

MILAN & THE VERDI FESTIVAL IN PARMA

with Clive Paget



Discover the world of Giuseppe Verdi in Milan, Parma and surrounds at the 24th edition of the Festival Verdi, together with Limelight Editor-at-Large Clive Paget

HIGHLIGHTS

- Enjoy four performances of works by Giuseppe Verdi, performed in the historic opera houses of the towns indelibly associated with his life and work
- Delight in two performances at Milan's La Scala opera house: Robert Carsen's new production of Cesti's witty *L'Oronoea* and John Neumeier's haunting ballet *La dame aux camélias*
- Discover the medieval villages, castles and cathedrals of the Castelli del Ducato, a beautifully preserved Italian region untouched by international tourism
- Savour the superlative gastronomic culture of Parma and Emilia-Romagna
- Enhance your enjoyment of the performances with the operative expertise of your tour leader, Clive Paget, an engaging communicator and *Limelight's* Editor-at-Large

IN A NUTSHELL

DATES: 29 Sep – 08 Oct 2024

ITINERARY:

Milan (3 nights)

Parma (6 nights)

PRICE: \$13,550pp twinshare

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: \$1,850
for sole use of a double room

FITNESS: Moderate: some late
nights; walking tours

GROUP SIZE: max. 20 places



Limelight Arts Travel Pty Ltd
Level 6, 84 Pitt Street, Sydney NSW 2000
(02) 8599 4201
www.limelight-arts-travel.com.au

LIMELIGHT
ARTS — TRAVEL

OVERVIEW

Limelight Arts Travel presents a new tour exploring the life and times of Giuseppe Verdi. Journey from Milan to Parma and immerse yourself in the Festival Verdi.

Enjoy 6 performances and 2 private recitals on this 10-day tour, including Verdi's tuneful early operas *La battaglia di Legnano* and *Attila*, as well as the masterful *Un ballo in maschera* and the rarely-performed French version of *Macbeth*. The Festival Verdi takes place in the historic opera houses of Emilia-Romagna, from Parma's stately Teatro Regio to Busseto's bijoux Teatro Verdi. Our survey of the rich musical history of northern Italy includes a visit to a luthier's studio in Cremona, behind-the-scenes tours of La Scala in Milan and of Teatro Regio in Parma, and a visit to Parma's historic Teatro Farnese.

Three days in central Milan allow us to enjoy two productions at La Scala, with Robert Carsen's new production of Cesti's *L'Oronota* (TBC May 2024) and John Neumeier's haunting ballet *La dame aux camélias*, inspired by the same Alexandre Dumas play as *La Traviata*. The medieval villages, castles and cathedrals of the Castelli del Ducato, a less-visited region, round out the tour, as does the superlative gastronomic culture of Emilia-Romagna.

Pre-performances talks by tour leader Clive Paget, *Limelight's* Editor-at-Large, an opera expert and an engaging communicator, further enhance your experience.

TOUR LEADER

Clive Paget is a leading arts writer and critic and is Editor-at-Large for *Limelight* in Australia. He also writes for *Musical America*, *BBC Music Magazine*, *Gramophone*, *The Guardian*, and others on a wide range of topics. Currently based in the UK, over the past five years he has reported for *Limelight* from both New York and London.

Before moving to Sydney in 2008, he was Nicholas Hytner's music theatre consultant at London's National Theatre, where he initiated many new projects. In 1997 he co-directed the world premiere of Stephen Sondheim's previously unperformed musical, *Saturday Night*, and presented many important American musicals at London's influential Bridewell Theatre.



From top: Verdi looks over the square in Busseto, one of the picturesque small towns associated with him in the Parma region; the interior of the stately Teatro Regio, Parma (image: Nicola Mazzocato); Vigoleno, a fortified village that is one of the jewels of the beautifully preserved "Castelli del Ducato" region in Emilia-Romagna.

Below, your tour leader Clive Paget (image: Sam Grimmer)



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LIMELIGHT
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DETAILED ITINERARY

SUNDAY 29 SEPTEMBER – ARRIVAL (D)

The tour commences this evening at 6pm when we meet in the hotel for welcome drinks, after which we enjoy dinner together. Overnight Milan.

