

# THE HABSBURGS ART & MUSIC IN VIENNA

SUNDAY 21 – FRIDAY 26 JANUARY 2024 (6 DAYS)

LECTURERS: TOM DUNCAN & INGRID SAWERTHAL

£2935

- **Short and comprehensive introduction to one of Europe's most important cities**
- **Comfortable 4\* hotel in historic centre within easy walking distance of museums**
- **Guided visits of the fabled Kunsthistorisches Museum**
- **Private visit to the Lichtenstein Collection**
- **Opportunity to attend Opera, Ballet & Concert performances**



Vienna: a view from the Belvedere Gardens towards the historic centre

## OVERVIEW

During the course of more than three centuries Vienna was the capital of one of the greatest European empires, that of the Austrian Habsburgs. Austria had always been their home, yet the family acquired land throughout Europe, partly through conquest but more cunningly through dynastic connections and inheritance. One sixteenth century diplomat put it succinctly: “You, Oh France, may acquire lands through war but the Habsburg territories grow through Love!”

When the Emperor Charles V split the family territories into two great entities, governed separately from Madrid and Vienna, the future for this Austrian city was assured as it became the heart of the Habsburg Holy Roman Empire. As the focus of both Imperial and Princely patronage the city grew rapidly, reflecting an elegant mixture of architectural styles. These draw on the influence of nearby Italy whilst retaining a faint air of eastern mystery, reflecting both the brooding threat from, and the equal attractions of, the Ottoman Turks.

Our five-day visit will be the ideal introduction to Vienna, concentrating on its evolution as an Imperial capital through an exploration of its architecture, art collections and musical culture. The visit will be led by one of Vienna's most experienced (and charming) English-speaking guides, Ingrid Sawerthal.

We shall stay at the comfortable 4\* Hotel Ambassador, located within the historic centre reasonably close to St Stephen's Cathedral. Given that almost all the sites we shall visit are close to our hotel, most of our time will be spent on foot and **not** in a coach.

Music will play an integral, though optional, part of this visit. Once the opera schedules have been confirmed, participants will be offered the opportunity to book tickets for performances at the Vienna State Opera.

## ITINERARY OUTLINE

**Day 1:** Sunday 21 January – We take a morning flight from Heathrow with BA and on arrival in Vienna we will be met by our local guide, Ingrid Sawerthal. We drive to our hotel and en route there will be an orientation tour of the city along the **Ringstrasse** ending to our hotel by the State Opera House. Weather and light permitting, we may also stop at the **Upper Belvedere Gardens** to enjoy a panoramic view of the city. There will be a group dinner that evening – wine, water and coffee are included with group lunches and dinners.

**Day 2:** Monday 22 January – We begin at the **Capuchin Crypt** which holds the tombs of many generations of the Habsburg family. This mausoleum for the Austrian branch of the family will be an apt introduction to the rest of our week's visits. We continue to the nearby **Hofburg** - an enormous complex of buildings occupying much of the old city centre. The earliest section is the **Alte Burg**, begun in 1275 as a fortress. The main sites here are the **Burgkapelle**, built in the mid fifteenth century and much altered subsequently. There is also the **Sacred and Secular Treasuries** which contain many of the jewelled treasures of the Habsburgs. After a group lunch we visit

the next section of the Hofburg, named **In der Burg** and we shall visit the **Imperial Apartments**, now given over to mementoes from the later Habsburgs. We return to our hotel via the **Spanish Riding School** for a guided tour (but not a performance) and the evening will be free.

**Day 3:** Tuesday 23 January – We begin at the historic **Cathedral of St Stephen**, a magnificent example of medieval architecture. We then make our way on foot down to the **Ringstrasse** to visit the **Karlskirche**, one of the city's fine Baroque churches. We continue to the famous **Secession Building**, erected in 1898 by Joseph Olbrich, which contains Klimt's famous frieze celebrating Beethoven. After a pause for lunch (not included) we visit the **Kunsthistorisches Museum** for our first visit. This is undoubtedly one of Europe's finest art galleries. We concentrate on the Italian paintings. These are *exceptionally* good and many of the "plums" were once owned by Charles I and some of his courtiers. Dispersed after the Civil War, they were purchased by the then Governor of the Spanish Netherlands, Archduke Leopold von Habsburg and subsequently incorporated into the Imperial collections. We then return to our hotel and the evening will be free.

**Day 4:** Wednesday 24 January – This morning we take a tram to visit the **Belvedere Palace**. This is a stunning Baroque ensemble built in two stages for Prince Eugene of Savoy by the greatest architect of the day, Lucas von Hildebrandt. We concentrate on the Upper Belvedere Palace with its commanding views of the city., now the home of the **Österreichische Galerie**. It contains a marvellous collection of paintings by Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele and their contemporaries. We then return to the **Kunsthistorisches Museum** where we pause for a group lunch, after which we continue our tour of the collection, concentrating on the non-Italian schools. The undoubted highlights will be the famous landscapes by Brueghel (including *Hunters in the Snow*) and very fine works by Rubens, Van Dyck and Rembrandt. We return to the hotel and the evening will be free.

**Day 5:** Thursday 25 January – Travelling by coach we start our day at the **Lichtenstein Palace Museum**. The Lichtenstein princes have always owned vast properties in Austria. At the outbreak of World War II the family secretly removed their famous paintings collection to Vaduz, nestled amidst the Swiss/Austrian Alps. These have been returned to Vienna and we have arranged for a private tour of the palace and its collections. Late morning we return to the **Hofburg** to visit the **Imperial State Library** with some free time for lunch (not included). We continue to just outside the city centre to the marvellous **Schönbrunn Palace**, the summer residence of the Habsburgs. Later that evening we have a group dinner in a restaurant close to our hotel.

**Day 6:** Friday 26 January – For our final visit we walk the short distance to the little known **Gemäldegalerie** of the Fine Art Academy. This is a small collection but it contains masterpieces by Bosch, Van Dyck and many others. We have a final group lunch after which we continue to the airport for our return flight to Heathrow.

**Opera in Vienna:** We have left most evenings free so that participants can enjoy the city's rich musical life. If you would like to attend the Vienna State Opera or one of the other major venues – information on performances will be sent to all participants once details are published. Tickets can be added to your booking via our office.

## PRACTICALITIES

**Price** £2935    **Price without flights** £2790    **Deposit** £425    **Single Supplement** £330 (Double for Sole Use)

**Hotel** 5 nights with breakfast at the 4\* Hotel Ambassador. DSU Comfort Rooms & Couples/Two sharing in Business Rooms

**Flights** British Airways

Outward:        **BA700** Depart London Heathrow (Terminal 3) **0945** arrive Vienna **1255**

Return:         **BA703** Depart Vienna **1710** arrive London Heathrow (Terminal 3) **1840**

**Price includes** 2 dinners & 3 lunches with wine, water & coffee, all local transfers, entry fees & gratuities, services of Tom Duncan & Ingrid Sawerthal

**Not included** Travel to/from Heathrow, 3 dinners & 2 lunches, Opera, Ballet & Concert Tickets



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