



CICERONI
T R A V E L

LIFE & LOVE TRANSFORMED WAGNER'S RING CYCLE IN DRESDEN

SUNDAY 28 JANUARY – MONDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2018 (9 DAYS)

LECTURERS: TOM DUNCAN & PETER HILL

FROM £3385

- **Landmark production by Willy Decker, conducted by Christian Thielemann**
- **Pre-performance lectures with exploration via piano of the complex leitmotif structures of each opera given by Peter Hill**
- **Discover the insatiable patronage of the art-mad Electors of Saxony**
- **See some amazing pictures & the world's finest collection of Meissen porcelain**
- **Day spent in Leipzig in pursuit of Bach, Mendelssohn, the Schumanns & Wagner**
- **We stay in Dresden's finest 5* hotel overlooking the Semper Opera House**



Dresden, The Semper Opera House

OVERVIEW

The Dresden *Semperoper* will mount their celebrated production of Richard Wagner's *Der Ring de Niebelungen* in late January 2018 and we are delighted to offer members of our mailing list the opportunity to experience this unique dramatic and musical event. The production will be Willy Decker's acclaimed interpretation, now fully matured. Renowned Wagnerian, Christian Thielemann will conduct the Dresden Staatskapelle and Petra Lang will sing Brünnhilde and Andreas Schager will be Siegfried. Others in the cast include Albert Dohmen, Christa Mayer, Gerhard Siegel, Kurt Streit and Georg Zeppenfeld.

Wagner was born in Leipzig in 1813 and after his early musical training he established himself as a composer of works similar to those of Weber and Meyerbeer. However, he revolutionised opera through his concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the 'total work of art', a synthesis of poetic, visual, musical and dramatic elements, with music as the servant of the drama. Unique for his time, Wagner wrote the librettos for his operas and his ideas are most fully realised in his four-opera cycle, *Der Ring des Niebelungen*.

Before this great music-drama emerged, plagued by debts, a tempestuous love-life and an uncertain future, Wagner came to Dresden in 1842 to conduct his early opera, *Rienzi*. He remained in the city until 1849 and it was here that he premiered both *Der fliegende Holländer* and *Tannhäuser*. Appointed Court Composer, he mixed in cosmopolitan circles but his involvement in the Uprising of 1849 precipitated his flight from Saxony into exile. Indeed, these connections with Saxony and Dresden will provide us with many links to explore during our visit.

This great musical journey will be supported by a wonderful series of guided visits round Dresden, Meissen and Leipzig. The patronage of the Electors and Kings of Saxony as builders and collectors will loom large and we shall have the opportunity to explore all the major sites and collections. There will be ample free time and the operas will all be fully introduced to participants through a series of lectures interspersed through our stay.

Tickets for the four operas have been secured in the top two seat categories. We have been allocated a total of 26 tickets and they have to be paid for immediately, hence the large deposit required. As demand for these tickets will be high, you are strongly advised to confirm your booking with us as soon as possible. Preference for seat sector will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

The visit will be jointly led by Tom Duncan and Professor Peter Hill. Tom will concentrate on the architectural and art history aspects while Peter will guide us through the musical labyrinth that is 'The Ring'. Prof Peter Hill taught at Sheffield University for many years and now devotes his time to lecturing and continuing his distinguished career as a keyboard recitalist. A recording artist, he is known particularly for his acclaimed recordings of Bach, Beethoven, Stravinsky and others. We shall stay at the 5* Kempinski Taschenberg Palace Hotel, the city's finest, close to all the major sites and a short walk to the Opera House and all the major sites of Dresden.

ITINERARY OUTLINE

Day 1: Sunday 28 January – We fly from Heathrow to **Berlin** and transfer by coach to **Dresden** to the **5* Kempinski Taschenberg Palace**. **Prof Peter Hill** will give an introductory lecture on **Wagner and The Ring**, followed by a group dinner in our hotel. Wine, water and coffee are included with all group lunches and dinners.

