



Drottningholm & Confidencen

Dardanus and The Fairy Queen

11–14 August 2023 (MJ 825)

4 days • £2,060

(Including tickets to two performances)

Lecturer: Dr David Vickers

Two operas in two historic theatres: Rameau's *Dardanus* and Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*.

Good hotel on the waterfront in Stockholm.

Some free time around the performances and lectures to see some of Stockholm's magnificent museums and art collections.

Very few theatres survive unchanged from the eighteenth century. Only the Drottningholm Court Theatre survives without having needed modern restoration or refurbishment, with the original stage machinery and scenery intact, and as home of a living operatic tradition of international renown.

Built in 1766 for Queen Louisa Ulrika of Sweden as part of a marvellous ensemble of palace, park and lake outside Stockholm, the theatre enjoyed its heyday during the reign of her son Gustav III. But after his death in 1792, it ceased to be used and was virtually forgotten for over a century. Performances recommenced in 1922, and subsequently an annual festival developed which specialises, appropriately enough, in Baroque and Classical repertoire. The performance for 2023 is Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*.

Drottningholm is not the only eighteenth-century theatre in Stockholm's watery environs. Confidencen, the theatre built in 1752 at Ulriksdal, is also part of a palace complex in a beautiful lakeside setting and, like Drottningholm, a long period of neglect preceded its revival. But the festival here is of much more recent origin and as yet is little known outside Sweden. Artistically, it has to be said, it sets its sights lower, but productions have become increasingly accomplished. Their production for 2023 is Rameau's *Dardanus*.

The tour is based in Stockholm, a city with many architectural and artistic riches spread across the archipelago where the waters of Lake Mälaren meet the Baltic. There is quite a lot of free time to explore the city independently.



Drottningholm Palace, steel engraving c. 1840

Itinerary

Day 1: Stockholm. Fly at c. 9.15am from London Gatwick to Stockholm (Norwegian Air). Drive to the Ulriksdal Palace, built in the 17th century on the banks of the Edsviken in Solna as a country retreat. There is time to settle into the hotel before and dinner.

Day 2: Stockholm. A morning lecture, followed by a guided tour of the old town centre. Free afternoon; recommended is the spectacular display of prehistoric gold artefacts at the Museum of Antiquities and the Museum of Modern Art. *Evening opera at Confidencen Theatre: Dardanus (Rameau).* Peter Spisky (conductor), Gilbert Blin (director), cast: Martin Vanberg, Ida Ränzlöv, Yannis François, Mikael Horned, Helena Sá Cavalcante Schuback, Marie Theoleyre, Matilda Larsson, Artour Zakirov, Antonin Pinget, Ingrid Berg, Patrik Kesselmark, Arash Azarbad, Mathilda Sidén Silfver.

Day 3: Drottningholm. After a morning lecture, travel by boat from the centre of Stockholm to Drottningholm Palace, summer residence of the Swedish royal family since the 17th century; splendid interiors, wonderful gardens, landscaped park, exquisite Chinoiserie pavilion and theatre museum. *Late afternoon*

opera at Drottningholm Slottsteater: The Fairy Queen (Purcell). Francesco Corti (conductor), Josette Bushell-Mingo (director), Samuel Boden (Theseus), Luciana Mancini (Hermia), Alex Rosen (Demetrius), Zachary Wilder (Lysander), Emmanuelle de Negri (Helena), Anna Dennis (Titania), Thomas Walker (Oberon), Kayo Shekoni (Puck), Jeremy Carpenter (Bottom/Pyramus).

Day 4: Stockholm. Free time in the morning or an optional visit to the museum of the *Wasa*, the royal flagship which sank on its maiden voyage in 1628. Fly to London Gatwick, arriving at c. 4.15pm.

Lecturer

Dr David Vickers. Author, journalist, broadcaster and lecturer. He works as a consultant for many international Baroque music organisations and teaches at the Royal Northern College of Music. He is a council member of the Handel Institute and has made frequent appearances on BBC Radio 3. He is a critic for *Gramophone* and writes essays for record labels including BIS, Chandos, Decca, Deutsche Grammophon, EMI and Harmonia Mundi.

Drottningholm & Confidencen
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Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £2,060 or £1,920 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £2,310 or £2,170 without flights.

Included: top category tickets for two operas; air travel (economy class) with Norwegian Air (aircraft: Boeing 737-800); coach or boat for excursions as specified in the itinerary; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts and three dinners with wine, water and coffee; admission to museums visited with the group; all gratuities for restaurant staff and drivers; all state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

Accommodation. Hotel Diplomat (www.diplomathotel.com/): 5-star hotel on the waterfront of the Östermalm district of Stockholm. *Solo travellers are in queen rooms.*

How strenuous? This is a short tour with a fair amount of free time. Nevertheless participants need to be fit enough to navigate the city centre and parks on foot and to cope easily with stair climbing. Average distance by coach per day: 12 miles.

Group size: between 10 and 22 participants.

Combine this tour with: *Verona Opera*, 2–6 August 2023; *The Lucerne Festival*, 20–25 August 2023.