



Paris at Christmas

Art and music in the *Ville Lumière*

21–27 December 2023 (MJ 148)

7 days • £3,680

(including tickets to 2 performances)

Lecturer: Patrick Bade

The main art museums (Louvre, Musée d'Orsay) as well as lesser-known attractions

Newly refurbished museums and galleries including the Hôtel de la Marine and the Musée Carnavalet.

Opera at the Garnier and a concert in Sainte Chapelle, one of Europe's most beautiful consecrated spaces.

Centrally-located 4-star hotel which was an intimate retreat for King Edward VII.

'He who does not visit Paris regularly will never be truly elegant' wrote Honoré de Balzac in 1830 (*Traité de la Vie Élegante*). His assertion goes some way to explain the allure of Paris, even at a time of deep social and political turmoil, manifested in the July Revolution of the same year. Paris, whose streets were soon to be drastically re-envisioned by Baron Haussmann into the boulevards so recognisable today, was unquestionably *the* place to be and be seen. Not unsurprisingly, the dazzle of the *Ville Lumière* and the lifestyle of its inhabitants has endured, and Parisians remain the ultimate arbiters of good taste.

Never does Paris appear more elegant than at Christmas, inevitably conjuring up the festive atmosphere of Act II of Puccini's opera *La Bohème*. Led by Patrick Bade, art historian, *bon viveur* and part-time Paris resident, MRT aims to offer just as much fun, together with a rich cultural feast, in considerably more comfort. What better location than the Hôtel Édouard VII, former love nest of Queen Victoria's son and heir, situated on the splendid Avenue de l'Opéra?

We shall be visiting the Musée Carnavalet, museum of the history and culture of Paris, newly reopened after lengthy refurbishment; the sumptuous 18th-century Hôtel de la Marine, the former royal *garde-meuble* and navy headquarters whose apartments and reception rooms have recently opened to the public; and the dream-like Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature in a superb hôtel in the Marais.

Several major venues are yet to announce their exhibitions for the winter season; we will publish further details in the summer.

Music in the towering space of the 13th-



Paris, Palais Garnier, watercolour by Y. Markino, publ. 1908.

century Sainte Chapelle on the Île de la Cité should be an unforgettable experience, as will be a performance in one of the world's greatest opera houses.

Itinerary

Day 1. Travel by Eurostar at c. 10.30am from London St Pancras to Paris, and continue by coach to our hotel on the Avenue de l'Opéra. In the afternoon, a short stroll to the sumptuous Palais Garnier opera house for a guided tour.

Day 2. By *métro* to the Marais, a lovely district which is home to several outstanding museums. The Musée Carnavalet, with myriad collections devoted to the history of Paris, reopened in 2021 after radical refurbishment, and the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature displays an eclectic collection in a fine *ancien régime* mansion.

Day 3. Morning visit to the Louvre, which for the range and quality of its collections remains the greatest art museum in the world. A temporary exhibition displays masterpieces from the Capodimonte museum

in Naples, including works by Michelangelo, Titian, Raphael and Caravaggio. Afternoon programme to be confirmed, depending on exhibition schedules.

Day 4. The Musée d'Orsay is home to the world's finest collection of Impressionism, and also to the contemporaneous academic tradition of painting and sculpture. You have tickets for the exhibition *Van Gogh in Auvers-sur-Oise: The Final Months*. Evening concert in Sainte Chapelle (programmes not yet announced), palatine chapel and apogee of French Gothic architecture.

Day 5, Christmas Day. Opulent turn-of-the-century home of a banking family, the Musée Jacquemart-André features many Italian Renaissance items among its varied collections. *Matinée or evening performance at the Opéra Garnier* (programme not yet announced). Lunch or dinner is in the hotel, depending on the performance time.

Day 6. At the Musée du Luxembourg, a special exhibition celebrates the 25th anniversary of Picasso's death, focussing on his relationship

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continued

with Gertrude Stein. The 18th-century Hôtel de la Marine is one of the finest neoclassical buildings in Paris. Originally the royal *garde-meuble* that managed the furnishing of royal properties, it then served as a navy headquarters until 2015, and its apartments and reception rooms have recently opened for visitors following a major refurbishment.

Day 7. Free morning to pursue your own interests before the Eurostar to St Pancras, where arrival is scheduled for c. 4.30pm.

Lecturer

Patrick Bade. Historian and writer with wide-ranging art-historical and musical interests. Educated at University College London and the Courtauld Institute, he was senior lecturer at Christies Education for many years. He has also worked for the Art Fund, Royal Opera House, National Gallery, Victoria & Albert Museum and spoken on Radio 3 and 4 and Classic FM Radio. He has published extensively on 19th- and early 20th-century painting (Ingres, Courbet, Degas, Renoir, Rops, Mucha, Lautrec, Tamara de Lempicka etc) and on historical vocal recordings. His books include *Music Wars: 1937–1945*, an account of how music was used in World War II.

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £3,680 or £3,500 without Eurostar. **Single occupancy:** £4,320 or £4,140 without Eurostar.

Included: return rail travel (Standard Premier) by Eurostar from London to Paris; private coach for transfers; some travel by *métro*; hotel accommodation; breakfasts, 5 dinners and 1 lunch with wine, coffee, water; interval refreshments; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

Performances: tickets to 2 performances are included, costing c. £230. *To be confirmed in June 2023.*

Accommodation. Hotel Édouard VII, Paris (hoteledouard7-paris.com): comfortable 4-star hotel, located on the Avenue de l'Opéra, a short walk from the Louvre and the Palais Garnier. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*

How strenuous? A fair amount of walking is necessary to reach the venues, as well as use of the Métro and standing around in museums. There are some late nights but starts are leisurely. You need to be able to lift your luggage on and off the train and wheel it within stations.

Group size: between 10 and 19 participants.