

LA FUGUE

Collection Of Exceptional Journeys - Exclusive Travel Collection

July 2024 - August 2025



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editorial

The new 2024/2025 season has some exciting journeys and musical explorations in store for you! From **Vicenza** to **Naoshima**, from **Paris** to **AlUla**, via the **South Pole**, you'll find all the sounds of the world in this selection, which we're delighted to present to you once again.

Accompanied Fugues will take you to some of the most delightfully intimate festivals, such as the one in **Vicenza**, where a few "happy few" can spend the day discovering the Villa Valmarana, which has welcomed Picasso and Churchill. Or the **Tyrol Erl Festival**, where **Jonas Kaufmann** will take over as artistic director in September. Lovers of Italy can rediscover Venice through our confidential addresses, which they will reach on board the legendary (and still magical) **Orient-Express**.

Even further afield, the unique Fugues offer you more than just a journey, a rare communion with exceptionally rich nature and cultures, from the Seto Sea in **Japan** in the year of the **Setouchi Triennale** to the spectacular landscapes of the **Saudi Arabian desert**, whose calm will be disturbed when the runners of the legendary **Paris-Dakar rally** pass through.

What would the music season be without the highlights that punctuate it? As usual, you'll find all the highlights: **New Year's Eve in Vienna**, of course, but also the **Kaufmann-Grigolo** duo in **Munich**, **Asmik Grigorian and Roberto Alagna in Vienna**, a marvellous **Mozart week in Salzburg**, a brand new trio made up of **Gustavo Dudamel, Juan Diego Flórez** and **Nadine Sierra** in **Barcelona** and **Anna Netrebko's** unique recital in **Paris**.

The very best of European programming will be presented in our Fugues Musicales collection, sometimes enhanced by talks given by our expert partners, so that you don't miss out on any of the exceptional evenings that await you.

We hope you enjoy reading these pages as much as we enjoy presenting them to you - they promise so many wonderful moments to share!

Chloé Lefevre
And La Fugue's team



BAVARIAN ALPS

From Munich to Erl, Symphony of the Alps with Jonas Kaufmann and Irene Roberts

Why choose between Bavaria and Tyrol when you can have both? Especially during the Easter period, when chocolate hares and delicious *Osterbrot* fill the shelves. In Munich, the markets and streets are full of painted eggs. In the Austrian Alps, tradition is in full swing during Holy Week, with processions and festivities of all kinds. Innsbruck is decked out with Easter decorations and markets, while the Passionspielhaus in Erl stages a re-enactment of the last moments in the life of Christ every 6 years (and until 2025).

The repertory theatre that is the Bayerische Staatsoper confirms its prestige, with first-rate singers, even for its revivals - **Ermonela Jaho** and **Yusif Eyvazov** in Puccini's rare *Manon Lescaut*. The Erl Festival, directed by star tenor **Jonas Kaufmann**, finds a fitting programme, with the *St Matthew Passion* and *Parsifal*. Bach's delicate yet powerful oratorio, meanwhile, is performed on Good Friday, as it was at its premiere.

MANON LESCAUT, in Munich

After Auber and Massenet, it was Puccini's turn to adapt Abbé Prévost's novel on his return from Bayreuth in the 1890s, in what was to be his first great public success. He would say that, unlike his predecessors, he saw the heroine "like an Italian, consumed

by passion". The result is a structure in four acts separated by ellipses, like so many stages in the exile of Manon and Des Grieux.

ST MATTHEW PASSION, at the Tyrol Festival Erl

The *St Matthew Passion* takes up two chapters of the Gospel, from the Last Supper to the burial of Jesus, including his appearance before the high priest and his crucifixion on Mount Golgotha. This oratorio alternates narrative recitatives, arias crystallising the action (in the style of opera seria) and weightless Lutheran chorales.

PARSIFAL, at the Tyrol Festival Erl

The mystery of Parsifal is one of the best-kept secrets in the repertoire. The combination of instrumental timbres provides an unprecedented aural experience, where "time becomes space", as Gurnemanz says in the first act. Everything lies in the orchestra's dramaturgy, brought to its climax. Wagner's libretto, infused with multiple inspirations, is as much about spirituality as it is about responsibility. •

Guided Journey - Small Group Travel
April 17/21, 2025
Prices to be announced



JONAS KAUFMANN AT THE HELM OF THE TYROL ERL FESTIVAL:

A NEW ERA FOR OPERA

The world of opera has been lit up by a new spark with the announcement of Jonas Kaufmann, one of the greatest contemporary operatic voices, as director of the prestigious Erl Festival in Austria.

This appointment marks the start of an exciting new era for this festival, where classical music shines in all its splendour.

Jonas Kaufmann, whose name resonates as a star in the opera firmament, has captured the hearts of music lovers the world over with his spellbinding voice and captivating interpretation.

Born in Munich, Kaufmann has risen through the ranks of the operatic stage to become one of the most eminent figures of our time, performing on the world's greatest stages in a varied repertoire ranging from Verdi to Wagner.

At the helm of the Tyrol Erl Festival, he brings an innovative artistic vision and an infectious passion for opera. His desire to convey the pure emotion of classical music and his willingness to push back the boundaries of the lyric arts promise to breathe new life into this historic festival.

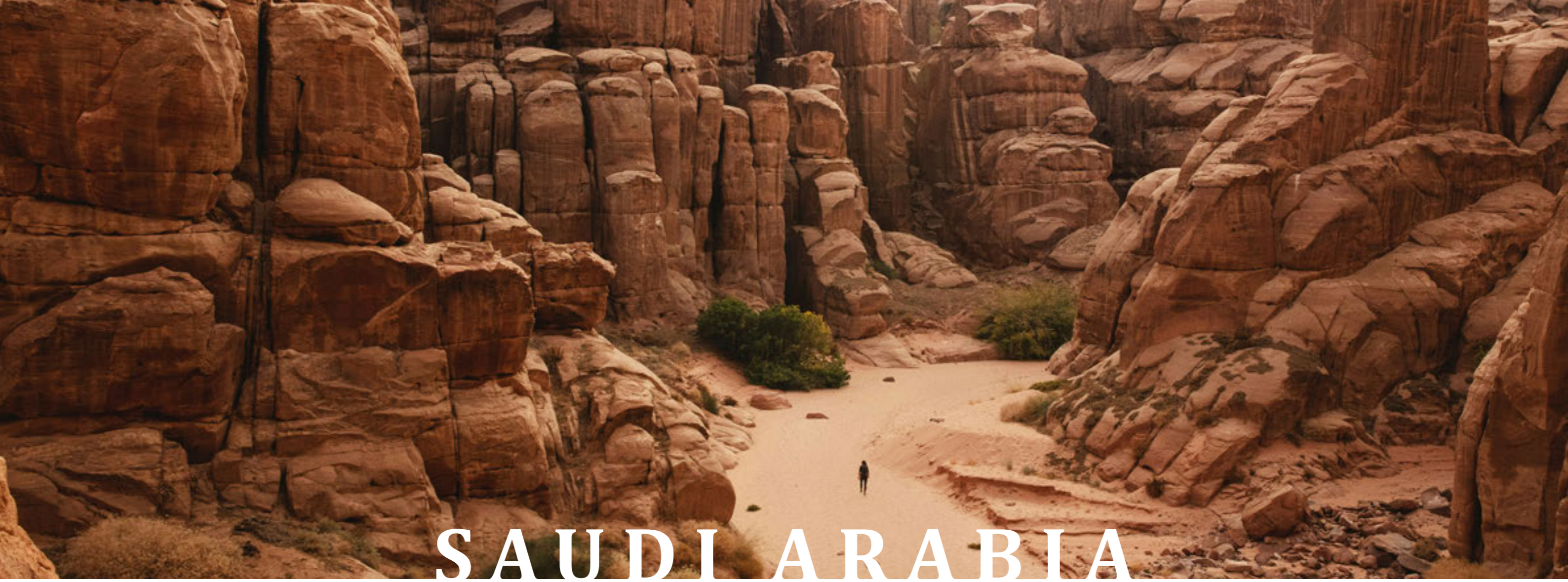
Kaufmann wants to offer unique and daring productions, while honouring the musical heritage that has characterised the Tyrol Erl Festival since its foundation.

Nestled in the heart of the Austrian Alps, the Erl Festival is a musical jewel where magic happens at every performance.

Since its creation in 1998, the festival has established itself as one of the must-see events of the European musical summer, attracting renowned artists and opera lovers from all over the world.

The atmosphere of each performance is unique thanks to the enchanting setting of the Passionspielhaus, a modern theatre surrounded by the majestic Tyrolean mountains.

Jonas Kaufmann's nomination as director of the Erl Festival represents a historic moment for the world of opera. His undeniable prestige and talent bring an aura of grandeur and promise to this already prestigious event. Under his leadership, the festival is set to shine brightly, attracting ever-growing audiences and delighting them with productions of timeless beauty. •



SAUDI ARABIA

Jeddah, AlUla – Experience a stage of the Dakar Rally

Saudi Arabia promises a journey to the heart of tradition and innovation. This multifaceted kingdom invites you to discover its exceptional heritage and unique culture. In **Jeddah**, the pearl of the Red Sea, you will be charmed by the historic streets of the Al-Balad district, where the past blends harmoniously with the present. The coral houses and bustling souks offer a fascinating insight into the city's trading history.

Then it's on to **AlUla**, an archaeological treasure trove of majestic Nabataean tombs and spectacular rock formations. Here, every stone tells a thousand-year-old story, and the breathtaking scenery will leave you speechless.

But this trip wouldn't be complete without a modern-day adventure: you'll witness a stage of the legendary **Dakar 2025 rally**. In the breathtaking setting of the Saudi desert, you'll feel the excitement of this legendary race, a symbol of endurance and self-transcendence.

Get ready to experience unforgettable moments in Saudi Arabia, where the warm hospitality of its people and the splendour of its sites will leave you with lasting memories.

JEDDAH

A vibrant port city founded in the 7th century, **Jeddah** has always been a cultural and commercial crossroads, welcoming merchants and pilgrims from all over the world. Often referred to as the "Bride of the Red Sea", this dynamic coastal metropolis is not only the gateway to the pilgrimage to Mecca, but also a city where modernity and tradition live side by side in harmony. Its rich history is reflected in its architecture, bustling markets and traditions.

The **historic district of Al-Balad**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a must-see. Famous for its traditional coral houses, narrow streets and colourful souks, Al-Balad takes you back in time to the heart of authentic Jeddah. Wind towers and carved wooden balconies bear witness to the city's architectural ingenuity and rich cultural heritage.

The floating mosque, or **Al-Rahma Mosque**, is an architectural landmark located on the Jeddah Corniche. Built on stilts above the Red Sea, it gives the impression of floating during high tides, creating a masterly visual spectacle. Its modern design blends traditional and contemporary Islamic influences, making it a highly sought-after place of prayer and contemplation.

ALULA

Located in the north-west region of Saudi Arabia, **AlUla** is a fascinating destination. Famous for its majestic rock formations and breathtaking archaeological sites, this desert gem is a real gem for lovers of archaeology, geology and adventure. From red cliffs to wind-sculpted canyons, every corner of this region is a natural work of art.

Hegra, also known as Madain Salih, is the first UNESCO World Heritage Site in Saudi Arabia. The monumental tombs, carved directly into the sandstone cliffs and adorned with elaborate facades, bear witness to the advanced architecture and artistic skills of the Nabataeans, an Arab civilisation that flourished between the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD.

Archaeological excavations have revealed impressive statues, inscriptions and monumental structures in **Dadan**, the capital of the Lihyan kingdom. Nearby is the site of **Jabal Ikmah**, often described as an "open-air library" because of the hundreds of inscriptions in Dadanite, Thamudic, Nabataean and other ancient languages engraved on the rocks.

Thanks to its mirror-covered facades, AlUla's theatre, the **Maraya**, blends into the spectacular surrounding desert landscape.

A STAGE OF THE DAKAR RALLY

One of the highlights of your stay will undoubtedly be a day spent following a stage of the **2025 Dakar Rally**, formerly known as the Paris-Dakar and relocated to Saudi Arabia in 2020.

During this race, the drivers cross breathtaking landscapes: endless sand dunes, steep mountains and rocky plains, putting their endurance, navigability and technical skills to the test. Each stage is designed to offer a unique challenge, making this one of the world's most fearsome rallies.

Attending a stage of the Dakar Rally in Saudi Arabia is an unforgettable experience. Spectators get to see the vehicles in action up close, feel the adrenalin of the race while enjoying the warm hospitality of the Saudis. The Dakar Rally is much more than just a race: it is an epic adventure that celebrates the spirit of challenge and exploration.

Whether you're a motor sport enthusiast, an adventurer or simply looking for a unique experience, attending the Dakar Rally in Saudi Arabia is the opportunity of a lifetime. •

Guided Journey - Small Group Travel
January 6/12, 2025
Prices to be announced



Vicenza & Asolo – Iván Fischer, *Ariadne on Naxos*, Chiara D'Anna

Situated in the heart of the Veneto region, Vicenza exudes elegance and refinement. The "city of Palladio", whose architectural masterpieces are dotted around the city, is a Renaissance jewel listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In October, this enchanting city becomes even more captivating with its prestigious **Opera Festival**. This annual event attracts music lovers from all over the world, offering an exceptional programme in the sumptuous setting of the Teatro Olimpico, the oldest covered stone theatre in the world.

