

ENGELSK

Bravo Hadeland!

With the calm and stunning Randsfjord as a backdrop, the Operafest Røykenvik 2019 holds its audience in awe. Just as we intended! Maybe even a little more...

The fjord sparkles as the evening sun kisses smiling faces everywhere. The sounds of laughter and small talk echo from the long tables, which are subtly decorated with lush wildflowers. Delicious scents waft from the outdoor kitchen a little further away. About a dozen boats bob on the water in the background and the audience find their seats to the sound of The Kringkastingsorkesteret tuning their instruments. As soon as the festival begins, the opera director herself and lead singer Eli Kristin Hanssveen, along with her five international colleagues, enthrall an attentive and enthusiastic audience.

– We could not have had more beautiful scenery! Eli Kristin says enthusiastically after the concert as she gestures across the fjord.

Every day she gazes over these rolling hills from her veranda up in the hillside, characterized by numerous farms and overlooking the fourth largest lake in Norway.

– A dream ten years in the making has come true. The landscape here demands the drama of opera! This is the viewpoint of a woman who holds the highest standards for herself, and more than anything wants us all to experience the art of opera at the highest international quality.

– If I, with my background in popular music, can become an opera singer and love it so deeply – well then anyone can like at least one aria! Is her mantra.

Along with the opera manager and forty something volunteers, she organizes a classical music festival which runs for three days. The entire local community pitches in to make this happen. The grilled burgers come from animals grazing nearby and the beer on tap is brewed just around the bend. With a stage stretching out into the lake and the 26-foot tall tribune built on the beach, this crew has established a sold out festival in record time, seating 1200 people on a Saturday in June.

Most of the spectators come from the immediate area, but travellers from afar have also found their way here. Some hear the music for the first time and others are steady operagoers. A group of girlfriends are back after a wonderful trip last year, and this year they have bought a 2-day festival pass.

– “We think this is fantastic, and we are coming back next year, for sure!” they voice together.

Talent search in Røykenvik

Curious about tomorrow's heroes in classical music and vocal art? Come to Hadeland on one Sunday in June and be inspired!

– “I have to admit I came here to taste the burger, but the music was great,” says a 16-year old after the afternoon concert, which lasts one hour. He gives opera a thumbs up, seated with his family at one of the long tables on the grass behind the outdoor stage. Local apple cider and bratwurst have also been tested and approved.

Just behind him, kids are teetering around the stand where they can try out different musical instruments. The colourful ukulele is the most popular, but the red trombone arouses excitement too. A Luthier presents his hand crafted violins and explains the process of making them.

Young opera singers have just playfully performed arias from Carmen, The Marriage of Figaro and The Magic Flute on stage. The audience cheers and even the smaller children are quiet as mice, paying attention to the music.

The Operafest youth orchestra masterfully accompanies the singers. Pupils from Hadeland School of culture and two local marching bands, supplemented by professional musicians and students from the Norwegian Music academy rise to the occasion.

– “It was very inspiring for us to be able to play with professionals,” a trumpeter from the marching band says, and tells us of three very informative rehearsals beforehand.

With the last day of Operafest Røykenvik offering a free event dedicated to families, the Opera fest primus motor Eli Kristin Hansveen desires to awaken the curiosity of young people to pursue classical music and opera. Judging by the faces leaving the arena this afternoon, I suspect she managed just that.

Exclusive barn concert

Experience drama, humour and romance when Darlene Dobisch and Bernt Ola Volungholen take the barn floor in Næs.

Chains of lights are suspended from old wooden beams at Øvre Næs barn. A grand piano thrones the centre space, and the dining tables are decked in white linen tablecloths and green branches of myrtle. No tractors and machinery are in sight. Instead, guests in their best clothing come streaming up the steep barn bridge to enjoy a gourmet dinner and attend an intimate opera concert.

– Welcome! The hosts Mari and Per declare, while pouring opera bubbles into the glasses. The wine is made from their own raspberries and apples. The couple run the neighbouring farm and have 12 acres of apple orchards, dairy cows and the farm stand «Hemlaga på Næs».

On the menu tonight, they are serving trout from the Randsfjord, beef from the farm and bread baked with ancient grains cultivated just a stone's throw away. The kitchen has a professional chef, but tonight's host and hostess have been heavily involved in planning the menu.

The concert begins. We hear Mozart, Prøysen, Porgy and Bess, and Phantom of the Opera. The Baritone Bernt Ola Volungholen from Stange in Hedmark is just as much an entertainer as he is a singer and a skilful actor. Engaged in dramatic interaction with partner Darlene Dobisch, little emotional explosions of music characterize the evening, much to the delight of the audience. Piano players Kristin Fyrand Mikkelsen and Gunnar Flagstad accompany the singers.

After locally grown rhubarb in vanilla pudding completes the meal, satisfied guests slowly scatter into the summer night, contemplating an intimate and exclusive experience.

Thank you, Opera fest Røykenvik 2019!