

MUSIC IN CENTRAL EUROPE

with Robert Gay



Enjoy 9 performances, including at the Dvořák Festival and the 200th anniversary celebrations of Anton Bruckner, on this new 15-day tour to Prague, Bratislava, Vienna and Linz.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Enjoy 9 performances of opera and orchestral music, including at the Dvořák International Music Festival in Prague and at the 200th anniversary celebrations of Bruckner in Linz
- Maximise your appreciation with pre-performance talks by tour leader Robert Gay
- Delight in the magic of Prague's World Heritage-listed Old Town, with its perfectly preserved monuments from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century
- Discover Linz, a rejuvenated town on the Danube with a growing reputation for being Austria's youthful face
- Enjoy fine regional food and wine in the UNESCO-listed Wachau Valley
- Admire some of Europe's finest collections of Old Masters in Vienna and Prague

IN A NUTSHELL

DATES: 23 Sep – 07 Oct 2024

ITINERARY: Prague (4n), Bratislava (2n), Vienna (4n), Linz (4n)

PRICE: \$12,300pp twinshare

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: \$1,600 for sole use of a double room

FITNESS: Moderate: some late nights; walking tours

GROUP SIZE: max. 20 places



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LIMELIGHT
ARTS — TRAVEL

OVERVIEW

In 2024, the 200th anniversary of Anton Bruckner has inspired a year-long program of special performances by international ensembles in Linz. We're delighted to offer this new tour, which is carefully timed to take in both the events in Linz and the Dvořák International Music Festival in Prague.

The tour commences in Prague, whose magical streetscapes, exceptional museums and historic venues set the scene for the first three performances on tour. We then travel to Bratislava, a delightful European capital that is often overshadowed by neighbours. After enjoying the music and history of Bratislava, we travel up the Danube to Vienna, where we settle in for 4 days of exceptional performances, musical history and the fine art collections of the imperial capital.

We conclude the tour in Linz, where we have selected performances of Bruckner's symphonies, which will be performed with the original sound on the instruments that Bruckner composed for. This project has been five years in the making, and the selected ensembles have trained specifically for these single performances.

TOUR LEADER

Robert Gay has significant expertise as a music history educator and tour leader, having designed and led more than 100 tours to the great musical cities of Western and Central Europe and North America.

Known for his popular music history courses, offered at the University of Sydney's Centre for Continuing Education for more than 30 years, Robert's musical expertise extends from the Baroque period through to the great composers of the modern era. He trained as a lyric baritone and was President of the Sydney Schubert Society for many years. Robert is regularly invited to present talks on opera and music history for organisations such as the Wagner Society NSW.

"Robert Gay is the best there is for musical tours. He is very special" – participant on Wagner's Ring in Bendigo tour, April 2023



From top to bottom: golden hour in Prague; the spires of Brno cathedral; Anton Bruckner in a contemporary portrait; St Florian monastery, Linz; below, your tour leader Robert Gay



DETAILED ITINERARY

MONDAY 23 SEPTEMBER – ARRIVAL (CANAPÉS)

The tour commences at 5:30pm this evening, when we meet in the hotel lobby for an orientation stroll around Prague, followed by drinks and canapés. Overnight Prague.

TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER – PRAGUE OLD TOWN – PERFORMANCE #1 (B, L)

This morning a talk by tour leader Robert Gay will introduce you to our first two events at the Dvořák Festival. We then explore Prague's UNESCO World Heritage-listed **Old Town** with a local guide. The Old Town is one of the most beautiful in Europe and it is fabulously well-preserved, with burgher palaces, churches and public buildings from the Gothic period to Art Nouveau periods intact. After we enjoy a welcome lunch together, there is time to relax in the afternoon before we attend our first performance this evening. Overnight Prague.