The festival promises an unforgettable experience where history, culture and music come together to delight the senses and nourish the spirit.

Come and discover Vicenza, where every street corner tells a story, and Asolo, nicknamed "the pearl of Veneto", a charming town perched on the hills of the region. It was an important centre in Roman times and prospered under the rule of the Serenissima Republic of Venice. Famous for its picturesque narrow streets, elegant villas and breathtaking panoramic views, Asolo has attracted many artists and intellectuals, including the famous Queen of Cyprus, Catherine Cornaro, and the legendary actress Eleonora Duse.

SYMPHONIC CONCERT

Internationally renowned Hungarian conductor and co-founder and music director of the Budapest Festival Orchestra, **Iván Fischer** is renowned for his innovative approach and profound interpretations. As a regular guest of the world's leading musical institutions, he brings incomparable passion and expertise to every performance.

ARIADNE ON NAXOS

The Vicenza Opera Festival is breaking new ground this year with a new version of the combination of Molière's play *Le bourgeois gentilhomme* and Richard Strauss's opera *Ariadne on Naxos*. Commedia dell'arte actors present the ancient Greek story of Ariadne in the form of an opera.

In the first half of the evening, **Iván Fischer** will lead his orchestra in Richard Strauss's *Suite du bourgeois gentilhomme*, choreographed by co-director **Chiara D'Anna** for the Commedia dell'arte characters. •

Guided Journey - Small Group Travel
October 24/27, 2024
Prices to be announced

IVÁN FISCHER AT THE VICENZA OPERA FESTIVAL: A DAZZLING ENCOUNTER OF TALENT AND HERITAGE

The Opera Festival of Vicenza, celebrated as one of one of Italy's most eminent cultural events, will have the honour of welcoming Iván Fischer, one of the most distinguished conductors of our time, in 2024.

Born in Budapest in 1951, Fischer is a leading figure in classical music. Both conductor and composer, he is the founder and musical director of the Budapest Festival Orchestra, an ensemble acclaimed for its artistic excellence.

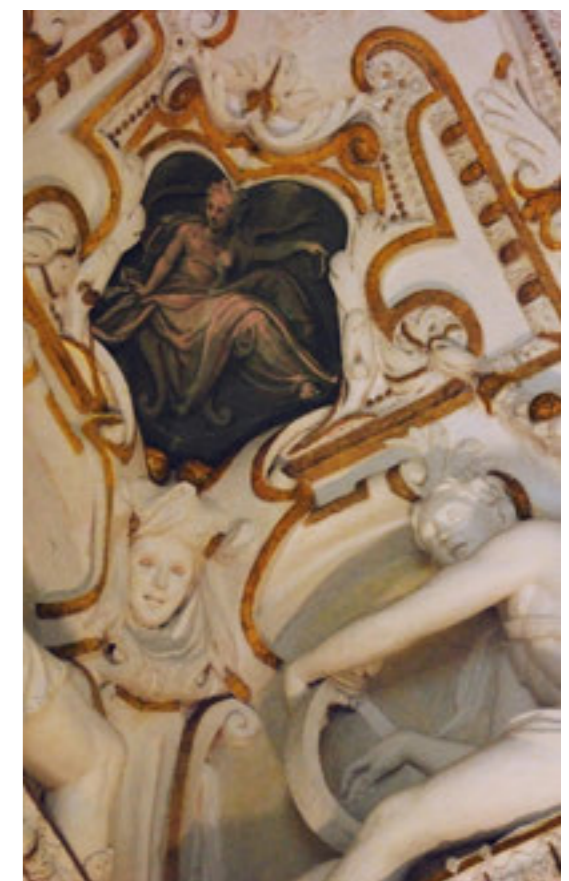
Fischer is particularly renowned for his ability to infuse his interpretations with profound sensitivity and boundless creativity, earning him international recognition and numerous awards.

Every year since it was founded, this festival has attracted music lovers and opera enthusiasts from all over the world to the picturesque town of Vicenza, where it is held.

Founded in the 1990s, the festival is renowned for highlighting the richness of Italy's musical heritage, while making use of emblematic historic venues.

This prestigious collaboration between Fischer and the Festival promises audiences an unforgettable musical and visual experience, thanks in particular to the exceptional production of *Ariadne on Naxos* conducted by the talented maestro. Composed by Richard Strauss to a libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *Ariadne on Naxos* is a remarkable work that juxtaposes a prologue and an act. This singular work blends opera seria and commedia dell'arte, creating an unparalleled narrative and musical richness. The story tackles the themes of love, fidelity and art, while skilfully playing on the contrasts between the serious and the light-hearted.

The Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza, Andrea Palladio's architectural masterpiece, will be the setting for this masterly production. The theatre, with its classical architecture, perfect proportions and illusionist décor, will undoubtedly add visual and historical depth to the staging. Fischer, renowned for his ability to transform classical works into contemporary experiences, will take advantage of Teatro Olimpico's exceptional acoustics and unique aesthetic to deliver a memorable performance. •





JAPAN

Kyoto, Naoshima, Tokyo – Gardens and Setouchi Triennale

Japan, a country with a thousand faces, embodies exceptional cultural and artistic wealth. From its ancestral traditions to its contemporary art forms, it offers a kaleidoscope of creativity. But what gives Japan an even more special aura are its magnificent gardens, veritable living works of art.

The itinerary of your stay in Japan will be divided between Kyoto, Nara, Naoshima and Tokyo.

A former imperial capital, Kyoto is a cultural treasure trove of temples, Zen gardens and geishas. Nara, the historic cradle of Japan, is famous for its free-roaming deer and ancient temples. Naoshima is a contemporary art lover's paradise, home to museums and installations by renowned artists. Tokyo, the bustling capital, blends tradition and modernity. Its futuristic skyscrapers stand alongside thousand-year-old temples, and its lively districts are home to contemporary art galleries.

In 2025, a major art event, the Setouchi Triennale, returns to showcase talent from the country and around the world. This event promises to be a unique opportunity to celebrate art in all its forms.

KYOTO

The former imperial capital of Japan, Kyoto is a cultural and historical treasure trove.

At the heart of this city steeped in tradition, gardens occupy a central place. Most of Kyoto's many green spaces are associated with temples, shrines, villas or imperial complexes. Their Zen aesthetic and tranquillity bring a profound sense of serenity.

The most exclusive (a covering letter in Japanese is required to apply for a visit!) is the famous **Moss Garden**, or **Saihō-ji**. It boasts a peaceful atmosphere and lush vegetation. In this haven of peace, 120 varieties of moss cover the ground, century-old trees stand majestically, and the ponds reflect the serenity of the place. Usually closed to the public, you'll have the chance to wander through it accompanied by its gardener.

Each of these gardens tells a story, reflects an era and offers a unique experience.

Kyoto, with its wealth of vegetation, is a haven of peace for those in search of harmony and beauty.

NARA

Formerly known as Heijo-kyo, Nara was Japan's first permanent imperial capital. Despite its short existence of just 14 years, Nara marked an artistic and cultural boom. Today, the city is home to numerous World Heritage sites: the historic monuments of ancient Nara, the Buddhist monuments of the Horyuji region (home to the oldest wooden buildings in the world) and the pilgrimage routes in the Kii mountain range. Nara is also a natural park home to thousands of sacred deer, symbols of the city.

NAOSHIMA

Naoshima, a small island in the Seto Inland Sea, is an artistic jewel. Once exploited as an industrial site by the Mitsubishi company, the former mining town has been transformed into an art capital thanks to the initiative of the chairman of the Benesse company, Soichiro Fukutake.

In collaboration with architect Tadao Ando, Naoshima has become the "Benesse Art Site Naoshima", bringing together contemporary art museums, architectural buildings and outdoor sculptures. One of the island's must-sees is the Benesse House Museum, which stands on a point on the south coast. Its conceptual concrete architecture houses priceless works of art... a hotel where you'll be lucky enough to stay! Naoshima, once deserted, is now a world cultural pilgrimage destination.

TOKYO

Art in Tokyo is not limited to museums and galleries: the city itself is a constantly evolving work of art.

As soon as you set foot in Tokyo, you are immediately plunged into a teeming artistic universe, where the streets become living canvases where colours and shapes mingle.

You will have the opportunity to meet **Natane Takeda, VIP curator of Art Basel Japan**, for a tour of the city. Her invaluable explanations will provide you with the keys you need to understand Tokyo's contemporary art.

Far from the hustle and bustle of Tokyo, the **Echigo-Tsumari Art Field** lies in Niigata Prefecture. **Kitagawa Fram, general manager of the Echigo-Tsumari Art Fiel Triennale and the Naoshima Triennale**, will guide you on an exceptional tour of this art center nicknamed "**the Naoshima of the mountains**". This art festival, with its 20-year history, stretches over 750 km2, making it the world's largest open-air exhibition. Works of art await in the heart of nature, inviting visitors on artistic walks. •

Guided Journey - Small Group Travel
May 27 / June 6, 2025
Prices to be announced



Spend New Year's Eve in Lisbon with the Gulbenkian Choir

La Fugue invites you to celebrate the arrival of the New Year in one of Europe's most vibrant and colourful cities.

In good company, enjoy the friendly spirit of Lisbon, where every street corner is brimming with life and joy. Join us for this special occasion, a sweet and memorable end to the year.

At the heart of our programme, discover the best of Lisbon music. Let yourself be enchanted by **Fado**, the melancholy, intoxicating music that captures the soul of the city.

Attend the New Year's Eve Concert in the dazzling **São Roque Church**, a unique musical experience that will mark the start of the new year with grace and beauty. And to top it all off, La Fugue has an exceptional musical surprise in store for you, adding a magical touch to your stay.

Get ready to experience moments of pure enchantment and welcome the New Year in a warm and festive atmosphere, surrounded by music and art lovers.

Lisbon awaits you for a New Year's Eve you won't soon forget.

LISBON

Welcome to Lisbon, Portugal's enchanting capital, where history and modernity meet in harmony. Situated on the west coast of the country, on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, this vibrant city captivates with its picturesque hills, cobbled streets and colourful buildings bathed in light.

Lisbon's National Azulejo Museum is a hidden treasure nestled in the heart of the city. This unique museum offers an exclusive and immersive experience of the art of azulejos, the richly decorated tiles that are a true cultural imprint of Portugal.

During your private visit, you will be transported through centuries of history and tradition, discovering the evolution of this captivating art, from its Moorish origins to its most refined expression. This private opening will allow you to immerse yourself in this fascinating world, appreciating every detail in an intimate and exclusive way.

Your trip to Lisbon will take you on a tour of Portuguese heritage. Considered one of the finest examples of 17th-century Portuguese architecture, the **Palácio dos Marquês de Fronteira** was built in 1640 by the first Marquis of Fronteira. Surrounded by magnificent

Italianate gardens, it is famous for its azulejo decorations, its gallery of paintings and its beautiful Battle Hall.

Another of Lisbon's jewels is the **Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation**. This museum houses one of the most impressive art collections in Europe, with works ranging from Antiquity to Modern Art. You can admire works by masters such as Rembrandt, Monet and René Lalique, as well as treasures of Islamic and Oriental art.

But what would Lisbon be without its lively neighbourhoods?

A stroll will take you through the historic districts of Chiado and Bairro Alto. Chiado, with its literary cafés and chic boutiques, contrasts beautifully with Bairro Alto, known for its lively nightlife and charming little streets. These neighbourhoods embody Lisbon's unique blend of tradition and modernity.

The next stop is Lisbon's oldest and most picturesque district: the Alfama. Its narrow streets, winding staircases and colourful houses create a unique and enchanting atmosphere, inviting you to end the evening in a Fado house and discover the heart and soul of Lisbon.

NEW YEAR'S EVE CONCERT

Samuel Barber's *Adagio for strings* is truly vibrant with emotion and

intensity. The work has a strong link with American history, having been chosen to accompany great moments of national mourning such as the announcement of Franklin D. Roosevelt's death, John F. Kennedy's funeral and Albert Einstein's funeral ceremony. Thirty years after the original composition, Barber adapted the piece into the choral version *Agnus Dei*.

It is this choral version that will be performed at this traditional New Year's Eve concert by the **Gulbenkian Foundation Choir** at the Church of São Roque, an imposing 16th-century baroque church, alongside sacred works by Poulenc, Frank Martin and Miguel Jesus. This musical event, part of the city's cultural traditions, promises to create a solemn and introspective atmosphere, resonating with the architectural magnificence of the church.

The **Gulbenkian Foundation Choir**, renowned for its precision and passion, will bring a unique emotional depth to this evening of celebration. As well as the musical beauty, the audience will be able to appreciate the exceptional acoustics of the Church of São Roque, which amplify and enrich every note, offering an unforgettable aural experience. •

Guided Journey - Small Group Travel
December 30, 2024 / January 1, 2025
Prices to be announced



CZECH REPUBLIC

Prague – Spring Festival

Discover Prague, the city of a thousand charms, where every street corner tells a fascinating story.

