



## Music in Berlin

Art, architecture and music in the German capital

**15–20 April 2026 (MM 921)**

6 days • £3,670

(including tickets to 4 performances)

Lecturer: Professor Jan Smaczny

Deutsche Oper Berlin: *Suor Angelica* / *Gianni Schicchi* (Puccini).

Staatsoper Unter den Linden: *The Turn of the Screw* (Britten) and *Ariadne auf Naxos* (R. Strauss).

Berlin Philharmonie: Works by Mieczysław Weinberg, John Williams and Sergei Prokofiev, conducted by Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, with Emanuel Ax (piano).

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

This tour is an exciting and varied mix of opera performed in both the Deutsche Oper and the Staatsoper unter den Linden, and an orchestral concert at the Philharmonie in which Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla makes her debut with Berlin Philharmonic. The programme comprises music from Prokofiev's gloriously evocative *Romeo and Juliet*, John Williams' large-scale piano concerto performed by its dedicatee, Emanuel Ax, and an orchestral suite from Weinberg's charming ballet *Burattino and the Golden Key* based on Tolstoy's highly personal retelling of *Pinocchio*.

Puccini's *Suor Angelica* and *Gianni Schicchi* from *Il trittico* are given in productions by the young German director, Pinar Karabulut. Premiered in 2023, these versions of the operas are colourful, thought-provoking and, in *Gianni Schicchi*, wildly funny. The exciting Armenian soprano Mané Galoyan takes the title role of *Suor Angelica* and the Georgian Baritone, Misha Kiria, well-known for his performances of Falstaff, is Gianni Schicchi.

At the Staatsoper, Claus Guth's 2014 production of Britten's the *Turn of the Screw* offers new interpretative levels to the characterisation of Henry James's elusive cast of personalities in this chillingly compulsive chamber opera. Finnegan Downie Dear, winner of the 2020 Mahler Conducting Prize, is musical director.

The tour concludes with Strauss's glorious *Ariadne auf Naxos* in the Staatsoper. Composed shortly after *Der Rosenkavalier*, the opera builds richly on the warmth, humour and lyricism of the earlier work. One of Strauss's most varied and intoxicating scores, it ranges



Berlin, Staatsoper, copper engraving c. 1750.

from hilarious comedy in the first part to music of ravishing beauty in the second where *Ariadne*, sung here by the internationally acclaimed Finnish soprano Camilla Nylund, falls in love with Bacchus, performed by the much sought after American tenor, Brian Jagde; Eun Sun Kim, a favourite in Berlin and director of the San Francisco Opera, conducts.

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.

### Itinerary

**Day 1.** Fly at c. 1.15pm from London Heathrow to Berlin Brandenburg (British Airways). Dinner in the hotel.

**Day 2.** Walk through the oldest part of the city to 'Museums Island', a group of major museum buildings. Visit the Neues Museum, the stunning home to the Egyptian Museum, restored and recreated by British architect David Chipperfield and the Alte Nationalgalerie which superbly displays

European painting of the 19th century including the finest collection of German Romantics. Some free time before an evening concert at the Philharmonie with Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla (conductor) and Emanuel Ax (piano): Weinberg, *The Golden Key*, Suite No. 4, Op. 55d: I. *Burattino's Dance with the Key*; Williams, *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*; Prokofiev, *Romeo and Juliet*, Op. 64 (excerpts).

**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 opera at the Deutsche Oper Berlin with Giulio Cilona (conductor), Pinar Karabulut (director), Orchestra and Choir of the Deutsche Oper Berlin: *Suor Angelica* (Puccini) with Mané Galoyan (*Sister Angelica*), Lauren Decker (*Princess*), Stephanie Lloyd (*Sister Osmina*), Gyumi Park (*Sister Dolcina*); *Gianni Schicchi* (Puccini) with Misha Kiria (*Gianni Schicchi*), Mané Galoyan (*Lauretta*), Lauren Decker (*Zita*), Andrei Danilov (*Rinuccio*), Burkhard Ulrich (*Gherardo*), Alexandra Oomens (*Nella*), Michael Bachtadze (*Betto di Signa*), Andrew Harris (*Simone*), Dean Murphy (*Marco*), Arianna Manganello (*La Ciesca*).

Music in Berlin  
continued

**Day 4.** 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. Some free time before an *evening opera at the Staatsoper unter den Linden: The Turn of the Screw* (Britten) with Finnegan Downie Dear (conductor), Claus Guth (director), Staatskapelle Berlin, Stephan Rügamer (Prologue, Peter Quint), Christiane Karg (Governess), Nicolò Balducci (Miles), Regina Koncz (Flora), Rosie Aldridge (Mrs Grose), Anna Samuil (Miss Jessel).

**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 performance at the Staatsoper unter den Linden: Ariadne auf Naxos* (R. Strauss) with Eun Sun Kim (conductor), Hans Neuenfels (director), Staatskapelle Berlin, Max Urlacher (Major-domo), Roman Trekel (Music Master), Katharina Kammerloher (Composer), Camilla Nylund (Prima Donna, Ariadne), Brian Jagde (Tenor, Bacchus), Serena Sáenz (Zerbinetta), Jaka Mihelač (Harlequin), Álvaro Diana (Scaramuccio), Manuel Winckler (Truffaldino), Junho Hwang (Brighella), Sonja Herranen (Naiad), Sandra Laagus (Dryad), Serafina Starke (Echo), Sotiris Charalampous (Officer), Hanseong Yun (Wig-maker), David Oštrek (Lackey), Michael Laurenz (Dance Master).

**Day 6.** Homeward journey. Return to London Heathrow from Berlin Brandenburg landing at c. 12.00 noon.

## Lecturer

**Professor Jan Smaczny.** Sir Hamilton Harty Professor Emeritus, Queen's University, Belfast, and an authority on Czech music. An author, broadcaster and journalist, he has published books on the Prague Provisional Theatre, Dvořák's Cello Concerto, Music in 19th-century Ireland and Bach's B-minor Mass. He is a graduate of the University of Oxford, has studied at the Charles University in Prague and worked extensively in university education.

## Practicalities

**Price, per person. Two sharing:** £3,670 or £3,360 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £4,090 or £3,780 without flights.

**Included:** flights with British Airways (Airbus A320); travel by private coach throughout; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 3 dinners with wine, interval canapés at one performance; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the tour leader and local guide.

**Music:** tickets to 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 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.

**Combine this tour with** *Tom Abbott's Berlin*, 23–27 April 2026.