



Ragnhild Hemsing

– Violin & Hardanger fiddle
www.ragnhildhemsing.com

BIOGRAPHY 2023/2024

*"Ragnhild Hemsing's emotional resonance still resonates,
long after the music has ceased to be heard."*

– Julian Haylock

Since her childhood, violinist and Hardanger fiddler Ragnhild Hemsing has been deeply connected to the rich musical folk tradition of her native Norway. As a result, she is successfully able to combine the typical elements of Norwegian folk music and classical music in a youthful, fresh, and completely unique new way.

Born in Valdres in 1988, Ragnhild Hemsing began playing the violin at the age of five and the traditional Hardanger fiddle shortly thereafter. Later she studied at the Barratt Due Music Institute in Oslo and with Professor Boris Kuschnir in Vienna. At only 14 years of age, Ragnhild made her debut with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and the Trondheim Symphony Orchestra, performing Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto. Since then, she has built an international career and has made the Hardanger fiddle known outside of Norway. Hemsing's extensive repertoire of classical solo works for violin and lesser-known, complex works for the fiddle make her one of the most versatile musicians of our time.

The **2023/2024 season** sees Ragnhild Hemsing perform a wide range of programmes throughout Europe. In October 2023, she performed Geirr Tveitt's second Concerto for Hardanger Fiddle from her album *Bruch + Tveitt* together with the Philharmonic Orchestra Regensburg at the Regensburg Theatre. Hemsing's engagements will also take her to Katowice in Poland for a performance of a special arrangement of Grieg's *Peer Gynt* with the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra. In the Grieghallen in Bergen, she will be the soloist in Philip Glass' Violin Concerto No. 1 with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra. Another highlight will be Hemsing's debut at the Brighton Dome with the Brighton Philharmonic under the baton of Adam Hickox in April 2024. A tour with the Trondheim Soloists will take the artist to Germany again with concerts in Munich and Fürth, among other places. Together with the Württembergisches Orchester Reutlingen, Ragnhild Hemsing will be playing in Reutlingen and at the Gezeitenkonzerte in East Frisia. In the field of chamber music, Ragnhild Hemsing will be performing in Germany with some of her long-standing partners such as the cellist Benedict Klöckner and the accordionist Bjarke Mogensen.

A special highlight of the season will be Hemsing's residency at the Bergen International Festival. The first Hardanger fiddle player to be appointed as the festival's Artist in Residence, she will give several concerts in May and June together with accomplished artists such as Mathias Eick, Mats Eilertsen, Tor Espen Aspaas and the ensemble Barokkanerne.



Last season Hemsing made her debut at the Festspiele Mecklenburg–Vorpommern, the MDR–Musiksommer, in the Kölner Philharmonie and the Musée d'Orsay, amongst others, as well as with the Wuppertal Symphony Orchestra, where she opened their season. On a tour of Germany with the Trondheim Soloists, she captivated audiences with Grieg's *Peer Gynt*. Hemsing also returned to the USA at the invitation of the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival. She performed both chamber music and as soloist with orchestra at the renowned Weilburger Schlosskonzerte and accepted (repeat) invitations from the Nürnberger Symphoniker, the German Baroque Orchestra L'arte del mondo, the Württembergische Philharmonie Reutlingen, the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra, the Norwegian Radio Orchestra (KORK), the Trondheim Soloists, the Kristiansand Orchestra and the Norwegian Baroque Ensemble Barokkanerne.

Important debuts in recent years include concerts with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, the NDR Radiophilharmonie Hannover, the MRD Symphony Orchestra under Kristjan Järvi, the Nürnberger Symphoniker, the Philharmonic Orchestra Freiburg, the Residentie Orkest The Hague, the Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra under Santtu–Matias Rouvali, the Belgian National Orchestra and the Düsseldorf Symphony Orchestra, as well as appearances at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., at the Tonhalle Düsseldorf, the Tonhalle Zürich, the Beethovenfest Bonn, the Risør Chamber Music Festival and the Schwetzingen SWR Festival and the Mariinsky Concert Hall in St Petersburg.

