



**MUSIKKSELKAPET
HARMONIEN**



**Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra to perform in Antwerp as part of European tour (16 February 2023)
Star pianist Víkingur Ólafsson joins the orchestra in Grieg's Piano Concerto, in a concert which also
features Rachmaninov's *Symphonic Dances***

‘Gardner’s pacing was spot on as he steered the piece to its heady climax’

The Scotman, Rachmaninov’s Symphonic Dances at Edinburgh International Festival, August 2022

Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra’s European tour in summer 2022, its first outside Norway since 2019, resulted in critically acclaimed concerts in Edinburgh, Bremen and Copenhagen. In February 2023 the orchestra and its Chief Conductor Edward Gardner will be on the road again for a seven-date tour of central Europe which will also include a performance at Antwerp’s Queen Elizabeth Hall, as part of royal concert organization COFENA’s concert series. It will mark the orchestra’s first visit to Belgium since 1984 and its second ever performance in Antwerp since playing there in 1973.

The programme in Antwerp will see the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and Gardner start with the rarely heard *Funeral March for Rikard Nordraak*, composed by Grieg and arranged by Johan Halvorsen, two composers who lived in Bergen and had a long association with the orchestra. Icelandic pianist Víkingur Ólafsson, with whom the orchestra also enjoys a close relationship, will be the soloist in Grieg’s Piano Concerto, while Rachmaninov’s kaleidoscopic, adrenaline-inducing *Symphonic Dances* will complete the programme.

Chief Conductor Edward Gardner, who has been at the helm of one of the world’s oldest symphony orchestras since 2015, commented: “I love making music with my amazing orchestra, now joined by the wonderful soloist Víkingur Ólafsson for our upcoming tour. He is a visionary artist who will make a profound impact with his remarkable musicianship.”

“Chief Conductor Edward Gardner will lead exciting and varied programmes,” said the orchestra’s CEO Bernt Bauge. “Gardner and the orchestra have worked closely with Víkingur Ólafsson, and he was soloist with the orchestra on our last tour to Germany, performing the Grieg and Schumann concertos. The orchestra performed in Antwerp only once fifty years ago and we’re much looking forward to returning there in February as part of our tour”.

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Thursday 16 February 2023, 8pm

Koningin Elisabethzaal, Antwerp

[Event link](#)

Edward Gardner conductor | **Víkingur Ólafsson** piano | **Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra**

Grieg (arr. Johan Halvorsen) *Funeral March for Rikard Nordraak*

Grieg Piano Concerto

Rachmaninov *Symphonic Dances*

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra

Founded in 1765, the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra is one of the oldest orchestras in the world. Composer Edvard Grieg had a close relationship with the orchestra and was Artistic Director in 1880-82. Since October 2015, Edward Gardner has been the orchestra's Chief Conductor, succeeding Andrew Litton, who was Chief Conductor in 2003-2015. Recent tours saw the Bergen Philharmonic and Gardner perform in venues including Concertgebouw Amsterdam and Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, and return to the UK for concerts at the Edinburgh International Festival and the BBC Proms. Every season, selected concerts are livestreamed for free on the orchestra's Bergenphilive platform. Gardner and the orchestra were awarded the *Gramophone* Opera Recording of the Year and Recording of the Year 2021 for their release of Britten's *Peter Grimes*. Sir Mark Elder has been appointed as the orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor from the 2022-23 season.

Edward Gardner

Among the most talented conductors of his generation, Edward Gardner has been Chief Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra since October 2015, following his tenure as Principal Guest Conductor in 2013-2015. For eight years (2006-15) Gardner was Music Director at the English National Opera, receiving the Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Best Conductor in 2008 and a prestigious Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera in 2009. In addition to his work in Bergen, Gardner is Principal Conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and he has been announced as the future Music Director of the Norwegian Opera and Ballet from August 2024.