



The Ring in Berlin

Wagner in the German capital

3–11 April 2023 (MJ 662)

£5,980 • 9 days

Lecturer: Barry Millington

Wagner's monumental Ring of the Nibelung cycle anatomises the shortcomings of materialistic society – mankind's greed, its lust for political power, its despoliation of the environment – and offers a powerful vision of a better future.

Visits on most days to study the art, architecture and history of Berlin, and those sites most relevant to Wagner.

Second category tickets for all four performances.

Talks on the operas by Barry Millington, chief music critic for London's Evening Standard and editor of *The Wagner Journal*. Walks and gallery visits with a Berlin-based art historian.

Long established as the finest Wagner conductor of the modern era, Daniel Barenboim collaborates with the leading Russian director Dmitri Tcherniakov and a stellar cast of singers on a new production of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. As he enters his eighties, Barenboim's peerless grasp of the musico-dramatic complexities of Wagner's masterpiece becomes increasingly evident and his appearances ever more sought after. Staged in the newly refurbished Berlin Staatsoper as part of the Easter Festtage, and performed with Barenboim's own superlative Berlin Staatskapelle, this is a Ring cycle not to be missed.

The first-rate cast includes Michael Volle as Wotan, Anja Kampe as Brünnhilde and Andreas Schager as Siegfried. There will be lectures on each instalment of the Ring by Barry Millington, the Wagner specialist and editor of *The Wagner Journal* and walks or excursions on most days with a Berlin-based cultural historian. However, plenty of time is allowed to rest and to prepare for experiencing the greatest achievement of music drama.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 1.15pm from London Heathrow to Berlin Tegel (British Airways).

Day 2. A morning lecture on the music before an introductory morning walk, finishing at the 'Museums Island', a group of major museum



Lithograph, 1902.

buildings. Explore the Alte Nationalgalerie, which superbly displays European painting of the 19th century and German Romantics. *Opera at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden: Das Rheingold:* Daniel Barenboim (conductor), Michael Volle (Wotan), Lauri Vasar (Donner), Siyabonga Maqungo (Froh), Mika Kares (Fasolt), Peter Rose (Fafner), Rolando Villazón (Loge), Johannes Martin Kränzle (Alberich), Stephan Rügamer (Mime), Claudia Mahnke (Fricka), Anett Fritsch (Freia), Anna Kissjudit (Erda), Evelin Novak (Woglinde), Natalia Skrycka (Wellgunde), Anna Lapkovskaja (Flosshilde).

Day 3. Morning lecture on the music, before departing for a walk that takes in Unter den Linden, Friedrichstraße and the Brandenburg Gate. It ends with the Reichstag dome and lunch at the roofgarden restaurant there. *Opera at the Staatsoper: Die Walküre:* Michael Volle (Wotan), Mika Kares (Hunding), Robert Watson (Siegmund), Claudia Mahnke (Fricka), Anja Kampe (Brünnhilde) Vida Miknevičiūtė (Sieglinde), Clara Nadeshdin (Gerhilde), Christiane Kohl (Helmwige), Michal Doron (Waltraute), Alexandra Ionis (Schwertleite),

Anett Fritsch (Ortlinde), Natalia Skrycka (Siegfrune), Anna Lapkovskaja (Grimgerde), Kristina Stanek (Rosswisse).

Day 4, Potsdam. The enclosed park of Sanssouci was created as a retreat from the affairs of state by Frederick the Great. It consists of gardens, parkland, palaces, pavilions and auxiliary buildings. Visit his relatively modest single-storey palace atop terraces of fruit trees and the exquisite Chinese teahouse. Lunch in Potsdam followed by a drive through the town centre with its Dutch quarter and cathedral by Schinkel. Free evening.

Day 5. Visit Schloss Charlottenburg, the earliest major building in Berlin, an outstanding Baroque and Rococo summer palace with fine interiors, paintings (Watteau especially) and extensive gardens. Optional visit to the Berggruen Collection of Picasso and classic modern art. Free evening, or *Optional Concert at the Philharmonie Berlin:* Missa Solemnis, Beethoven: Daniel Barenboim (conductor), Elena Stikhina (soprano), Anna Kissjudit (alto), Saimir Pirgu (tenor), René Pape (bass), Staatsoperchor, Staatskapelle Berlin.

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continued

Day 6. Morning lecture. See Potsdamer Platz, Europe's greatest building project in the 1990s, with several buildings by star architects. Continue to the nearby 'Kulturforum'. Pass the Philharmonie (Hans Scharoun) and visit the Gemäldegalerie, one of Europe's major collections of Old Masters and the Museum of Musical Instruments. *Opera at the Staatsoper: Siegfried: Andreas Schager (Siegfried), Stephan Rügamer (Mime), Michael Volle (the Wanderer), Peter Rose (Fafner), Anna Kissjudit (Erda), Anja Kampe (Brünnhilde), Johannes Martin Kränzle (Alberich), Victoria Randem (The Woodbird).*

Day 7. Free morning, or *Optional Recital at the Philharmonie Berlin: András Schiff performs works by Beethoven & Bach.* The afternoon is spent in the Neues Museum, home to the Egyptian Museum and restored by British Architect David Chipperfield.

Day 8. Morning lecture. The rest of the day is left free for independent exploration or relaxation. *Final opera at the Staatsoper: Götterdämmerung: Andreas Schager (Siegfried), Lauri Vasar (Gunther), Johannes Martin Kränzle (Alberich), Mika Kares (Hagen), Anja Kampe (Brünnhilde), Mandy Fredrich (Gutrune), Anna Lapkovskaja (Flosshilde), Violeta Urmana (Waltraute), Evelin Novak (Woglinde), Natalia Skrycka (Wellgunde), Noa Beinart, Kristina Stanek, Anna Samuil (Three Norns).*

Day 9. Homeward journey. Fly back to Heathrow from Berlin Tegel, arriving at c. 1.30pm.

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: £5,980 or £5,840 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £6,940 or £6,800 without flights.

Included: flights (Euro Traveller) with British Airways (Airbus A319); travel by private coach; hotel accommodation as described below;

breakfasts, 2 lunches and 2 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 art historian.

Music: tickets (second category) for 4 performances are included. Tickets for the optional concert and optional recital are subject to availability, on request.

Accommodation: the Regent Berlin (theregentberlin.de): an elegant hotel decorated in Regency style. Rooms are of a good size and excellent standard. Located within walking distance of the major museums and a 5-minute walk from the opera house.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking and standing around in art galleries and museums. Average distance by coach per day: 11 miles.

Group size: the tour will operate with between 8 and 18 participants.