In spring, the Czech capital comes alive with its Spring Festival, an exhilarating celebration of culture and art. The streets are decked out in bright colours, the parks come alive with vibrant greenery and the cafés offer a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

The Prague Spring Festival offers a varied programme including concerts, theatre performances, art exhibitions and gastronomic events. Local and international artists come together to deliver exceptional performances that delight audiences. The vibrant, festive atmosphere pervades the city, inviting everyone to let themselves be carried away by the magic of spring.

Among the many renowned artists who have graced the 2024 edition of the festival are such iconic names as violinists David Oistrakh, Yehudi Menuhin and Shlomo Mintz, pianists Sviatoslav Richter, Arthur Rubinstein and Rudolf Firkušný, as well as singers Galina Vishnevskaya (who met her professional and life partner, Mstislav Rostropovich, at the Prague Spring Festival), Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Dagmar Pecková and Magdalena Kožená, Peter

Schreier, Luciano Pavarotti and Peter Dvorský.

Although the cast for the 2025 edition has yet to be revealed, it promises to be just as grand.

Prague's magnificent historic monuments, such as Prague Castle and Charles Bridge, provide a majestic backdrop for the festivities. Travellers stroll through the cobbled streets of the Old Town to discover architectural treasures. The botanical gardens and flower-filled parks offer a peaceful retreat to recharge your batteries between festival events. Art lovers will appreciate the many galleries and museums, with collections ranging from classical art to the contemporary avant-garde. In the evening, the city lights up with a thousand lights.

The Prague Spring Festival is an unforgettable experience that celebrates the creativity, cultural diversity and spirit of this enchanting city. Come and experience the magic of spring in Prague and let yourself be seduced by its timeless charm. •

Guided Journey - Small Group Travel
From May 14, 2025
Program and prices to be announced

THE PRAGUE SPRING FESTIVAL:

A MUSICAL ODYSSEY THROUGH EXCELLENCE AND EMOTION

For more than seven decades, the Prague Spring Festival has been a shining beacon on the European cultural landscape. This captivating event, which traces its origins back to 1946, is now a not-to-be-missed rendezvous for lovers of classical music from all over the world.

Located in one of the architectural gems of Central Europe, Prague offers the perfect setting for this celebration of classical music. Its cobbled streets, elegant bridges and historic buildings bear witness to a past rich in culture, creating an enchanting atmosphere that permeates every note played at the festival.

Renowned symphony orchestras, virtuoso chamber ensembles and dazzling soloists perform in the city's most prestigious concert halls, offering masterful interpretations that transport audiences into a world of beauty and emotion.

The highlights of the 2024 edition include performances by the most eminent artists of our time. From violin virtuosos to prodigious pianists, from opera singers to inspired conductors, every evening of the festival offers moments of grace and

transcendence that leave an indelible mark on the hearts of those lucky enough to attend.

But the Prague Spring Festival is not limited to its prestigious concerts. It also offers a plethora of parallel events, including conferences, exhibitions and meetings with artists, giving music lovers the chance to delve even deeper into the captivating world of classical music.

As a living witness to musical history, the Prague Spring Festival also celebrates the great masters who have shaped its history. Names such as David Oistrakh, Yehudi Menuhin, Sviatoslav Richter and Luciano Pavarotti have all graced the festival's stages, leaving behind a musical legacy that continues to inspire and amaze future generations.

The Prague Spring Festival is an odyssey through excellence and emotion, a vibrant celebration of the beauty and power of classical music. Whether you are a passionate music lover or simply looking for an enriching cultural experience, this festival invites you to immerse yourself in a world of spellbinding sounds and magical moments. •





FRANCE

Paris — Anna Netrebko, Benjamin Bernheim et Christof Loy at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées

Paris, capital of the world!

The French city has always aroused passions. The capital of fashion and the world, a stronghold of the arts and technology, the former Lutetia has adapted to the challenges of the future with panache and elegance.

Located on avenue Montaigne, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées is a monument to the musical history of the 20th century. It was here that the legendary premiere of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* took place in 1913, and today singers such as Cecilia Bartoli and Philippe Jaroussky still perform in Paris.

Our programme brings together two of the greatest opera stars of our time: soprano **Anna Netrebko** in a concert-recital of Italian opera arias, and tenor **Benjamin Bernheim** in Massenet's *Werther*, directed by **Christof Loy**. Alongside the Franco-Swiss singer with the golden voice are the finest French singers (**Marina Viotti, Jean-Sébastien Bou**).

FRÉDÉRIC PFEFFER'S COLLECTION OF CONDUCTOR'S STICKS

Frédéric Pfeffer, founder of La Fugue, invites you to an exclusive presentation of his famous collection of conductor's sticks, which has been exhibited many times around the world.

INTERVIEW WITH YOUR EXPERT SPEAKER: LAMA TYAN

As a chorister with the Orchestre National and a lover of culture and languages, Lama Tyan shares her love of the voice through sessions dedicated to operas, themes and sacred music.

La Fugue (LF) : The recital by Anna Netrebko and Yusif Eyvazov is a much-anticipated evening at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. How do you feel about this duo on stage and off?

Lama Tyan (LT) : What are a soprano and a tenor talking about? Love, of course, and with these two, we believe it! After all, Anna and Yusif have been in love for ten years or so, performing together on stages the world over and forming an undeniably iconic operatic couple. The Italian programme, a tribute to Puccini, will showcase their vocal understanding in an exceptional fusion performance.

LF : Why is this performance of Werther, co-produced with La Scala

in Milan and starring Benjamin Bernheim in the title role, so eagerly awaited?

LT : The staging by multi-award winner Christoph Loy promised to be elegant. The eagerly awaited Milan premiere was a triumph on 10 June. According to *Il Corriere Musicale*, Bernheim melted into the character of Werther, exceeding the limits of his range and covering the powerful waves of the orchestra! I first heard Benjamin Bernheim in the summer of 2014 in Salzburg in Schubert's *Fierrabras*. A clear, youthful voice rang out above all others! Since then, he has become a benchmark in the French repertoire and is currently at the top of his game.

Who better to bring passion and passion to the tormented character of Werther? Having already performed the role in 2022 at the Opéra de Bordeaux, there's no doubt that his seductive timbre and expressiveness will add extra depth to the 'Wertherian fever'.

ANNA NETREBKO & YUSIF EYVAZOV CONCERT

Of course, everything has been said and written about **Anna Netrebko**. The Russian-born singer is unquestionably one of the greatest and most renowned sopranos today.

Since the start of her meteoric career in 1994, she has established herself as the undisputed prima donna of the 21st century. What strikes you most when you hear her in concert is the immense sonic impact of her voice, which leaves you breathless from the very first note. In recent years, her repertoire has expanded to include superbly dramatic roles, and she now interprets the most impressive heroines of Italian and Russian opera.

It is precisely a bouquet of scenes from Italian operas that she will be performing at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. Accompanied by tenor (and husband) **Yusif Eyvazov**, THE Netrebko promises a breathtaking performance of virtuoso power.

WERTHER

Charlotte's mother wanted her to marry Albert... But when Charlotte meets the poet Werther, she discovers both love and suffering.

Torn between family duty and the torments of passion, will Charlotte remain faithful to her husband or abandon herself to Werther?

Inspired by Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, *Werther* is one of the pinnacles of French opera.

First performed in 1892, Massenet's music overwhelms with its naturalness and the truth of its characters. While the role of Werther is moving, that of Charlotte is not to be outdone, with sublime arias such as the tunes *Air des Lettres* and *Du gai soleil plein de flamme*.

In the past, people used to talk about the poor health of French singing. Those days are over: all the specialists agree that French song is enjoying a new golden age, and this show, directed by the renowned German director **Christof Loy**, will not prove the contrary.

The cast at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées is of the highest calibre, and almost exclusively French: **Benjamin Bernheim** (solar voice, marvellous actor), the remarkable **Marina Viotti**, whose career is on the rise, and the superb **Jean-Sébastien Bou**.

In the pit we find **Les Siècles**, an orchestra playing on period instruments. •

Guided Journeys with Lecturer - Renowned Experts
March 27/28, 2025
From €1,200 per person



ITALY

Double triptych in Milan – Tarmo Peltokoski, Christian Thielemann, Kirill Petrenko

Milan is the world capital of elegance. Along with Paris, the beautiful city of Lombardy is home to some of the world's greatest fashion designers, as well as being at the forefront of design, architecture and the visual arts. We invite you to enjoy an exquisite stay. During the day, we'll visit the masterpieces of the **Pinacoteca** and the astonishing creations of the **Fornasetti House**, a brilliant designer with a surrealist universe. In the evening, we will immerse ourselves in the unique atmosphere of the legendary Scala. This historic temple to music is a hotbed of creativity!

Over three evenings, you'll have the chance to hear three great conductors (**Peltokoski, Thielemann, Petrenko**), a new production of Wagner's *The Rhinegold* and a performance of Strauss's *Knight of the Rose*, whose beautiful staging has been compared to a film as sublime as *The Cheetah* by Luchino Visconti (an illustrious Milanese if ever there was one). **Lama Tyan** will introduce the work to you before each performance.

SIBELIUS AND SZYMANOWSKI

Tarmo Peltokoski is the new conducting sensation. The greatest orchestras are calling for him (at just 23, he is already Music Director of the Capitole de Toulouse and Principal Guest Conductor of the

Rotterdam Orchestra!), and during this concert **Tarmo Peltokoski** will be making his debut with the **Scala Philharmonic Orchestra**. We look forward to hearing the admirable Greek violinist **Leonidas Kavakos** in Szymanowski's rare *Violin Concerto No. 2* and above all Sibelius's extraordinary *Symphony No. 2*.

THE RHINEGOLD

For ten years, audiences at La Scala in Milan have been waiting for a new production of Wagner's *Ring*. We can count on the plastic beauty of **David McVicar**'s staging and the conducting of the giant (in every sense of the word) **Christian Thielemann** at the helm of the **Scala Orchestra**. As Wotan, **Michael Volle** is one of the great interpreters of the Wagnerian role.

THE KNIGHT OF THE ROSE

The Knight of the Rose is regularly staged at La Scala. There have been no fewer than three productions of Richard Strauss's opera in the last ten years, but if there is one staging that has won unanimous acclaim, it is **Harry Kupfer**'s. The sets take us back to 1911, the year the work was first performed. In Franz Josef's Vienna, echoes of a film as legendary as *The Leopard* by Visconti (a great Milanese before all eternity) are revealed in this portrait of an aristocracy in

decline. As well as the trio of **Stoyanova, Lindsey** and **Devieille**, all eyes are on the pit, of course, with the exceptional presence of **Kirill Petrenko**.

VISIT TO THE PINACOTECA AND THE FORNASETTI HOUSE

Housed in a magnificent 17th-century palace in Milan, the **Pinacoteca di Brera** is an artistic sanctuary containing a remarkable collection of Italian works of art. This iconic venue houses treasures from the Renaissance to the Baroque, offering a deep insight into the evolution of Italian art through the centuries.

Among the jewels in its collections is Mantegna's exceptional Lamentation over the Dead Christ.

The **Fornasetti house-laboratory** is a veritable artistic and architectural jewel, imbued with the eclectic and whimsical style that characterises Piero Fornasetti's work. Closed to the public, this emblematic residence, adorned with eccentric motifs and surrealist decors, will be opening its doors exclusively to us so that we can immerse ourselves in the unique and fascinating world of this famous Italian artist. •

Guided Journeys with Lecturer - Renowned Experts
October 27/30, 2024
From €3,990 per person

INTERVIEW WITH YOUR EXPERT SPEAKER: LAMA TYAN

La Fugue (LF) : Why do you consider these performances to be the most eagerly awaited of the new season?

Lama Tyan (LT) : It's almost too good to be true... three consecutive evenings of this intensity at the Teatro Alla Scala. Music lovers from all over the world have gathered to listen to two immense maestros. Believe me, tickets are going to be snapped up!

Personally, I have always followed Thielemann throughout Europe... An advocate of the great Germanic repertoire, he is the absolute eminence in the Wagnerian register. He will conduct the premiere of *The Rhinegold*, the prelude to the new *Ring* commissioned by the Milanese theatre from David McVicar.

Do I need to introduce the talented Kirill Petrenko? The Russian maestro gave me my greatest musical thrills in Munich, Berlin and New York. His passion and happiness as he conducts are visible and infectious, and he magnifies the works he performs.

Not to mention the symphony evening with the young Finnish conductor Tarmo Peltokoski, who will conduct works by his compatriot Sibelius, and the virtuoso violinist Leonidas Kavakos!

LF : Why do you think Michael Volle's appearance as Wotan is such a big deal?

LT : Michael Volle is a charismatic singer with an 'ideal' voice that's as powerful in the lows as it is in the highs. His generous timbre and stage presence give his performances an uncommon sense of authenticity. You'll come away transformed! Named Singer of the Year by Opernwelt magazine in 2008 and 2014, the German baritone is currently outshining all his rivals in the role of Wotan.

LF : What do you make of Harry Kupfer's production of *The Knight of the Rose*?

LT : This production is one of my fondest memories of the Salzburg Festival. Harry Kupfer is one of those who have radically changed the way opera is staged. He gives us his vision of *The Knight of the Rose*, which is profoundly human, since the subject of the work is the ineluctable passage of time and the resignation of an ageing woman of thirty-two... The absolutely spectacular set design is based on panoramic tableaux of breathtaking beauty. •



SLOVENIA

The Ljubljana Festival – in partnership with the Mezzo television channel

Dive into the heart of Central Europe and discover the enchanting splendour of Slovenia, where history gracefully blends with modernity. Your journey takes you to **Ljubljana**, the charming capital nestled between the Alpine peaks and the serene banks of the Ljubljanica River. This picturesque city dazzles with its diverse architecture, where Baroque, Art Nouveau and medieval influences blend harmoniously.

