



Multiple winners at Aria Borealis Bodø

The first edition of Aria Borealis Bodø presented compelling mix of international Early Music singing competition, festival and celebration of worldwide musical community (24 June – 2 July 2022)

After nine days of large-scale musical meetings, concerts and two rounds of the international singing competition, it is clear that there are many winners at Aria Borealis Bodø: "There is simply such a high level among the participants that we are happy that there were several prizes to be awarded," says Rasmus Adrian, CEO at Stormen Konserthus and Jury Chairman of the Aria Borealis Bodø International Competition for Early Music Singers.

The jury, the audience (both in the hall and online) and even the orchestras involved were able to choose their own winner of the competition, which took place in the Norwegian city just north of the Arctic Circle on Monday 27 June and Saturday 2 July. Austrian soprano Johanna Rosa Falkinger received the jury's first prize in the first competition round, and British tenor/haute-contre Kieran White won the first prize in the second round. The complete prize list is as follows:

First round – Jury's prize:

- 1st prize: Johanna Rosa Falkinger (soprano), Austria
- 2nd prize: Camilo Delgado Díaz (tenor), Colombia
- 3rd prize: Jorge Armando Martínez Escutia (baritone), Mexico

Second round – Jury's prize:

- Kieran White (tenor/haute-contre), UK

Orchestra prizes:

- Barokkanerne: Johanna Rosa Falkinger (soprano), Austria
- Concerto Copenhagen: Johanna Rosa Falkinger (soprano), Austria
- Finnish Baroque Orchestra: Johanna Rosa Falkinger (soprano), Austria
- Drottningholm Baroque Ensemble: Johanna Rosa Falkinger (soprano), Austria

Audience prize:

- Jorge Armando Martínez Escutia (baritone), Mexico

The distinguished competition jury consisted of British soprano Dame Emma Kirkby, harpsichordist and Artistic Director of Concerto Copenhagen Lars Ulrik Mortensen, Theater an der Wien director Stefan Herheim, Finnish soprano Tuuli Lindeberg and Swedish tenor Anders J. Dahlin.

Talent development

The Aria Borealis Bodø International Competition for Early Music Singers started several months before the festival itself, with as many as 127 young singers signing up. After the initial digital rounds, eight participants from all over the world were finally selected to travel to Bodø in June to compete in two more rounds – with the added opportunity of further talent development.

Austrian soprano Johanna Rosa Falkinger commented on the competition: "I am extremely honoured that every orchestra selected me as their favourite and also very grateful for the jury's first prize in the first round, especially because it is thanks to jury members Tuuli Lindeberg and Emma Kirkby that I found my way into Early Music four years ago. It was amazing to get the opportunity to present your own programme, working with a stage director and being accompanied by such great and renowned orchestras of the Nordic Baroque Scene. In Bodø I experienced a great atmosphere of co-working, inspiration, and making dreams come true!"

21-year-old Jorge Armando Martínez Escutia, from Mexico, also really enjoyed his experience in Bodø: "This is the dream. Meeting my idols like Emma Kirkby and performing professionally is fantastic. Additionally, we have received so much good guidance and training together with very skilled musicians, which is rare," he says. He has also fallen in love with the midnight sun and the tranquillity he's found in Bodø. "It's so beautiful here and I can really relax. I would have loved to live here," he adds.

The Aria Borealis Bodø International Competition for Early Music Singers has been praised for creating an environment around the singers characterised by collaboration and development rather than stress and competition nerves. "This has been about working together and creating musical meetings enabling both the artists and musical interpretations to develop, and it is good to see that this is exactly what has happened. We have seen a great development among the singers through the competition rounds," says Rasmus Adrian.

The whole world in Bodø

Bodø, long known for its breathtaking landscape, has seen its international profile soar since it was named a European Capital of Culture for 2024. Last week, the inaugural Aria Borealis Bodø gathered more than a hundred performers for workshops, sessions, concerts and even a summer program for young musicians. Performances included L'Arpeggiata and Christina Pluhar, lutenist Rolf Lislevand, star of Norwegian folk music Berit Opheim, bandoneon player Per Arne Glorvigen, and composer Maja Ratjke with Nordic Affect.

