

## **Ragnhild Hemsing Biography**

Violinist and Hardanger fiddler Ragnhild Hemsing has had a deep connection to the rich folk music tradition of her native Norway since childhood. Thanks to her ability to explore the standard violin repertoire while being equally at home with folk music, she enjoys a flourishing career as a virtuoso exponent of both instruments, bringing the Hardanger fiddle to the attention of audiences outside Norway. Her extensive repertoire of classical solo violin works, fiddle pieces, and original compositions, each with their own charm and expressive power, make her one of the most versatile musicians of our time.

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. Aged just 14, Ragnhild made her debut with both the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and the Trondheim Symphony Orchestra, performing Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto.

In recent years, she has performed at the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival, the Rheingau Music Festival, the MDR Music Summer, the Beethovenfest Bonn, the Thüringer Bachwochen, the Olavsfestdagene in Trondheim, the Gezeiten Festival in Emden, the Risør Chamber Music Festival, and the Schwetzingen SWR Festival. She has also performed with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra and the NDR Radio Philharmonie Hannover, the MDR Symphony Orchestra under Kristjan Järvi, the Estonian State Symphony Orchestra, the Nuremberg Symphony Orchestra, the Freiburg Philharmonic Orchestra, the Württemberg Chamber Orchestra Heilbronn, the Residentie Orkest Den Haag, the Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra under Santtu-Matias Rouvali, the Belgian National Orchestra, and the Düsseldorf Symphony Orchestra. She has also performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D. C., the Tonhalle Düsseldorf and Zurich, the Philharmonie Cologne, the Prinzregententheater Munich, the Musée d'Orsay, the Brucknerhaus Linz, and the Mariinsky Concert Hall in St. Petersburg.

Ragnhild Hemsing has released five albums on the Berlin Classics label since 2021. All have been enthusiastically received by the public and press alike. On four of these she plays both violin and Hardanger fiddle, reflecting her dual classical and folk music identity. Her most recent album, *The Norwegian Seasons*, together with the Norwegian ensemble Barokkanerne sheds new light on Vivaldi's famous *Four Seasons*. Here she performs the solo part only on Hardanger fiddle and integrates elements of Norwegian folk performance style with historical performance practise. Likewise, her album *Peer Gynt* with the Trondheim Soloists offers fresh insight into the links between Grieg's famous incidental music and traditional music. The recording features arrangements commissioned from Tormod Tvette Vik for violin and Hardanger fiddle and was a great

success on digital streaming platforms. Her album *Røta* (“Roots”) includes works by Norwegian classical composers as well as traditional folk music for violin and Hardanger fiddle. It was awarded the prestigious Opus Klassik Prize in the category “Classical Music without Borders” in 2021. On the album *Bruch + Tveitt*, Ragnhild Hemsing performs Bruch's Violin Concerto and Geirr Tveitt's Second Concerto for Hardanger Fiddle with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra. *Vetra* (“Winter”) presents melodies collected during the 19th century in Hemsing's home region of Valdres, as well as two of her own compositions.

Her earlier recordings include Johan Halvorsen's *Fossegrimen* op. 21 with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and Neeme Järvi (Chandos) and three albums on the label 2L with pianist Tor Espen Aspaas: *Northern Timbre*, *YR* and *Beethoven's Testaments of 1802*.

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 by Francesco Ruggeri (Cremona, 1694) and a Hardanger fiddle previously played by the violinist and composer Ole Bull (1810-1880), who was dubbed the "Paganini of the North", both generously on loan from the foundation *Dextra Musica*.