

Ragnhild Hemsing

Violin & Hardanger Fiddle

www.ragnhildhemsing.com



BIOGRAPHY

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 unique way.

Ragnhild Hemsing was born in the region of Valdres. She 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. Her 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.

In the **2024/2025 season**, Ragnhild Hemsing will perform a variety of programmes throughout Europe. In December she will appear at the Philharmonie Luxembourg. Later in the season she will perform with the Neue Philharmonie Westfalen in Gelsenkirchen and Recklinghausen. She will return to Tallinn, this time as soloist with the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra conducted by Risto Joost. Together with the Trondheim Soloists, Ragnhild Hemsing will undertake tours through Norway and also abroad, performing for instance at the Brucknerhaus in Linz. She will also tour Germany with the Württembergisches Kammerorchester Heilbronn. Another invitation will take her to the Gezeiten Festival with her chamber music partners Benedict Kloeckner and Mario Häring. Together with bandoneonist Omar Massa she will perform at the MDR Musiksommer. A special highlight of the season is the release of her album *The Norwegian Seasons* (Berlin Classics), on which she reinterprets Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* in an arrangement for Hardanger fiddle with the Norwegian baroque ensemble Barokkanerne. She will be performing this programme at the Thüringer Bachwochen, the Rheingau Musikfestival and the Olavsfestdagene in Trondheim.

Important debuts in recent years have included appearances at the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival, the MDR Music Summer, the Cologne Philharmonie, the Musée d'Orsay and concerts with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, the NDR Radio Philharmonic Hanover, the MRD Symphony Orchestra under Kristjan Järvi, the Nuremberg Symphony Orchestra, the Freiburg Philharmonic Orchestra, the Residentie Orkest Den Haag, the Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra under Santtu-Matias Rouvali, the Belgian National Orchestra and the Düsseldorf

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Symphony Orchestra, as well as performances at the Kennedy Center in Washington D. C., the Tonhalle Düsseldorf, the Tonhalle Zurich, the Beethovenfest Bonn, the Risør Chamber Music Festival and the Schwetzingen SWR Festival and at the Mariinsky Concert Hall in St Petersburg.

As with her album *The Norwegian Seasons*, her preceding four recordings were also released on the Berlin Classics label. On all five these albums she plays both violin and Hardanger fiddle, a characteristic of her entire artistic output reflecting her dual classical and folk music identity. The journalist Stephan Bartels praised the album *Røta* ("Roots" in her regional dialect), which includes works by Norwegian classical composers as well as traditional folk music for violin and Hardanger fiddle, as "almost too good to be true". The album *Peer Gynt* with the Trondheim Soloists, released in the spring of 2022, features arrangements commissioned from Tormod Tvette Vik for violin and Hardanger fiddle of Grieg's famous incidental music. This album was a great success on the digital platforms Spotify and Apple Music, achieving high streaming numbers. The programme of the album has also been enthusiastically received by the public and the press in concert performances. In early 2023, Hemsing released her album *Bruch + Tveitt*, a recording of Bruch's Violin Concerto and Geirr Tveitt's Second Concerto for Hardanger Fiddle with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra. *Vetra* ("Winter" in her regional dialect) was released in November 2023 and presents unknown and rarely performed melodies and works collected during the 19th century in Hemsing's home region of Valdres, as well as two of her own compositions. Susanne Schmerda of *BR-Klassik*, where it was named album of the week, called it an "atmospheric, dense album between folk and classical music that whets the appetite for winter and Advent and transports us to the far north".

Her earlier recordings include Johan Halvorsen's *Fossegrimmen* op. 21 with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and Neeme Järvi (Chandos), which was highly acclaimed by the international music press. This recording led to a close working relationship between the two musicians and Neeme Järvi invited her to make her debut with the Estonian State Symphony Orchestra in February 2012. Ragnhild Hemsing's three albums with pianist Tor Espen Aspaas, *Northern Timbre*, *YR* and *Beethoven's Testaments of 1802*, were all released on the 2L label and have received very positive reviews from both the press and the public.

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 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.



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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