MONDAY 30 SEPTEMBER – LA SCALA – PERFORMANCE 1 (B)

We begin the day with a talk by your tour leader, Clive Paget. We then undertake a guided **walking tour of central Milan**, which includes an ascent by elevator to the terraces of Milan's magnificent Gothic cathedral. The walking tour concludes at **Teatro alla Scala**, where we visit the small but interesting **museum**. The afternoon is at leisure, before we meet in the hotel lobby to attend this evening's performance at La Scala: Robert Carson's new production of **Cesti's *L'Oron tea*** (tickets TBC in May). Cesti, one of Monteverdi's musical heirs and a younger contemporary of Cavalli, was one of the most popular composers of the seventeenth century. When it premiered in 1656, *L'Oron tea* was an instant hit, thanks to its sizzling story of a queen who falls for a handsome stranger, only to discover that most of the women in her court are her rivals. Overnight Milan.

Performance 1

Venue: Teatro La Scala, Milan

Program: Antonio Cesti, *L'Oron tea*

Performers: Giovanni Antonini (conductor), Stéphanie d'Oustrac (*Oron tea*), Mirco Palazzi (*Creonte*)

TUESDAY 01 OCTOBER – LA SCALA WORKSHOPS – PERFORMANCE 2 (B, L)

This morning, after a pre-performance talk, we take a private transfer across Milan to the Laboratorio del Teatro alla Scala Ansaldo for a **guided tour of La Scala's costume workshop**. The workshop is located in one of Milan's resurgent districts, a nineteenth-century industrial area that has recently transformed into a centre for Milan's fashion and design scene. After a guided tour of the costume workshop, we have lunch at a restaurant in the area before returning to the hotel for an afternoon at leisure. In the evening, we meet in the hotel lobby to attend our second performance at La Scala, the John Neumeier-choreographed ***La dame aux camélias***. This ballet, set to music by Chopin, takes as its source the same Alexandre Dumas novel that inspired Verdi's *La Traviata*. Overnight Milan.

Performance 2

Venue: Teatro La Scala, Milan

Program: John Neumeier (choreographer), *La dame aux camélias*

Performers: Simon Hewett (conductor), orchestra and ballet of Teatro alla Scala



WEDNESDAY 02 OCTOBER – CREMONA – RECITAL 1 (B, D)

Today we travel to Parma for the Verdi Festival, stopping to visit Cremona on the way. Cremona's place in Italian musical history is inextricably linked to the art of luthiery, particularly the development of modern stringed instruments by the Amati family and by Stradivarius. In the morning, we have a guided visit of the **Museum of the Violin**, whose collections include multiple instruments by these great luthiers. After our visit we have a **private recital** on a historical violin. After a break for lunch, we continue to a **luthier's workshop** to learn directly from a master artisan. Continuing to Parma by coach, we check in and enjoy dinner together in a local restaurant. Overnight Parma.

THURSDAY 03 OCTOBER – ANCIENT CASTLES & *ATTILA* – PERFORMANCE 3 (B, L, CANAPÉS)

This morning we have a leisurely start, before we depart by coach to explore the castles that embody this region's history as a border between rival duchies. Our first stop is **Castell'Arquato**, today a quiet castle town with a commanding view across the Apennine mountain passes. After a guided walking tour of the township, we have lunch at an excellent country restaurant before continuing to **Vigoleno**, a castle so perfect that it is frequently used as a medieval film set. In the later afternoon we continue to **Fidenza**, where we visit the medieval cathedral with its superlative Romanesque sculptures. After aperitifs and canapés, we take our seats for a concert performance of **Verdi's *Attila***, one of the composer's most tuneful early operas, with patriotic sentiments that had audiences cheering in the aisles. We return to Parma after the performance. Overnight Parma.

Performance 3

Venue: Teatro Girolamo Magnani, Fidenza

Program: Giuseppe Verdi, *Attila*

Performers: Riccardo Frizza (conductor), Giorgi Manoshvili (*Attila*)

FRIDAY 04 OCTOBER – ART & THEATRE IN PARMA – PERFORMANCE 4 (B)

This morning is at leisure in Parma, before we meet in the early afternoon for a **private backstage visit of Parma's Teatro Regio**, whose illustrious past is indelibly linked to the life and career of Verdi. We then enjoy a **walking tour of Parma's historic centre**, including the city's medieval cathedral and baptistery, followed by the **Teatro Farnese**. This baroque theatre was commissioned by the Farnese family to be a centrepiece of ducal magnificence, and was even the setting for a *naumachia* (or artificial battle staged on water!), 'Mercury and Mars', set to music by Monteverdi and celebrating a wedding between the Farnese and Medici. In the evening, we attend a production of ***La battaglia di Legnano* at Parma's storied Teatro Regio**. Composed in Paris, *La battaglia di Legnano* was so popular at its Rome premiere, the entire fourth act had to be encored! Overnight Parma.



