



Hardanger Music Festival 30 years 26 - 30 August

In 2026, Hardanger Music Festival will celebrate its 30th anniversary – and we invite you to a week of jubilee that will linger long in the memory.

This year's theme is SPARK – the small thing that sets something big in motion. A spark can ignite between people, in an encounter with nature, or when music strikes its first note. It can be brief and fleeting, or it can take on a life of its own, burning on and spreading.

What happens when a Hardanger fiddle makes the hall rise, and you feel everyone hold their breath at the exact moment? When a voice sings a melody you have never heard before, but which nevertheless touches something familiar? When a newly composed sound meets an old folk tune, a whole new energy is born.

In this anniversary year, orchestras fill the fjord and mountains with their power, soloists make time stand still, and choirs send warm waves of sound through the audience. The artists bring with them sparks of roots, longing, joy, and imagination – which, together with the fjord, mountains, and audience, will become something unique. Children and young people will be involved and leave their mark on the celebration – because the spark is also about what lies ahead.

We are looking back on 30 years of music festivals, but we are by no means satisfied. The spark has been lit for the future – for new encounters, new sounds, and discoveries.

These will be days full of sensory experiences: walking between concert venues along the fjord, the taste of fresh apples on the way to church, the sound of birdsong mingling with string instruments – and the feeling of being part of something that only happens here, only now, under the open sky and between the fjord and the mountains.

Welcome to Hardanger Music Festival 2026 – the anniversary where the spark is lit!

PROGRAMME

WEDNESDAY 26 AUGUST

118:30 – Vernissage: SPARK – Moments that Ignite, Ekspedisjonen

Knut Utler

Photography exhibition by Knut Utler, the 2026 festival artist. In this anniversary year, Utler returns to Hardanger Music Festival with an exhibition drawn from his rich festival archive. Through gentle and precise moments, he highlights the sparks that arise when music, space, and people meet.

A visual retrospective and a celebration of the festival's distinctive character.

THURSDAY 27 AUGUST

09:30 – The Carnival of the Animals, Opedal School

District Musicians of Voss

Based on Camille Saint-Saëns's Carnival of the Animals, the District Musicians of Voss lead pupils into a musical animal world, where timbre and harmony bring different animals and characters to life. The concert includes songs about animals, Rossini's famous "Cat Duet", and opportunities to sing along.

09:30 – Mirra, Kinsarvik School

Benedicte Maurseth, Håkon Stene, Mats Eilertsen, Morten Qvenild

In Mirra, the wild reindeer near Maurseth's home in Eidfjord takes centre stage. The work follows the reindeer throughout the year and allows the audience to come close to their sounds, movements, and rituals.

10:30 – Music Festival for the Very Young, Borgstova

Silje Hveem Lofthus and Messiaen Quartet Copenhagen

We invite parents and the very youngest children into an intimate and sensory musical space. Through simple songs and sounds, Silje Hveem Lofthus and the musicians of Messiaen Quartet Copenhagen share music that fosters curiosity, closeness, and joy.

A warm and informal moment to breathe, listen, and sing together, and experience music up close. For parents with children aged 0–2. In collaboration with Ullensvang Church Council.

12:00 – The Carnival of the Animals, Kinsarvik School

District Musicians of Voss

Based on Camille Saint-Saëns's The Carnival of the Animals, the musicians demonstrate how harmony and sound imagery can vividly characterise different representatives of the animal kingdom. The programme includes Rossini's famous "Cat Duet" and several songs about animals in which pupils can join in singing.

12:45 – The Song You Love Kinsarvik Church

Ingunn Dalland, Tanja Tetzlaff, Martin Steinum Brun, Gabriel Fliflet, Thormod Rønning Kvam

Do you have a song that means something truly special to you? A melody that awakens memories, makes you smile, or gives you goosebumps? The Song You Love is a wish concert in which the audience has submitted songs in advance that hold personal meaning. The result is an intimate and warm concert experience where music and memory intertwine.

18:30 – Opening Concert, Ullensvang Church

Messiaen Quartet Copenhagen

- Auerbach: T'filah

- Christophersen: New work (world premiere)

- Brahms: Clarinet Trio

The opening concert embraces the intimate, the innovative, and the classical masterpiece. From Auerbach's quiet prayer for violin, via Christophersen, a composer who allows old threads to meet new sounds and writes music that finds its way directly to the heart.

The evening concludes with Brahms's trio for clarinet, cello, and piano, a work from the composer's final years, where melancholy, warmth, and living vitality meet in music that has moved audiences for generations.

