



Drottningholm & Confidencen

Venus & Adonis, Dido & Aeneas and Agrippina

11–14 August 2021 (MH 850)

4 days • £1,990

(Including tickets to 2 performances)

Lecturer: Jonathan Keates

Two performances in two historic theatres: a double bill of Blow's *Venus and Adonis* and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, followed by Handel's *Agrippina*.

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 18th century. Only the 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 2021 is Handel's *Agrippina*.

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, again 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. In 2021 we see a double bill performance of John Blow's *Venus & Adonis* and Purcell's *Dido & Aeneas*.

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 a fair amount of free time to explore the city independently.



Drottningholm Palace, steel engraving c. 1840.

Itinerary

Day 1: Stockholm. Fly at c. 11.30am from London Heathrow to Stockholm (British Airways). Drive to the Ulriksdal Palace, built in the 17th century on the banks of the Edsviken in Solna as a country retreat.

Day 2: Stockholm. A morning lecture is 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: double bill Venus & Adonis (Blow) and Dido & Aeneas (Purcell).* Olof Boman (conductor), Ida Ränzlöv (*Venus/Dido*), Bernt Ola Volungholen (*Adonis/Aeneas*), Christina Larsson Malmberg (*Belinda*), Rupert Enticknap (*Cupido/Sorceress*).

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. *Evening performance at Drottningholm Slottsteater: Agrippina (Handel).* Francesco Corti

(conductor), Nahuel Di Piero (*Claudio*), Ann Hallenberg (*Agrippina*), Bruno de Sá (*Nerone*), Kristina Hammarström (*Ottone*), Roberta Mameli (*Poppea*).

Day 4: Stockholm. Free morning. Fly to London Heathrow, arriving at c. 5.30pm.

Lecturer

Jonathan Keates. Recently retired from teaching English at the City of London School. As author and journalist, his non-fiction books include *Purcell: A Biography*, *Handel, the Man and his Music* and *The Siege Of Venice*, and fiction includes the short story collections *Allegro Postillions* and *Soon to be a Major Motion Picture*. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, a Trustee of the London Library and Chairman of the Venice In Peril Fund.

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £1,990 or £1,860 without flights. Single occupancy: £2,210 or £2,080 without flights.

Drottningholm & Confidencen
continued

By train: London – Amsterdam – Hamburg – Stockholm: between 24 and 26 hours. Contact us for more information.

Included: tickets for two performances; flights (Euro Traveller) with British Airways (Airbus A320); 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.

Accommodation. Hilton Stockholm Slussen (hilton.com/en/hotels/sweden/hilton-stockholm-slussen): 4-star hotel situated on the waterfront of the Södermalm district of Stockholm, a short walk to the old town of Gamla Stan. Rooms have a view over the lake or the old town.

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: *King Ludwig II*, 15–20 August 2021. We are happy to advise on linking accommodation and transport.