The festival has represented a pioneering collaboration between Bodø's Stormen Culture Centre, a concert hall, library and multi-purpose performance space opened in 2014, and Nordic Baroque Scene, a network formed by the four prominent Nordic Baroque orchestras Concerto Copenhagen, Finnish Baroque Orchestra, Drottningholm Baroque Ensemble (Sweden) and Barokkanerne from Norway. According to the organisers, Aria Borealis turned out exactly the way they had hoped for. "We've succeeded in creating a musical meeting between musicians and singers from all over the world. My impression is that it has been very beneficial thanks to this innovative form of competition, where mentoring, collaboration with the orchestras and less competitive pressure has been central," says Mari Giske from Nordic Baroque Scene.

Now they'll start planning the next edition of the competition and festival, which will take place during Bodø's Capital of Culture year. "We aim to repeat the success in 2024 and I hope it can be even bigger. This could be an international summit of Baroque music," says Giske. Rasmus Adrian is particularly pleased to have achieved this in Bodø: "There is no doubt that we have been able to show Norway at its best and made our mark as an important and accomplished cultural force in the region. We have created an international event here. Now I am tired, and happy and proud."

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www.konserthus.stormen.no www.nordicbaroque.com

Photos available on www.dropbox.com/sh/fopdo4rqk3nmgxf/AADIsakJgnP1zVITIDZb7l5ca?dl=0

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

PARTICIPANTS OF ARIA BOREALIS BODØ INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION FOR EARLY MUSIC SINGERS

			Country of birth	Country of residence	
Camilo	Delgado Díaz	29	Colombia	Netherlands	Tenor
Camilo Delgado Díaz was chosen for the Junges Ensemble's 2020/2021 season at the Musiktheater im Revier in Gelsenkirchen, Germany. Performances include Keiser's <i>Octavia</i> , Monteverdi's <i>Orfeo</i> , and <i>Vespro della beata Vergine</i> . Díaz was a finalist at the 5th International Competition Pietro Antonio Cesti in Innsbruck and at the 2021 Corneille Competition in Rouen, France. He performed in Handel's <i>Alcina</i> under Maestro Andrea Marcon as the winning tenor of the Voci Olimpiche competition in Vicenza, Italy. Camilo holds a Master's degree in Baroque singing from the Hochschule für Musik in Cologne.					
Johanna Rosa	Falkinger	26	Austria	Austria	Soprano
Johanna Rosa Falkinger has performed as a soloist in orchestral concerts, oratorios and masses. She is a member of Momentum Vocal Music and regularly performs with the Company of Music at the Vienna Konzerthaus. Johanna has won prizes at the Corneille Competition in Rouen, France, and the WDR Prize at the H.I.F. Biber Competition in St. Florian, Austria with Ensemble freymut. She is currently a Master's student in Early Music Singing at the MUK Music and Arts University in Vienna.					
Paulina	Francisco	29	United States	Canada	Soprano

Paulina Francisco has performed as a soloist with several ensembles, including the Indianapolis Baroque Orchestra, Bourbon Baroque, and the Bloomington Bach Cantata Project. She was a finalist in the 2021 Handel Aria Competition and she is in the final stages of completing a DM in Historical Performance at Indiana University. Additionally, Paulina holds a Graduate Certificate in Vocology from IU, a Master of Arts in Early Music from the University of Southern California and Bachelor's degrees in Vocal Performance and Public Relations from Carroll University.

Franko Klisović 27 Croatia Croatia Countertenor

Franko Klisović was in his early studies when he was engaged as Ottone in Handel's *Agrippina* at the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb in 2016. He has performed regularly with orchestras and opera companies, including in Doha at the Katara Opera House and at the Croatian National Theater Ivan pl. Zajc in Rijeka. In the 2020/2021 season he performed the role of Nireno in Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* in Rijeka. Franko has won numerous awards at international vocal competitions, including the Audience Prize at the Premiere Opera Foundation + NYIO in New York in 2020, and 1st Prize at the 2021 Tullio Serafin singing competition in Vicenza, Italy. He is currently pursuing a degree from the University of Zagreb Academy of Music.

