



Walking the Rhine Valley

Concerts & hikes through woods, fields & vineyards

22–28 June 2023 (MJ 774)

7 days • £3,150

Lecturer: Richard Wigmore

The Rhine Valley Music Festival interspersed with country walks, and six private concerts.

Musicians of the highest calibre.

Music from the medieval to the late romantic, in appropriate historic buildings.

Led by lecturer, critic and musicologist Richard Wigmore.

This tour continues the highly popular format developed several years ago for *The Danube Music Festival* and inaugurated in 2014 for *The Rhine Valley Music Festival*. While most of the participants on these festivals eat and sleep on board a river cruiser, a small group stays in hotels and undertakes walks on most days through some of the most attractive stretches of the countryside in the vicinity of the river and the concert venues. Further details of the concerts can be found online at www.martinrandall.com/rhine

Itinerary

Day 1: Colmar. Travel by rail from London to Colmar, leaving St Pancras at c. 8.30am and changing in Paris. An exceedingly attractive town with richly ornamented half-timbered and stone buildings lining the streets and canals, Colmar's position in the foothills of the Vosges makes an ideal base for walking tours. Lecture, dinner and the first of three nights in Colmar (France).

Day 2: Colmar, Munster, Basel. Starting uphill from Munster Haut-Rhin, this is a moderate-strenuous circular walk on country lanes, farm tracks and woodland paths, which passes through picturesque villages and farms (5 ½ miles, 2 ½ hours). Free time in Colmar. Enlarged and comprehensively refurbished, the Musée d'Unterlinden is recommended; chief among the 15th- and 16th-century works of art is Grünewald's searing Isenheim altarpiece. Drive to Basel (Switzerland) to attend the concert. *Basler Madrigalisten, Raphael Immoos (director): Swiss Romantic Choral Music.* Overnight Colmar.

Day 3: Colmar, Breisach, Freiburg. Drive to Breisach (Germany), an attractive town built on a hill which rises from the water's edge with



Breisach, wood engraving c.1880.

a superb Gothic church crowning its summit. Starting from the riverside this is a moderate walk on woodland paths (4 miles, 1 ¼ hours). After a picnic lunch continue to Freiburg to attend the concert. *Freiburg Baroque Orchestra, Baroque Concertos.* Overnight Colmar.

Day 4: Ribeauvillé, Mannheim. A walk along part of the Alsace wine route begins in Ribeauvillé. The path is mostly level with a short descent into Bergheim at the end (5 miles, 1 ½ hours). Then drive to Mannheim, stopping briefly for lunch *en route*. Mannheim succeeded Heidelberg as the capital of the Palatinate, one of the richest and most culturally accomplished of the smaller states of Germany. The great Baroque Schloss, within walking distance of the hotel and venue for the concert, is one of the largest in Europe. *Basel Chamber Orchestra, Giovanni Antonini (conductor), Sol Gabetta (cello): Kraus, Schumann and Beethoven.* Overnight Mannheim.

Day 5: Bingen, Königswinter. Drive north to Bingen am Rhein, now world-famous as the birthplace of St Hildegard (1098–1179), nun, mystic, thinker, poet and composer. A moderate-strenuous walk up through vineyards with views down to the Rhine ending at the pilgrimage church of St Roch (Rochuskapelle), the venue for this afternoon's concert. *Per Sonat Ensemble, Sabine Lutzenberger (director): Songs of a Saint and a Travelling Minstrel.* Drive to

Königswinter, along the most scenic section of the Rhine. First of two nights here.

Day 6: Königswinter, Bonn. We have opted to include both concerts in Bonn instead of a country walk on this day. The morning recital takes place at the Beethoven-Haus, one of the best stocked and well presented of the composers' house museums. *Freddy Kempf: Beethoven and Schubert on Piano.* Some free time in Bonn precedes the late afternoon concert at the Electoral Palace with the *Mandelring Quartet: String Quartets.* Overnight Königswinter.

Day 7: Königswinter. A free morning in Königswinter, or an optional walk. Board the c.12.45am train from Cologne. The Eurostar arrives at London St Pancras at c. 5.00pm.

Lecturer

Richard Wigmore. Music writer, lecturer and broadcaster for BBC Radio 3. He writes for *The Daily Telegraph*, *BBC Music Magazine* and *Gramophone* and gives classes in Lied history and interpretation at Birkbeck College, London. He read French and German at Cambridge and later studied music at the Guildhall. His publications include *Schubert: the complete song texts* and *Pocket Guide to Haydn*.

Walking the Rhine Valley
continued

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £3,150 or £2,870 without train travel. Single occupancy: £3,730 or £3,450 without train travel.

Included: rail travel (Standard Premier Eurostar; first class into France and back from Germany); hotel accommodation as described below; travel by private coach; breakfasts, 2 picnic lunches and 5 dinners with wine; tips for waiters, drivers and local guides; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

Accommodation. Maison des Têtes, Colmar (3 nights): a charming, independent 5-star hotel located in the historic centre of Colmar with an exceptional restaurant. Radisson Blu, Mannheim. A smart 4-star hotel, located within walking distance of the concert venue. Steigenberger Grandhotel Petersberg, Königswinter (2 nights): a comfortable and spacious 4-star hotel, the Steigenberger has an indoor swimming pool and a restaurant overlooking the Rhine valley.

How strenuous? This is a walking tour: it is essential for participants to be in good physical condition and to be used to walking in countryside with hills. No walk is more than 6 miles or 3 hours. There is not always the opportunity to return to the hotel to freshen up before every concert or dinner. We have tried to limit driving time, but by necessity there are a few long drives. Average distance by coach per day: 67 miles.

Group size: between 12 and 22 participants.