And as the melodies of the **Ljubljana Classical Music Festival** echo through the cobbled streets, let yourself be transported to a world of musical virtuosity in the very heart of this city where art and culture meet in a spellbinding symphony.

LJUBLJANA

Slovenia's capital offers you a rich immersion in its history and architectural legacy left by Jože Plečnik. Ljubljana Castle stands majestically atop the city, offering breathtaking views of the red roofs and surrounding green hills.

BLED

Your escapade in Bled promises to be one of discovery and wonder. A traditional Pletna boat will take you across the crystal-clear

waters of Lake Bled to the picturesque islet at its centre. Offering breathtaking panoramic views of the lake and surrounding mountains, Bled Castle will open its doors to you for an exceptional visit.

KOSTANJEVICA/GORIŠKA BRDA

After a visit to the Franciscan monastery of Kostanjevica, a jewel in Slovenia's cultural heritage, a local winemaker will welcome you and introduce you to the Goriška Brda wine region.

CONCERT OF OPERA ARIAS

Renowned for his artistic excellence and significant contribution to the international music scene, **Juan Diego Flórez** will be performing an exquisite repertoire. This fusion between the orchestral virtuosity of the **RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra** and the vocal power of the tenor promises an unforgettable evening, where passion and emotion combine to create moments of pure musical magic.

CONCERT LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA / VILDE FRANG

Here it is, the long-awaited evening. With the **London Symphony Orchestra** (LSO). The LSO is one of the most prestigious and

acclaimed orchestras in the world. Led by famous conductors and collaborating with the most talented soloists, we will be treated to a concert by the LSO conducted by the newly-awarded **Sir Antonio Pappano**, and accompanied by **Vilde Frang**, whose captivating and expressive playing has earned her a place among the great performers of her generation.

CONCERT LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA / BRUCE LIU

The **London Symphony Orchestra** will be sharing the stage at the Ljubljana Festival with **Bruce Liu**. The young Canadian pianist is one of those dazzling revelations whose precocious debuts on stage, notably with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, followed by repeated victories in competitions, presaged a soloist's temperament. Crowned first prize winner of the Warsaw Chopin Competition in 2021, which propelled him onto the international stage at the age of twenty-four, Bruce Liu embraces an inclusive repertoire, from Bach to Prokofiev and Kapustin, not forgetting of course Chopin.

Optional extended stay in Piran (from 30 August to 1 September) for the Tartini Festival. •

Guided Journeys with Lecturer - Renowned Experts
August 27/30, 2024
From €3,500 per person

YOUR EXPERT SPEAKER: ANTOINE PECQUEUR

Antoine Pecqueur is a journalist specialising in the politics and economics of culture. A leading French music critic and writer, he is renowned for his passion and expertise in the field of contemporary and classical music. A graduate of the École normale supérieure de la rue d'Ulm, he enriches the French cultural landscape with his insightful analyses and informed contributions across a range of media.

Over the years, Antoine Pecqueur has distinguished himself by his sharp pen and his ability to decipher the subtleties of music, exploring genres ranging from contemporary music to opera and jazz.

His work, which has appeared in prestigious publications such as *Le Monde*, has helped to demystify music for a wide audience, while at the same time providing essential keys to understanding the most complex works.

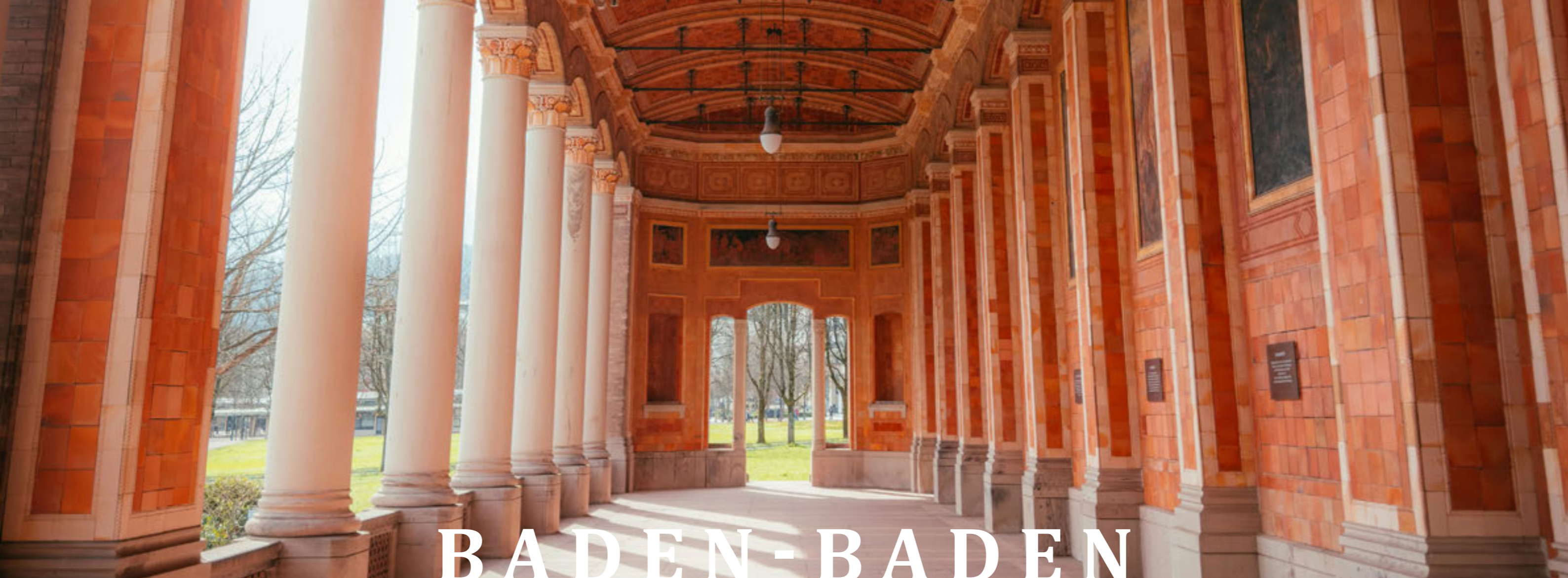
As a lecturer and teacher, Antoine

Pecqueur shares his passion for music through interventions in cultural and educational institutions, inspiring future generations to explore the riches of the musical repertoire.

Through his dedication and commitment to the art of music, Antoine Pecqueur continues to enrich the French and international cultural landscape, offering unique perspectives and illuminating analyses that contribute to the vitality and understanding of music in contemporary society.

The author of *Atlas de la culture* and *Géopolitique du rail* (published by Autrement), he is a monthly columnist on France Musique's *Matinale* programme, discussing the politics and economics of culture.

Winner of the bassoon prize at the CNSMD in Lyon, he also has a career as a musician with various orchestras playing period instruments (*Les Siècles*, *Orchestre des Champs-Élysées*, *Anima Eterna*, etc.). •



BADEN-BADEN

Teodor Currentzis, Utopia Orchestra

Nestling on the edge of the Black Forest, Baden-Baden is a city of culture and art. Some of the world's greatest names (Dostoyevsky, Brahms, Wagner, Hugo...) have lived and worked here, and the town has preserved a vibrant record of their lives. The Fabergé Museum, an astonishing institution dedicated to the jeweller of the famous Eggs, is a must-see, as is the Frieder Burda, one of Europe's leading museums of modern and contemporary art.

For relaxation, who can resist the thermal delights of the Friedrichsbad baths (opened in 1877) or the Caracalla baths (located in a more modern building)? The pleasures of Baden-Baden's thermal springs have been known and recognised since Latin times.

On this tour, we invite you to enjoy an exceptional musical experience. In the Festspielhaus, **Teodor Currentzis** presents two immense masterpieces of the Germanic repertoire: Mahler's *Symphony No. 5* and Bruckner's monumental *Symphony No. 9*. At the head of the **Utopia Orchestra**, the Greek conductor promises us emotions in capital letters!

TEODOR CURRENTZIS — G. MAHLER

Mahler's *Symphony No. 5* is the story of a rebirth. In 1901, the

Austrian composer met the love of his life: Alma Schindler, the daughter of a famous Viennese landscape architect. While the mythical *Adagietto* (imagined as a gift to his new fiancée) and the glorious *Finale* confirm the return to happiness, **Teodor Currentzis** expressly wishes to draw our attention to the third movement, the symphony's entire keystone. A *scherzo* of which the composer himself said: "each note is of radical vitality and the whole turns like a whirlpool, like a wave or like the hair of a comet".

TEODOR CURRENTZIS — A. BRUCKNER

Bruckner's sublime *Symphony No. 9!* The last (unfinished) work by a Romantic giant, the work impresses with its grandeur and emotional power. Long misunderstood and mocked by his contemporaries, Anton Bruckner here reaches the quintessence of his art. It is this legendary milestone in the history of music that conductor **Teodor Currentzis** has chosen to perform with his **Utopia Orchestra**, a collaborative group made up of musicians from a dozen countries. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways

October 25/27, 2024

From €830 per person

Berliner Philharmoniker, Kirill Petrenko, Klaus Mäkelä, Leif Ove Andsnes

Enjoy a musical wellness cure in Baden-Baden. With its lush vegetation, the Lichtentaler Allee is the most pleasant of walks, and can be complemented by a visit to the sublime Frieder Burda Museum, a temple of architecture and classical and contemporary art.

During the Easter holidays, Baden-Baden offers a delightful bath of music. The programme on offer features nothing less than three of the world's most extraordinary artists. In residence in the Black Forest city, the **Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra** will be led by its principal conductor, **Kirill Petrenko**, in an unforgettable *Symphony No. 9* by Beethoven. Making his Baden-Baden debut, the prodigious **Klaus Mäkelä** teams up with the exceptional Norwegian pianist **Leif Ove Andsnes** for a concert of the highest calibre. As for the new production of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, directed by **Davide Livermore**, it boasts the exceptional presence of **Eleonora Buratto** in the title role and Petrenko's Berlin forces in the pit.

BERLINER PHILHARMONIKER/KIRILL PRETRENKO

Ever since they were founded in 1883, the **Berliner Philharmoniker** have included Beethoven's *9th Symphony* in their programme. A

regular guest in the Black Forest, the berliner ensemble has been playing it since the reign of Han von Bülow in Baden-Baden, soon followed by performances by Wilhelm Furtwängler, Herbert von Karajan and Claudio Abbado. Heir to this prestigious tradition, **Kirill Petrenko** offers his own interpretation.

BERLINER PHILHARMONIKER/KLAUS MÄKELÄ/LEIF OVE ANDSNES

For this exceptional Easter Festival 2025, Finnish musician **Klaus Mäkelä** makes his Baden-Baden debut with the **Berlin Philharmonic** in a spectacular programme. He joins forces with the marvellous Norwegian pianist **Leif Ove Andsnes** for Rachmaninov's *Piano Concerto No. 3*, full of grace and poetry.

MADAME BUTTERFLY

For this new production, directed by **Davide Livermore**, we can count on the extraordinary forces of the **Berlin Philharmonic** conducted by **Kirill Petrenko**. Since taking on the role at New York's Metropolitan Opera in 2022, the Italian **Eleonora Buratto** has established herself as one of the great Butterflies of our time. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways

April 18/21, 2025

From €1,800 per person



BARCELONA

Gustavo Dudamel, Nadine Sierra, Juan Diego Flórez

We don't need to tell you just how pleasant Barcelona is! The beautiful Catalan city has everything you could wish for: an exceptional climate, beaches right in the heart of the city, a remarkable architectural heritage and a lifestyle that is absolutely unique in Europe.

Of course, you'll want to visit the sublime Sagrada Família (completion of which is scheduled for 2026 after almost 150 years of construction!) and Antonio Gaudí's astonishing works dotted around the city, including Parc Güell and the casas Milà and Batlló. The Palau de la Música Catalana, designed by Lluís Domènech i Montaner, is another extraordinary example of Catalan Art Nouveau.

In the evening, the legendary Théâtre de Liceu invites you to a musical monument. The line-up has the whole world dreaming: **Gustavo Dudamel, Nadine Sierra** and **Juan Diego Flórez!**

These three stars (all of whom have Latin American roots) are reunited in an absolute masterpiece of 20th century music: *West Side Story*. Leonard Bernstein's irresistible musical is presented here with a luxury of means rarely seen during the season.

How can you resist such a lyrical whirlwind?

WEST SIDE STORY

Vertical shots of Manhattan, a distant whistle, the camera suddenly plunges onto a basketball court where a group of young men are snapping their fingers...

The prologue to *West Side Story* has become the stuff of film legend. Although the film won ten Oscars in 1962, it is first and foremost a musical.

The genesis of *West Side Story* dates back to 1949. The choreographer Jerome Robbins suggested to Leonard Bernstein a modern version of Romeo and Juliet with street brawls between Jewish and Catholic groups. The composer was enthusiastic about the idea of creating a "musical tragedy", but soon gave up because of his duties as conductor.

