



THE WITTELSBACHS & WAGNER MUSIC & ART IN MUNICH

SUNDAY 25 JULY – SUNDAY 1 AUGUST 2027 (8 DAYS)

LECTURERS: TOM DUNCAN & PETER HILL

£4990

- Discover the Wittelsbach Dukes, Electors & Kings of Bavaria & their capital, Munich
- Three wonderful palaces with amazing contents & superb museums & art galleries
- Musical patronage a central theme, focussing on a new production of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at the *Bayerische Staatsoper*
- A series of lecture introductions to each of the operas with Professor Peter Hill
- Superior 4* hotel in the historic central district, a 5-minute walk to the *Staatsoper*



Munich, State Opera House

OVERVIEW

The extraordinary story of the Wittelsbach Dukes, Electors and Kings of Bavaria is the joint theme of this tour as we explore their varied and remarkable patronage of architecture, the visual arts and music. Their most famous musical patronage involved the unstinting support given to Richard Wagner by King Ludwig II in the later 19th century. This provided him with the freedom to produce some of the most influential music dramas of all time, not least his cycle *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, which participants will be able to see over the course of our week's stay.

In the early 18th century Bavaria embraced the late Baroque of Italy, inspired by Rome and Turin. By about 1725, French influence began to lighten this style with a particularly delicious variety of the Rococo, represented by the extraordinary Asam brothers' church of St John Nepomuk. Under the Elector-Duke, Maximilian III Joseph (1745 - 1777), Munich consolidated this 'Golden' rococo age, perhaps best typified by the exquisite Residenz Theatre by François de Cuvillies and the delicate interiors of both Schleissheim and Nymphenburg just outside the city.

Bavaria was 'upgraded' to a kingdom in 1806 with much expanded territories, and the enriched state treasury was able to fund an extraordinary period of building. It was transformed according to new ideas of first, classical dignity under Ludwig I and second, romantic eclecticism under melancholy Ludwig II, Wagner's doomed patron.

As a 'court' city Munich had a marvellous musical tradition, particularly noted for its operatic performances. Indeed, music lovers owe King Ludwig II of Bavaria thanks for supporting the 'impossible' Richard Wagner at a vital point in his life. This level of state support continues today and Munich's *Staatsoper* is one of Europe's most important, a vibrant artistic and music milieu. The State Opera has been busy introducing a new production of *The Ring* over the last year and in Summer 2027 the complete cycle will be presented. This new production is the work of Tobias Kratzer and for once in a German opera house, the first two instalments (when seen by Tom) made sense – quite amazing really. Musical direction is under Vladimir Jurowski and the sound created stellar. Wotan is sung by Nicholas Brownlee, Brünnhilde by Miina-Lisa Väreälä, Siegmund by Joachim Bäckström, Sieglinde by Irene Roberts and Fricka by Ekaterina Gubanova. Other members of the cast for Parts 3 and 4 will be confirmed later. We have requested tickets in the centre stalls, with allocation to be confirmed later this year.

We shall be based in the comfortable 4* **Superior Hotel Platzl**. Located in the heart of the historic centre, it is within easy walking distance (five minutes) of the Opera House. The visit will be co-guided by our usual Wagner expert, Professor Peter Hill, with art historian Tom Duncan, supported by our local tour manager.

ITINERARY OUTLINE

Day 1: Sunday 25 July – We fly from Heathrow arriving in **Munich** in the evening. We are met by our local guide and transfer by coach to our hotel, the 4* **Superior Platzl**, ideally situated in the centre of the old city. Given our late arrival dinner is not included this evening.

Day 2: Monday 26 July – We begin with an introductory walk around the city centre. The **Marienplatz** with its Neo-gothic **Rathaus** is situated at the core of the **Aldstadt**, the old medieval centre. The nearby **Frauenkirche** is the most important monument to survive from that time. The **Pieterskirche** is the oldest parish church in Munich. Medieval in origin, transformed in the Baroque period, badly damaged during World War II and subsequently rebuilt, it will be the perfect introduction to the splendours of the 18th century. Indeed, the finest expression of this style is the nearby **Asamkirche**, one of Europe's unknown gems, the perfect end to our introductory walk.

