



Leipzig Bach Festival

Music by the Bach family and their Baroque contemporaries

11–17 June 2024 (MK 320)

7 days • £3,520

Lecturer: Professor John Butt OBE

Eight concerts, with the option of attending two additional late-evening concerts.

Ensembles include the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, Freiburger Barockorchester, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin and Collegium Vocale Gent, with soloists such as Kristian Bezuidenhout (harpsichord) and Katharina Konradi (soprano).

Concert venues include the Thomaskirche and Nikolaikirche, the churches where J.S. Bach was director of music.

Centrally-located hotel within easy walking distance of the concerts and restaurants.

Guided walks to explore the architecture and musical heritage of this historic and lively city.

Over 80 members of the Bach family are listed in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. For two centuries the Bachs, Johann Sebastian among them, plied their trade in the employ of courts, churches and free cities in Thuringia and Saxony. Though geographically in the heart of Germany, these places were not among the major political or cultural centres of Europe. And their location on the other side of the Iron Curtain in the later 20th century enveloped them further in obscurity.

There was no star system in the Bachs' time; genius was an alien concept. The tradition the family worked in was one of sheer dogged professionalism, with ability generally recognised and rewarded. Really exceptional once-in-a-century talent was beyond the comprehension of the city burgers, however; Johann Sebastian was the third choice for the post of Cantor at St Thomas's Church in Leipzig, and for the remainder of his life he was constantly chafing against the indifference and high-handedness of his employers.

The Bachfest Leipzig has become established as one of the major items in the calendar of European festivals. The venue most used is the parish church of St Thomas, the Thomaskirche, which was Bach's principal auditorium during the 27 years when he was effectively the city's director of music. There are concerts also in the Nikolaikirche, another church for which he had responsibility, in the Evangelisch-Reformierte Kirche, the Old Town Hall, the Kupfersaal and in the Bundesverwaltungsgericht (Federal Supreme Court).



Leipzig, Altes Rathaus wood engraving from *The Illustrated London News*, 1866.

Leipzig is now, again, a handsome and lively city, following an almost miraculous transformation during the 1990s and beyond. Cleaning, restoration and rebuilding went hand in hand with the emergence of cafés, smart shops and good restaurants. Located at the heart of this ancient trading city is the large market place and the renaissance Town Hall, and around is a beguiling network of alleys, courtyards and arcades.

Guided walks investigate this heritage and the musical history of the city, which encompasses not only the Bach family but also Telemann, Robert and Clara Schumann, Mendelssohn, Wagner, Mahler and Kurt Masur. There is time also to enjoy the excellent museums – the Fine Arts Museum in spectacular new premises, the radically refurbished Museum of Musical Instruments, and the rejuvenated Bach Museum.

Itinerary

Day 1. Morning flight from London Heathrow to Berlin (British Airways) with onward travel to Leipzig (c. 3 hours) by private coach. Time to settle into the hotel before the daily lecture; dinner follows.

Day 2. The morning talk is followed by a walk with a local guide to introduce the layout and main buildings of Leipzig's historic centre. **Late-afternoon concert at the Evangelisch-Reformierte Kirche** with Hélène Schmitt (violin), Francisco Mañalich (viola da gamba), Ján Krígovský (violone), Matthias Spaeter (theorbo), François Guerrier (harpsichord, organ): Biber, *Rosary Sonatas*; works by J.S. Bach. Dinner at a famous restaurant is followed by an **evening concert at the Nikolaikirche** with the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra & Choir, Ton Koopman (director), soloists: J.S. Bach, Ach Gott, wie manches Herzeleid, BWV3; Was mein Gott will, das g'scheh allzeit, BWV111; Wår Gott nicht mit uns diese Zeit, BWV 14; In allen meinen Taten, BWV97.

Day 3. After the daily talk, a guided tour of the excellent museum at the Bach Archive. Free afternoon; try Mendelssohn's Apartment or the Old Town Hall Museum. **Evening concert at the Thomaskirche:** St John Passion, Thomanerchor Leipzig, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Andreas Reize (director), soloists. **Optional post-dinner concert at the Evangelisch-Reformierte Kirche:** Hélène Schmitt (violin), Francisco Mañalich (viola da gamba), Ján Krígovský (violone), Matthias Spaeter (theorbo), François

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continued

Guerrier (harpsichord, organ): Biber, Rosary Sonatas; works by J.S. Bach.

