



CICERONI
T R A V E L

SOUND THE TRUMPET THE VALLETTA BAROQUE FESTIVAL

FRIDAY 10 – WEDNESDAY 15 JANUARY 2020 (6 DAYS)

LECTURER: GLORIANNE MIZZI

£2385

- **Enjoy one of Europe's highly regarded Baroque Music Festivals**
- **Works by Bach, Handel, Lully, Rameau, Vivaldi & others**
- **Performers include Les Musiciens du Louvre, La Serenissima & Ensemble Phoenix**
- **Discover Malta's extraordinary history ranging over six thousand years**
- **Historic 5* Phoenicia Hotel in Valletta**



Valletta, the city's January skyline seen from the harbour

OVERVIEW

Malta's small scale belies the number and range of truly fascinating sites, monuments and artistic treasures to be found on the island. The Malta Tourism Authority has long been active in promoting cultural visits and eight years ago it launched a truly innovative Winter Festival based in Valletta, devoted to Baroque Music across the centuries. Now growing into maturity, the Festival has established itself as a serious 'player' on the international music scene and singers, musicians and orchestras of the highest calibre are regular participants.

Performances take place in a series of splendid seventeenth and eighteenth century historic buildings including Valletta's Manoel Theatre and some of the city's finest churches, with in 2020 a new range of fine venues elsewhere on the island included for the first time. Thus, we have no hesitation in recommending this visit to all those who would like to combine truly remarkable music with some gently paced visits – all in the soft light and winter warmth of the southern Mediterranean and performed within some splendid buildings, some of which are not normally accessible.

We have chosen what we believe will be some of the 2020 Festival's musical highlights, coinciding with the opening weekend. These include the internationally acclaimed *Les Musiciens du Louvre*, the English ensemble *La Serenissima* and *Ensemble Phoenix* from Munich. Works by Bach, Handel and Rameau together with some of the great Italian Baroque composers such as Corelli and Vivaldi will also feature. Transfers to and from all the included performances will be provided for participants.

In support of this musical feast, we shall also include a number of gently paced visits designed to introduce you to Malta's history. Its antiquity should not be doubted as the island has Europe's most remarkable group of monuments from the pre-classical world, many of them literally awe-inspiring. The Greeks, Phoenicians and Romans all knew Malta and appreciated its logistical worth. This strategic importance continued throughout medieval times as both Christianity and Islam developed a keen interest in keeping Malta within their respective spheres of influence.

The Habsburg Emperor, Charles V, gave Malta to the homeless Knights of St John as a permanent base, hoping they would secure the island against Ottoman attack and this military role became the island's principal function. Napoleon expelled the Knights and following his defeat, the British took control. Thus the island once again became an important staging post as more recent 'Imperial' strategies developed. This helps explain the long and friendly links between Malta and Britain, leavened by Malta's geographical proximity both to North Africa and to Italy. Indeed, this mixing of Mediterranean cultures with British norms makes Malta particularly attractive.

We shall spend five nights in Valletta at the historic and very comfortable **5* Phoenicia Hotel**. It is perfectly placed for our explorations of this lovely walled city and the wider island. Transfers to and from all concerts and recitals are included.

ITINERARY OUTLINE

Day 1: Friday 10 January – On arrival in Valletta we check into our hotel, the **5* Phoenicia**. We have an early group dinner after which we attend the opening concert of the Festival at the historic **Teatru Manoel** when *Les Musiciens du Louvre* will recreate an evening of music in eighteenth century London, based on the infamous rivalry between Handel and his contemporary Nicola Porpora.

Day 2: Saturday 11 January – We begin with a gently paced walking tour when we visit the **Archaeology Museum** followed by the splendidly decorated **St. John's Co-Cathedral**, the main resting place for the Knights of Malta. The most famous work of art in the Cathedral is Caravaggio's monumental painting of *The Beheading of St John the Baptist*. We continue on foot to the **Franciscan Church of St Mary of Jesus** for a midday concert of concertos by Vivaldi, Couperin, Naudot, Buxtehude and Telemann, after which we have a late group lunch. The remainder of the afternoon will be at leisure and this evening's concert in the **Collegiate Church of St Paul** will be given by *La Serenissima*, devoted to sacred works by Vivaldi, including his famous *Gloria*.

Day 3: Sunday 12 January – This morning you will have some free time after which we drive inland to the **Verdala Palace**, the official summer residence of Malta's President located in the historic **Buskett Gardens**, for a midday concert given by *Les Contre-Sujets* with music by William Friedemann Bach, Handel and Telemann. After our group lunch, we continue to the **Teatru Manoel** for the late afternoon concert given by *La Serenissima*, a truly festive selection of concertos by Telemann, Fasch and Vivaldi with oboes, bassoons, trumpets and timpani all making their mark felt. The rest of the evening will be at leisure.

Day 4: Monday 13 January – **Mdina** is a fascinating town, dominating the centre of the island and was its capital before the arrival of the Knights in the sixteenth century. It is particularly rich in buildings from the Baroque period and these will be the focus of our morning, including the **Cathedral** and **Palazzo Falson**. We have a group lunch in Mdina and return to our hotel for a rest and this evening's concert will be in **Naxxar's Palazzo Pariso** when *Ensemble Phoenix Munich* will present English, French and Italian music of the late Renaissance and early Baroque.

Day 5: Tuesday 14 January – We walk to visit **The Grandmaster's Palace**, the central governing location of the Knights of Malta where the historic interiors are furnished in lavish style. Nearby we have a **private visit** to the historic home of one of Valetta's aristocratic families, followed by some free time for lunch, not included. This afternoon we drive to **Birgu**, the first maritime town on the island, to visit the **'Malta at War' Museum** and the atmospheric **Inquisitors Palace**. We return to our hotel and later this evening we have a final group dinner in a local restaurant. Alternatively, if you prefer you can book separately to attend a concert by the *Malta Philharmonic Orchestra* in the **Teatru Manoel**, featuring modern music inspired by Couperin and JS Bach.

Day 6: Wednesday 15 January – Our final morning will be free and we conclude this tour with a midday performance of JS Bach's Goldberg Variations, played by Jory Vinikous on harpsichord at **St Augustine's Church**. After some free time for a snack lunch, not included, we continue to the airport for the return flight back to the UK.

PRACTICALITIES

Price £2385 **Without Flights** £2235 **Deposit** £300 **Single Supplement** £250 (Double for Sole Use)

Hotel Upgrade £300 per room Harbour View (Subject to availability)

Optional extra concert In lieu of dinner (Evening of Day 5: Tuesday 14 January)

Hotel 5 nights with breakfast at the 5* Phoenicia

Flights Air Malta

Outward: **KM101** Depart London Heathrow (Terminal 4) **1125**, arrive Malta **1535**

Return: **KM102** Depart Malta **1650**, arrive London Heathrow (Terminal 4) **1925**

Price includes 7 concerts, 2 dinners & 3 lunches with wine, water & coffee, all local transfers, entry fees & gratuities, services of Glorianne Mizzi & tour manager James Hill

Not included Travel to/from Heathrow, 3 dinners & 2 lunches



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