20:30 – Mirra, Krossvoll

Benedicte Maurseth, Håkon Stene, Mats Eilertsen, Morten Qvenild

Benedicte Maurseth takes us from the fiddle tradition into new soundscapes. Mirra, centred on the wild reindeer of Hardangervidda, is a critically acclaimed continuation of Hårr, the work she composed for Hardanger Music Festival in 2019 – later named one of the ten best folk music albums in the world by The Guardian and winner of the Nordic Music Prize. Now Mirra returns home to Hardanger for an intimate concert at Krossvoll, where fiddle, percussion, piano, and double bass meet in a living, poetic sound universe.

FRIDAY 28 AUGUST

10:00 – Musical Brunch: Morning Gems, Fløy

Helsinki Chamber Choir

- Claude le Jeune: Reveycy venir du Printans

- Jacques Arcadelt: Il bianco e dolce cigno

- Fredrik Ehrström: Svanen

- P. J. Hannikainen: Kevätsointuja

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- Giaches de Wert: Vezzosi augelli
 - Benjamin Britten: The Succession of the Four Sweet Months
 - Claudio Monteverdi: Ecco mormorar l'onde
 - Selim Palmgren: Juhannus
 - Anonymous (13th century): Sumer is icumen in
 - Erik Bergman: Nu är sommarn här
 - Fanny Hensel: Abendlich schon rauscht der Wald
 - Gabriel Linsén: Kesäpäivä Kangasalla

Take your coffee with you and enjoy a string of choral pearls stretching from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance to the Nordic sounds of the twentieth century. Helsinki Chamber Choir leads us through musical glimpses of spring and summer, birdsong and love. A light and luminous concert where the vocal sound stands at the centre, and where the seasons and nature speak through centuries of vocal mastery.

10:00 – A Musical Storytime, Veisane Kindergarten

Martin Steinum Brun

How can an old lyre and a human voice open the door to fairy tales and play?

With old ballads, short rhymes and songs inviting clapping, stomping and participation, Martin Steinum Brun creates a musical moment filled with warmth, humour and magic. Here, children experience how music can be as gentle as a lullaby and as mischievous as play in the courtyard.

10:00 – The Carnival of the Animals, Odda Primary School

District Musicians of Voss

Based on Camille Saint-Saëns's The Carnival of the Animals, the musicians demonstrate how harmony and sound imagery can vividly characterise different representatives of the animal kingdom. The programme includes Rossini's famous "Cat Duet" and several songs about animals in which pupils can join in singing.

11:00 – Musical Half Hour, Bråvolltunet

Ragnhild Hemsing and Gabriel Fliflet

Ragnhild Hemsing (Hardanger fiddle/violin) and Gabriel Fliflet (accordion and voice) visit the care home for a warm, lively musical moment. The repertoire ranges from traditional fiddle tunes and folk melodies to playful tunes and beautiful gems from the classical tradition. A half hour marked by presence, joy in communication, and resonant fellowship.

12:00 – The Carnival of the Animals, Tyssedal Primary School

District Musicians of Voss

Based on Camille Saint-Saëns's The Carnival of the Animals, the musicians demonstrate how harmony and sound imagery can vividly characterise different representatives of the animal kingdom. The programme includes Rossini's famous "Cat Duet" and several songs about animals in which pupils can join in singing.

12:00 – Lunchtime Concert, Odda Library

Viktor Wennesz, Tanja Tetzlaff, Thormod R. Kvam

- Paquito D'Rivera: The Cape Cod Files – III: Lecuonerías
- Grieg: Ballade (excerpt)
- Piazzolla: Le Grand Tango
- Farrenc: Trio in E-flat Major for Clarinet, Cello, and Piano, Op. 44

At midday, Odda Library hosts a vibrant lunchtime concert featuring musical breadth and energy. Latin American rhythms, dancing pulse, and Romantic sonority meet in a programme that both uplifts and gathers. With Viktor Wennesz, Tanja Tetzlaff, and Thormod Rønning Kvam on stage, everything is set for a concentrated and lively concert experience.

11:30 – A Musical Storytime, Kinsarvik Kindergarten

Martin Steinum Brun

How can an old lyre and a human voice open the door to fairy tales and play?

With old ballads, short rhymes and songs inviting clapping, stomping and participation, Martin Steinum Brun creates a musical moment filled with warmth, humour and magic. Here, children experience how music can be as gentle as a lullaby and as mischievous as play in the courtyard.

13:15 – Mirra, Odda Upper Secondary School

Benedicte Maurseth, Håkon Stene, Mats Eilertsen, Morten Qvenild

In Mirra, the wild reindeer near Maurseth's home in Eidfjord takes centre stage. The work follows the reindeer's rituals through the year and captures their distinct sounds and behaviour.

