Concert with Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra](#). [Bergen International Festival](#) 2020 takes place 20 May–03 June.