



Music in Berlin

Art, architecture and music in the German capital

10–15 April 2024 (MK 227)

6 days • £3,610

(including tickets to 4 performances)

Lecturer: Barry Millington

Deutsche Oper Berlin: *Fidelio* (Beethoven).

Staatsoper Unter den Linden: *Tosca* (Puccini) and *Lohengrin* (Wagner).

Berlin Philharmonie: Sibelius's 7th Symphony, Stravinsky's Violin Concerto, conducted by Hannu Lintu, with Vilde Frang (violinist).

Walks, museum and gallery visits with a Berlin-based local guide, including excursions to Potsdam and Charlottenburg.

This tour centres on three favourite opera classics and a concert by the peerless Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. The Staatsoper *Tosca* stars Maria Agresta as the title-role diva, Michael Fabiano as her freedom-loving but ill-fated lover Cavaradossi and Christopher Maltman as the sadistic Baron Scarpia. Alvis Hermanis's 'largely traditional' production oscillates between the date in which the work is set (1800) and the date of the premiere (1900), with video projections counterpointing the action on stage. At the helm is the Colombian conductor Andrés Orozco-Estrada, renowned for his impassioned, communicative style.

Lohengrin at the Staatsoper is strongly cast with the popular Klaus Florian Vogt in the title role. Calixto Bieito's characteristically challenging production similarly juxtaposes two spheres, the fairytale world of the forest and the reality of the court room, to interrogate the eternal ideals of faith and trust. On the podium is the outstanding British conductor Alexander Soddy, now general music director in Mannheim.

David Hermann's production of *Fidelio* at the Deutsche Oper investigates the nature of freedom in a corrupt society. The conductor, Stephan Zilias, general music director in Hanover, has a close relationship with the Deutsche Oper.

The acclaimed Finnish conductor Hannu Lintu makes his debut with the Berlin Philharmonic in a concert including Sibelius's powerfully concentrated one-movement final symphony, the Seventh, Stravinsky's Violin Concerto, with the Norwegian virtuoso Vilde Frang as soloist, and works by Messiaen and Lintu's esteemed compatriot, the late Kaija Saariaho.



Berlin, Staatsoper, copper engraving c. 1750.

Berlin possesses some of the finest art galleries and museums in the world and offers the highest standards of music and opera performance. It is endowed with a range of historic architecture and is the site of Europe's greatest concentration of first-rate contemporary architecture. Once again a national capital, it is also one of the most exciting cities on the Continent, recent and rapid changes pushing through a transformation without peacetime parallel.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 1.15pm from London Heathrow to Berlin Brandenburg (British Airways). Take an orientation tour by coach: the New Embassy quarter, Reichstag, Brandenburg Gate, Pariser Platz and Unter den Linden. Dinner in the hotel.

Day 2. Walk through the oldest part of the city to 'Museums Island', a group of major museum buildings. Visit the Neues Museum, the stunning home to the Egyptian Museum, restored and recreated by British architect David Chipperfield and the Alte Nationalgalerie which superbly displays European painting of the 19th century including the finest collection of German Romantics. Some free time before an evening concert at the Philharmonie with Hannu Lintu (conductor) and Vilde Frang (violinist):

Messiaen, *Le Tombeau resplendissant*; Stravinsky, *Violin Concerto in D*; Kaija Saariaho, *Ciel d'hiver*; Sibelius, *Symphony in C No.7 Op.105*

Day 3: Berlin, Charlottenburg. Schloss Charlottenburg, the earliest major building in Berlin, is an outstanding Baroque and Rococo palace with splendid interiors. The Berggruen Collection of Picasso and classic modern art is also here. Evening performance at the Deutsche Oper Berlin: *Fidelio* (Beethoven), with Stephan Zilias (conductor), David Hermann (director), Orchestra and Choir of the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Philipp Jekal (Don Fernando), Markus Brück (Don Pizarro), Valentyn Dytiuk (Florestan), Flurina Stucki (Leonore), Tobias Kehrer (Rocco), Lilit Davtyan (Marzelline), Gideon Poppe (Jaquin).

Day 4. Europe's greatest building project in the 1990s, Potsdamer Platz showcases an international array of architects (Piano, Isozaki, Rogers, Moneo). Scattered around the nearby 'Kulturforum' are museums, the State Library and the Philharmonie concert hall (Hans Scharoun 1956–63). The Gemäldegalerie houses one of Europe's major collections of Old Masters. Free afternoon, an opportunity to visit the Museum of Musical Instruments. Evening performance at the Staatsoper unter den Linden: *Tosca* (Puccini) with Alvis Hermanis (director), Andrés Orozco-Estrada (musical director), Maria

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Agresta (Tosca), Michael Fabiano (Cavaradossi), Christopher Maltman (Scarpia), Friedrich Hamel (Angelotti), Jan Martinik (Sacristan), Florian Hoffmann (Spoletta), Dionysios Avgerinos (Sciarrone), Taehan Kim (Jailer).

Day 5: Berlin, Potsdam. Excursion to Potsdam which in the 18th century developed into Brandenburg-Prussia's second capital and acquired fine buildings, parks and gardens. Sanssouci, created as a retreat from the affairs of state by Frederick the Great, is among the finest 18th-century complexes of gardens, palaces and pavilions to be found anywhere. Visit his single-storey palace atop terraces of fruit trees, the Chinese Tea House and the orangery, and see the city centre with its Dutch Quarter and Neo-Classical buildings. Return to Berlin for an *early evening performance at the Staatsoper unter den Linden: Lohengrin (Wagner) with Alexander Soddy (musical director), Calixto Bieito (stage director), Günther Groissböck (Heinrich der Vögler), Klaus Florian Vogt (Lohengrin), Camilla Nylund (Elsa of Brabant), Wolfgang Koch (Friedrich of Telramund), Marina Prudenskaya (Ortrud), Adam Kutny (The King's Herald).*

Day 6. Homeward journey. Return to London Heathrow from Berlin Brandenburg landing at c. 12.05pm.

Lecturer

Barry Millington. Barry Millington is Chief Music Critic for the *London Evening Standard* and writes also for the *Guardian*. The founder/ editor of *The Wagner Journal* and the author/ editor of eight books on Wagner, he contributed articles on opera and opera production to *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*. He was the founder and artistic director of the Hampstead & Highgate Festival (1999–2003), has acted as dramaturgical adviser at international opera houses, and co-founded the ensemble Counterpoise, working with artists such as Sir John Tomlinson and Sir Willard White. He organises concerts and a music appreciation series in Hampstead Garden Suburb and has belatedly begun to develop a low-profile career locally as a collaborative pianist.

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £3,610 or £3,260 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £4,190 or £3,840 without flights.

Included: flights with British Airways (Airbus A320); travel by private coach throughout; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 3 dinners with wine, interval canapés at one performance; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the tour leader and local guide.

Music: tickets to 4 performances are included.

Accommodation. The Regent Berlin (theregentberlin.de): elegant 5-star hotel decorated in Regency style, close to Unter den Linden. Rooms are of a good size and excellent standard. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*

How strenuous? There is a reasonable amount of walking and standing around in art galleries. Average distance by coach per day: 9 miles.

Group size: between 10 and 22 participants.

Combine this tour with *Opera in Vienna, 2–7 April 2024*. We are happy to advise on linking accommodation and transport.