16:00 – Voices in Counterlight, Skrivargarden

Musicians from Messiaen Quartet Copenhagen, Ruth Lillegraven

- Shostakovich: Piano Trio No. 2 in E minor, Op. 67 – I Andante
- Clara Schumann: Piano Trio Op. 17 – III Andante
- Bent Sørensen: Phantasmagoria, III Dolcissimo

- Svendsen: Romance for Violin and Piano, Op. 26

- Messiaen: Louange à l'Éternité de Jésus from Quatuor pour la fin du temps

“Those who are not allowed to speak also have something to say.” Voices in Counterlight is a meeting between music and poetry that gives space to the silenced and marginalised. Through tones and words from different times, the audience is taken from unrest to consolation, from the quiet voice of the night to a forward-looking gaze. Who is allowed to speak? Who is heard? And what happens when art itself is silenced?

18:00 – Jubilee Concert – 30 Years of Hardanger Music Festival! Hardangerhallen

Three decades of music, encounters, and memories are to be celebrated. The jubilee concert reflects Hardanger Music Festival as it truly is: diverse, vibrant, and full of contrasts.

The evening is shaped as a series of musical moments, where short contributions and encounters between expressions create a dynamic whole. Local forces and international performers stand side by side, folk music meets chamber music, and the evening opens up unexpected combinations.

From marches and birthday songs to major musical highlights – the jubilee concert is a celebration of the community around music, of voices that have been part of the journey, and of everything still in motion. A festive evening in Hardangerhallen, where history is not summarised, but shared, performed, and lived on.

21:00 – Disco Night at Krossvoll

Ingunn Dalland and musicians from the Norwegian Radio Orchestra

When Ingunn Dalland joins forces with musicians from the Norwegian Radio Orchestra, Krossvoll becomes a pulsating dance floor. With two sets full of glittering disco hits and soulful energy, they invite you to an evening where rhythm, groove, and festive atmosphere take centre stage.

There is room for high heels, bare feet, and smiling faces – and for letting the music take over.

SATURDAY 29 AUGUST

11:00 – Threads of Light, Ullensvang Church

Martin Steinum Brun and Helsinki Chamber Choir

Threads of Light gathers voices and sounds in Ullensvang Church. With Martin Steinum Brun and Helsinki Chamber Choir, an intimate meeting arises between solo and ensemble, between folk music and choral music.

The programme alternates between Steinum Brun's own solos and choral works revolving around words, resonance, and reflection – from Kalevi Aho's mystical Rumi Songs to Nordic soundscapes by Lotta Wennäkoski. The concert weaves voices and expressions into a quiet, concentrated whole, where small glimpses of light are given space to burn.

13:00 – Space for Expression II: Censorship and Resistance, Skrivargarden, Lofthus

Tanja Tetzlaff, Thormod Rønning Kvam, Therese Ulvo

- Henriëtte Bosmans: Sonata for Cello and Piano in A minor (1919), I Allegro maestoso
- Erwin Schulhoff: Sonata for Cello and Piano, Op. 17 – 2nd movement (1914)
- Viktor Ullmann: Piano Sonata No. 7 (Theresienstadt, 1944) – 3rd movement
- Dmitri Shostakovich: Cello Sonata in D minor, Op. 40 – 1st movement
- Henriëtte Bosmans: Sonata for Cello and Piano in A minor – IV Allegro molto e con fuoco

Space for Expression II brings together music created under censorship and oppression. In Skrivargarden, the audience will hear works by composers who lived with threats, exile, and prohibition – and who nevertheless continued to write. Through music and brief narratives, the works are set in a historical context, depicting artistic courage and resistance. With Tanja Tetzlaff and Thormod Rønning Kvam on stage, the music itself bears witness – from the quiet and intimate to the explosive and defiant.

13:00 – Cider Walk in Lofthus Village

Anna Gursli Langesæter and Gabriel Fliflet

The head of the Hardanger Cider Cluster, Anna Gursli Langesæter, takes you on a walk through Norway's finest, most beautiful, most important, and largest fruit and cider landscape. Words, music, and landscape are interwoven, with Gabriel Fliflet as the musical voice along the way, and three refreshing stops are included. The event lasts approximately two hours.

14:00 – Marie Curie – The Light in the Invisible, Family Concert at Krossvoll

Messiaen Quartet Copenhagen and Agnethe Sørlien

What happens when research meets music – and light strikes what we cannot see?

Marie Curie opened a new world when she discovered the hidden energy within matter.

In this concert, you will hear music glowing with the same curiosity: from nature's own landscapes – clouds and marshes – to the smallest sound particles. A discovery in sound and light, where wonder and play take centre stage. Suitable for children and curious adults from around 4 years and up.

19:00 – The Norwegian Radio Orchestra in Hardanger, Hardangerhallen

Ragnhild Hemsing, The Norwegian Radio Orchestra, Holly Choe

- Therese B. Ulvo: Friction Forward

- Johan Halvorsen: Fossegrimen – Ragnhild Hemsing, Hardanger fiddle

Interval

- Ludwig van Beethoven: Symphony No. 5

The Norwegian Radio Orchestra fills Hardangerhallen with power and resonance. Beethoven's Fifth Symphony – the iconic four notes that still vibrate in music history – meets Halvorsen's fairy-tale Fossegrimmen with Ragnhild Hemsing on Hardanger fiddle, and new music by Therese Birkelund Ulvo. The concert is conducted by the orchestra's chief conductor, Holly Choe. A major symphonic event by the fjord, where the spark of the present, tradition, and the eternal classic is ignited anew.

