



Dresden Music Festival

Art and music in the Saxon capital

19–25 May 2023 (MJ 726)

7 days • £3,430

(including tickets to 7 performances)

Lecturer: Dr Jarl Kremeier

Seven performances in four venues including *Die Zauberflöte* at the Semperoper.

Walks to see the fine 18th- & 19th-century architecture and outstanding art collections led by art historian, Dr Jarl Kremeier.

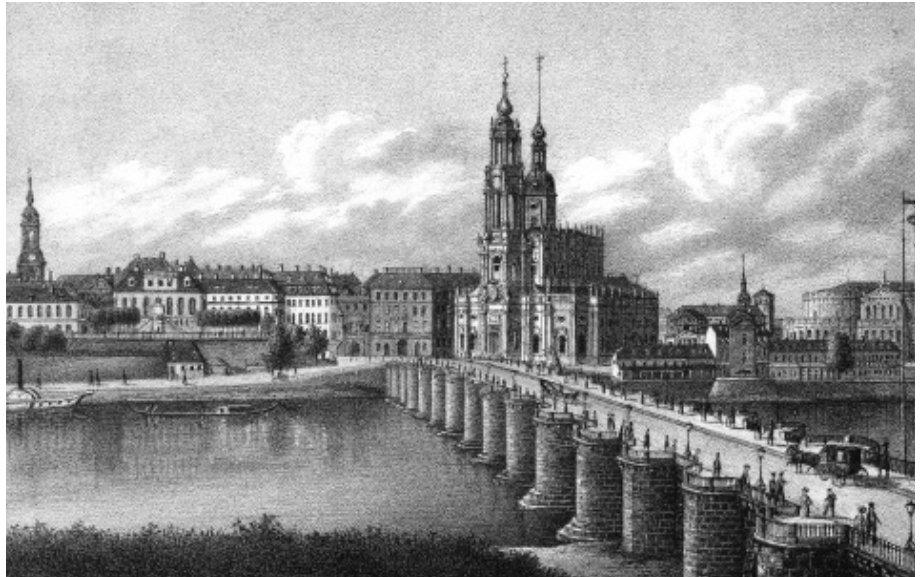
Rebuilding, restoration and refurbishment has wrought wonders in this once shattered city.

Dresden's greatness as a city of the arts was very much the creation of two electors in the 18th century: Frederick Augustus I ('the Strong', 1694-1733) and his son Frederick Augustus II. (1733-1763). Though founded at the beginning of the thirteenth century, for its first five hundred years it was a minor city of little distinction. This despite having been selected as residence in 1485 by the branch of the dukes of Saxony that gained the electorate in 1547.

Augustus the Strong's pillaging of the state treasury to feed his reckless extravagance was both symbol and to some extent the cause of his dismal record in most areas of statecraft, but his achievements as builder, patron and collector rank him among the most munificent of European rulers. Great architecture, a picture collection of legendary richness, magnificent accumulations of precious metalwork and ceramics (porcelain was manufactured here for the first time in Europe) and a glorious musical life transformed Dresden into one of the most admired and visited cities in Europe and a major destination on the Grand Tour.

If to a somewhat lesser degree, subsequent rulers of Saxony continued the tradition of cultural embellishment (and political ineptitude: they had a tiresome habit of joining the losing side). In the nineteenth century, 'the Florence on the Elbe' acquired buildings by Schinkel and Semper, and Weber and Wagner were directors of the opera house. In the twentieth century, Richard Strauss added to its illustrious musical history.

Then in February 1945 a tragically propitious set of circumstances conspired to make the air raid on Dresden the most 'successful' of Allied bombing missions. Most of the art collections had been removed to safety but 80 percent of the old centre was destroyed. Under the Communist regime a few of the chief monuments were grudgingly



Dresden, mid-19th-century lithograph.

restored, but since unification the painstaking process of rebuilding and restoration has accelerated.

The great dome of the Protestant Cathedral, the Frauenkirche, again dominates the skyline, and the Green Vault in the royal palace again displays the unequalled magnificence of the treasury. Significantly, rank and file buildings are steadily being recreated; the glory of Dresden lay as much in the lesser buildings as in the major ones. Some striking new architecture is being added, notably the all-glass car factory in the historic centre and the Foster & Partners railway station.