The project was revived six years later when Bernstein met the playwright Arthur Laurents in a Beverly Hills hotel. Laurents had set the stage for the conflict between two rival gangs of "Americans" and Puerto Rican newcomers. This close-knit team was joined by the exceptional talent of the very young lyricist Stephen Sondheim, who was soon to become the king of Broadway.

The first rehearsals began enthusiastically, and the New York premiere on 26 September 1957 was hailed as a milestone in the history of American music. The show ran for 772 performances at the Winter Garden for two years.

Author of such gems as *Wonderful Town* and *Candide*, Bernstein has perhaps never written more beautiful music than *West Side Story*. Inflamed by the rhythms of Latin America, particularly Cuba, the score displays a dazzling diversity, often reaching operatic grandeur. In this collection of "hits", it's hard to single out one, and everyone will choose their own: from the *Mambo* in the ballroom scene, to *America America* to the rhythm of Huapango, not forgetting *I feel pretty* or *Maria Maria*...

Venezuelan conductor **Gustavo Dudamel** can be counted on to ignite the Latin rhythms of Bernstein's score. In the role of the tragic couple, the Peruvian **Juan Diego Flórez** has the golden voice to play Tony and the American **Nadine Sierra** (who has Puerto Rican roots) has the ideal quivering sensitivity to play Maria.

Irresistible! •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
July 31 / August 1, 2025
Prices to be announced

LA SAGRADA FAMILIA TERMINÉE EN 2026?

The Sagrada Família in Barcelona is one of the world's most emblematic works of architecture, designed by the visionary architect Antoni Gaudí.

Its construction, begun in 1882, is an ambitious project that has spanned more than a century of work, embodying the evolution of Catalan Modernist architecture. Completion of the basilica is scheduled for 2026, marking the centenary of Gaudí's death.

The Sagrada Família is a complex monument, rich in Christian symbolism and innovative architectural details.

Each facet of the basilica tells a biblical story, and its impressive towers dominate Barcelona's skyline. The central towers, dedicated to Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, the four Evangelists and the twelve Apostles, are a masterpiece of engineering and design. The interior of the basilica is equally spectacular, with its slender columns reminiscent of giant trees, creating a mystical forest atmosphere.


Coloured stained glass floods the space with light, constantly changing the perception of the interior according to the time of day and the seasons. Gaudí imagined the Sagrada Família as a harmonious fusion of architecture, nature and faith, and every element of the basilica reflects this vision.

Work on the basilica was continued by several generations of architects and craftsmen, each making their own contribution while remaining faithful to Gaudí's original vision.

Completion in 2026 will be a major event, celebrating the culmination of almost 150 years of artistic dedication and technical prowess.

The event will honour Gaudí's vision of the basilica as a harmonious fusion of faith, nature and architecture.

The Sagrada Família is not only a place of worship, but also a symbol of Barcelona and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. •



Samariterstraße

BERLIN

Anna Netrebko, Luca Salsi, René Pape

NABUCCO

Nabucco marks a major milestone in Verdi's career. Premiered at La Scala in 1842, it was the Italian composer's first great success.

Set in biblical times in Jerusalem and Babylon, *Nabucco* deals with the fate of two peoples and cultures, but also with the folly of power. Verdi achieves admirable scenes, such as the famous "*Va pensiero*" chorus sung by the imprisoned Hebrews, and intense theatrical scenes full of drama and passion.

This new production has been entrusted to the care of the remarkable director **Emma Dante**. The Sicilian artist, renowned for her films and plays, has teamed up with the great French conductor **Bertrand de Billy**.

The vocal cast includes **René Pape** and **Luca Salsi**, but of course we'll only have Chimène's eyes for **Anna Netrebko's** Abigail. The Russian soprano promises a performance that will be legendary in every way. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
October 9/10, 2024
Prices to be announced

Christian Thielemann

THE SILENT WOMAN

This is one of Richard Strauss's most unfairly overlooked operas. After the death of Hugo von Hofmannsthal, the German composer thought his operatic career was over. But he did not count on his meeting with the writer Stefan Zweig, with whom he created *The Silent Woman*.

The story is deliberately that of an opera buffa: a man who hates noise marries a woman he thought would be silent... Alas, History with a capital H would sweep away this endearing work, since in 1935 the Nazis were in power and Stefan Zweig had already fled because of his Jewishness. Worse still, the play was quickly banned and had to wait many decades for its true value to be recognised.

So it's a powerful gesture that conductor **Christian Thielemann** is proposing for his very first show at the helm of the Berlin Staatsoper. German director **Jan Philipp Gloger** is the ideal choice to assist him. In the title role, the American **Brenda Rae** follows in the footsteps of Natalie Dessay, who left her mark on the history of the role. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
July 24/25, 2025
Prices to be announced

Joyce di Donato, Elīna Garanča, René Pape, Rachel Willis-Sørensen

There are so many reasons to love Berlin. Its architectural heritage is immense, from the rococo splendour of Charlottenburg Palace to the futuristic style of Potsdamer Platz. The range of activities covers a superb spectrum: from the prestigious collections of the Museum Island to the UNESCO World Heritage-listed workers' housing estates. You can also relax in the Tiergarten or take in the extraordinary view from the top of the famous Television Tower to feel the pulse of this vibrant city.

We're offering three evenings of great diversity. The first is a recital by **Joyce di Donato**, who sings Schubert's moving *Winter Journey*, followed by two operas in decidedly different styles. On the one hand, Wagner's *Parsifal*, led by an exceptional cast (**Andreas Schager**, **René Pape**, **Elīna Garanča**); on the other, Bellini's bel canto masterpiece *Norma*, sung by the eminent American soprano **Rachel Willis-Sørensen**.

JOYCE DI DONATO RECITAL

The *Winter Journey* is without doubt Franz Schubert's most beautiful collection of songs. Intense and dramatic, it is a work of despair whose emotions touch the most intimate part of the human being. After recording it, **Joyce di Donato** returns to Schubert for an exceptional recital.

PARSIFAL

Richard Wagner's last opera, this "sacred stage festival" recounts the quest for the Holy Grail with a grandeur tinged with spirituality. Yet **Dmitri Tcherniakov** has chosen to strip the work of all religious decorum in this Berlin production. Musically, the vocal cast is full of promise. In the title role, **Andreas Schager** has all the heroism required. **Tomas Tomasson** as Klingsor and **Lauri Vasar** as Amfortas are captivating in their commitment, while **René Pape's** Gurnemanz offers a formidable lesson in singing and **Elīna Garanča** creates a sensation as Kundry.

NORMA

Set against a politico-historical backdrop, Bellini's opera re-enacts the eternal dilemma between public duty and private drama. From the opening recitative, **Rachel Willis-Sørensen** establishes herself as a great interpreter of the lead role. As powerful as she is electric, the American soprano offers a very fine psychological portrait, enhanced by velvety piani. **Vasily Barkhatov's** staging gives her a veritable showcase in which to shine. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
April 11/14, 2025
Prices to be announced



Festival Opening Concert, Gala Wagner, Jonas Kaufmann, René Pape, Lise Davidsen

In the Tyrol, the surrounding mountains and the art of living invite a new perception. The Swarovski Kristallwelten in Wattens open the eye to the iridescent shades of crystal. For hikers, the view from and towards the summit of the Kaisergebirge (Emperor's massif) offers the prospect of inspiring nature. The imposing fortress of Kufstein, for its part, offers a glimpse of over 800 years of history. And let's not forget Erl!

Chaired by **Jonas Kaufmann** until 2030 (at least), the Tiroler Festspiele has historically been held in the summer since 1998, but has managed to spread its offering over the whole season. Its principal conductor, **Asher Fisch**, will play a binding role thanks to his regular presence throughout the year. Act I of *The Valkyrie*, under his baton, will continue the event's Wagnerian legacy with the exquisite vocal trio of **Lise Davidsen-Jonas Kaufmann-René Pape**. The Austrian premiere of the dreamlike *Picture a Day Like This*, conducted by **Corinna Niemeyer**, is also in keeping with the contemporary creation DNA of the Austrian event.

FESTIVAL OPENING CONCERT

The programme for this inaugural evening features thematic and textural juxtapositions.

PICTURE A DAY LIKE THIS

George Benjamin is one of the leading figures in music today. With his faithful librettist Martin Crimp, he has taken the philosophical tale format and told a universal and poetic story with many facets.

A woman has one day to find a happy person who, according to a prophecy, can bring her recently deceased infant back to life. The parade of characters she encounters along the way marries a sensitive score with breathtaking textures and telluric energy.

GALA WAGNER

As a true Romantic, Liszt was keen to push instrumental music to its limits, in particular by sculpting it on the basis of poetic language. This *leitmotiv* approach is a vertiginous source of inspiration for Wagner's *Tetralogy*, of which *The Valkyrie* is the second part.

Act I reveals the meeting of Sieglinde and Siegmund, followed by a forbidden love, the trigger for the fantastic epic between humans and gods that continues to shape the history of the operatic world. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
July 3/6, 2025
Prices to be announced

Camilla Nylund, Ludovic Tézier, Alexandra Dovgan, Claus Guth

Music will be part of your daily travel routine, as the programme of the Erl Tyrolean Festival is sure to be varied. The acacia panels of the magnificent Festspielhaus will resound in four fascinatingly different formats.

The intimate, bubbling world of Germanic and Nordic Lieder for piano and soprano, two centuries of dizzying keyboard sonatas by a young prodigy, two short, mysterious 20th-century operas staged, and a shattering operatic classic by Verdi in a luxurious concert version.

CAMILLA NYLUND / HELMUT DEUTSCH RECITAL

A piano-voice recital can have many strings to its bow, especially when accompanied by a living legend of Lieder, namely **Helmut Deutsch**. The Finnish soprano brings together pieces from her native country, fragments by a composer she loves as an operatic soloist (Strauss) and a saving cinematic touch (Korngold), but doesn't forget the cycles.

ALEXANDRA DOVGAN RECITAL

Born in 2007, rising star **Alexandra Dovgan** has already won five international competitions. It goes without saying that musicality and virtuosity are equal in every repertoire!

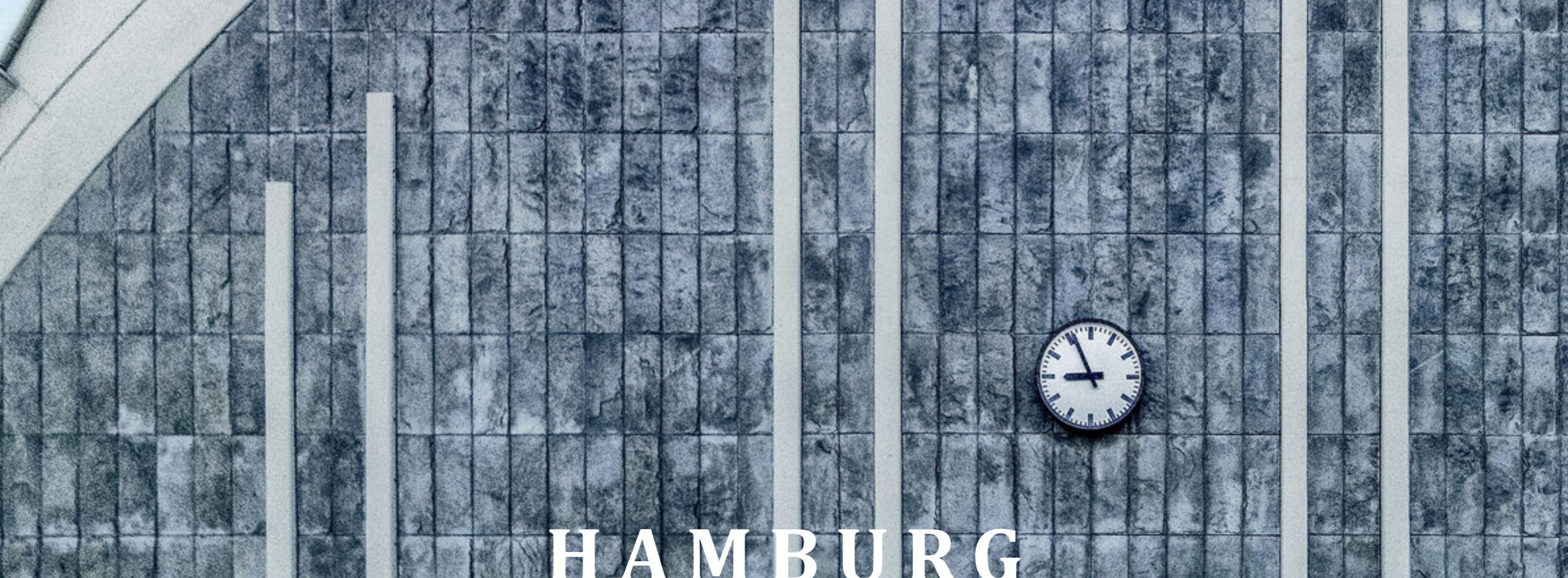
BLUEBEARD'S CASTLE / THE HUMAN VOICE

Despite the a priori dissimilar trajectories of *Bluebeard's Castle* and *The Human Voice*, director **Claus Guth** makes one the keystone of the other in the same evening, where two face-to-face confrontations confront a couple with their finitude. Bartók's only opera traces a path to Judith - Bluebeard's recent and last wife - through seven doors, linked to numbers that owe as much to Hungarian musical folklore as to the German and French masters.

