



## The Ring in Basel

Wagner in Switzerland

**3–10 June 2025 (ML 709)**

£4,910 • 8 days

Lecturer: Barry Millington

Wagner's monumental Ring Cycle, with visits to key Wagnerian locations in Switzerland.

First category tickets for all four performances.

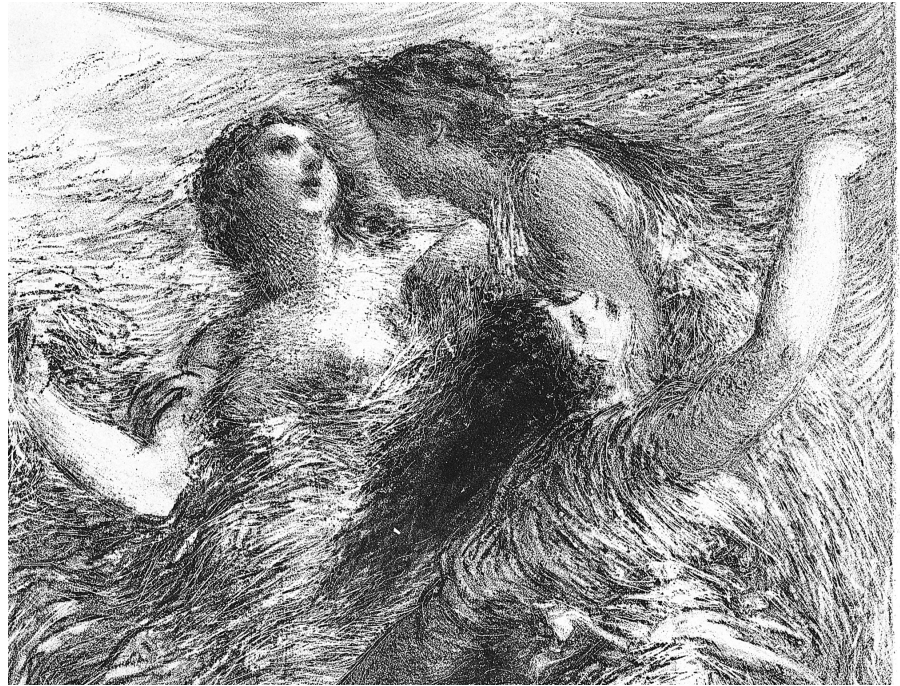
Day excursions to Zurich and Lucerne, two cities closely associated to Wagner.

Talks on the operas by Barry Millington, chief music critic for London's Evening Standard and editor of *The Wagner Journal*.

One of the chief reasons for the enduring appeal of Wagner's epic tetralogy *Der Ring des Nibelungen* is the scope it offers interpreters and audiences alike to view the work refracted through the lens of our contemporary experience. Benedikt von Peter says of his new production at the Theater Basel that it 'examines the effects of Wotan's patriarchal rule of power on subsequent generations'. Wotan's Valkyrie daughter Brünnhilde, the heroine of the cycle, is thus – and very much in tune with modern approaches to the *Ring* – right at the centre of this reading, reflecting upon the complex dynamics within her family. This production is not for the traditionalist – time-lines are intriguingly collapsed, enabling us to see the effects of the ring's curse on successive generations and there are one or two other dramaturgical surprises, including a moving deployment of puppetry.

The English conductor Jonathan Nott, who has carved a stellar reputation largely outside Britain, has assembled a strong cast including the exciting young Danish soprano Trine Møller as Brünnhilde and the acclaimed Canadian bass-baritone Nathan Berg as Wotan. Taking the roles of the sibling lovers Siegmund and Sieglinde are Ric Furman and Therese Kronthaler who both made highly praised contributions in last year's *Die Walküre*.

Basel is renowned as one of the great cultural cities of Europe, with its Kunstmuseum (housing the largest art collection in Switzerland) and the Foundation Beyeler, specialising in contemporary art, its idyllic parkland setting close to the foothills of the Black Forest housing the elegantly designed building of Renzo Piano. We will also visit two cities closely associated with Wagner himself. It was during his decade-long exile in Zurich that Wagner wrote the libretto for the entire



Rhine Maidens, lithograph by Henri Fantin-Latour, 1886.

*Ring* and the music of the greater part of it. His later years in Lucerne, to which he moved with his second wife, Cosima, were the happiest in his life. We visit his newly restored lakeside house at Tribschen, just outside the city, and will be expertly guided both in Lucerne and in Zurich by Professor Chris Walton, the leading authority on Wagner's close relationship with Switzerland.

### Itinerary

**Day 1.** Fly at c. 3.40pm from London Heathrow to Basel (British Airways). Arrive at the hotel in time to settle in before dinner.

**Day 2.** Morning lecture on the music, before departing for an introductory walk of the old city centre with a local guide. In the afternoon visit the Kunstmuseum, an excellent collection notable for paintings by one-time resident Hans Holbein. Early dinner in a local restaurant is followed by the first opera at the Theater Basel: *Das Rheingold*, with the Basel Symphony Orchestra, Jonathan Nott (conductor), Benedikt von Peter (production), Harpa Ósk Björnsdóttir (Woglinde), Valentina Stadler (Wellgunde), Sophie Kidwell (Flosshilde), Nathan Berg (Wotan), Michael Borth (Donner), Ronan

Caillet (Froh), Michael Laurenz (Loge), Solenn' Lavanant Linke (Fricka), Lucie Peyramaure (Freia), Hanna Schwarz (Erda), Andrew Murphy (Alberich), Karl-Heinz Brandt (Mime), Hubert Kowalczyk (Fasolt), Runi Brattaberg (Fafner), Ric Furman (Siegmund), Trine Møller (Brünnhilde).

