

Tora Augestad, mezzo-soprano

The most striking thing about this extraordinary artist is how versatile she is. (...) Tora Augestad transcends conventional labels. Opernwelt

Tora Augestad's versatility inspires composers, theatre directors and conductors. By commissioning new works and through the collaboration with her various ensembles she continuously seeks new challenges and the exchange of artistic ideas. She knows how to be theatrically convincing and how to engage her vocal capabilities, which defy easy classification, in a compelling manner.

Born in Bergen in 1979, the singer/actress Tora Augestad studied classical music and jazz singing in Oslo and Stockholm, devoting herself principally to repertoire of the 20th and 21st centuries. While studying in Berlin and Munich she intensified her involvement in German music before graduating in cabaret singing from the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo.

Tora Augestad has become a regular guest in her native Norway and the rest of Europe, sharing the podium with musical partners such as the Ensemble Modern (Weill's *Three Penny Opera*), Ensemble Contrechamps (Gardner's *No Thanks*), Klangforum Wien, Remix Ensemble (Berio's *Folk Songs*), Finnish Chamber Orchestra (Paus' *Hate Songs*), NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester (Widmann's *Dunkle Saiten*), Gürzenich Orchestra of Cologne (Manoury's *Lab. Oratorium*), the Bamberg Symphony, the SWR Symphonieorchester (Filidei's *The Red Death*), Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra (Schönberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*, Weill's *Seven Deadly Sins*), NRK Norwegian Radio Orchestra (Weill's *Seven Deadly Sins*), the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra (Hellstenius's *As if the law is everything*) and the Stavanger, Kristiansand and Helsingborg Symphony Orchestras. She performed the premiere of Cecilie Ore's *Adam & Eve* which she also commissioned at the Bergen Festival 2015. She made her debut as Ruth Sherwood in Bernstein's *Wonderful Town* at the Norwegian National Opera Oslo in 2026.

The collaboration with the Swiss director Christoph Marthaler, which began in 2010 with the premiere of Beat Furrer's *Wüstenbuch*, has become a constant in Tora Augestad's artistic life. After the success of Marthaler's *Meine faire Dame*, a take on *My Fair Lady*, at the Theater Basel in 2012 with guest appearances in Naples, Avignon, Edinburgh and Paris, the homage to Verdi's *Lo Stimolatore Cardiac* in Basel and the Zurich Opera House production of *Salé* with music by Handel followed. The staged Lieder recital *King Size* went on tour to Hamburg, Prague, Moscow, Geneva, Turin, Rotterdam, London (Royal Opera House), Santiago de Chile, Sao Paulo and Jerusalem. The production *Last Days. An Eve* was performed at the Wiener Festwochen 2013, the Festival d'Automne Paris and at the Staatsoper Berlin. Productions at the Volksbühne Berlin included *Hallelujah*, *Bekannte Gefühle*, *Gemischte Gesichter*, *Tessa Blomstedt gibt nicht auf* and *Wachs oder Wirklichkeit*. In 2017, *Mir nåmeds uf ois* was presented at the Schauspielhaus Zurich and in 2018 the Charles Ives-tribute *Universe, Incomplete* at the RuhrTriennale followed, for which she has been nominated *Singer of the Year 2019* by Opernwelt.

In 2004, Tora Augestad founded the ensemble MUSIC FOR A WHILE, made up of high-class musicians from the Norwegian jazz scene. After the release of their CD *Weill Variations*, the singer was awarded the renowned Lotte Lenya Prize in 2008. Their album *Graces That Refrain* followed in 2012 and the CD *Canticles of Winter* in 2014. The ensemble has already appeared at the Kurt Weill Festival Dessau, Bergen International Festival, Beethovenfest Bonn, Dresden Music Festival, Handel Festival Halle, Musikfest Stuttgart and the Kissinger Sommer. Her BOA TRIO released its debut album *mOOn Over tOWns* in 2013 and has performed at the Ultima Festival Oslo, Radialsystem Berlin, Klangspuren Schwaz and Wien Modern. Her first ECM CD *Rumi Songs* was released in 2016. The solo-CD *Portraying Passion* (LAWO Classics, Oslo Philharmonic featuring works by Weill, Ives and Paus) has been nominated by the German Record Critics' Award as best recording 2019 and been chosen as star/recording of the month by Fono Forum and Opernwelt magazine. It also has been awarded the Spellemannprisen 2019, the Norwegian Grammy. In 2019, her latest CD *DIALOGUES* has been released at Grappa. In 2023, she recorded Reinbert de Leeuw's *Im wunderschönen Monat Mai* with the Oslo Philharmonic in Oslo for LAWO Classics.

In the season 2026/27, Tora Augestad will present the world premiere of Christoph Marthaler's *Erste letzte Sekunde - eine Gala* at Kampnagel Hamburg and will give her debut as Leokadja Begbig in Kurt Weill's *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* at the Staatstheater Wiesbaden. Since 2026, she is also founder and director of the summer festival Holmestrand Musikkfest in the vicinity of Oslo.

Tora Augestad was co-artistic director of the Hardanger Music Festival in Norway between 2015-2020. She was nominated for the Nordic Council Music Prize 2015, the most important cultural prize in Scandinavia, and was awarded as *Performer of the Year* by the Norwegian Composer Society in 2018.