RIGOLETTO

Who would have thought that a hunchback - and a baritone at that - would play the lead role in a plot that had twice been rejected by the Venetian censors? Verdi sensed the appeal of his melodies, so much so that he imposed an embargo - no whistling or singing - on the orchestra musicians for the aria "*La donna è mobile*" before the first performance. **Ludovic Tézier**, one of the best interpreters of the protagonist today, will light up the stage with **Julia Muzychenko-Greenhalgh**, a young talent to be followed very closely. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
July 16/20, 2025
Prices to be announced



HAMBURG

Ermonela Jaho, Bryn Terfel

Hamburg is an amazing city.

Germany's second-largest city breathes the air of the open sea: the Warehouse district and the Elbphilharmonie, which stands at the mouth of the Elbe, are not to be missed. Place de l'Hôtel de Ville (Town Hall Square) exudes a graceful elegance, and from the tower of St Michael's Church you can admire a panoramic view of the port and its surroundings.

Hamburg is a city of contrasts.

Take a stroll through the delightful Altona district, full of beautiful boutiques and charming restaurants. You can also discover the turbulent Sankt Pauli district and the legendary Reeperbahn, where the Beatles made their debut.

It is precisely this combination of passions that Hamburg Opera is offering over the course of two exceptional evenings. On the one hand, Donizetti's *Mary Stuart*, one of the most spectacular operas in the bel canto repertoire, with the immense soprano **Ermonela Jaho**; on the other, a recital by **Bryn Terfel** in which the Welsh baritone sings (and plays!) the full range of human emotions.

MARY STUART

Mary Stuart is now a legendary opera.

Yet it is hard to believe that the work was largely forgotten during the 19th century before being rediscovered during the golden age of recording in the late 1950s.

The greatest singers took on the roles of Mary Stuart and Elizabeth I: Montserrat Caballé and Shirley Verrett, Joan Sutherland and Marilyn Horne.

The scenes of the quarrel between the two queens are among the most explosive (and jubilant!) in the operatic repertoire, and Donizetti's music achieves prodigies of drama and vocal pyrotechnics.

This new production by Hamburg Opera has been entrusted to the care of German director **Karin Beier** and will feature the presence of the immense soprano **Ermonela Jaho**.

To face her, Irish singer **Aebh Kelly** has established herself as one of the most promising mezzos of the new generation.

BRYN TERFEL

Hamburg Opera's 'The art of' series is legendary. In the past, the Hanseatic series has welcomed Luciano Pavarotti, José Carreras, Grace Bumbry and Montserrat Caballé.

Continuing this prestigious tradition, the series welcomes *The Art of Bryn Terfel* concert, in which the Welsh baritone displays the full extent of his talent.

The programme is full of surprises, including Schubert Lieder, Debussy melodies and British songs.

Fabulous Falstaff, immense Scarpia, **Bryn Terfel** has a radiant voice and a fiery stage temperament.

In the intimacy of the recital, the baritone remains the prodigious actor who brings his texts to life with an irresistibly infectious enthusiasm.

His masterful interpretation makes every performance an unforgettable experience. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
March 22/24, 2025
Prices to be announced

THE CITY WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF BRIDGES

In Hamburg, the indissoluble alliance between water and land has created a city of incomparable splendour.

In this distinguished metropolis, a fusion of municipality and Land, the Elbe, Alster and Bille merge, breathing their vitality into the very depths of the city.

As well as its reputation as a crossroads of the waterways, Hamburg also boasts a majestic lake at its heart, a veritable playground for its intrepid inhabitants.

No fewer than 2,500 bridges, like architectural jewels, span the many arms of water that criss-cross this megalopolis, surpassing the number of bridges in Amsterdam, London and Venice combined.

Hamburg's impetuous waters have long shaped its destiny, closely weaving its economic and

urban fabric.

The Port of Hamburg, the pride of the city and Europe's third largest, has always been the pulsating economic heartbeat of the metropolis, attracting traders from the four corners of the globe and driving its industrial and commercial development.

Far from being confined to a utilitarian role, water became the epicentre of the Hanseatic city's cultural and recreational life.

The picturesque canals offer stunning panoramas for an immersive discovery of the city.

The clear waters and imposing arches of Hamburg's bridges tell the story of a rich history of prosperity, innovation and well-being, written in gold letters in the heart of this Hanseatic city that vibrates to the rhythm of its tumultuous waves and effervescent population. •



LISBON

Yuja Wang, Hannu Lintu, Alexander Malofeev, Mahler Chamber Orchestra

Portugal's bewitching capital, Lisbon is a city where ancient history blends harmoniously with modernity. Nestling on the banks of the majestic River Tagus, this fascinating city offers a unique and sunny setting, ideal for a memorable escape. Its winding cobbled streets, iconic monuments and lively districts such as Alfama and Bairro Alto reveal a wealth of culture and authentic charm that captivate visitors.

From its panoramic vantage points, you can admire the characteristic red roofs, azulejo facades and green hills that make up the picturesque landscape.

Lisbon is also a cradle of musical traditions, notably fado, and a dynamic arts scene, embodied by prestigious venues such as the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. A genuine invitation to discover and marvel, every street corner in Lisbon tells a story and every moment promises an unforgettable experience.

SWAN LAKE

When **Alexander Malofeev** was awarded the prestigious Tchaikovsky Prize for Young Musicians at the age of just 13, the advent of a new 'Russian genius' was quickly prophesied. Since 2014, this prediction

has materialised on the world's greatest stages, where Malofeev has shone.

Among his first fervent admirers was the renowned conductor Riccardo Chailly, who praised the "depth and technical quality" of his piano interpretation. Under the enlightened direction of **Hannu Lintu**, Malofeev joins the **Gulbenkian Orchestra** to magnify Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto No. 2*.

YUJA WANG/MAHLER CHAMBER ORCHESTRA RECITAL

In her first year as Associate Artist of the **Mahler Chamber Orchestra**, the Chinese pianist **Yuja Wang**, whose virtuosity and intensity are remarkable, returns to the Gulbenkian Foundation to perform and conduct two emblematic piano concertos by Ravel and Shostakovich. After winning over the critics with his dazzling interpretations of Ravel's music, Wang returns to one of the composers closest to his heart, showcasing his immense charisma. Following the success of Mitsuko Uchida in 2023, the Mahler Chamber Orchestra is once again under the direction of an exceptional pianist. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
November 15/18, 2024
Prices to be announced

Grigory Sokolov, Gulbenkian Orchestra, Krzysztof Urbanski, Alina Ibragimova

Lisbon, a true invitation to dream, stands out for its remarkable geographical location, unique atmosphere and picturesque districts that give the Portuguese capital its unrivalled charm.

There's nothing better than losing yourself in the winding streets of the Alfama district, steeped in history and authenticity, or gazing out over the city from the many terraces offering unbeatable views of the red rooftops and the Tagus River.

This trip will offer a deep immersion in the cultural richness of Lisbon. Music lovers will be particularly delighted, as two exceptional evenings are planned at the prestigious Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. This renowned establishment, dedicated to the promotion of the arts, will be offering musical moments of rare intensity, allowing you to savour top-level performances in a refined and elegant setting.

CONCERT BY THE GULBENKIAN ORCHESTRA

Regarded as one of the greatest violinists of our time, Alina Ibragimova plays with an immediacy and honesty that "has the uncanny ability to abolish any distance between performer and listener" (The Guardian), as if her notes were addressed exclusively to each audience member in an intimate musical sharing. Highly acclaimed

for her recording of Prokofiev's Violin Sonatas, the violinist returns to this sublime repertoire under the direction of Polish conductor Krzysztof Urbanski, who will conduct Shostakovich's powerful and visceral 10th Symphony in the second half.

GRIGORY SOKOLOV CONCERT

There are not enough words to do full justice to one of the most eminent pianists of all time. For more than a decade, Grigory Sokolov has been an indispensable presence at each new season of the Gulbenkian Foundation, nurturing an intense and lasting relationship with his audience.

The Grand Auditorium is transformed into a veritable sanctuary for the pianist's exuberant musicality. Blessed with a genius that systematically ensures a new and unprecedented interpretation of the works to which he devotes himself, Sokolov invests each season with a unique programme, projecting his profound and singular vision of each piece, and thus taking his audience to unexplored artistic heights. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
March 14/16, 2025
Prices to be announced



Milan's outstanding musical tradition is the jewel in the crown of the Lombard capital. This city, a veritable architectural and cultural symphony, echoes centuries of artistic excellence through its emblematic buildings, such as the majestic Duomo and the legendary Teatro alla Scala. The latter, the revered temple of opera, is the pinnacle of Milan's musical splendour. Since its inauguration in 1778, this sanctuary

of music has witnessed the most sublime operatic and symphonic works, as well as performances by the most illustrious artists in history. Music lovers flock from the four corners of the globe to indulge in the magic of its performances, where the perfect acoustics and the magnificence of the staging provide an incomparable experience.

Christian Thielemann

R. Chailly, J. Kaufmann, A. Netrebko

C. Thielemann, C. Nylund, K. F. Vogt

Raphaël Pichon, Ensemble Pygmalion

THE RHINEGOLD

For this first part of the *Tetralogy* (*Siegfried*, *Valkyrie* and *Twilight of the Gods* will follow in the coming seasons), La Scala has called on the excellent British director **David McVicar**. Acclaimed by the greatest theatres, McVicar knows how to combine the intimate and the spectacular, tradition and novelty, respect for the text and surprise, creating a most pleasing blend.

Christian Thielemann, an undisputed star conductor, is undoubtedly one of the great Wagnerians of our time. The cast that will be singing under his direction is largely made up of singers well-versed in the Wagnerian tradition, including **Michael Volle** as Wotan and **Okka von der Damerau** as Fricka.

A Wagner opera at the Teatro alla Scala - what a promising equation!•

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
October 31 / November 2, 2024
From €915 per person

A TRIBUTE TO PUCCINI

Puccini and the Teatro della Scala have a passionate relationship: the Milan opera house was home to his early works (*The Willies*, *Edgar*) as well as his most famous masterpieces (*Madame Butterfly*, *Turandot*). If ever there was a city that honoured its great man, it was the capital of Lombardy, which celebrated him in its opera house.

La Scala's Puccini gala is nothing short of exceptional. It features not only the **Chorus and Orchestra of La Scala** led by its admirable musical director, **Riccardo Chailly**, but also two of the greatest opera stars of our time. The programme presents a wide range of Puccini's music: from the juvenile *The Willies* to the rare *Crisantemi*, before **Jonas Kaufmann** and **Anna Netrebko** set the stage alight in the deeply moving final act of *Manon Lescaut*. Viva Puccini! •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
November 29 / December 1, 2024
From €850 per person

THE VALKYRIE

It has been ten years since Wagner's *Tetralogy* was performed at La Scala in Milan. Following in the footsteps of such legendary musicians as Arturo Toscanini, Wilhem Furtwangler and Herbert von Karajan, conductor **Christian Thielemann** leads this magnificent production by Scottish director **David McVicar**.

The second part of the *Tetralogy*, *Valkyrie* completely reshuffles the cards and the stakes of *The Rhinegold*.

Among the highlights of the score are **Michael Volle**'s majestic Wotan and **Camilla Nylund**'s moving Brünnhilde in the deeply moving scene of Wotan's farewell to his daughter. But the hero of the evening will be **Klaus Florian Vogt**'s Siegmund, an admirable German singer whose heroic voice continues the Wagnerian legend. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
February 15/16, 2025
Prices to be announced

RAPHAËL PICHON/JOHANNES-PASSION/PYGMALION

Premiered on 7 April 1724, the *St John Passion* is the most lyrical of the two Passions composed by Johann Sebastian Bach. Of course, the work is set in a liturgical context, but it is striking for the beauty of its solo arias (the sublime aria *Es ist vollbracht*) and the majesty of its choral parts. The German composer would hardly have accepted the expression, but this passion is very much in the form of an opera, and it is only natural that the work should be performed in the world temple of lyric art: the Teatro della Scala.

Founded in 2006, the **Ensemble Pygmalion** tackles this Everest of the repertoire with contagious enthusiasm. With its lively rhythms and balance between contemplation and theatrical urgency, conductor **Raphaël Pichon** presents an unforgettable reading of Johann Sebastian Bach's music. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
April 17/18, 2025
Prices to be announced



MUNICH

Munich, a city of unrivalled historical and cultural wealth, stands as the beating heart of Bavaria, radiating its prestige around the world. Founded in the 12th century, this Bavarian metropolis has succeeded in harmonising tradition and modernity, offering its visitors an enchanting blend of architectural heritage and contemporary innovations.

However, it is perhaps in its musical heritage that Munich stands out most brilliantly. With world-renowned institutions such as the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra and the Bavarian State Opera, the city is a sanctuary for lovers of classical music and opera. Famous composers such as Richard Strauss and Carl Orff found Munich a source of inspiration and a stage for their masterful creations.

A veritable showcase for music, Munich is not just a city where you listen; it's a city where you live music. Whether in sumptuous concert halls, open-air festivals or intimate concert cafés, music is everywhere. Every note tells a story and every melody captures the deep soul of Bavaria. Munich is much more than a musical destination; it's a living symphony, a hymn to the timeless beauty of the art of sound.