Performance 1

Venue: Rudolfinum

Program: Beethoven, Concerto for Violin, Cello, Piano and Orchestra in C Major, Op. 56; Dvořák, Symphony No. 8 in G Major, Op. 88, B. 163, "English"

Performers: Ingo Metzmacher (conductor), Alexandra Conunova (violin), Pablo Ferrandez (cello), Dmitry Shishkin (piano), Czech Youth Philharmonic

WEDNESDAY 25 SEPTEMBER – PRAGUE CASTLE (B)

The complex of buildings that make up Prague Castle reveals the power and magnificence of the various rulers of Bohemia over the centuries, culminating in the great Hapsburg dynasty from the sixteenth century onwards. We explore the fascinating **Castle District**, before visiting the splendid **Lobkowitz Palace**, where a special collection of musical instruments and composer manuscripts confirm Prague's position as an historical centre of outstanding music-making. In the afternoon, we offer an optional walk through the so-called **Lesser Town** (Mala Strana), one of Prague's most delightful districts. The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure before attending our second performance at the Dvořák Festival. Overnight Prague.

Performance 2

Venue: The State Opera

Program: Donizetti, *L'elisir d'amore*

Performers: Andriy Yurkevych (conductor), Vera Talerko (Adina) Petr Nekoranec (Nemorino)



THURSDAY 26 SEPTEMBER - ART NOUVEAU PRAGUE (B)

This morning, after a talk on this evening's performance, we familiarise ourselves with Prague's more modern face, with an **Art Nouveau walking tour** including the beautiful **Municipal House**, where the superbly renovated interiors capture the opulence of early twentieth-century interior design. One of the artists working here was **Alphonse Mucha**, whose work we appreciate in greater depth at the small but charming museum dedicated to him. The afternoon is at leisure for further explorations of this endlessly fascinating city before attending our third performance at the Dvořák Festival this evening. Overnight Prague.

Performance 3

Venue: Estates Theatre

Program: Mozart, *Marriage of Figaro*

Performers: Marek Šedivý (conductor), Lukáš Barák (Figaro), Pavol Kubán (Count Almaviva), Barbora Perná (Countess Almaviva)

FRIDAY 27 SEPTEMBER - BRNO (B, D)

We depart Prague this morning for Bratislava. En route, we visit **Brno**, the capital of Moravia, to see Mies van der Rohe's masterpiece, the World Heritage-listed **Villa Tugendhat**. After visiting the grounds – which have been restored to their original appearance – and appreciating the clean modernist lines of the exterior, there is time for lunch and a brief stroll in Brno, before we continue on to Bratislava. This evening we dine in a local restaurant. Overnight Bratislava.

SATURDAY 28 SEPTEMBER - BRATISLAVA (B)

We begin the day with a pre-performance talk, before a guided **walking tour of Bratislava's delightful Old Town**. With its elegant squares and colourful, well-kept facades, it's easy to see why visitors find the Slovakian capital an unexpected gem. The afternoon is at leisure to enjoy Bratislava, and there is the option to visit the **Danubiana Art Museum**, with its collections of modern and contemporary art housed in a building inspired by the Roman galleys that once plied the city's great river. In the evening we attend a performance. Overnight Bratislava.

Performance 4

Venue: Slovak National Theatre

Program: Leoš Janáček, *The Cunning Little Vixen*

Performers: Juraj Valčuha (conductor)

SUNDAY 29 SEPTEMBER - IN ALONG THE DANUBE TO VIENNA (B, L)

This morning we travel by **catamaran** westwards up the Danube to Vienna. (Luggage will be transported by van). On arrival in Vienna, we enjoy lunch at a local restaurant, after which we check into our hotel. In the evening we enjoy our fifth performance. Overnight Vienna.