Day 4. The morning is free until the **early-afternoon concert at the Old Town Hall**, *Christine Schornsheim (harpsichord): J.S. Bach, Goldberg Variations, BWV988.* Dinner is followed by an **evening concert at the Nikolaikirche, with the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra & Choir, Ton Koopman (director), soloists: J.S. Bach, Christ lag in Todes Banden, BWV 4; Nun danket alle Gott, BWV 192; Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan, BWV 100; Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, BWV 140.**

Day 5. A morning walk with a specialist guide concentrates on Leipzig's musical heritage. Free afternoon, opportunity for a trip by tram to the Völkerschlachtdenkmal, a vast centennial monument to commemorate the Battle of the Nations (1813). **Evening concert at the Thomaskirche with Katharina Konradi (soprano), Patrick Grahl (tenor), Tobias Berndt (bass), Gaechinger Cantorey, Freiburger Barockorchester, Hans-Christoph Rademann (director): Brahms, Warum ist das Licht gegeben dem Mühseligen Op.74 No.1 in F; Mendelssohn, O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden; J.S. Bach, Christ lag in Todes Banden, BWV4; Mendelssohn, Ach Gott, vom Himmel sieh darein; J.S. Bach, Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis, BWV21. Optional late-night concert at the Bundesverwaltungsgericht with Chouchane Siranossian (violin), Balázs Máté (cello), Leonardo García Alarcón (harpsichord): J.S. Bach, Violin Sonata in G, BWV1021; Fugue in G minor, BWV1026; Violin Sonata in E minor, BWV1023; Farina, Sonata quinta detta la Farina; Muffat, Violin Sonata in D; Walther, Passacaglia in D minor; Anonymous, Adagio; Schmelzer, Violin Sonata in A 'Victori der Christen'.**

Day 6. After the morning lecture, the earlier part of the day is free. The German Museum of Books and Writing and Museum of Fine Arts remain. **Afternoon concert at the Kupfersaal, with the Freiburger Barockorchester, Kristian Bezuidenhout (harpsichord, director): Fasch, Ouverture-Suite in D; C.P.E. Bach, Keyboard Concerto in G minor, Wq.32; Heinichen, Sonata in B flat; J.S. Bach, Brandenburg Concerto No.1 in F, BWV1046. Final concert: B Minor Mass at the Thomaskirche with Collegium Vocale Gent, Philippe Herreweghe (director), soloists.** Dinner follows.

Day 7. Drive from Leipzig to Berlin Airport and fly to London Heathrow, arriving late afternoon.

Lecturer

Professor John Butt OBE. Gardiner Professor of Music at the University of Glasgow and musical director of Edinburgh's Dunedin Consort. He has published several books on Bach, the surrounding culture of performance and the historical performance movement. His recordings with the Dunedin Consort of Handel's *Messiah* and Mozart's *Requiem* have received *Gramophone* awards (2007, 2014) and the latter was also nominated for a Grammy Award. He is Principal Artist with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and has been guest conductor with many orchestras across Europe and North America. He has been awarded the FBA and FRSE, the Dent Medal of the RMA and the RAM/Kohn Foundation's Bach Prize.

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £3,520 or £3,310 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £3,860 or £3,650 without flights. Package of Two optional evening concerts £105.

Included: top category tickets for eight concerts; flights with British Airways (Airbus A319); private coach for airport transfers; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 4 dinners (with drinks); museum admissions; tips; taxes; lecturer, tour manager and local guide.

Music: concert tickets to be confirmed autumn 2023.

Accommodation. Leipzig Marriott Hotel (leipzigmarriott.de): Conforming to its brand, the Marriott is a smart 4-star hotel with lots of marble, pillars, wood, brass and comfortable easy chairs. It is located on a pedestrian street just inside the north-eastern section of the ring road that runs around the city centre, and no more than 10–15 minutes on foot from the venues. Rooms are spacious, with cosy neoclassical furnishings and are equipped to a high standard. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*

How strenuous? Walking is the only practical way of getting around the largely pedestrianised centre of Leipzig. Most walks will be less than 20 minutes.

Group size: between 10 and 22 participants.