



## The Ring in Dresden

Wagner in Saxony's historic capital

**28 January–4 February 2021 (MH 632)**

8 days • £4,210

(including tickets to 4 performances)

Lecturer: Barry Millington

Wagner's monumental *Ring of the Nibelung* cycle in the city where he made his name.

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

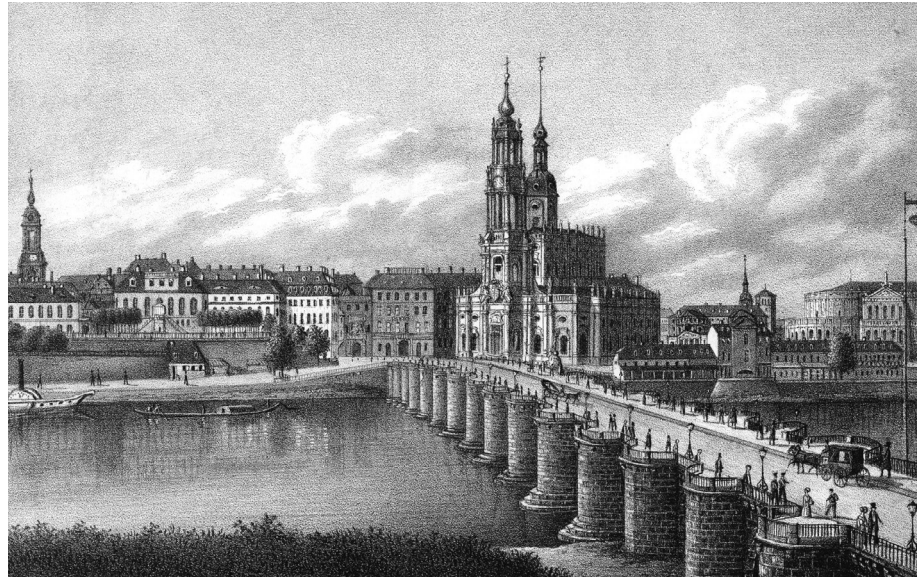
Walks to see the fine 18th- & 19th-century architecture and outstanding art collections led by an experienced local guide.

Excursions to the surrounding area including Pillnitz and Meissen.

The city of Dresden is steeped in Wagner history. It was here that the composer went to school and to the Court Theatre that he returned in 1843 to serve as Kapellmeister, and where the first performances of *Rienzi*, *The Flying Dutchman* and *Tannhäuser* were given. In the majestic Frauenkirche (now meticulously restored to its former glory) he mounted his choral extravaganza *The Love Feast of the Apostles* with 1200 singers and an orchestra of 100. Six years later, as a prominent insurrectionist, he climbed to the tower of the Kreuzkirche (as you can still do today) to report on the movement of the Prussian troops at the height of the 1848–9 revolution.

The Staatskapelle Dresden that Wagner himself conducted has maintained its prestigious reputation and is led today by one of the great Wagnerians of our time, Christian Thielemann, performing in the miraculously reconstructed *Semperoper*. Thielemann's spacious, authoritative handling of the *Ring* was acclaimed in an earlier manifestation of this production and he returns with a stellar cast led by Michael Volle as Wotan, with Petra Lang as Brünnhilde and the tireless Stephen Gould as both Siegmund and Siegfried.

Decker's minimalist production, with designs by Wolfgang Gussmann, for all its iconoclastic imagery focuses on theatrical essentials and has been praised for the potency of its dramatic interaction between characters.



Dresden, mid-19th-century lithograph.

### Itinerary

**Day 1.** Fly at c. 10.00am from London Heathrow Airport (British Airways) to Berlin. Introductory lecture before dinner in the hotel.

**Day 2.** 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. *Semperoper*, 6.00pm: *Das Rheingold*. Staatskapelle Dresden, Christian Thielemann (conductor), Willy Decker (director), Michael Volle (Wotan), Tansel Akzeybek (Froh), Stephan Rügamer (Loge), Falk Struckmann (Alberich), Jürgen Sacher (Mim), Georg Zeppenfeld (Fasolt), Karl-Heinz Lehner (Fafner), Christa Mayer (Fricka), Jennifer Holloway (Freia), Michal Doron (Erda), Sabrina Kögel (Wellgunde), Simone Schröder (Flosshilde).

