



**CICERONI**  
T R A V E L

## STRADIVARIUS TO VERDI MUSIC & ART IN CREMONA & PARMA

WEDNESDAY 16 – MONDAY 21 OCTOBER 2019 (6 DAYS)

LECTURER: PETER HILL

FROM £2795

- **Exciting opportunity to attend Parma's world famous Verdi Festival**
- **The craft of stringed-instrument-making explored in delightful Cremona**
- **Lectures and private recitals in Parma, Cremona & at Villa Medici-Giulini**
- **Splendid monuments & works of art explored in Parma & its surroundings**
- **Verdi's *Aida*, *Luisa Miller* & *I Due Foscari* performed in historic theatres in Parma & Busseto**



Verdi rehearsing 'Un Ballo in Maschera' in 1858

### OVERVIEW

Italy's greatest composer of operas, Giuseppe Verdi, was born in 1813 at Le Roncole, a little to the north of Parma. He studied in nearby Busseto before moving to Milan where his career began its ill-tempered, though steady, rise to fame and fortune. Every October, to coincide with the anniversary of his birth, Parma holds a wonderful opera festival devoted to Verdi. The featured operas in 2019 will be *I Due Foscari*, *Aida* and *Luisa Miller*.

Cremona is remembered as the home of the world's finest violin maker, Antonio Stradivarius. The city was renowned for making luxury goods and superb stringed instruments. The Amati, the Guarneri and the Stradivari produced their instruments in a town of singular delight.

Visual culture is as great a part of Parma's history as are music and food: the medieval era when Parma was ennobled with some of the finest churches of northern Italy; the renaissance and baroque when the Farnese family came to rule it as resident hereditary Dukes; and the nineteenth century when Napoleon's second wife, the Habsburg Marie-Louise of Austria, was given Parma and its Duchy.

The medieval city was clearly very wealthy as it built a marvellous Duomo, plus the remarkable Baptistery which has a unique group of medieval sculptures and frescoes. In 1545, Parma, by then in Papal hands, was made an Imperial Duchy, created by Charles V for Pope Paul III's natural son, Pier-Luigi Farnese, initiating almost two hundred and fifty years of Farnese rule. In time, the Farnese family dies out in the male line and Parma became a neglected backwater. After Napoleon's defeat, his Habsburg wife had to be found a home – Parma was it.

The visit will be led by Professor Peter Hill. Peter taught at Sheffield University for many years and now devotes his time to lecturing and continuing his distinguished career as a keyboard recitalist. The three included operas will be introduced by a series of lectures, two with piano accompaniment. We shall stay at the comfortable 4\* Hotel Maria Luigia, ideally located a short walk from the historic centre and the Teatro Regio.

### ITINERARY OUTLINE

**Day 1:** Wednesday 16 October – We fly from Heathrow to Bologna, arriving late-afternoon. We transfer by coach to Parma where we shall stay at the 4\* Hotel Palace Maria Luigia. Following Peter Hill's introduction to Verdi over a welcome drink, dinner will be in our hotel – wine, water and coffee are included with all group lunches and dinners.

**Day 2:** Thursday 17 October – This morning we visit the medieval centre of Parma, dominated by some splendid buildings. The **Baptistery** is one of the finest medieval examples in Italy and externally has marvellous sculptural programmes. The **Duomo** is dominated by a series of frescoes painted in the sixteenth century by Correggio, the master of renaissance illusionism. His work is also to be found in the nearby church of **San Giovanni**