Jorge Armando Martínez Escutia 21 Mexico Switzerland Baritone

Young baritone Jorge Armando Martínez Escutia already has a significant experience as soloist. Recent performances include J. S. Bach's Magnificat BWV 243 and Cantata BWV 211 with La Academia de Música Antigua de la UNAM, Mexico City, and the role of Aeneas in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* at Festival Impulso, Mexico City. Jorge was a 1st Prize winner at the 29th Francisco Araiza Singing Competition in Mexico City in 2018 and 3rd Prize winner at the 7th María Bonilla Singing Competition in 2017. He is currently pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Renaissance-Romantic Singing at Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in Basel, Switzerland.

Kieran White 32 UK UK Tenor / Haute Contre

Kieran White is an established performer and soloist with leading European ensembles, including Amsterdam Baroque and the Edvard Grieg Kor in Norway. He performs regularly with the Monteverdi Choir under Sir John Eliot Gardiner and with Copenhagen Soloists. Recent operatic engagements include *Castor et Pollux* by Rameau with Warsaw Kameralna, Poland; Damon in Handel's *Acis and Galatea* with Dorset Opera, UK, and Ruggiero in Caccini's *La liberazione di Ruggiero* at Brighton Early Music. Kieran received 2nd Prize at the 2021 Froville International Baroque Competition. He holds a Master's degree from the Royal Academy of Music in London.

STORMEN CONCERT HALL

Situated right by Bodø's waterfront, Stormen Concert Hall is a vibrant and innovative arena for arts and culture. Since its opening in November 2014, the popular venue has been taking Bodø by storm. Stormen Culture Centre is an essential part of Bodø and its thriving culture scene, featuring a state-of-the-art library and an award-winning concert hall. The clean and modern architecture offers a modern expression and an urban vibe.

The multi-venue cultural complex of Stormen Concert Hall consists of four venues and is suitable for a wide range of arts and cultural activities. The main hall is a unique multi-purpose venue that can house more than 900 audience members, ideal for a wide range of genres and activities, including opera, theatre, concerts and conferences. The hall's top-level acoustics ensure optimal conditions for the many acoustic concerts and recordings around the year. The hall is also the home venue of the resident symphony orchestra, the Arctic Philharmonic.

NORDIC BAROQUE SCENE

Nordic Baroque Scene (NBS) is a collaborative platform by four leading Nordic Baroque orchestras from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Barokkanerne from Oslo, Concerto Copenhagen (CoCo), the Drottningholm Baroque Ensemble (DBE) from Stockholm and the Finnish Baroque Orchestra (FiBO) from Helsinki have come together to undertake substantial collaboration projects and share best practices, thus strengthening the Nordic Baroque scene by creating a whole greater than the sum of the individual parts.

The NBS aim to establish novel and exciting projects where different cultural expressions are mixed to form surprising and boundary-pushing experiences. The festival and international singing competition for Early Music singers Aria Borealis Bodø is the first main collaboration project of NBS. The four ensembles met and performed together for the first time when the competition was launched in Helsinki in August 2021.

In the summer of 2023, the collaboration takes the ensembles to Berlin for the *Northern Lights* festival at Berlin's Philharmonie, which NBS is planning in cooperation with Freiburger Barockorchester, Andreas Richter Consulting and the Nordic embassies in Berlin. Further plans include opera productions and the next editions of Aria Borealis Bodø in 2024 and 2026. In addition, the ensembles are doing smaller collaboration projects and concert exchanges.

NBS is registered as a non-profit association in Denmark. The board members are Laura Kajander from FiBO (chair), Nikolaj de Fine Licht (CoCo), Olof Larsson (DBE) and Mari Giske (Barokkanerne).

NBS is supported by The Nordic Culture Fund and Nordic Culture Point.