

BRAGERNES  
KIRKES  
SOLISTENSEMBLE

# DRAMMENSKLANG



HALVOR F. MELIEN – BARITONE  
JULIA GUSEK – SOPRANO  
JON MARTIN HØIE – ORGAN  
JØRN FEVANG – CONDUCTOR

## TE DEUM

The text of *Te Deum* is considered one of the great hymns of the early church. It was probably written by Bishop Nicetas of Remesiana, who died in 414. The Norwegian translation is by Pastor Agnar Sandvik. Countless composers have set this magnificent text to music. Jørn Fevang's composition was written in 2021 for Bragernes Church's 150th anniversary. The work is for choir, baritone solo, trumpet, and organ. It consists of four movements and is sung alternately in Norwegian and Latin, and sometimes in both languages simultaneously. The piece was designed for liturgical use, either as a complete work or as individual movements. At its premiere, the entire large choir community of Bragernes participated.

## THE COMPOSER JØRN FEVANG

Jørn Fevang studied church music at the Norwegian Academy of Music from 1979 to 1985. From 1987 to 1992, Fevang served as cantor at Lilleborg Church in Oslo, and from 1992 to 2025 worked as cantor at Bragernes Church in Drammen. At Bragernes, Fevang conducted several choirs, including the Soloist Ensemble. Fevang distinguished himself by developing a rich musical life, notably by performing works such as Bach's Mass in B minor and St. John Passion dur-

ing worship services for the first time in Norway. Fevang has been a union leader, a teacher of chant, and has served on numerous central church councils and committees in the Church of Norway. Fevang was also on the committee for the new Norwegian hymnal in 2013. As a composer, Fevang has written functional church music as needed, and *Te Deum* is one such work. Fevang received Drammen Municipality's Cultural Award in both 2005 and 2025.

## THE CANTATA

The cantata written for Strømsø Church's 275th anniversary in 1942 is scored for string orchestra, organ, two soloists, and choir. The work is expansive and addresses the church's struggle and ultimate triumph. The text must also be understood in light of the global situation at the time: the darkest year of World War II. Stylistically, the musical language can be described as late Romantic with impressionistic elements. A reviewer wrote in 1942 that the music was reminiscent of Brahms. The cantata includes choral movements, solo sections, and a finale for double choir.

## THE COMPOSER DANIEL HANSSEN

Daniel Hanssen was born in 1895 and died in 1982. After completing his music



studies, he settled in Drammen in 1919 and remained there for the rest of his life. In 1919, he founded Daniel Hanssen's Choir, which he led for nearly 40 years. With this choir, he performed many of the greatest works in music literature. In 1924, he succeeded Arne Eggen as organist and cantor at Bragernes Church, a position he held until 1964. Hanssen was known as a skilled organist, improviser, choir conductor, and composer. As a composer, he wrote numerous works, including three cantatas. His main work is the cantata for Strømsø Church's 275th anniversary in 1942. The score for several of Hanssen's compositions has been difficult to locate, and the 1942 cantata was discovered almost by chance in 2017. The other two cantatas remain missing. Daniel Hanssen received the King's Medal of Merit in gold in 1963.

#### THE LYRICIST BJARNE ERIKSEN

Bjarne Eriksen was born in 1903 and died in 1982. He earned his theology degree in Oslo in 1928. After working as a pastor for the Mission among the Homeless in Oslo and later as a pastor in Lier, he came to Drammen in 1939 as pastor of Tangen and Strømsø. He remained there until his retirement in 1972. Eriksen published three books, and in his 1943 book *Duggdråper* (*Dewdrops*), we find the text for the cantata that Dan-

iel Hanssen set to music. Bjarne Eriksen's text deals largely with the church's struggle and victory, and it must have resonated strongly in the context of 1942.

#### PASSACAGLIA, OP. 1

Conrad Baden composed his *Passacaglia in C minor* in 1930 as his Opus 1. It is a large-scale and highly demanding organ work, and sources indicate that the composition attracted attention in its time. "His musical and compositional talent (*Passacaglia* etc.) is extraordinarily great," said Günther Raphael, Baden's teacher in music theory and composition at the Leipzig Conservatory. Geir Tveitt, Baden's fellow student in the same city, exclaimed, "For this, you need at least four organs" when he saw the score. Baden himself called the *passacaglia* "formidable." Many associate Conrad Baden with the neoclassical style, but his *passacaglia* shows the composer in a different light. With its 30 variations, its form and structure are clearly inspired by the late Romantic organ style represented by composers such as Max Reger and Sigfrid Karg-Elert. At the same time, the music points in another direction—toward a tonality with freer chord progressions and features such as bitonality and modality. As of 2025, the work remains unpublished and was recorded from the manuscript.

