

Bjørnar Habbestad – Press Bio (Short Version)

Norwegian flautist, composer, curator, and researcher

Bjørnar Habbestad (b. 1976) is a Norwegian flautist, composer, curator, and researcher working at the intersection of performance, installation, and experimental sound. Trained in Bergen, London, and Amsterdam, he performs internationally as a soloist and ensemble musician across acoustic and electroacoustic formats.

Habbestad has premiered works by composers including Antti Auvinen, Lene Grenager, Ruben Sverre Gjertsen, Sven Lyder Kahrs, and Alwynne Pritchard, and introduced Norwegian audiences to works by Luigi Nono, Salvatore Sciarrino, and Brian Ferneyhough. He collaborates widely with choreographers, orchestras, festivals, and improvisers across Europe, including saxophonist Michel Doneda, pianist John Tilbury, and composer/bassist Per Zanussi.

Since 2006, he has performed with the improvising quartet LEMUR, whose latest album was nominated for a *Spellemann Award*. From 2017 to 2025, he served as Artistic Director of *nyMusikk*, curating the acclaimed *Only Connect* festival. He is also the founder of *plus3db*, a label for experimental music.

Habbestad holds a PhD from the Norwegian Academy of Music, where his research focused on composer–performer collaboration.

Bjørnar Habbestad – Press Bio (Long Version)

Bjørnar Habbestad (b. 1976) is a Norwegian flautist, composer, curator, and researcher whose work interweaves performance, installation, and experimental sound practices. Trained at the Grieg Academy, the Guildhall School of Music in London, and the Conservatorium van Amsterdam, he has developed a multifaceted career as soloist, ensemble collaborator, and instigator of new sonic contexts.

Recent projects include the premieres of Antti Auvinen’s flute concerto *Ventilation Beat* (2023) with Avanti Chamber Orchestra and Lene Grenager’s flute concerto *Off Soundings* with Caput Ensemble (2023); the staging of *In C* by Sasha Waltz / Terry Riley with Nagelhus Schia Productions at the Norwegian Opera (2023); and *Symphonie magnétophonique* (2022) with the ensemble LEMUR at the Ultima Festival. Other significant engagements include the solo part in Luigi Nono’s monumental *IO* at the Bergen International Festival, *Das Atmende Klarsein* at Ultima, and the world premiere of Alwynne Pritchard’s theatrical flute concerto *DONT TOUCH ME!* at Borealis as well as the development and premiere of Natasha Barret’s *Transversing a Small Town by Night* for flute and electronics.

Since 2006 Habbestad has been a core member of LEMUR, creating and performing large-scale collaborative works alongside Hild Sofie Tafjord (horn), Lene Grenager (cello), and Michael Duch (bass). Drawing on a shared vocabulary from experimental music, noise, contemporary composition, and jazz, the quartet operates both as a tightly knit improvising unit and as a conceptually framed composition collective. LEMUR has released five studio albums, the most recent of which received a nomination for a Norwegian Grammy.

From 2017 to 2025 he has served as Artistic Director of nyMusikk, Norway's leading platform for contemporary music; his programming for the *Only Connect* festival was widely praised for its intellectual breadth and curiosity. In parallel with his curatorial work, Habbestad runs plus3db, a record label dedicated to experimental sound, which to date has issued over 30 releases—extending his commitment to sonic exploration and collaborative creation.

Habbestad holds a PhD in performance practice from the Norwegian Academy of Music, where his research investigated collaborative processes between composers and performers.