Performance 5

Venue: Vienna State Opera

Program: Giuseppe Verdi, *Don Carlo*

Performers: Philippe Jordan (musical direction), Kirill Serebrennikov (production director), Roberto Tagliavini (Philip II), Asmik Grigorian (Elisabetta)

MONDAY 30 SEPTEMBER – IMPERIAL VIENNA (B)

Today we look at two different sides of the Habsburgs' rule in Vienna. We start with a guided visit of the **Kunsthistorisches**, once an imperial collection that demonstrated the refined tastes of the dynasty. Today, it is one of the finest collections of Old Masters in Europe, with masterpieces by Titian, Caravaggio, Rembrandt, Breugel and many more. After a guided visit, there is time to explore the collections at your own pace. The afternoon is at leisure, before we meet in the early evening for **an after-hours guided visit of the Imperial Apartments**, in the sumptuous style of Emperor Franz Joseph and Empress Elizabeth. Overnight Vienna.

TUESDAY 1 OCTOBER – MUSICAL VIENNA (B, L)

We begin the day with a pre-performance talk, before travelling to the former village of **Heiligenstadt** to visit the small museum dedicated to Ludwig van Beethoven. After lunch together, we visit **Grinzing Cemetery** to see Gustav Mahler's simple, austere gravestone, designed by Vienna Secession artist Josef Hoffmann. After time to relax in the hotel, we attend our second performance in Vienna this evening. Overnight Vienna.

Performance 6

Venue: Musikverein

Program: Georg Friedrich Haas, *I don't know how to cry*, Alexander Arutiunian, Concert for trumpet and orchestra; Beethoven, Symphony No. 3 in E flat major (Op. 55) "Eroica"

Performers: Yukata Sado conducting the Tonkünstler Orchester Niederösterreich

WEDNESDAY 2 OCTOBER – LEOPOLD MUSEUM AND IMPERIAL TREASURY (B)

After a morning pre-performance talk, we visit the superb collection of art and furniture from the period of the Viennese Secession and the Wiener Werkstätte in the **Leopold Museum**, situated in the city's Museum Quarter. In the afternoon, we offer an optional visit to the priceless collection of regalia and other treasures in the **Imperial Treasury**. This evening, we attend our third performance in Vienna. Overnight Vienna.

Performance 7

Venue: Vienna State Opera

Program: Mozart, *Le nozze di Figaro*

Performer: Barrie Kosky (director) and the Vienna State Opera



THURSDAY 3 OCTOBER – KREMS AND THE WACHAU VALLEY (B, L)

This morning we depart Vienna by coach to visit the **Wachau Valley** en route to Linz. The Wachau is home to some of Austria's most sought-after wines – Grüner Veltliner in particular – and its terraced vineyards and well-preserved medieval towns and monasteries have made it a UNESCO-listed 'cultural landscape'. We stop at the delightful town of **Krems**, where the streets preserve their Renaissance ambience, for a guided walking tour. We then **cruise on the Danube** – enjoying lunch on board – to the great **abbey at Melk**. This superbly situated Benedictine structure towers above the Danube, affording breathtaking views of the surrounding countryside. After a guided visit, we continue by coach to Linz where the evening is at leisure. Overnight Linz.

FRIDAY 4 OCTOBER – LINZ (B)

Linz, where Anton Bruckner lived for many years, is a small city which is full of surprises. Recently, it has come to be considered as the new youthful face of Austria. After a morning talk in the hotel, we have a **guided walking tour** of this elegant city, its streets lined with the town palaces of merchants whose wealth derived both from trade along the Danube and from its intersection with the north-south trade route linking Bohemia in the north with the Mediterranean. Our walk ends at **Ars Electronica**, a dynamic and highly regarded museum of Electronic Arts, which is presenting a special event for the Bruckner bicentenary. The afternoon is at leisure, with the option to visit the Lentos Museum of Modern Art, which boasts a fine collection of Klimt, Gabriele Münter and Kokoschka. In the evening, we attend our first Bruckner performance, with the ensemble Concerto Köln being conducted by Kent Nagano in the celebrated acoustic of Linz's fine Brucknerhaus concert hall. Overnight, Linz