#### THE COMPOSER CONRAD BADEN

Conrad Baden (1908–1989) received his first musical impressions from his father, Olaf Jørgensen, who was organist at Strømsø Church from 1905 to 1926. Conrad resumed the family name Baden after his great-grandmother. Daniel Hanssen was his first teacher, and at age 19, he became organist at Strømsgodset Church. He began performing and composing, and after a few lessons with Arild Sandvold, he passed the organist exam as a private candidate at the Music Conservatory in 1931. He studied in Leipzig from 1931 to 1932, and the fact that his monumental *Passacaglia* was already composed by then is both surprising and impressive. From 1943 to 1961, he was organist at Strømsø Church like his father, and later at Ris Church in Oslo until 1975. His teaching in counterpoint (nicknamed "Conradpoint") at the Music Conservatory/Norwegian Academy of Music from 1943 to 1978 became legendary, and he was a respected voice in musical life as a critic for *Drammens Tidende*, *Vårt Land*, and *Morgenbladet*. After creating what he hesitantly called his Opus 1, he became an important contributor to new Norwegian vocal and instrumental church music. Many of his 146 works, including orchestral and chamber music, are available on digital platforms such as YouTube and Spotify.

Several compositions are linked to his hometown. Songs were composed for Daniel Hanssen's Choir, Strømsø Church Choir, and Drammen Girls' Choir. For Drammen City Orchestra, he composed *Pastorale and Fugue* in 1958. He wrote jubilee cantatas for the Masonic Lodge (1952), Tangen Church (1954), Strømsø Church (1967, performed again in 2017), and Drammen City (1986). A large Mass for soloists, choir, and orchestra from 1949 was later performed at Bragernes Church. The Drammen publisher Lyche published many of his works. Conrad Baden's works reflect shifting trends in Norwegian musical life. After the Romanticism of the 1930s and 1940s and the Neoclassicism of the 1950s, from the 1960s onward, his music was influenced by the timbral radicalization of contemporary music. Even his later, more modernist works are rooted in melodic themes and tonality and employ an accessible musical language.

## BRAGERNES KIRKES SOLISTENSEMBLE

Bragernes kirkes solistensemble was founded by conductor Jørn Fevang in the 1990s and has since grown from its original eight singers to a full ensemble of thirteen professional vocalists. Based in Drammen, Norway, the ensemble plays a central role in the church's musical life and performs regularly in both liturgical settings and concert programs. Known for its artistic precision and expressive depth, the ensemble specializes in classical and contemporary sacred music. Over the years, it has built a rich repertoire that includes major works such as Rossini's *Petite messe solennelle*, Kverno's *Improperia Salvatoris nostri* and *Fadervår-sanger*, Kjell Mørk Karlsen's *St. Luke Passion*, Fauré's *Requiem*, Rheinberger's *Mass in F*, Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*, Hanssen's *Cantata*, and Fevang's *Te Deum*. The ensemble has also performed Bach's *Mass in B minor*, *St. John Passion*, and numerous cantatas. From August 2025, the ensemble will be led by cantor Gustaf Martinson, continuing its legacy of excellence in sacred music and artistic collaboration.





**BARITONE**  
**HALVOR F. MELIEN**

Halvor F. Melien (baritone) is a Norwegian concert and opera singer, working in Europe. He studied at the Norwegian Academy of Music. In 2015/-16 he was part of the soloist ensemble at The Norwegian National Opera in Oslo. He has a broad concert repertoire, spanning from the 17th century till today, and has particularly devoted time to Bach's music.

Halvor has worked with all Norwegian symphony orchestras and with ensembles such as BBC Philharmonic, Les Talens Lyriques, Concertgebouw Kammerorkest, Musica Saeculorum, Taverner Consort, Danish National Orchestra, Slovenian Philharmonic, Ho Chi Minh City Symphony Orchestra, Academia Montis Regalis, Oslo Sinfonietta, Trondheimsolistene, The Norwegian

Chamber Orchestra, Barokkanerne and several others.

Halvor has contributed to a number of CD recordings, including Kurt Weill's *Die Sieben Todsünden* with Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, John Frandsen's *Requiem* with Danish National Orchestra and Knut Vaages *Høgsongen*. He has also worked extensively with new music, and has premiered pieces written for him by Ørjan Matre, Eivind Buene, Øyvind Mæland and others.

