

Salome Unveiled

Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and Edward Gardner to give concert performance of Strauss's *Salome* at this year's Edinburgh International Festival (14 August)

Outstanding cast includes Malin Byström (Salome), Johan Reuter (Jochanaan), Gerhard Siegel (Herodes) and Katarina Dalayman (Herodias)

Conductor and orchestra also explore showpieces by Ravel and Rachmaninov and Robert Schumann's Piano Concerto, with Víkingur Ólafsson (15 August)

'... a stupendous performance that rightly earned a tumultuous reception,' review of BPO's *Peter Grimes* at Edinburgh International Festival, *The Times*, 15 August 2017

Sold-out signs are sure to greet the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and its Chief Conductor Edward Gardner when they return to the Edinburgh International Festival this summer. Their gripping account of Britten's *Peter Grimes*, among the highlights of the festival's 70th birthday season five years ago, set superlative standards. They intend to do the same at Usher Hall this year with a concert performance of Richard Strauss's one-act opera *Salome* (14 August 2022) and a compelling programme of Ravel's *La valse*, Schumann's Piano Concerto in A minor, with Víkingur Ólafsson as soloist, and Rachmaninov's *Symphonic Dances* (15 August).

Salome, with its religious symbolism, eroticism and brutality and daring libretto based on Oscar Wilde's eponymous play, has lost none of its power to shock since it was first staged in 1905. Malin Byström is set to bring her dramatic voice, charismatic artistry and irresistible stage presence to the title role in Edinburgh. The Swedish soprano, recently described by *Bachtrack* as 'one of the greatest operatic singers today', will be joined by Johan Reuter as Jochanaan, Gerhard Siegel as Herodes, Katarina Dalayman as Herodias and Bror Magnus Tødenes as Narraboth. The performance boasts an equally fine supporting cast, including Hanna Hipp, Clive Bayley, Callum Thorpe and James Ley.

Edward Gardner and his Bergen musicians will also perform *Salome* as part of this year's Bergen International Festival (2 June), with Sara Jakubiak as Salome, Kostas Smoriginas as Jochanaan and Hubert Francis as Herodes. Strauss's opera marks a continuation of the conductor's bold programming in Bergen, which has embraced such monumental choral works as Berlioz's *Grande messe des morts* and Schoenberg's *Gurre-Lieder* and secured international acclaim with concert performances and a Gramophone Award-winning recording of *Peter Grimes*.

"We're lucky in Bergen to have an orchestra that can perform both the symphonic and operatic repertoire at the highest level," notes Edward Gardner. "I think the success of *Peter Grimes* resonated widely, which means we can attract world-class singers to work with us. It's wonderful to have Sara and Malin sharing *Salome* in Bergen and Edinburgh and terrific casts for both performances. *Salome* is among those operas that work beautifully in concert. It feels like the perfect project to follow on from *Grimes* and the ideal piece for us to bring to Edinburgh. When we take programmes on tour, they have to be meaningful and contain a unique essence. I'm determined that our performances at the Edinburgh Festival this summer will leave behind something for audiences to remember."

In addition to playing Schumann's Piano Concerto in Edinburgh, Víkingur Ólafsson will perform Grieg's Piano Concerto in A minor with the Bergen Philharmonic and Gardner at the Tivoli Festival in Copenhagen (17 August) and the Rheingau Festival in Wiesbaden (18 August). The Icelandic pianist first worked with orchestra and conductor during the initial Covid-19 lockdown when he filmed the Grieg Concerto in his native city of Reykjavík and the Bergen Philharmonic accompanied the recording from their home at Bergen's Grieghallen.

"Víkingur's a star and such an intrepid thinker," observes Edward Gardner. "The genesis of our relationship was wonderful. Of course there were edges to our online performance, but the essence of it was so beautiful and such a boost in those tough times. Since then we've played the Grieg together in person as part of Víkingur's residency in Bergen last year. He's a wonderful colleague. We share a similar way of feeling music and searching for ideas. I'm very proud of our second Edinburgh programme, which came out of *Salome*'s 'Dance of the Seven Veils' and the idea of dance itself. There are elements of dance in each of those pieces which I believe perfectly complement *Salome*. During the pandemic I've thought deeply about our role as performers, what we should be giving to our

audiences and how we should develop. To work with someone like Víkingur and others like him who are always challenging the status quo is essential for me. It's a great privilege as a conductor to forge relationships with such an imaginative, innovative performer."

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For press enquiries, please contact:

Elena Dante at Valerie Barber PR

elena@vbpr.co.uk / +44 (0)20 7586 8560 / www.vbpr.co.uk

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EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

Sunday 14 August 2022, 7pm

Usher Hall, Edinburgh

[Event link](#)

Edward Gardner conductor | **Malin Byström** Salome | **Johan Reuter** Jochanaan | **Gerhard Siegel** Herodes | **Katarina Dalayman** Herodias | **Bror Magnus Tødenes** Narraboth | **Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra**

Strauss *Salome*

Monday 15 August, 7.30pm

Usher Hall, Edinburgh

[Event link](#)

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

Ravel *La valse*

Schumann Piano Concerto

Rachmaninov *Symphonic Dances*

SOMMERKLASSISK I TIVOLI

Wednesday 17 August 2022, 8pm

Tivoli Concert Hall, Copenhagen

[Event link](#)

RHEINGAU MUSIK FESTIVAL

Thursday 18 August 2022, 8pm

Kurhaus Wiesbaden

[Event link](#)

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

Ravel *La valse*

Grieg Piano Concerto

Rachmaninov *Symphonic Dances*