Her album *Røta* (meaning “Roots” in her local dialect), with works by classical Norwegian composers as well as traditional folk music for violin and Hardanger fiddle, received excellent reviews. It was her first album to appear on the label Berlin Classics, as have all her subsequent ones. “Almost too good to be true” was the verdict of journalist Stephan Bartels, whereas Alain Steffen wrote in the music magazine *Pizzicato*: “Ragnhild Hemsing plays all the pieces with much love and care, technically flawlessly, but always in the spirit of traditional Norwegian music. The purity of the music and the meditative power, the richness of colour and the sparse but warm soulful images set in as of their own accord, offering the listener an intense and truly beautiful listening experience [...]”

Spring 2022 saw the release of her album with the Trondheim Soloists featuring Edvard Grieg's famous incidental music to *Peer Gynt*. This newly commissioned arrangement for violin and Hardanger fiddle by Tormod Tvette Vik premiered at the Bergen International Festival in May 2021 and was euphorically received by audience and press alike. This album turned out to be a great success on the digital platforms Spotify and Apple Music, obtaining high streaming numbers. In early 2023, Hemsing released her album *Bruch + Tveitt*, for which she recorded Bruch's Violin Concerto and Geirr Tveitt's second Concerto for Hardanger Fiddle together with the Bergen Philharmonic.

Hemsing's fourth album on the Berlin Classics label, *Vetra*, was released in November 2023. Here, too, plays both violin and Hardanger fiddle, which represent her classical and folk musical identity – a characteristic that runs through all her work. *Vetra* (“Winter” in her local dialect) presents unknown and rarely played melodies and pieces collected from her native region of Valdres by Ludvig Mathias Lindeman in the 1800s. On this album, this cultural heritage is brought to life in a



more modern rendition. In addition, two of Hemsing's own compositions, "Vetrahalling" and "Vinterstemning", are included here on an album for the first time. These and other pieces were arranged together with Tormod Tvette Vik and recorded with renowned musicians such as Mathias Eick and Ole and Knut Aastad Braten. The latter play the "langeleik", another traditional Norwegian instrument similar to the zither. This album was also well received by the press. Susanne Schmerda from *BR-Klassik*, where it was chosen as album of the week, called it an "atmospherically dense album between folk and classical music that makes you yearn for winter and the Advent season and transports us to the far north" and Stephan Schwarz-Peters from the magazine *Rondo* wrote: "On 'Vetra' [Ragnhild Hemsing] has now successfully attempted to breathe new life into ancient sounds, to tell stories from distant centuries in a contemporary way. The treasure she has drawn on could provide material for dozens of further albums."

Her recording of Johan Halvorsen's *Fossegrimen*, Op. 21 with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and Neeme Järvi (Chandos) received great acclaim from the international press. Since this recording, the two have enjoyed a close working relationship. Among other things, Neeme Järvi invited the young artist to make her debut with the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra in February 2012. Ragnhild Hemsing's albums *Northern Timbre* (label: 2L) and *Yr* with Tor Espen Aspaas also met with a very positive response from the press and the public. The duo's latest CD, *Beethoven's Testaments of 1802* (2L), received rave reviews. "Although Beethoven can be played in many ways, I simply have to say that this is exactly the way Beethoven should be played," wrote Magnus Andersson on musikkritikk.no.

In October 2021, Ragnhild Hemsing received the prestigious Opus Classic Prize in the category "Classical Music without Borders" for her album *Røta* and also performed at the Awards Gala at the Konzerthaus Berlin, which was broadcast live on ZDF television. After her successful debut at the Beethovenfest Bonn in 2013, Ragnhild Hemsing received the Beethoven Ring, which is awarded annually by the association "Citizens for Beethoven" to an artist performing at the festival. In 2018, she was appointed by the Arts Council Norway as a member of the expert group for "touring activities". She has been an advisor to the Nordic-Baltic Mobility Program for Culture since 2021.

In 2013, Ragnhild Hemsing founded the Hemsing Festival with her sister Eldbjørg Hemsing, which the two have been running together ever since. The chamber music festival takes place every year in February in their hometown of Aurdal in the Valdres region. For further information, see: www.hemsingfestival.com.

Ragnhild Hemsing plays a violin built by Francesco Ruggeri (Cremona, 1694) and a Hardanger fiddle previously played by the violinist and composer Ole Bull (1810–1880), dubbed the "Paganini of the North", both generously on loan from the foundation Dextra Musica.

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