



CICERONI
T R A V E L

A SYMPHONIC REVOLUTION BEETHOVEN IN BONN

SUNDAY 15 – SUNDAY 22 MARCH 2020 (8 DAYS)

LECTURERS: PETER HILL & TOM DUNCAN

£3990

- **Remarkable series of concerts presents all of Beethoven's nine symphonies**
- **Series performed by the electrifying Musica Aeterna Orchestra of Perm Opera, under Teodor Currentzis**
- **Concerts supported by detailed Seminar presentations with Prof Peter Hill**
- **Supporting tour programme includes Cologne, Aachen, Brühl & Düsseldorf**
- **Lovely 4* hotel overlooking the Rhine**



Ludwig van Beethoven

OVERVIEW

Beethoven was born in Bonn in 1770, moving permanently to Vienna in 1792, where he died in 1827. He is one of the most innovative composers of all time, leaving his mark on many different musical forms – the sonata, the string quartet and above all, the symphony. To celebrate the 250th anniversary of his birth, Bonn will host a hugely anticipated series of concerts next March when all of Beethoven's symphonies will be featured over five nights. They will be performed by the astonishing Musica Aeterna Orchestra of Perm Opera, conducted by Teodor Currentzis. We have been extremely fortunate to obtain tickets for this series, which will form the backbone of a tour to include several important cities and towns on and near the Rhine – Cologne, Aachen, Brühl and Düsseldorf with their fine churches, palaces and outstanding museums.

Each of the nine symphonies of Beethoven forms a milestone in his extraordinary musical journey, from the classical style of the late eighteenth century to the visionary finale of the Ninth Symphony, one of the masterpieces of Beethoven's last years. The first two symphonies (1799–1800 and 1801–2) have their roots in classicism, but their characteristically Beethovenian power and originality are unmistakable. The Third Symphony, the 'Eroica' (1803), marks a defining moment in musical history with its sense of the symphony as more than the sum of its individual movements, as a psychological or spiritual whole. This is further explored in the remaining odd-numbered symphonies. In the Fifth (1807–8) the opening motif – 'Fate hammering at the door', as Beethoven is reputed to have called it – permeates the first movement, while the finale thrillingly resolves the tensions of the earlier movements.

Meanwhile the Fourth Symphony (1806), is lighter in tone but no less striking in its symphonic mastery, while the Sixth, the 'Pastoral' (1808) is programmatic, with a cadenza of birdcalls in the slow movement (subtitled 'Scene by the brook'), and a Storm that offsets the rustic good humour of the outer movements. The next two symphonies contrast the power and exuberance of the Seventh (1811–12) with the irresistible delights of the Eighth (1812), which seems at times like a tribute to the classical past. Lastly, the Ninth (1822–24) brings the cycle to a sublime conclusion, with the finale famously rejecting the themes of the earlier movements, and instead exploding into song, in an ecstatic setting for soloists and chorus of Schiller's *Ode to Joy*.

Musica Aeterna is the creation of the Greco-Russian conductor, Teodor Currentzis and the ensemble is now the orchestra of Perm Opera, one of the most innovative houses in Russia. Their appearance at the 2018 Proms, playing two of the Beethoven symphonies, was sensational, one critic remarking "the high voltage results Currentzis draws from this Russian orchestra are truly electrifying... he enjoys causing storms. He inflames." Supporting these concerts Prof Peter Hill will guide us through the symphonies when he gives two Seminars, with piano accompaniment, while Tom Duncan will lead the group through the non-musical visit programme.

We shall stay at the historic and very comfortable 4* Hotel Königshof, the ideal destination from which to explore Beethoven's home city. The Rhine promenade is right in front of the hotel, while the museum district and the concert venues are within easy walking distance.

ITINERARY OUTLINE

Day 1: Sunday 15 March – We fly from Heathrow to **Düsseldorf** on BA and then transfer by coach to **Bonn**, checking into our hotel, the 4* **Königshof**. We have an early group dinner in our hotel after which we attend the first concert of the Beethoven cycle - **Symphonies Nos 1 & 3**, at Opera Bonn where the full symphonic cycle will be performed, a ten minute walk from our hotel.