The German art song genre is important for Halvor. He is currently working with several Lied projects, performing music by Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Mahler and Webern.

Source::

[www.halvorfestervollmelien.com/about](http://www.halvorfestervollmelien.com/about)



**SOPRANO**  
**JULIA GUSEK**

Soprano Julia Gusek holds a master's degree in music performance from the Norwegian Academy of Music and the Barratt Due Music Institute in Oslo.

She is a versatile artist feeling at home in most musical styles, with a special dedication to Bach, Mozart, German and French art songs and works by contemporary composers. As a soloist, she has sung on stages such as The Norwegian National Opera, Oslo Cathedral, Folke-teateret, Drammen Theatre, The Northern Lights Cathedral Alta, The Geilo Cultural Church and Kongsberg Music Theatre. She has performed at festivals such as the Fartein Valen Festival in Haugesund, the Halvorsen Music Festival in Drammen, the Oslo Opera Festival and the Oslo Organ Festival. Her performances include collaborations with most

of Norway's major choirs and orchestras, amongst others The Oslo Philharmonic Choir, The Norwegian Baroque Ensemble «Barokkanerne» and Norway's leading boys' choir «Sølvguttene». Julia Gusek is also active in multiple chamber music groups and in creating her own concert projects.

## TRUMPET BRYNJAR W. KOLBERGSRUD

Brynjar W. Kolbergsrud is the principal trumpet of the Oslo Philharmonic. He began playing the cornet in the Røyken School Music Corps. Brynjar studied at the Norwegian Academy of Music and at two schools in New York: Mannes College of Music and Manhattan School of Music. For thirteen years, he worked as principal trumpet in Norrköping and Malmö before returning to Norway and Oslo in 2014.



## ORGANIST JON MARTIN HØIE

Jon Martin Høie (b. 1997) is a trained cantor from the Norwegian Academy of Music and the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Hamburg. He holds a bachelor's degree in church music and a master's degree in solo organ performance, and studied under Professors Terje Winge, Kåre Nordstoga, and Matthias Neumann, as well as Associate Professor Anders Eidsten Dahl. He later pursued studies in German and pedagogy. Since 2019, Jon Martin Høie has worked as cantor at Bragernes Church, and from August 1, 2025, he holds a full-time position. He conducts the girls' choir and youth choir of Bragernes Church, leads the church's organ club, and performs regularly both within and outside Bragernes Church.

**MUSICIANS:**  
Bragernes kirkes solistensemble  
Halvor F. Melien, baritone  
Julia Gusek, soprano  
Brynjar Kolbergsrud, trumpet  
Jon Martin Høie, organ  
Jørn Fevang, conductor

## BRAGERNES KIRKES SOLISTENSEMBLE:

Soprano:  
Julia Gusek,  
Jorun Hermansen  
Hannah Agnethe Pold  
Åshild Watne  
Alto:  
Ingeborg Skarre Stensland  
Frøydis Fegran Kopperud  
Beate Strømme Fevang

Tenor:  
Vidar Helkås,  
Øystein Stensheim  
Magnus Olesønn Løvlie

Bass:  
Ole Strøm  
Helge Harila  
Olav Refvem

## ORCHESTRA:

Violin:  
Hans Petter Mæhle  
Victoria Willumsen Lewis  
Sunniva Sofie Christensen  
Tor Alvin Wika

Viola:  
Catherine Bullock-Bukkøy  
Pål Solbakk

Cello:  
Silje Katrine Gotaas  
Marek Bienkunski

Doble bass:  
Eskild Abelseth

## COMPOSERS:

Jørn Fevang  
Daniel Hanssen  
Conrad Baden

|    |                               |       |
|----|-------------------------------|-------|
| 01 | Te deum I. Te Deum Laudamus   | 03:54 |
| 02 | Te deum II. Tu Rex Gloria     | 01:27 |
| 03 | Te deum III. Judex Crederis   | 01:36 |
| 04 | Te deum IV. Per Singulos Dies | 01:33 |
| 05 | Passacaglia                   | 15:29 |
| 06 | Kantate I.                    | 04:32 |
| 07 | Kantate II.                   | 03:42 |
| 08 | Kantate III.                  | 04:42 |
| 09 | Kirken den er et gammelt hus  | 01:05 |
| 10 | Kantate IV.                   | 04:56 |
| 11 | Kantate V.                    | 03:25 |
| 12 | Kantate VI.                   | 07:01 |
| 13 | Kantate VII.                  | 03:12 |

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