V. Grigolo, J. Kaufmann, D. Rustioni

CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA/PAGLIACCI

Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci will transport you to Italy in the early 20th century. This new production has been entrusted to **Francesco Micheli**, one of the great Italian directors of our time. Although Leoncavallo's and Mascagni's operas are two completely different works, their thematic, temporal and stylistic similarities mean that they can be linked together. Micheli's proposal promises to be fascinating.

In the vocal cast, Leoncavallo's opera is not sacrificed to Mascagni's, since the former features the formidable Italian tenor **Vittorio Grigolo** and the latter the celebrated **Jonas Kaufmann**, who, although not of Italian origin like Grigolo, has shown just how comfortable he is in the transalpine repertoire. If **Aylin Pérez** and **Yulia Matochkina** are appreciated in the main female roles, the legendary **Wolfgang Koch** creates a delightful link by singing in both works.

In the pit, conductor **Daniele Rustioni** has all the *Italianità* needed to set the stage alight. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
May 22/23, 2025
Prices to be announced

D. Michieletto, L. Oropesa, J. Fuchs

THE DAUGHTER OF THE REGIMENT

In this subtle blend of bravura arias and tender romances, the composer paints a delightful portrait of Marie, performed here by the formidable **Lisette Oropesa**. The American soprano will be accompanied by the legendary **Susan Graham** in the role of the Countess. As for the staging, Italian director **Damiano Michieletto** has created a magnificent set, accentuating the contrast between nature and the city in the libretto. In the pit, **Stefano Montanari** is an immense Baroque conductor, who possesses all the art of this energising repertoire.

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

With his librettist Lorenzo da Ponte, Mozart imagined lyrical and theatrical whirlwinds of breathtaking virtuosity. Russian director **Evgeny Titov**'s invigorating staging of *The Marriage* is reminiscent of commedia dell'arte. As well as **Dorothea Röschmann** as Marcellina and **Willard White** as Bartolo, we can't help but notice our own **Philippe Sly** and **Julie Fuchs** as Figaro and Suzanna. These two beasts of the stage will be conducted here by the ultra-precise baton of **Susanna Mälkki**, one of the great conductors of our time. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
July 1/4, 2025
Prices to be announced

A. Grigorian, R. Pape, R. Willis-Sørensen

RUSALKA

In **Martin Kušej**'s highly acclaimed production, the emphasis is on the aquatic world. Here, the mermaid is by no means protected by her fairytale family; family secrets hover over this rather nightmarish world. The moral of the tale is considerably renewed here. As for Dvořák's music, it is as sumptuous as ever, especially when conducted by **Edward Gardner** and sung by the flamboyant **Asmik Grigorian** in the role of the Little Mermaid.

LOHENGRIN

This production, directed by **Kornél Mundruczó**, was warmly received when it premiered in 2022. For its revival, the audience even gave it a standing ovation during the applause!

The German **Sebastian Weigle**, admittedly little known in France, will take his place in the pit. Poland's **Piotr Beczala** is the most melodious of the Lohengrins. Returning to their roles, **René Pape**, **Rachel Willis-Sørensen**, **Wolfgang Koch** and the incredible **Anja Kampe** make up the most dazzling cast. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
July 29/31, 2025
Prices to be announced



NAPLES

Naples, a city of legends and contrasts, stands out for the harmony between its thousand-year-old history and its vibrant modernity. Situated in the south of Italy, at the foot of the imposing Vesuvius and bordered by the crystal-clear waters of the eponymous bay, Naples is a veritable treasure trove of world heritage, renowned for its cultural wealth, its exceptional art of living and its exquisite cuisine.

Founded by the Greeks, embellished by the Romans and enriched by a multitude of civilisations over the centuries, Naples is a city where every stone whispers tales of a glorious past. To stroll through its narrow streets is to be immersed in a unique atmosphere, where the sacred and the profane, the ancient and the contemporary, blend in striking harmony. The birthplace of pizza, Naples also charms with the warmth of its people, their infectious joie de vivre and their legendary hospitality. This fascinating city offers a colourful and vibrant spectacle of life around every corner.

From its art and history to its gastronomic delights and breathtaking scenery, Naples offers an unforgettable experience, full of charm and magic. The timeless beauty of this city continues to captivate and enchant all those who (re)discover it, leaving an indelible mark on their lives. (re)discover it, leaving a lasting impression on their memories.

Asmik Grigorian, Anita Rachvelishvili

ASMIK GRIGORIAN CONCERT

Asmik Grigorian is an extraordinary singer: her voice combines clarity and power with extraordinary refinement. She is also what is known as a "stage beast", capable of setting fire to the stages of the world's greatest opera houses. An immensely talented opera singer, Asmik Grigorian is also a marvellous recitalist: the Lithuanian soprano performs here in a programme of Tchaikovski-Rachmaninov and Slavic Romanticism.

RUSALKA

Here's a *Rusalka* that's been eagerly awaited! The Teatro San Carlo in Naples is calling on another giant of staging: **Dmitri Tcherniakov**. With the Russian artist at the helm, *Rusalka* will certainly take on new colours, as Tcherniakov is capable of stage magic as well as probing the psychoanalytical issues of the libretto. The vocal cast is a veritable quartet of aces, with four immense stars in the female roles: **Ekaterina Gubanova, Maria Riccarda Wesseling, Anita Rachvelishvili** and the flamboyant **Asmik Grigorian** in the title role. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
December 1/4, 2024
Prices to be announced

Jonas Kaufmann, Saioa Hernández

TOSCA

How can you resist a performance of Puccini's opera in an Italian theatre?

Tosca is certainly one of the composer's finest works, thanks to its intensity and lyrical passion.

In this production, director **Edoardo de Angelis** (a renowned filmmaker whose last film opened the Venice Festival) sets the story in mythical Naples.

There is something of the mafia boss about Scarpia's cruelty.

The love between Tosca and Mario is all the more moving, especially when sung by **Saioa Hernández** and tenor **Jonas Kaufmann**, who finds one of his best roles here.

Recently applauded in Massenet's *Don Quixote* at the Bastille, **Christian van Horn** is a magnificent Scarpia. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
September 13/14, 2025
Prices to be announced

Ludovic Tézier, Anna Netrebko

A MASKED BALL

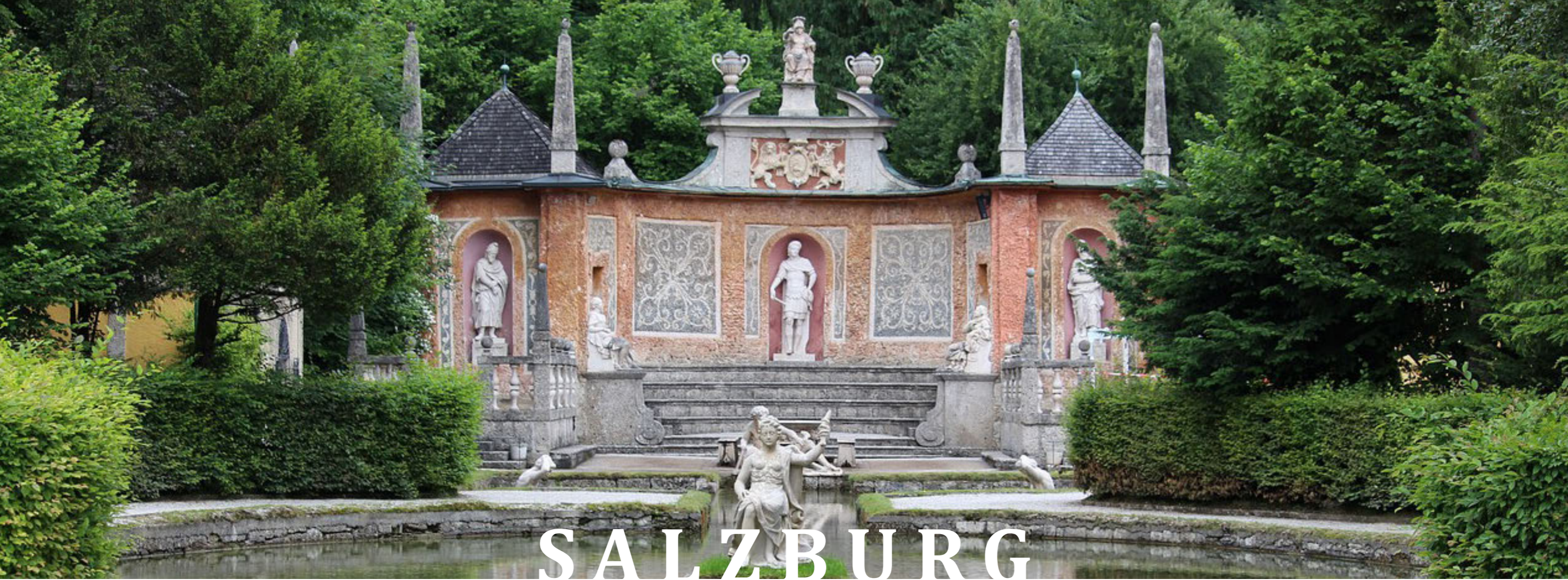
A Masked Ball marks a major milestone in Verdi's work. Premiered in 1859, the opera marks the abandonment of *bel canto* for a more dramatic style that was to culminate in later masterpieces.

The work was inspired by a real event, the assassination of King Gustav III of Sweden at a masked ball in 1791, which caused serious censorship problems. The action, already moved to Boston, was set in Naples when the opera was first performed in Paris in 1861.

In **Massimo Gasparon's** beautiful staging (recreated from Pierluigi Samaritani's), we find ourselves in the 18th century.

Here, the singers have plenty of time to display their bewitching art, especially as the cast includes a trio of no less than exceptional performers: the Italian tenor (and star in his own country) **Piero Pretti**, the imperial **Anna Netrebko** and our national **Ludovic Tézier**, considered to be the finest Verdian singer of our time. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
October 4/5, 2025
Prices to be announced



SALZBURG

Mozart Week – Wiener Philharmoniker, Sonya Yoncheva

Salzburg is the musical city par excellence.

Follow in the footsteps of its most famous child during your stay: Mozart's birthplace contains moving reminders of his youth.

The magnificent Council Chamber of the Residence of the Prince Archbishops hosted his first concerts, and it was in St Peter's Basilica that the Austrian composer was baptised. Mozart sometimes awaits you where you least expect him, as on the way to Capuchin Hill, where a statue of the musician dominates the city.

At the end of January, Salzburg hosts an entire Mozart Week. Conducted by tenor **Rolando Villazón**, this year's edition invites four of the greatest composers in history: Mozart, of course, but also Monteverdi, Bach and Händel.

Five days of concerts to admire artists such as singers **Sonya Yoncheva** and **Juan Diego Flórez**, pianists **Mitsuko Uchida** and **András Schiff**, not forgetting a superb performance of Monteverdi's *Orfeo* conducted by **Christina Pluhar**.

Fabulous!

WIENER PHILHARMONIKER / SONYA YONCHEVA

Mozart's musical genius is such that we think of him as an isolated phenomenon. In reality, the Austrian composer stands at the crossroads of eras: one foot in the Baroque Age of Enlightenment, the other (already) in the Romanticism of the 19th century.

This concert by the legendary **Vienna Philharmonic** conducted by the prodigious **Thomas Guggéis** (the Finnish conductor is undoubtedly the new star of the next few years) presents a Mozart in touch with his two elders: Bach on the one hand, but also Händel, whose splendid operatic excerpts are sung by the glorious Bulgarian soprano **Sonya Yoncheva**.

MAHLER CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

From the introduction to *Concerto No. 21*, we are thrown into the light-hearted atmosphere of Don Giovanni. Like the *adagio* of *Concerto No. 23*, the slow movement is one of Mozart's most famous melodies.

This sublime masterpiece will be performed this evening by the immense Japanese specialist **Mitsuko Uchida** alongside a superb concerto grosso by Händel.

ORFEO

L'Orfeo is a milestone in the history of music. It may even be the most important event of the last five centuries, since Monteverdi's work symbolises (wrongly, since other works preceded it) the birth of opera.

For this pinnacle of Western music, Mozart Week is inviting a highly acclaimed production from Dresden directed by **Nikolaus Habjan**.

Conductor **Christina Pluhar**, at the head of her ensemble **L'Arpeggiata**, no longer needs to prove her affinity with this repertoire, and the cast includes **Rolando Villazón's Orfeo** (also director of Mozart Week), who will be accompanied by such seasoned Baroque singers as **Céline Scheen** as the Nymph and **Cyril Auvity** as Apollo.

WIENER PHILHARMONIKER / CHAMBER ORCHESTRA OF EUROPE

How can you resist the voice of **Juan Diego Flórez**? The Peruvian tenor performs here in a selection of top-flight Mozart arias.

This concert by the **Vienna Philharmonic** conducted by the excellent Ukrainian conductor **Oksana Lyniv** is not the only Annocident treat, as we hear one of Mozart's masterpieces for violin and Händel's magnificent *Water Music*.

This '*music on water*' was composed by Händel for a festival on the River Thames in honour of King George I, which took place on 17 July 1717.