**Day 3.** In the morning visit the Zwinger, a unique Baroque confection, a pleasure palace, arena for festivities and museum for cherished collections. See the porcelain collection and the Old Masters Gallery, one of the finest collections in Europe, particularly strong on Italian and Netherlandish painting. *Semperoper*, 4.00pm: *Die Walküre*. Christian Thielemann (conductor), Willy Decker (director), Stephen Gould (Siegmund), Michael Volle (Wotan), Georg Zeppenfeld (Hunding), Jennifer Holloway (Sieglinde), Petra Lang (Brünnhilde), Christa Mayer (Fricka),

Dorothea Herbert (Gerhilde), Mariya Taniguchi (Ortlinde), Stepanka Pucalkova (Waltraute), Julia Rutigliano (Siegrune), Simone Schröder (Roßweisse), Sabrina Kögel (Grimgerde), Katharina Magiera (Schwertleite).

**Day 4.** Pillnitz, Graupa. Drive to Pillnitz, a summer palace in Chinese Rococo style, with collections of decorative art and a riverside park. Lunch here before an afternoon visit to Graupa and the so-called 'Lohengrin House' where, in the summer of 1846, Wagner composed much of the opera. The house now forms part of a museum complex dedicated to the composer.

**Day 5.** Visit the New Masters Gallery in the Albertinum, reopened in 2010 after extensive renovations following flood damage and home to the New Masters Gallery. *Semperoper*, 4.00pm: *Siegfried*. Christian Thielemann (conductor), Willy Decker (director), Stephen Gould (Siegfried), Michael Volle (The Wanderer), Georg Zeppenfeld (Fafner), Petra Lang (Brünnhilde), Christa Mayer (Erda), Jürgen Sacher (Mime), Falk Struckmann (Alberich).

**Day 6.** Meissen. 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

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continued

be more residential than defensive, and within the complex is a fine Gothic cathedral. Return to Dresden for some free time.

**Day 7.** A morning walk includes the Hofkirche and Kreuzkirche, finishing with a visit to the great domed Frauenkirche. Lunch is followed by some free time. *Semperoper, 4.00pm: Götterdämmerung.* Christian Thielemann (conductor), Willy Decker (director), Stephen Gould (Siegfried), Petra Lang (Brünnhilde), Falk Struckmann (Hagen), Markus Eiche (Gunther), Albert Dohmen (Alberich), Jennifer Holloway (Gutrune), Christa Mayer (Waltraute).

**Day 8.** A leisurely start before driving to Berlin Tegel for the flight to London Heathrow arriving at c. 5.30pm.

**How strenuous?** The tour involves some walking in the historic centre, where coach access is restricted, and standing in museums and churches. A good level of fitness is essential. You will be on your feet for lengthy stretches of time. 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.

**Combine this tour with:** *Wagner's Ring in London, 5–11 February 2021.*

## Lecturer

**Barry Millington.** Chief Music Critic for London's *Evening Standard* and founder/editor of *The Wagner Journal*. He is the author/editor of eight books on Wagner including *The Sorcerer of Bayreuth*. He also contributed the articles on Wagner and his operas to *The New Grove Dictionary of Music & Musicians* and *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*.

## Practicalities

**Price, per person. Two sharing:** £4,210 or £3,990 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £4,770 or £4,550 without flights.

*By train: London – Brussels – Frankfurt – Leipzig – Dresden: c.11 hours. Contact us for more information.*

**Included:** flights (Euro Traveller) with British Airways (Airbus 320); travel by private coach; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts; 2 lunches and 2 dinners with wine, water, coffee; interval canapés and refreshments at 3 performances; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

**Music:** tickets (top category) for 4 performances are included.

**Accommodation. Hotel Taschenbergpalais Kempinski** ([kempinski.com/en/dresden/hotel-taschenbergpalais](http://kempinski.com/en/dresden/hotel-taschenbergpalais)): a 5-star hotel in the heart of the Old Town, 2 minutes' walk from the Semperoper and the Zwinger. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*