After a simple group lunch (wine, water and coffee are included with all group lunches), we visit the Wittelsbach family's great city palace, the **Residenz**. Built round a series of courtyards, the interiors are remarkable and our visit will include some of the State Apartments, the Treasury and the Court Theatre by François de Cuvilliés. We return to our hotel for the first of Professor Peter Hill's introductory talks on the **Ring Cycle** followed by **Das Rheingold** at 7:00pm. The State Opera is a 5-minute walk from our hotel. Dinner is not included tonight and on other performance nights. Snacks are readily available throughout the opera house.

Day 3: Tuesday 27 July – The focus of this morning's visit will be the **Alte Pinakothek** where the best old masters from the several discrete collections formed by the three branches of the Wittelsbach family are now united. They are quite breath-taking and range across all the major European schools and this will be the first of two visits. We have a group lunch after which we return for the second of Peter Hill's lectures on The Ring, this time concentrating on **Die Walküre** after which we continue to the opera house for the performance at 5.00pm.

Day 4: Wednesday 28 July – This morning we go by coach to **Schleissheim**, one of two wonderful country palace complexes which we shall visit. There are several palaces and lesser structures which make up the complex and the **New Palace** will be the focus of our visit. This is a very handsome essay in late Baroque with subsequent alterations, with some lovely paintings. After a group lunch we continue to **Nymphenburg**, the family's favourite summer residence. Here, a mixture of baroque, rococo and neoclassical interiors are furnished appropriately, the ensemble set amidst a fine landscape park where there are some delightful pavilions, including the ravishing **Amealienburg**. We return to Munich and the evening is free.

Day 5: Thursday 29 July – We return to the **Alte Pinakothek** to continue our exploration of the collection but this time to include masterpieces removed from the **Neue Pinakothek** (under repair until late 2029) with splendid pictures from the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist periods. After a group lunch at our hotel we have the third of Peter Hill's lectures, this time on **Siegfried**, after which we attend the performance, beginning at 4.00pm.

Day 6: Friday 30 July – Successive Bavarian monarchs looked to ancient Greece and Rome for inspiration, reflected not only in the architecture of Leo von Klenze but also in several museums devoted to antiquities such as the **Glyptothek**, where the displays bring many aspects of the ancient world to life. After a group lunch in a local restaurant we continue to the **Pinakothek der Moderne**, one of the best collections of modern and contemporary art in Germany. We return to the hotel and the evening will be free.

Day 7: Saturday 31 July – This morning participants will be free to explore independently. Options include the **Staatliche Antikensammlungen**, the **Lenbach House Art Gallery** and the city's **Botanic Garden** with its world famous Alpine collection, much praised by Robin Lane Fox. Lunch is not included today and we meet at our hotel at 1.30 for Peter Hill's final lecture, this time on **Götterdämmerung**, after which we see the opera, beginning at 4.00pm.

Day 8: Sunday 1 August – We check out and travel to the airport for our return flight.

PRACTICALITIES

Price £4990 **Price without flights** £4790 **Deposit** £725 **Single Supplement** £1095 (Double for Sole Use)

Hotel 7 nights with breakfast at the 4* Superior Hotel Platzl, Munich

Flights British Airways

Outward: **BA938** Depart London Heathrow (Terminal 5) **1720**, arrive Munich **2015**

Return: **BA929** Depart Munich **1145**, arrive London Heathrow (Terminal 5) **1255**

Price includes 5 lunches with water, wine & coffee, Opera tickets, all local transfers, entry fees & gratuities, services of Tom Duncan & local tour guide

Not included Travel to / from Heathrow, 7 dinners and 1 lunch



CICERONI TRAVEL
2 The Square, Aynho, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX17 3BL
Telephone +44 (0) 1869 811167 Fax +44 (0) 1869 811188
Email info@ciceroni.co.uk Website www.ciceroni.co.uk