A beautiful summer evening, richly decorated boats filled with lords and ladies and an orchestra of 50 musicians playing on board a huge barge. Almost 300 years later, this masterly music has lost none of its freshness.

CAPPELLA ANDREA BARCA

At the end of his short life, Mozart developed a passion for the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. With its rich contrapuntal writing, the magnificent *Concerto No. 25* bears the marks of this discovery.

The immense Hungarian pianist **András Schiff** plays and conducts from his keyboard this superb concerto, full of majesty and a gateway to Beethovenian Romanticism.

At the head of the **Cappella Andrea Barca**, the musician will continue the enchantment with one of the most beautiful Brandenburg concertos and a triple concerto by Bach. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
January 29 / February 2, 2025
Prices to be announced



VENICE

Located in north-east Italy, Venice, the famous city of the waters, is a unique city with a rich musical and cultural heritage.

Since the Renaissance, Venice has been a hotbed of artistic creation, where composers, musicians and artists from all walks of life have left an indelible mark.

Antonio Vivaldi, one of the most famous Baroque composers, created his major works here, and his concertos continue to resound in the city's magnificent concert halls.

La Fenice, Venice's prestigious opera house, attracts music lovers from all horizons with its rich repertoire.

This legendary theatre has seen some of the world's greatest artists perform and has been the venue for numerous world premieres, consolidating Venice's reputation as a nerve centre for classical music.

In every alleyway, in every square, music and art vibrate, making Venice a living museum where past and present meet in harmony. The little churches are home to hidden treasures, and classical music concerts are frequent, offering exceptional acoustics.

Pier Luigi Pizzi, Alex Esposito

ANNE BOLEYN

Premiered on 26 December 1830 at the Teatro Carcano in Milan, this tragic opera is considered one of the masterpieces of the *bel canto* repertoire. The opera recounts the last days of Queen Anne Boleyn, second wife of King Henry VIII of England, wrongly accused of adultery, treason and incest.

Donizetti's music is distinguished by its lyrical melodies, rich orchestration and thematic motifs that heighten the drama. The aria *Al dolce guidami castel natio* is one of the opera's most poignant moments, in which Anne expresses her nostalgia and despair.

For this performance, directed by the exceptional **Pier Luigi Pizzi**, **Lidia Fridman** will take on the particularly demanding role of Anne Boleyn, requiring vocal virtuosity and great emotional depth. She will be joined by **Alex Esposito** as Henry VIII and **Enea Scala** as Percy. **Renato Balsadonna** will be in the pit conducting the **La Fenice Orchestra**. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
April 4/6, 2025
Prices to be announced

Leo Muscato, Michele Pertusi

ATTILA

Attila is an opera in a prologue and three acts composed by Giuseppe Verdi. Premiered on 17 March 1846 at La Fenice in Venice, it is based on the play *Attila, King of the Huns* by Zacharias Werner. The opera takes place in the 5th century, recounting the Hun invasions led by Attila and the struggles of the invaded peoples.

The title role, Attila, played here by **Michele Pertusi**, is a powerful baritone, portrayed both as a ruthless conqueror and a man of complex feelings. Odabella, played by soprano **Anastasia Bartoli**, is the daughter of the lord of Aquileia, determined to avenge her father. **Andeka Gorrotxategi** will take on the role of Foresto, a tenor in love with Odabella, adding a romantic dimension to the work. **Sebastiano Rolli** will be back with the **La Fenice Orchestra** for this performance, directed by **Leo Muscato**.

This dramatic opera continues to captivate with its timeless themes and passionate music, cementing Verdi's reputation as a master of musical drama. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
May 23/25, 2025
Prices to be announced

Daniele Rustioni, Interpreti Veneziani

TOSCA

Set in Rome in June 1800 during the Napoleonic Wars, *Tosca* tells the tragic story of Floria Tosca (**Chiara Isotton**), a famous opera singer, and her love for the painter Mario Cavaradossi (**Riccardo Massi**). Baron Scarpia (**Roberto Frontali**), the chief of police, is the epitome of brutality and corruption, seeking to destroy their love to satisfy his own desires. In the pit, **Daniele Rustioni** reunites with the **La Fenice Orchestra**.

VIVALDI CONCERT

The Interpreti Veneziani, an ensemble renowned the world over for its masterly interpretations of Baroque music, will be honouring Vivaldi in an extraordinary concert in the church of San Vidal. This enchanting 17th-century Venetian setting boasts exceptional acoustics, revealing every musical nuance with incomparable clarity and purity. The historic atmosphere of this place, steeped in mystery and grandeur, adds a unique dimension to the appreciation of Baroque music. You'll be transported to a bygone era when artistic beauty reached its zenith. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
September 4/7, 2025
Prices to be announced



VIENNA

Vienna, the musical jewel of Europe, resonates to the rhythm of timeless melodies and spellbinding notes. The capital of illustrious composers such as Mozart, Beethoven and Strauss, the city celebrates its musical heritage with palpable passion. Its prestigious concert halls, such as the Musikverein and Konzerthaus, host world-class performances, while the Vienna State Opera lights up the opera scene

with captivating productions. The cobbled streets echo with street melodies and the sounds of classical music, while historic cafés provide intimate settings for enjoying live musical performances. In Vienna, music is much more than just a tradition; it is the very soul of the city, vibrating through every stone, every note and every moment of daily life.

Asmik Grigorian, Eve-Maud Hubeaux

DON CARLOS

For many, it is Verdi's best opera. If the composer was so attached to this sublime story of love and politics, it's because it sums up all his preoccupations: family, spiritual, political and sentimental. In Don Carlo, he imagined four exceptional roles: King Philip II, his son Don Carlos, Elizabeth of Valois and Princess Eboli.

We can count on the boundless imagination of the brilliant Russian director **Kirill Serebrennikov** (also a Cannes Festival favourite) to weave relevant echoes of our own time.

The high-calibre cast (**Roberto Tagliavini**, **Joshua Guerrero**, **Asmik Grigorian** and **Eve-Maud Hubeaux**) confirms the scope of this new production. With **Philippe Jordan** in the pit, this is one of the operatic events of the year. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
October 6/7, 2024
From €620 per person

Elīna Garanča, Jonas Kaufmann

CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA / PAGLIACCI

Cavalleria Rusticana and *Pagliacci* are two operas traditionally performed together. Created in 1985, Jean-Pierre Ponnelle's staging is resolutely "old-fashioned": the action is set in a Sicilian village in the 1930s. With its strength and elegance, the production has already served as a backdrop for such legendary singers as José Carreras and Plácido Domingo in *Pagliacci* or Gwyneth Jones and Ileana Cotrubaş in *Cavalleria Rusticana*.

For this eagerly-awaited revival, the Vienna Opera has assembled a superlative cast, including **Elīna Garanča** and **Jonas Kaufmann**. To attend a performance of the *Cavalleria Rusticana / Pagliacci* diptych is to enter a world of extreme passions, where love and death coexist with excess. The quintessence of Italian opera. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
January 19/20, 2025
From €700 per person

Aleksandra Kurzak, Roberto Alagna

TOSCA

This may be the Staatsoper's oldest production (it premiered in 1958!), but **Margarethe Wallmann's** production has lost none of its magic. The passionate love story between Tosca and Cavaradossi (thwarted by the cruel Baron Scarpia) is brought to life in striking images.

Puccini's breathtaking opera gains clarity and direction in this production, never more powerful than when embodied by great performers.

This is certainly the case here with the pairing (on stage and off) of **Aleksandra Kurzak** as Tosca and **Roberto Alagna** as Cavaradossi. Under the affectionate baton of **Marco Armiliato**, the duo (to which **Gabriele Viviani's** Scarpia should be added) will set the stage of the Vienna Opera alight! •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
May 17/18, 2025
From €680 per person

Anna Netrebko, Yusif Eyvazov

THE QUEEN OF SPADES

Tchaikovsky's opera is first and foremost a marvellous story of tormented romanticism. The work tells of Hermann's descent into hell, obsessed by gambling, leading him to sacrifice his love for Lisa. Tchaikovsky's feverish music is one of his finest scores.

Director **Vera Nemirova** cleverly sets the action just after the fall of Communism in the 1990s, when extreme wealth rubs shoulders with terrible poverty.

But perhaps the highlight of the evening will be **Anna Netrebko's** eagerly-awaited debut as Lisa, and as good fortune never comes alone, the Russian diva will be accompanied by her city husband, Azeri tenor **Yusif Eyvazov**, as Hermann. •

Individual Musical Journeys - Classical & Operatic Getaways
June 21/22, 2025
From €700 per person



VIENNA

Nouvel An – Concert de la Saint-Sylvestre au Musikverein, Gala Équestre

There's the Christmas tree, Christmas Eve on 25 December and... the New Year's Eve concert in Vienna!

For its 85th edition, this fabulous event watched by tens of millions of television viewers around the world marks its return under the direction of the immense Italian conductor **Riccardo Muti**.

Coming to Vienna for the concert is worth a visit in itself. But Vienna has so much to offer at this time of year. Of course, the Austrian capital is wonderful in any season, but it has a special magic in winter: the Prater illuminated in lights, the great Christmas markets with, for the more sporty, a magical ice rink in front of the Town Hall, Kärtner Strasse decked out in a thousand lights and, of course, the city's admirable museums, which are among the most beautiful in the world.

If there's one tradition that's firmly rooted in the hearts of the Viennese, it's the New Year's Eve concert in the legendary Musikverein. The atmosphere is magical, the audience surprisingly warm: it's as if you're witnessing a gentle, joyful ritual, and the **Vienna Philharmonic** has a sound to die for. Come and enjoy a magical stay in Vienna.

EQUESTRIAN GALA PERFORMANCE WITH MUSIC

The Spanish High School of Vienna, a veritable temple to the equestrian art, embodies the apogee of the Spanish equestrian tradition. In the heart of the imperial city, this prestigious institution perpetuates the age-old heritage of this noble art with exemplary rigour.

Riders and horses engage in exquisitely precise training in subtle harmony, demonstrating unrivalled skill in executing figures and movements of ineffable grace. Every moment spent in this place of unparalleled devotion reveals an absolute commitment to excellence, whether in the mastery of classical steps or in the subtle communication between rider and mount.

Within these walls, equestrian art is elevated to the level of true eloquence, transporting initiates into a universe where beauty and harmony reign supreme. The pinnacle of this artistic expression is reached during the prestigious musical equestrian galas, where the dazzling performances of male and female riders in tails riding sublime Lipizzaner stallions blend harmoniously with the spellbinding notes of refined music, creating a show of rare emotional and aesthetic intensity.

NEW YEAR'S EVE CONCERT

The last time **Riccardo Muti** conducted a New Year's concert in Vienna, in 2021, was without an audience because of the pandemic.

The immense Italian conductor finally returns to the Musikverein to conduct the **Vienna Philharmonic**, a collaboration that goes back to his youth. Indeed, it was in 1971 that Muti first performed with this sublime Austrian orchestra.

Since then, this association between the Wiener and the maestro has become the stuff of legend in nearly 500 concerts. It's worth noting that the Philharmonic's musicians are so fond of Muti that they regularly invite him to their major celebrations.

In a few months' time, Muti will take the baton to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*, premiered on 7 May 1824 in Vienna. In 2024, in addition to the 85th New Year's concert, we will also be celebrating the bicentenary of the birth of Johann Strauss II. This New Year's Eve concert therefore has a very special flavour, as the famous composer of *The Blue Danube* will reign even more majestically than usual.

A moment of happiness and a vintage concert not to be missed! •

Individual Musical Journeys - short version
December 30, 2024 / January 1, 2025
From €3,120 per person

Individual Musical Journeys - long version
December 29, 2024 / January 2, 2025
From €7,350 per person

THE VIENNA PUMMERIN TRADITION

The Pummerin, the most famous of St Stephen's Cathedral's bells, housed in the 68-metre-high north tower, is the second-largest working church bell in Europe. This melody of the Viennese soul, a bronze voice cast in 1711 from Turkish cannons captured in 1683, weighs 21 tonnes and measures almost 3 metres in diameter. It is the largest bell in Austria and a masterpiece of the foundry.

Every 1 January, the Pummerin rings out to welcome in the New Year, symbolising hope and the infinite possibilities that lie ahead. This is a sacred moment for the people of Vienna, a time when the whole city looks to the future with optimism, leaving behind the challenges of the past.

The deep, majestic ringing of the Pummerin envelops the city in a sense of renewal and unity, marking a new beginning.

Over the centuries, the people of Vienna have immersed themselves in its sound, finding comfort and continuity in its regular notes. The Pummerin embodies the history, resilience and hope of a people.

Whether it marks the beginning of the day or accompanies a moment of meditation, it is a faithful companion, anchored in the heart of Vienna.

Its deep timbre is a timeless symphony, an invisible link that unites the people of Vienna, recalling key moments in their history and offering unshakeable serenity in difficult times. And so, every New Year, the Pummerin not only marks the passage of time; it reaffirms the promise of a future full of hope and opportunity for all those who listen to its song. •

CAIRO

Dates to be announced

Cairo is preparing to welcome one of the most ambitious and eagerly awaited museums in the world: the **Great Egyptian Museum**.

Located at the foot of one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the Pyramids of Giza, the Great Egyptian Museum will house the world's largest collection of ancient Egyptian artefacts, including the treasure of Tutankhamen. