



Hamburg: Opera, 'Elphi' & Exhibition

Music, art & architecture in Germany's second city

18–22 February 2024 (MK 175)

5 days • £2,860

(including tickets to 3 performances)

Lecturer: Dr John Allison

The Hamburg Philharmonic play Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy* and Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 13* at the spectacular Elbphilharmonie.

Norma (Bellini) and *Peter Grimes* (Britten) at the Staatsoper Hamburg.

Special exhibition at the Kunsthalle marking the 250th anniversary of Caspar David Friedrich's birth.

Based at a historic hotel, beautifully situated on the Außenalster lake.

Hamburg is a city of industry, of exchange, a Hanseatic powerhouse. Yet its position as a gateway between Germany and the rest of the world, alongside its financial success and prestige throughout much of German history, has made it a creative city, home to a rich musical and artistic heritage.

The first public opera house in Germany, the *Oper am Gänsemarkt*, was established in Hamburg in 1678. While the current theatre of the Staatsoper Hamburg reopened in 1955 after its destruction in 1943, the sense of continuing a long-standing tradition still remains. Very much of that period, Britten's *Peter Grimes* is on the programme for our visit, along with the bel canto masterpiece that is Bellini's *Norma*.

Enter, then, the Elbphilharmonie – or 'Elphi' – an architectural, cultural and civic masterpiece by Herzog & de Meuron that dominates, and lifts, the city's harbour and its image. Yes, it ran over budget and over schedule, but the fact remains that Hamburg believed in it and built it. Tickets are hard to come by.

Juxtaposition of the old and the new is a recurring theme here, and with the Hamburg Philharmonic performing nineteenth-century Beethoven and twentieth-century Shostakovich in a twenty-first-century hall designed with an acoustic almost 'digital' in its clarity, this coexistence and cooperation becomes undeniable.

A unique feature of this 2024 tour is a visit to Hamburg's largest art museum, the Kunsthalle, for their special temporary exhibition marking the 250th anniversary of Caspar David Friedrich's birth. Presenting over 100 pieces of Friedrich's work, including



Elbphilharmonie © Malte Flechner.

his *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* (often associated with Schubert's *Wanderer Fantasy*), the Kunsthalle offers the most comprehensive retrospective on German Romanticism's foremost artist in many years.

Our tour also includes a daily session of talks and discussions about the evening's performance. There are guided walks and visits to a further selection of Hamburg's architecture and sites of musical heritage, but also plenty of free time for rest and preparation for the next event.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly in the morning from London Heathrow to Hamburg (British Airways). Arrive at the hotel in time to settle in before dinner.

Day 2. A morning walk through the Speicherstadt, the old warehouse district and centre of Hamburg's industrial past. Continue to Hafencity, the commercial and cultural development surrounding the harbour by the river Elbe. Free time before an afternoon talk, and dinner. *Performance at the Elbphilharmonie with Kent Nagano (conductor),*

Elbenita Kajtazi (soprano), Narea Son (soprano), Ida Aldrian (alto), Dovlet Nurgeldiyev (tenor), Nicholas Mogg (baritone), Liam James Karai (bass), Alexander Vinogradov (bass), Martin Helmchen (piano), the Estonian National Choir, the Harvesthuder Chamber Choir and the Hamburg Philharmonic Orchestra: Beethoven, Choral Fantasy, Op.80 and Shostakovich, Symphony No. 13.

Day 3. Visit the Komponistenquartier, a charming row of small museums commemorating composers including Brahms, Mendelssohn, and Mahler. There is some free time before a late-afternoon talk and early dinner. *Performance at the Staatsoper: Norma (Bellini): Paolo Arrivabeni (conductor), Marcelo Álvarez (Pollione), Hubert Kowalczyk (Oroveso), Olga Peretyatko (Norma), Angela Brower (Adalgisa), Renate Spingler (Clotilde), Seungwoo Simon Yang (Flavio).*

Day 4. Visit the Kunsthalle for their special exhibition marking the 250th anniversary of Caspar David Friedrich's birth. The afternoon is free for independent exploration; a visit to the Museum of Applied Arts is recommended. Afternoon talk and early dinner. *Performance at the Staatsoper: Peter Grimes (Britten): Kent*

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continued

Nagano (conductor), Gregory Kunde (Peter Grimes), Jennifer Holloway (Orford), Iain Paterson (Balstrode), Katja Pieweck (Auntie), Olivia Boen (First niece), Claire Gascoin (Second niece), Jürgen Sacher (Boles), Clive Bayley (Swallow), Rosie Aldridge (Mrs Sedley), Florian Panzner (Reverend Adams), Nicholas Mogg (Ned Keene), Liam James Karai (Hobson).

Day 5. The final morning is free before the journey to the airport. The flight to Heathrow arrives in the afternoon.

by coach per day: 5 miles.

Group size: between 10 and 22 participants.

Lecturer

Dr John Allison. Editor of *Opera* magazine and music critic for the *Daily Telegraph*. He was born in South Africa and completed his PhD degree while playing the piano and working as assistant organist at Cape Town cathedral. Since moving to London in 1989 he has written for publications around the world, authored two books, contributed chapters to several other volumes and served on the juries of many international competitions. He has also held positions as music critic on the *Sunday Telegraph* and the *The Times*.

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £2,860 or £2,580 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £3,210 or £2,930 without flights.

Included: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (Airbus A319); travel by private coach throughout; breakfasts and 4 dinners with wine; all admissions to museums and sites visited with the group; all gratuities for restaurant staff, drivers, guides; all airport and state taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

Music: tickets (first category at the Elbphilharmonie and for *Peter Grimes*; second category for *Norma*) for 3 performances are included, costing c. £250.

Accommodation. Hotel Atlantic Hamburg (brhhh.com/atlantic-hamburg): 5-star hotel in a beautiful location on the Außenalster lake. Traditionally furnished and decorated, with a long nautical history. Single rooms are doubles for sole use.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking on this tour, and a reasonable amount of standing around in museums. Average distance