

Welcome to the 49th Nordic Orchestra Conference

Wednesday 23rd – Friday 25th September 2026

Kilden Performing Arts Center, Kristiansand, Norway

Dear colleagues

We are pleased to welcome you to [the 49th Nordic Orchestra Conference](#) which takes place at [Kilden Performing Arts Centre](#) in Kristiansand, September 23rd – 25th.

This year's conference will take a closer look at the following three themes:

The Nordic Region Today

What does it mean to be “Nordic” today — artistically, politically and institutionally — and how does this identity affect the strategic role of the music institutions in the society? How is the sector addressing indigenous perspectives, minority cultures and broader cultural representation? And why should we strengthen the Nordic cultural cooperation?

Programming, Public Responsibility and Institutional Resilience

How do music institutions interpret their role and mandate in society, and how is this reflected in programming, partnerships and public engagement? Can artistic programming contribute to civic resilience, and how is this realised in practice?

Inclusion, Diversity and Mental Health

Building on the Nordic context and Kilden's recognised expertise, this track explores how strategic work in inclusion, diversity, co-creation and mental health can position orchestras as proactive and relevant institutions in a changing society.

Best regards,

Kilden Performing Arts Centre and Association of Norwegian Theatres and Orchestras

PROGRAMME

The conference mainly takes place in the Theatre and Opera Hall, Kilden, if nothing else is specified.

Wednesday 23rd of September

11:00-12:00 Registration and coffee (Kilden foyer)

12:00-13:00 Lunch (Restaurant Frihavn, Kilden)

13:00-13:15 Welcome

- Pål Svendsberget, Managing Director, Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra, Kilden
- Morten Gjeltén, Managing Director, Association of Norwegian Theatres and Orchestras (NTO)
- Elisabeth Lindland, Conference Host, Kilden

13:15-14:35 The Nordic region today

- 13:15-13:45 *Culture shapes the future of the Nordics*
Kristin Danielsen, Chief Executive, [The Nordic Culture Fund](#)
- 13:45-14:35 *The state of Play – Opportunities, challenges and what comes next for Nordic music and opera institutions.*
Panel discussion with representatives from the Nordic countries:
 - Iiris Lehtonen, Executive Director, [Association of Finnish Symphony Orchestras](#)
 - Guðni Tómasson, Managing Director, [Iceland Symphony Orchestra](#)
 - Anne Dalby, Head of Membership and Development, [Danish Performing Arts Association](#)
 - Maria Grundtman, Head of Negotiations, [Swedish Performing Arts Association](#)
 - Morten Gjeltén, Managing Director, [Association of Norwegian Theatres and Orchestras](#)

14:35-15:15 Still life – A Nordic Art Symphony Project (Concert Hall and S-lab, Kunstsilo)

Presentation of this year's collaborative project between Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra and Kunstsilo:

Torill Haugen, Head of innovation and digital development, [Kunstsilo](#).

15:15-15:30 Break

15:30-17:00 Inclusion, diversity and mental health

- 15:30-16:05 [Kilden Dialogue](#): *The Concert Hall as an Extended Therapeutic Space:*
 - *The collaboration between Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra and Sørlandet Hospital:*

Marie T. Sørensen, Head of Communications, Kilden and Iris Anette Olsen, Head of the Department of Child and Adolescent Mental Health (ABUP), [Sørlandet Hospital](#)

- *[Requiem for Life](#): How Mozart's iconic Requiem became a voice for young people's mental well-being:*

Audhild Wessman, Senior advisor, Kilden

- *How participation in cultural projects can support young people's mental health:*

Eva Mari Andreassen, Head of [Research, Kilden](#):

- 16:05-17:00 Case studies:

- *How the Aalborg-based foundation works to integrate art and culture into healthcare:*

[KulturKRAFT: Nord](#): Andreas Mathew and Per Thorgaard

The foundation builds collaborations between artists, researchers and health professionals to strengthen patient experience, wellbeing and aesthetic care in hospital settings.

