

A Festival opening flying across the city

The 67th Bergen International Festival opened on Wednesday 22 May with the world premiere of a genre-crossing performance, in the presence of H.M. Queen Sonja of Norway.

Musician and composer Martin Horntveth of the experimental jazz ensemble Jaga Jazzist created the commissioned piece *Flyr over byen (Flying over the city)*, to which the opening ceremony culminated at Edvard Grieg's Square.

The piece was performed by horn and string players and percussionists of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, the Bergen Boys' Choir, rapper Jaa9, Morten Qvenlid and Ivan Blomqvist on keys, Bjørn-Christian Svarstad and Kristoffer Almås of the percussion duo PERCelleh, as well as the composer himself.

The opening ceremony is the beginning of 15 days that will see approximately 300 performances take place on different stages in and around Bergen before the festival ends on 5 June. Among the experiences on this year's programme, are seven world premieres, eight Scandinavian premieres, and six world premieres of new music.

The host of the opening ceremony was artist Alwynne Pritchard, who for the occasion was wearing a ceramics dress created by the young designer Kira Massara. Accompanied by the soundscapes of Thorolf Thuestad, Pritchard tied the hour-long opening ceremony together.

The theme for this year's festival is longing, a theme that reverberated in both artistic elements and in speeches.

'Even though we are born with just one body, even though we are bound by time and space, art and culture allow us to walk in other peoples' shoes. This ability to, for a moment, become someone else, to enter another place and circumstance, which art gives us the possibility to do, is a fundamentally important feature of a democracy,' Bergen Mayor Marte Mjøs Persen said, before she declared the Bergen International Festival 2019 open.

In her speech, Prime Minister Erna Solberg emphasised art's ability to challenge and create change.

'When the stream on the valley side finds a new course, it changes the landscape forever. When art challenges us, our thoughts may also find brand new courses. Thus, art changes us forever. Each of us, and society as a whole,' said the Prime Minister, and urged the audience to launch themselves into their dreams and see where their thoughts may take them during the festival.

[All 2019 press photos](#) / [Opening Ceremony press photos](#)
[Opening Ceremony Programme](#)
[Entire Bergen International Festival 2019 Programme](#)

For further information, please contact Communications Manager Kjersti Jåstad:
kjerstij@fib.no / + 47 91 75 26 77