21:00 – Gabriels Novgorod, Krossvoll

At a concert with Gabriels Novgorod, you will hear original interpretations of hard-swinging Finnish humppa, Yiddish tango and longing waltzes, northern Swedish swing – complete with Cossack steps – and instructive German songs by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill. With great involvement, a strong sense of rhythm, and powerful four-part singing in numerous languages, they present ethnic popular music from the Baltic region from the 1930s, 40s, 50s, and 60s. A concert that swings, moves, and surprises.

SUNDAY 30 AUGUST

10:30 – Grieg Walk, from the Hotel Garden to Ullensvang Church

Edmund Utne

The Grieg walks were an important part of Hardanger Music Festival during its first twenty years, closely linking music, landscape, and history in Edvard Grieg's footsteps. In this anniversary year, it is natural to return to this tradition. Grieg will always be a central part of the festival.

This year, several threads come together beautifully: the festival turns 30, and Grieg's Ballade in G minor turns 150. The Ballade was written in Lofthus and stands at the heart of this year's Grieg concert in the church.

On the walk, Edmund Utne leads the audience from Grieg's cabin in the hotel garden to the church, sharing stories about Grieg's close relationship with Lofthus, the landscape, and the people here. With the Ballade as a starting point, this becomes a calm and atmospheric preparation for the concert awaiting in the church.

Grieg Concert

The Grieg Concert is an annual event at Hardanger Music Festival, where music by Edvard Grieg is placed in dialogue with other Norwegian composers – always including at least one living name on the programme. In this way, Grieg’s musical language is kept alive, in dialogue with both tradition and the present.

12:00 – The Grieg Concert, Ullensvang Church

Ragnhild Hemsing, Thormod Rønning Kvam, Malin William-Olsson, Kristoffer Hyldig, Mathias Beyer-Karlshoj

- Signe Lund: Concert Étude, Op. 38
- Halvorsen: Passacaglia, Op. 20 No. 2 for violin and cello
- Grieg: Ballade, Op. 24
- Christophersen: Sentimental Pebbles
- Grieg: Sonata No. 2 in G major for Violin and Piano, Op. 13

The Ballade in G minor resounds 150 years after it was written – one of Grieg’s most personal and monumental piano works. Hearing it in Hardanger, the landscape that would later become so important for Grieg, gives the music its own space of resonance.

With Ragnhild Hemsing and Thormod Rønning Kvam, and musicians from the Messiaen Quartet Copenhagen, we meet Grieg in dialogue with both the present and the tradition. In conversation with works by Signe Lund, Johan Halvorsen, and Morten Christophersen, the concert paints a nuanced portrait of the composer – rooted in Norwegian sonority yet open to new voices.

15:00 – Resonance, The Power Station Cathedral, Tyssedal

Helsinki Chamber Choir, Tanja Tetzlaff, Viktor Wenezs, Martin Steinum Brun

- Traditional
- Kaija Saariaho: Duft, I. Blütenstaub

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- Johann Sebastian Bach: Cello Suite No. 4 in E-flat major – Prelude
 - Jean Sibelius: Sortunut ääni
 - Jean Sibelius: Sydämeni laulu
 - Kaija Saariaho: Duft, II. Blühend
 - Johann Sebastian Bach: Cello Suite No. 4 – Allemande
 - Traditional
 - Einojuhani Rautavaara: Lorca Suite
 - Kaija Saariaho: Duft, III. Flüchtig
 - Johann Sebastian Bach: Cello Suite No. 4 – Gigue
 - Tze Yeung Ho: Blå er din krage (world premiere)
 - Traditional: Folkestadvisa – Martin Steinum Brun and Helsinki Chamber Choir

In the majestic Power Station Cathedral in Tyssedal, sounds from different times and traditions meet in a space that itself carries memory and resonance. Timeless movements stand side by side with the rich Finnish choral heritage, from Sibelius and Rautavaara to Kaija Saariaho's delicate and listening sound world.

Through folk melodies and traditional material, Martin Steinum Brun binds the programme together and creates transitions between the intimate and the monumental. In the world premiere of Tze Yeung Ho's new work for choir, new perspectives open – a new imprint in the space, where the resonance points forward.

26 - 30 AUGUST

**WELCOME TO HARDANGER MUSIC FESTIVAL 2026 – THE
ANNIVERSARY WHERE THE SPARK IS LIT!**

TICKETS AT TICKETCO