Day 2: Monday 16 March – After breakfast Prof Peter Hill will give the first of two morning **Seminars** introducing Beethoven's symphonic output, relating them to his wider development as a composer. Peter will use the piano to support his analysis. We then spend the rest of the day discovering **Bonn**, a most elegant German town with buildings from medieval times onwards, including a visit to the **Beethoven House Museum**. We have an early group dinner after which we attend the second concert of the Beethoven cycle - **Symphonies Nos 2 & 5**.

Day 3: Tuesday 17 March – **Cologne** is one of the most historic cities in Germany. It was an important Roman settlement, explored in the **Römisch-Germanisches Museum**, one of the best of its type in Europe. In time it became a great medieval trading centre on the Rhine, dominated by its vast medieval **Cathedral**. These twin historic strands will form the day's theme as we explore the city's **Altstadt**, broken by a group lunch. On our return to Bonn, the evening will be free. There are two optional concerts not included in the visit cost, tonight and on Day 6, performed by one of the local outstanding orchestras. The programme tonight includes **Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante** and **Symphony No 40**. Tickets can be booked (£117, subject to availability) if required.

Day 4: Wednesday 18 March – After breakfast we have our second **Beethoven Seminar** with Peter Hill. We continue our exploration of **Bonn** with a visit to **Bundeskunsthalle** where there will be a special exhibition devoted to Beethoven. We have an early group dinner after which we attend the third concert of the Beethoven cycle - **Symphonies Nos 4 & 6**.

Day 5: Thursday 19 March – We drive over to **Aachen**, once the capital of Charlemagne's vast Frankish empire. His **Cathedral** church dominates the historic centre and its attached **Treasury Museum** is remarkable. We have a group lunch today and after we return to Bonn we attend the fourth concert of the Beethoven cycle - **Symphonies Nos 7 & 8**.

Day 6: Friday 20 March – We return to **Cologne** to continue our explorations. There are several remarkable museums and art galleries and we shall visit some of these, including the **Wallraf-Richartz Museum**, which has a stunning display of paintings. You will also have some free time for independent explorations. We return to Bonn and the evening will be free. Tonight's optional concert will include **Beethoven's Piano Concerto No 3** and **Brahms's Symphony No 4**. Tickets can be booked (£33, subject to availability) if required.

Day 7: Saturday 21 March – A gentle morning as we drive to **Brühl**, to visit one of the most delightful palaces in Germany. The **Augustusburg Schloss** was built for the Wittlesbach Prince-Archbishop August of Cologne; it is in essence a piece of French-inspired Bavarian Rococo, so unexpected in this part of Germany, given all its stunning extravagance. We return to Bonn and after a final early dinner, we attend the last concert of the Beethoven cycle – **Symphony No 9**.

Day 8: Sunday 22 March – We leave after breakfast and drive to **Düsseldorf** where on its outskirts we visit the enchanting **Schloss Benrath**, after which we have a group lunch. The city has a fine **Kunstmuseum**, a highlight being a magisterial altarpiece by Rubens. We continue to the airport and the return flight to Heathrow.

PRACTICALITIES

Price £3990 **Without Flights** £3850 **Deposit** £595 **Single Supplement** £395 (Double Room for Sole Use)

Hotel 7 nights with breakfast at the 4* Hotel Königshof

Flights British Airways

Outward: **BA938** Depart London Heathrow (Terminal 5) **0920** arrive Düsseldorf **1145**

Return: **BA945** Depart Düsseldorf **1920** arrive London Heathrow (Terminal 5) **1950**

Price includes 9 concerts: Symphonies Nos 1 – 9, 4 dinners & 3 lunches with wine, water & coffee, all local transfers, City Tax, entry fees & gratuities, services of Peter Hill, Tom Duncan & our local tour manager

Not included Travel to/from Heathrow, 3 dinners & 5 lunches, 2 extra concerts: Tuesday 17 & Friday 20 March



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