Performance 8

Venue: Main Hall of the Brucknerhaus

Program: Benjamin Godard's Concerto romantique for violin and orchestra; Bruckner's Symphony No.4 ('Romantic'), 1874 version

Performers: Shunsuke Sato (violin), Concerto Köln, Kent Nagano (conductor)

SATURDAY 5 OCTOBER – CESKY KRUMLOV (B)

Today we visit **Český Krumlov** in Southern Bohemia, a UNESCO World Heritage-listed town known for its exceptionally well-preserved Gothic, Renaissance and baroque streetscapes. After a **walking tour of the Old Town** and free time for lunch, we have a guided tour of the **Castle Theatre**, perhaps the best-preserved baroque theatre in Europe. Our tour continues through the castle, where we admire its original interiors, especially the playful decoration of the Masquerade Hall, a masterpiece of Rococo wall painting. Returning to Linz in the late afternoon, the evening is at leisure. Overnight Linz.



SUNDAY 6 OCTOBER – BRUCKNER AND ST FLORIAN (B, D)

Today we focus on Bruckner's connection with the beautiful and secluded Augustinian **monastery of St Florian**, where he was first a member of the boys choir, then later organist. Our guided visit of the monastery concludes with a short recital on the '**Bruckner Organ**' – a magnificent instrument with over 7,000 pipes and four manuals – directly under which, in the crypt and by his own request, Bruckner's coffin lies. Returning to the hotel, there is time at leisure before we meet to attend our final performance, this time of Bruckner's superb Seventh Symphony – the premiere of which marked the greatest success he ever achieved – with Jérémie Rhorer conducting his own outstanding ensemble *Le Cercle de l'Harmonie*. After the performance, we enjoy a farewell dinner together. Overnight Linz.

Performance 9

Venue: Brucknerhaus Grosser Saal

Program: Ernest Chausson, Symphony in B flat major; Bruckner, Symphony No. 7 in E Major

Performers: Jérémie Rhorer (conductor); Le Cercle de l'Harmonie

MONDAY 7 OCTOBER – DEPARTURE (B)

The tour ends today, with a coach transfer to Vienna International Airport arriving at approximately 12.30pm.



INCLUSIONS

- 14 nights' accommodation at 4* hotels
- All breakfasts, 7 lunches or dinners including drinks, and welcome drinks and canapes
- Tickets to 9 performances
- All ground transport, guided tours and entrance fees to sites as mentioned in the itinerary, and tipping
- Talks by and expertise of an Australian tour leader throughout
- Services of an experienced local tour manager throughout

HOTELS

Hotel Clarion Old Town 4* Prague, 4 nights

<https://www.clarionhotelpragueoldtown.com/en/>

Hotel Carlton 4* Bratislava, 2 nights

<https://www.radissonhotels.com/en-us/hotels/radisson-blue-bratislava-carlton>

Hotel Royal 4* Vienna, 4 nights

<https://www.hotelroyal.at/en/hotel-royal-vienna>

Hotel Park Inn 4* Linz, 4 nights

<https://www.radissonhotels.com/en-us/hotels/park-inn-linz>

NB: hotels of a similar standard may be substituted.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

By booking on this tour, you accept our terms and conditions, which can be found on our website:

<https://www.limelight-arts-travel.com.au/terms-and-conditions-tours>

TOUR DETAILS

DATES

23 Sept – 07 Oct 2024

TOUR LEADER

Robert Gay

ITINERARY

Prague – 4 nights
Bratislava – 2 nights
Vienna – 4 nights
Linz – 4 nights

PRICE

\$12,300pp twinshare

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

\$1,600 for sole use of a double room

FITNESS

Moderate: some late nights; walking tours

GROUP SIZE

Maximum 20 places

DEPOSIT

\$1,500pp at the time of booking

SECOND DEPOSIT

\$2,000pp due on 26 May 2024

FINAL PAYMENT DUE

10 July 2024

