

Public Acclaim

Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra receives Gramophone 2025 Orchestra of the Year Award

Norwegian ensemble tops public vote from a strong field of six international nominees



‘Edward Gardner conducts the opera in one long paragraph, and the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra play sumptuously for him. There is so much to admire...,’ *Gramophone* (June 2025), review of Strauss’s *Salome*

The Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra is proud and honoured to receive the 2025 Gramophone Orchestra of the Year Award. The prestigious accolade, presented during the annual Gramophone Awards at the De Vere Connaught Rooms in London on 15 October, was chosen by public vote from a shortlist of six nominees. It represents heartening recognition of the Orchestra’s achievements on record and in the concert hall, both at home in Norway and through its many international tours. The Award also reflects the popular appeal of the Bergen Philharmonic’s discography, which broadened during Edward Gardner’s inspirational term as Chief Conductor (2015-24) to deliver landmark interpretations of large-scale choral and orchestral works and live recordings of operatic masterworks, among them Britten’s *Peter Grimes*, winner of the 2022 Gramophone Recording of the Year and Opera Recording of the Year Awards.

In addition to the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, the list of nominees for the 2025 Gramophone Orchestra of the Year Award included the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Hallé Orchestra and Le Concert des Nations. This is the only Gramophone Award decided by public vote and takes account of outstanding recordings released by each of the nominated ensembles over the past year.

The Bergen Philharmonic's releases during the period covered by the public poll comprised Richard Strauss's *Salome*, named as Recording of the Month in *Gramophone's* June 2025 edition, Sibelius' Violin Concerto with James Ehnes as soloist, and Nielsen's Symphony No.3 and Flute Concerto, all made under Edward Gardner's direction and issued on the Chandos label. Other titles during the same period include an album of works by Bergen-based composer Knut Vaage on Norway's LAWO Classics label and Dejan Lazić in Mozart Piano Concertos conducted by the BPO's Artistic Partner Willem de Vriend on Challenge Classics.

"On behalf of our wonderful musicians and staff, I would like to thank all those who cast their vote for our organisation," declared Sigurd Sverdrup Sandmo, Chief Executive of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra. "We know that *Gramophone's* discerning readers share a profound knowledge of today's classical music scene, so to be chosen by them as Orchestra of the Year – especially from such a strong field of nominees – is a tremendous endorsement. This is an exciting time for the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, as we look to appoint our next Chief Conductor and build on Ed Gardner's legacy. I am delighted to say that recording will continue to play a major part in the Orchestra's artistic development and mission to share our work with new audiences worldwide."

Sandmo also expressed thanks to Edward Gardner, now Honorary Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic, and Sir Mark Elder, the BPO's Principal Guest Conductor, for the critically acclaimed albums they have made with the Orchestra, and to the BPO's long-standing partnership with Chandos Records. "We are so fortunate to have these strong creative relationships," he commented. "The Gramophone Orchestra of the Year Award is above all a tribute to the world-class quality of our players and the consistent excellence of their collective artistry."

Forthcoming Chandos releases include Richard Strauss's *Elektra* with Irène Theorin in the title-role and Brahms's Second and Fourth Symphonies, all conducted by Edward Gardner, and Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliet* on LAWO Classics, conducted by Sir Mark Elder and with Jess Dandy and Pierre Derhet among the cast. Other highlights include an album of trumpet concertos by Arutiunian, Penderecki and Weinberg, with Tine Thing Helseth as soloist, scheduled for release this autumn on LAWO Classics. Sir Mark Elder will record Richard Strauss's *Four Last Songs* with Camilla Nylund as soloist next summer as part of a LAWO album devoted to the composer's music, which has been scheduled for release the following year.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra

Founded in 1765, the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra is one of the world's oldest orchestras. Composer Edvard Grieg had a close relationship with the orchestra and was Artistic Director from 1880-82. Edward Gardner became the Orchestra's Chief Conductor in October 2015, succeeding Andrew Litton, and closed his highly successful tenure at the end of the 2023-24 season. Recent tours saw the Bergen Philharmonic and Gardner perform in venues including the Concertgebouw Amsterdam and Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, and a return to the UK for concerts at the Edinburgh International Festival and the BBC Proms. Each season, selected BPO concerts are livestreamed for free on the orchestra's [Bergenphilive](#) platform, and remain available through the website's archive; the initiative's reach dramatically expanded during the Covid-19 pandemic, allowing audiences worldwide to enjoy live performances online. Gardner and the Orchestra were awarded the Gramophone Opera Recording of the Year and Recording of the Year 2021 for their recording of Britten's *Peter Grimes*.

The strength and breadth of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra's work are clearly reflected in its current season, which includes Sir Mark Elder's vision of Bruckner's Eighth Symphony (16 & 17 October 2025) and works by Wagner and Richard Strauss, the latter with Masabane Cecilia Rangwanasha as soloist (22 January 2026); Kahchun Wong and Benjamin Grosvenor in Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto (13 November); and Mahler's Ninth Symphony (11 December) and Third Symphony (29 & 30 January), conducted respectively by François-Xavier Roth and Edward Gardner. Osmo Vänskä conducts works by Szymanowski and Sibelius (5 February), while Esa-Pekka Salonen will join the BPO to open the Bergen International Festival with Messiaen's monumental *Turangalila-symphonie* (27 & 28 May).

Beyond its Grieghallen home, the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra is set to tour to Italy, France and Germany in September 2026. They will present a six-concert series under the direction of the Finnish conductor Dima Slobodeniouk and with Leif Ove Andsnes as soloist in Brahms's Second Piano

Concerto and Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto. A further tour to Germany, Austria and Belgium, planned for February 2027, will further extend the Bergen Philharmonic's commitment to ensuring that it is heard at Europe's leading concert halls.

For images from the Gramophone Awards' ceremony, please click [here](#).

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