Day 2: Monday 29 January – The centre of **Dresden** offers a remarkable overview of the city's history. It is full of fine historic buildings, many destroyed during World War II. These have almost all been fully restored and we spend the morning exploring this **Altstadt** on foot to include the **Altmakt** and several important churches such as the famed **Hofkirche** and **Frauenkirche**. After a group lunch there will be some free time and late afternoon we meet for a lecture on tonight's opera, **Das Rheingold**, which is at 7.00 pm. Dinner is not included tonight.

Day 3: Tuesday 30 January – The **Residenzschloss** or Royal Palace is a modern recreation of the mostly Renaissance buildings lived in by the Wettin Electors and Kings over many centuries. The quality of the restoration is amazing, as is the justly famed historic **Green Vault** where we shall find displayed some truly astonishing items from the Electoral Treasury. There will be an early group lunch and mid afternoon we meet for a lecture on tonight's opera, **Die Walküre**, which is at 5.00 pm. Dinner is not included tonight.

Day 4: Wednesday 31 January – We continue our explorations with a visit to the city's most important gallery, the **Gemäldegalerie**. This has one of Europe's greatest collections of paintings, including Raphael's Sistine Madonna, not to mention a truly stunning group of view paintings of Dresden by Bellotto. After lunch we look at the **Zwinger Palace** complex, built for festivals and tournaments and one of the great architectural jewels of the city. Designed by Poppelmann, it contains a number of fine rooms and above all the fabulous **Collection of Meissen and Oriental Porcelain**. The evening will be free; lunch and dinner are not included today.

Day 5: Thursday 1 February – This morning will be free, though Tom Duncan will be happy to return to the **Gemäldegalerie** for a further visit, should anyone want to take a second look at the pictures. Mid afternoon we meet for a lecture on tonight's opera, **Siegfried**, which is at 5.00 pm. Lunch and dinner are not included today.

Day 6: Friday 2 February – This morning we drive to **Meissen**, a delightful place round which we shall be guided. The Medieval centre is well preserved and we also visit the famous Meissen Porcelain Museum and Factory after which we have a group lunch. We return to Dresden and the remainder of the afternoon and evening will be free.

Day 7: Saturday 3 February – Today we visit **Leipzig** to explore its remarkable religious and musical traditions. This is the city where Johann Sebastian Bach, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Robert and Clara Schumann all worked, and where Richard Wagner was born and received some of his early musical training. It is sure to be a memorable day and we shall have lunch in the city. On our return to Dresden, the evening will be free.

Day 8: Sunday 4 February – This morning will be free and after a final group lunch, mid afternoon we meet for a lecture on tonight's opera, **Götterdämmerung**, which is at 5.00 pm. Dinner is not included tonight.

Day 9: Monday 5 February – We leave our hotel late morning for the journey to Berlin and the flight home.

Tickets: We have been allocated a total of 26 tickets in the top two seat categories which have to be paid for immediately - hence the large deposit required. As we have a large group of clients interested in this visit, you are advised to confirm your interest by payment of a deposit as soon as possible. Preference for seat sector will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

PRACTICALITIES

Price £3385 (Second sector seats) £3445 (First sector seats) **Deposit** £600

Price without flights £150 reduction **Single Supplement** £325 (Double for Sole Use)

Room Upgrades £595 (Double for Sole Use in a Superior Room)

Hotel 8 nights with breakfast at the 5* Kempinski Taschenberg Palace
Superior Room (Two sharing) & Classic Room (Double for Sole Use)

Flights British Airways

Outward: **BA984** Depart London Heathrow (Terminal 5) **1245**, arrive Berlin **1540**

Return: **BA985** Depart Berlin **1630** arrive London Heathrow (Terminal 5) **1725**

Price includes 1 dinner & 5 lunches with water, wine & coffee, all local transfers, entry fees & gratuities, all local transfers, services of Tom Duncan, Peter Hill & local guides

Not included Travel to/from Heathrow, 7 dinners & 2 lunches



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