**Day 3.** After the morning talk on the music, drive to Basel-Riehen where the Beyeler Foundation has a top-quality collection of classic modern art in a stunning building by Renzo Piano. Independent lunch and some free time. *Late-afternoon opera at the Theater Basel: Die Walküre*, with the Basel Symphony Orchestra, Jonathan Nott (conductor), Benedikt von Peter (production), Ric Furman (Siegmund), Artyom Wasnetsov (Hunding), Nathan Berg (Wotan), Therese Kronthaler (Sieglinde), Solenn' Lavanant Linke (Fricka), Trine Møller (Brünnhilde), Lucie Peyramaure (Helmwige), Sarah Marie Kramer (Gerhilde), Heather Engebretson (Ortlinde), Jasmin Etezadzadeh (Waltraute), Valentina Stadler (Siegfrune), Hope Nelson (Rossweisse), Sophie Kidwell (Grimgerde), Marta Herman (Schwertleite), Hanna Schwarz (Erda), Michael Borth (Donner), Ronan Caillet (Froh), Karl-Heinz Brandt (Mime).

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continued

**Day 4. Zurich.** All-day excursion to Zurich, where Wagner lived for nearly a decade. A walking tour takes you to several Wagnerian locations including Villa Wesendonck, Wagner's former house on the Zeltweg and the former concert hall. In the afternoon visit the Kunsthaus Zurich, Switzerland's largest art gallery, displaying Swiss and international art from the Middle Ages to the present day. Free evening.

**Day 5. Morning lecture.** The rest of the day is left free for independent exploration or relaxation. We suggest the Historical Museum (furniture, tapestries, silver), Museum of Contemporary Art or the Tinguely Museum. *Late-afternoon opera at the Theater Basel: Siegfried, with the Basel Symphony Orchestra, Jonathan Nott (conductor), Benedikt von Peter (production), Rolf Romei (Siegfried), Karl-Heinz Brandt (Mime), Nathan Berg (The Wanderer), Andrew Murphy (Alberich), Runi Brattaberg (Fafner), Hanna Schwarz (Erda), Trine Møller (Brünnhilde).*

**Day 6. Lucerne.** Lucerne, at the juncture of mountains, rivers and lake, has a most attractive historic centre with medieval, Renaissance and Baroque buildings. Start at the oldest road bridge in Europe, the richly decorated Chapel Bridge, and continue to the Spreuerbrücke, another historic covered bridge notable for its 'Dance of Death' roof panels. Afternoon visit to Richard Wagner's former home on the shore of Lake Lucerne, now a museum.

**Day 7.** Morning lecture is followed by some free time. *Final opera at the Theater Basel: Götterdämmerung, with the Symphony Orchestra Basel, the Choir of the Theater Basel, Jonathan Nott (conductor), Benedikt von Peter (production), Rolf Romei (Siegfried), Günter Papendell (Gunther), Andrew Murphy (Alberich), Patrick Zielke (Hagen), Trine Møller (Brünnhilde), Heather Engebretson (Gutrune), Jasmin Etezadzadeh (Waltraute), Harpa Ósk Björnsdóttir (Woglinde), Valentina Stadler (Wellgunde), Sophie Kidwell (Flosshilde), Nathan Berg (Wotan), Hanna Schwarz (Erda).*

**Day 8.** Fly to London Heathrow from Basel, arriving at c. 12.40pm.

## Lecturer

**Barry Millington.** Writer, lecturer and broadcaster specialising in Wagner. He is founder/editor of *The Wagner Journal* and author of eight books on Wagner including *The Wagner Compendium* and *Richard Wagner: The Sorcerer of Bayreuth*. He is Chief Critic for the Evening Standard. He has also acted as dramaturgical adviser at opera houses internationally.

## Practicalities

**Price, per person. Two sharing:** £4,910 or £4,770 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £5,660 or £5,520 without flights.

**Included:** flights (Euro Traveller) with British Airways (Airbus A320); travel by private coach; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 3 dinners, with wine, as well as interval fingerfood and drinks at 3 of the performances; all admissions; tips for restaurant staff, drivers and guides; state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer and local guides.

**Music:** first category tickets for 4 performances are included.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Radisson Blu ([www.radissonhotels.com/en-us/hotels/radisson-blu-basel](http://www.radissonhotels.com/en-us/hotels/radisson-blu-basel)): a comfortable, functional 4-star hotel, located very close (c. 150m) to Theater Basel, at the edge of the historic centre. Rooms are modern and of a good size and standard. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*

**How strenuous?** Quite a lot of walking is involved and the tour should not be undertaken by anyone who has difficulties with everyday walking and stairclimbing. There are a few long coach journeys. Average distance by coach per day: 65 miles.

**Group size:** the tour will operate with between 10 and 24 participants.