Performance 4

Venue: Teatro Regio, Parma

Program: Giuseppe Verdi, *La battaglia di Legnano*

Performers: Diego Ceretta (conductor), Marina Rebeka (Lida), Riccardo Fassi (Barbarossa)

SATURDAY 05 OCTOBER – TERRE DI VERDI – PERFORMANCE 5 (B, L, D)

This morning is at leisure in Parma. In the early afternoon, we follow in the footsteps of Verdi on a guided excursion to his **birth house at Le Roncole**, and to sites related to Verdi in **Busseto**. In addition to its associations with Verdi, this region is also renowned for its gastronomy and viticulture, both of which we enjoy over a delightful lunch showcasing local produce. In the mid-afternoon, we attend a fully-staged performance of *Un ballo in maschera* at Busseto's historic Teatro Verdi. We discuss our responses to the performance over dinner before returning to Parma. Overnight Parma.

Performance 5

Venue: Teatro Verdi, Busseto

Program: Giuseppe Verdi, *Un ballo in maschera*

Performers: TBA

SUNDAY 06 OCTOBER – MAGNANI ROCCA & MACBETH – PERFORMANCE 6 (B, L)

We begin the morning with a pre-performance talk in the hotel. We then travel by coach to the Fondazione Magnani Rocca, an estate near Parma that houses the impressive private collections of a prominent Italian critic. The collections include significant works by Durer, Canova, Cézanne and Giorgio Morandi. After a guided tour and time to explore the collections independently, we have lunch at the Foundation's well-regarded bistrot. In the mid-afternoon, we return to Parma to attend a new production of the rarely performed and subtly enhanced French version of Verdi's *Macbeth*, directed by Pierre Audi, one of Europe's most revered directors. Overnight Parma.

Performance 6

Venue: Teatro Regio, Parma

Program: Giuseppe Verdi, *Macbeth* (French version)

Performers: Roberto Abbado (conductor), Ernesto Petti (Macbeth), Lidia Fridman (Lady Macbeth)



MONDAY 07 OCTOBER – PATHS OF THE LABYRINTH – RECITAL 2 (B, L, CANAPÉS)

This morning we visit the **library of San Giovanni Evangelista**, a Benedictine abbey with frescoes by Correggio, Parmigianino and other Renaissance masters. In these peaceful surrounds we enjoy a **private organ recital**. We then travel by coach to the **Labyrinth of Franco Maria Ricci**, the unique vision of a major Italian publisher and private collector. The complex is Ricci's personal and fantastical creation, the centrepiece of which is an enormous bamboo labyrinth. We enjoy a farewell lunch together at the centre's excellent restaurant, before time to explore the labyrinth. Returning to Parma, there is time at leisure before we meet to discuss our experiences over farewell drinks and canapés. Overnight Parma.

TUESDAY 08 OCTOBER – DEPARTURE (B)

The tour ends after breakfast in the hotel. A coach transfer to Milan Malpensa will be available in the morning for those with onwards flights from Malpensa (departing in the mid-afternoon). If you're travelling elsewhere in Italy, Parma is well connected by train to destinations such as central Milan, Bologna, Florence and Rome. Our travel partner Mary Rossi Travel would be pleased to assist with your onward arrangements, including flights, transfers and international travel insurance.



INCLUSIONS

- 9 nights' accommodation at centrally-located 4* hotels
- All breakfasts, 8 lunches or dinners including drinks, and welcome drinks and canapés
- Best available seats to 6 performances, including 2 at Teatro alla Scala
- Private recitals in 2 venues in Cremona and Parma
- All ground transport, guided tours and entrance fees to sites as mentioned in the itinerary, and tipping
- Talks by and expertise of an expert tour leader throughout
- Services of an experienced tour manager throughout

HOTELS

Hotel Cavour 4*, Milan, 3 nights

<https://www.hotelcavour.it/en/>

A well-located and recently renovated 4* hotel in central Milan, within walking distance of major sites such as Piazza Duomo and Teatro alla Scala.

NH Parma 4*, Parma, 6 nights

<https://www.nh-hotels.com/en/hotel/nh-parma>

A purpose-built, central hotel in Parma, one of the few located within walking distance of Parma's historic sites and Teatro Regio. Rooms are decorated in a modern style, with balconies off each room contributing to the bright atmosphere.

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

29 September – 08 Oct 2024

TOUR LEADER

Clive Paget

ITINERARY

Milan – 3 nights

Parma – 6 nights

PRICE

\$13,550pp twinshare

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

\$1,850 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 01 June 2024

FINAL PAYMENT DUE

16 July 2024