The *Dresdner Musikfestspiele* is generally of an appropriate standing, but 2023 is again of high musical standards. The venues, too, are varied – the Frauenkirche, a magnificent nineteenth-century opera house and the city's Bauhaus cultural complex (*Kulturpalast*) with its modern 1,800 capacity concert hall.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly in the morning from London Heathrow Airport (British Airways) to Berlin Brandenburg Airport. An evening lecture is followed by dinner.

Day 2: Dresden. Morning visit of the Residenzschloss to see the wonderful Green Vault and its content, one of the world's finest princely treasuries, once again displayed in

their original venue. *Afternoon piano recital at the Palais im Großen Garten with Emanuel Ax: selected works by Liszt and Schubert.* Some free time before an *evening concert at the Frauenkirche with La Capella Nacional de Catalunya, Le Concert des Nations, Jordi Savall (conductor): Beethoven, Missa solemnis in D major, Op. 123.*

Day 3: Dresden. *Morning concert at the Kulturpalast with Lucas and Arthur Jussen (piano), Nederlands Philharmonisch Orkest, Hartmut Haenchen (conductor): Mozart, Piano Concerto No. 10, K 365; Bruckner, Symphony No. 7.* Afternoon visit of the Albertinum, reopened in 2010 after extensive renovations and home to the New Masters Gallery. *Evening opera at the Semperoper: Die Zauberflöte (Mozart): Gábor Káli (conductor), Joseph Dennis (Tamino), Ilya Silchuk (Papageno), Sofia Fomina (Pamina), Maria Perlt-Gärtner (The Queen of the Night), Georg Zeppenfeld (Sarastro), Timothy Oliver (Monostatos).*

Day 4: Meissen, Dresden. Drive downstream to Meissen, ancient capital of Dukes of Saxony and location of the discovery of hard-paste porcelain. The largely 15th-century hilltop castle overlooking the Elbe, the Albrechtsburg, is one of the first to be more residential than defensive, and within the complex is a fine Gothic cathedral. Return to Dresden for some free time before an *evening concert at the Semperoper with Christian Thielemann*

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(conductor), Christa Mayer (alto), the Ladies of the State Opera Chorus Dresden, Semperoper Children's Choir: Mahler, *Symphony No. 3*.

Day 5: Dresden. In the morning visit the Zwinger, a unique Baroque confection, a pleasure palace, arena for festivities and museum for cherished collections. See the Old Masters Gallery, one of the finest collections in Europe, particularly strong on Italian and Netherlandish painting. A free afternoon is followed by an evening concert at the Kulturpalast with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Kirill Gerstein (piano), Daniel Harding (conductor): Robert Schumann, *Overture to 'Manfred' Op. 115*; Dvořák, 'The Wild Dove' *Op. 110*; Brahms, *Piano Concerto No. 2, Op. 83*.

Day 6: Pillnitz, Dresden. Drive to Pillnitz, a summer palace in Chinese Rococo style, with collections of decorative art and a riverside park. After lunch take a boat trip back along the Elbe to Dresden. Evening concert at the Frauenkirche with the Insula Orchestra, Pierre Génisson (clarinet), Laurence Equilbey (conductor): Mozart, *Overture to 'La clemenza di Tito', K 621*; *Clarinet Concerto K 622*; *Symphony No. 39, K 543*.

Day 7. Fly from Berlin Brandenburg to London Heathrow airport, arriving in the afternoon.

Lecturer

Dr Jarl Kremer. Art historian specialising in 17th- to 19th-century architecture and decorative arts; teaches Art History at the Berlin College of Acting and the Senior Student's Department of Berlin's Freie Universität. He studied at the Universities of Würzburg, Berlin and the Courtauld, is a contributor to the Macmillan Dictionary of Art, author of a book on the Würzburg Residenz, and of articles on Continental Baroque architecture and architectural theory.

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £3,430 or £3,260 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £3,780 or £3,610 without flights.

Included: flights (Euro Traveller) with British Airways (Airbus 319 and 320); travel by private

coach; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts; 1 lunch and 4 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

Music: tickets (top category) for 7 performances are included costing c. £480.

Accommodation. Gewandhaus Dresden (www.marriott.com/en-us/hotels/drsak-gewandhaus-dresden-autograph-collection). A traditional 5-star hotel in a reconstructed Baroque building. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*

How strenuous? Vehicular access is restricted in the city centre. Participants are expected to walk to the concert venues and there is a substantial amount of walking and standing around in art galleries and museums. Average distance by coach per day: 45 miles (predominantly on the first and last days of the tour).

Group size: between 10 and 22 participants.