- *Patient experience, integrative oncology and wellbeing in cancer care:*

[Geraldine \(Geri\) McDonald](#), Associate Professor and Director of Patient Experience & Wellbeing, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in Melbourne, Australia

17:00-17:10 Break

17:10-17:30 Kilden's Digital Initiative – Tour and presentation (Concert Hall)

Presentation in the Concert Hall of the technical work related to *Nordic Art Symphony*. This will be followed by an introduction to [Kilden Digital](#) and its work with care centres, as well as a tour of the studio:

Øystein Nerland Flemmen, Producer and David Holme, Media Producer, Kilden

19:00 Aperitif (foyer)

19:30 Conference dinner (Frihavn Restaurant, Kilden)

Thursday 24th of September

08:30-09:00 Coffee

09:00-12:00 The Voice of the Art Institution

- 9:00-09:20 *The role of orchestras in war and peace: Music as Preparedness:* Bjarte Riseng, Chief Master Sergeant, [Norwegian Armed Forces Music](#)
- 09:20-09:50 *Programming, Public Responsibility and Institutional Resilience:* Keynote by [Jesus Herrera](#), Artistic Director, [London Philharmonic Orchestra](#)
- 09:50-10:05 *The Concert as Artistic Expression* (working title): Jakob Holtze, Artistic Director & CEO [Copenhagen Phil](#)
- 10:05-10:30 Panel discussion between Riseng, Herrera and Holtze, moderated by Ragnar Christensen, CEO, [Stavanger Symphony Orchestra](#)

10:30-10:45 Break

- 10:45-11:30 Group work, followed by plenary session

10.30-11.30 Parallel session: Communications

11:30-12:30 Lunch (Restaurant Frihavn, Kilden)

12:30-14:15 Reframing Nordic Identity

From Words to Action – Reconciliation Work in the Nordic Region:

- 12:30-13:00 Keynote by Frank Jørstad, Artistic and Managing Director, [Kvääniteatteri](#)
- 13:00-13:10 Helle Solberg, CEO [Norrländsoperan](#)
- 13:10-13:20 Trud Berg, CEO, [Arctic Philharmonic](#)
- 13:20-14:05 *Nordic Perspectives – How do the orchestra sector engage with the truth and reconciliation work?*
Panel discussion between Jørstad, Solberg and Berg

14:05-14:40 Break

14:40-14:55 Artistic interlude

14:55-15:20 The Voice of the Art Institution: Institutions in Changing Times

[Marte Cecilie Wilhelmsen Solheim](#), Vice-Rector for Innovation and Society, University of Stavanger

15:20-15:30 Concert pretalk

Pål Svendsberget, Managing Director, Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra, Kilden

17:30-19:30 Dinner: [Hos Moi](#), Nodeviga 2

20:00-21:15 Concert: [Still life - A Nordic Art Symphony Project](#)

Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra, Eivind Gullberg-Jensen, conductor,
Mari Eriksmoen, soprano

21:15 Optional social gathering: Place tba.

Friday 25th of September

09:30-10:00 Coffee

10:00-11:45 The Nordic region today: Collaboration and communication

- 10:00-10:10 Branding film from the Norwegian orchestra network for marketing and communications
Pål Svendsberget, Managing Director, Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra, Kilden
- 10:10-10:40 *Collaboration or competition?*
Eivind Gullberg-Jensen, Artistic Director of [Bergen National Opera](#)
- 10:40-11:00 *Collaboration in the Nordic Region:*
Conversation between Gullberg-Jensen and Catharina Bilsbak, Artistic and Managing Director, [Aalborg Symphony Orchestra](#)

11:00-11:15 Break

11:15-11:45 Group work: *Collaboration between institutions – Who loses and who wins?*
Using reflection starters from the reflection booklet. We collect data from various ticketing systems for co-productions and present our findings.

11:45-12:00 Closing Remarks & Handover to Next Year's Host

- Morten Gjelten, Managing Director, Association of Norwegian Theatres and Orchestras
- Guðni Tómasson, Managing Director, Iceland Symphony Orchestra

12:00-13:00 Lunch (foyer)