



Strauss in Berlin

A celebration of Richard Strauss in the German capital



Berlin, Staatsoper, copper engraving c. 1750.

19–24 March 2025 (ML 643)

6 days • £3,580

(including tickets to 4 performances)

Lecturer: Barry Millington

Three operas at the Deutsche Oper Berlin: *Elektra*, *Intermezzo* and *Arabella*. The latter two conducted by Sir Donald Runnicles.

Talks on the performances by Barry Millington, Chief Critic for the *Evening Standard*.

Walks, museum and gallery visits with a Berlin-based local guide.

Berlin possesses some of the finest art galleries and museums in the world and offers the highest standards of music and opera performance. It is endowed with a range of historic architecture and is the site of Europe's greatest concentration of first-rate contemporary architecture. Once again a national capital, it is also one of the most exciting cities on the Continent, recent and rapid changes pushing through a transformation without peacetime parallel.

One of the grandest capitals in Europe for the first forty years of the last century, it then suffered appallingly from aerial bombardment and Soviet artillery. For the next forty years it was cruelly divided into two parts and became

the focus of Cold War antagonism, a bizarre confrontation between an enclave of western libertarianism and hard-line Communism.

Since the Wall was breached in 1989 the city has been transformed beyond recognition. From being a largely charmless urban expanse still bearing the scars of war, it has become a vibrant, liveable city, the very model of a modern major metropolis. The two halves have been knitted together and cleaning and repair have revealed the patrimony of historic architecture to be among the finest in Central Europe.

The art collections, formerly split, dispersed and often housed in temporary premises, are now coming together in magnificently restored or newly-built galleries. Berlin possesses international art and antiquities of the highest importance, as well as incomparable collections of German art. The number and variety of museums and the quality of their holdings make Berlin among the world's most desired destinations for art lovers.

With three major opera houses and several orchestras, Berlin is a city where truly outstanding performances can be virtually guaranteed.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at midday from London Heathrow to Berlin Brandenburg (British Airways). Dinner in the hotel.

Day 2. Walk through the oldest part of the city to 'Museum Island', a group of major museum buildings. Visit the Neues Museum, the stunning new home to the Egyptian Museum, restored and recreated by British architect David Chipperfield. Some free time. *Evening opera at the Deutsche Oper Berlin: Arabella* (Richard Strauss) with Sir Donald Runnicles (conductor), Tobias Kratzer (director), Orchestra and Choir of the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Jennifer Davis (*Arabella*), Heidi Stober (*Zdenka*), Albert Pesendorfer (*Count Waldner*), Doris Soffel (*Adelaide*), Thomas Johannes Mayer (*Mandryka*).

Day 3: Berlin, Charlottenburg. Schloss Charlottenburg, the earliest major building in Berlin, is an outstanding Baroque and Rococo palace with splendid interiors. The Scharf-Gerstenberg Collection of classic modern art is also here. *Evening performance at the Deutsche Oper Berlin with Lorenzo Viotti (conductor) and the Orchestra of the Deutsche Oper Berlin: Richard Strauss, 'Symphony Concert'.*

Day 4: Berlin. Morning lecture on the music, before departing for a walk that takes in Unter den Linden, Friedrichstraße and the Brandenburg Gate. It ends with the Reichstag dome and lunch at the roofgarden restaurant here. *Evening opera at the Deutsche Oper Berlin: Elektra* (Richard Strauss) with Thomas Søndergard (conductor), Kirsten Harms (director), Orchestra and Choir of the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Elena Pankratova (*Elektra*), Camilla Nylund (*Chrysothemis*), Violeta Urmana (*Klytaemnestra*), Burkhard Ulrich (*Aegisth*), Tobias Kehrer (*Orest*).

Day 5. Europe's greatest building project in the 1990s, Potsdamer Platz showcases an international array of architects (Piano, Isozaki, Rogers, Moneo). The Gemäldegalerie houses one of Europe's major collections of Old Masters. *Evening opera at the Deutsche Oper Berlin: Intermezzo* (Richard Strauss) with Sir Donald Runnicles (conductor), Tobias Kratzer (director), Orchestra and Choir of the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Maria Bengtsson (*Christine Storch*), Philipp Jekal (*Robert Storch*), Anna Schoeck (*Anna*), Elliott Woodruff (*Franzl*), Thomas Blondelle (*Baron Lummer*), Clemens Bieber (*Stroh*).

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continued

Day 6. Homeward journey. Return to London Heathrow from Berlin Brandenburg landing at midday.

Lecturer

Barry Millington. Writer, lecturer and broadcaster specialising in Wagner. He is founder/editor of *The Wagner Journal* and author of eight books on Wagner including *The Wagner Compendium* and *Richard Wagner: The Sorcerer of Bayreuth*. He is Chief Critic for the *Evening Standard*. He has also acted as dramaturgical adviser at opera houses internationally.

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £3,580 or £3,430 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £4,070 or £3,920 without flights.

Included: flights with British Airways (Airbus A319); travel by private coach throughout; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 3 dinners with wine; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer, tour manager and local guide.

Music: tickets to 4 performances are included, costing c. £350.

Accommodation. Westin Grand Berlin (marriott.com): a 5-star hotel built in the 1980s and renovated in a classicist style, located on the corner of Unter den Linden and Friedrichstraße. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*

How strenuous? There is a reasonable amount of walking and standing around in art galleries. Average distance by coach per day: 9 miles.

Group size: between 10 and 22 participants.