



The Ring in Berlin

Wagner in the German capital

4–13 October 2025 (ML 817)

£6,090 • 10 days

Speaker: Barry Millington

Wagner's monumental *Ring of the Nibelung* cycle anatomises the shortcomings of materialistic society – mankind's greed, its lust for political power, its despoliation of the environment – and offers a powerful vision of a better future. First category tickets for all four performances.

Visits on most days to study the art, architecture and history of Berlin.

Talks on the operas by Barry Millington, author/editor of eight books on Wagner and editor of *The Wagner Journal*.

The long-awaited production by Dmitri Tcherniakov of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at the Staatsoper Berlin finally took place in 2022. Originally planned with the Staatsoper's general music director Daniel Barenboim, the conducting was taken over by Barenboim's successor Christian Thielemann. The result was acclaimed by *The Wagner Journal* as 'a wonder of our age'. With the peerless Berlin Staatskapelle orchestra at his command, Thielemann conjured miracles of sensitivity and refinement in the course of his breathtakingly original interpretation.

Thielemann's alertness to Tcherniakov's conceptual approach, which envisages the action taking place in an experimental laboratory, the better to probe the psychological disturbance of the Ring's characters and to analyse their social interactions, ensured a remarkable synchrony between stage and pit. The stellar cast, arguably unequalled anywhere else in the world today, has been reassembled for the two cycles in 2025: Michael Volle (Wotan), Anja Kampe (Brünnhilde), Andreas Schager (Siegfried), Vida Miknevičiūtė (Sieglinde) and Mika Kares (Fasolt, Hunding, Hagen). The acclaimed American tenor Eric Cutler joins as the new Siegmund.

There will be lectures on each instalment of the Ring by Barry Millington, the Wagner specialist and editor of *The Wagner Journal*, and walks or excursions on most days with local guides. However, plenty of time is allowed to rest and to prepare for experiencing the greatest achievement of music drama.



Lithograph, 1902.

Itinerary

Day 1: Fly in the early afternoon from London Heathrow to Berlin (British Airways).

Day 2. A morning lecture on the music, before an introductory walk that takes in Unter den Linden, Friedrichstraße and the Brandenburg Gate. Finish at the Reichstag dome; lunch at the roofgarden restaurant, Käfer. *Evening performance at the Staatsoper: Das Rheingold:* Christian Thielemann (conductor), Dmitri Tcherniakov (director), Michael Volle (Wotan), Mika Kares (Fasolt), Johannes Martin Kränzle (Alberich), Claudia Mahnke (Fricka), Anna Kissjudit (Erda), Stephan Rügamer (Mime), Roman Trekel (Donner), Peter Rose (Fafner).

Day 3. A coach tour to Kreuzberg, passing Cold War related landmarks such as the Oberbaumbrücke and Karl-Marx Allee. Visit the Jewish Museum in the celebrated and expressive building by Daniel Libeskind.

Day 4. A morning lecture before a second guided walk finishing at the 'Museums Island', a group of major museum buildings. Visit the Alte Nationalgalerie which superbly displays European painting of the 19th century

including the finest collection of German Romantics. There is free time for further exploration of the museums. *Afternoon performance at the Staatsoper: Die Walküre:* Christian Thielemann (conductor), Dmitri Tcherniakov (director), Michael Volle (Wotan), Anja Kampe (Brünnhilde), Vida Miknevičiūtė (Sieglinde), Eric Cutler (Siegmund), Mika Kares (Hunding), Claudia Mahnke (Fricka), Marina Prudenskaya (Waltraute).

Day 5. Visit Schloss Charlottenburg, the earliest major building in Berlin, an outstanding Baroque and Rococo summer palace with fine interiors, paintings (Watteau especially) and extensive gardens.

Day 6. Travel by coach to Potsdam. The enclosed park of Sanssouci was created as a retreat from the affairs of state by Frederick the Great. Visit his relatively modest single-storey palace atop terraces of fruit trees and the exquisite Chinese teahouse. Lunch is at Schloss Glienicke's restaurant. In the afternoon, visit the Nikolaikirche, a Classicist-style, Lutheran church. The Museum Barberini was built on the site of the original Barberini Palace, which was largely destroyed by bombing in 1945 and then demolished three years later.

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continued

Day 7. A morning lecture on the music before a visit to Berlin's Musikinstrumenten-Museum, which boasts over 800 instruments across five centuries on permanent display. *Afternoon performance at the Staatsoper: Siegfried: Christian Thielemann (conductor), Dmitri Tcherniakov (director), Michael Volle (Wotan), Anja Kampe (Brünnhilde), Andreas Schager (Siegfried), Johannes Martin Kränzle (Alberich), Anna Kissjudit (Erda), Stephan Rügamer (Mime), Peter Rose (Fafner).*

Day 8. See Potsdamer Platz, Europe's greatest building project in the 1990s. Continue to the nearby 'Kulturforum'. Pass the Philharmonie (Hans Scharoun) and visit the Gemäldegalerie, one of Europe's major collection of Old Masters. After lunch there is the option to join a guided tour of the Neue Nationalgalerie.

Day 9. Morning lecture. The rest of the day is left free for independent exploration or relaxation. *Afternoon performance at the Staatsoper: Götterdämmerung: Christian Thielemann (conductor), Dmitri Tcherniakov (director), Anja Kampe (Brünnhilde), Andreas Schager (Siegfried), Mika Kares (Hagen), Johannes Martin Kränzle (Alberich), Lauri Vasar (Gunther), Marina Prudenskaya (Waltraute).*

Day 10. Fly to London Heathrow from Berlin, arriving around midday.

Lecturer

Barry Millington. Barry Millington is Chief Music Critic for the *London Evening Standard* and founder/editor of *The Wagner Journal*. He is the author/editor of eight books on Wagner, of which the latest, *The Sorcerer of Bayreuth*, was published by Thames & Hudson/OUP in 2012. He also contributed the articles on Wagner and his operas to *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*. He was the founder and artistic director of the Hampstead & Highgate Festival (1999–2003), has acted as dramaturgical adviser at international opera houses, and co-founded the ensemble Counterpoise.

Practicalities

Price. Two sharing: £6,090 or £5,850 without flights. Single occupancy: £6,890 or £6,650 without flights.

Included: flights (economy) with British Airways; travel by private coach; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 2 lunches and 3 dinners, with wine, as well as interval fingerfood and drinks at 3 of the performances; all admissions; tips for restaurant staff, drivers and guides; state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer, tour manager and local Berlin guides.

Music: tickets (first category) for 4 performances are included.

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 quite a lot of walking and standing around in art galleries and museums. Average distance by coach per day: 10 miles.

Group size: the tour will operate with between 10 and 22 participants..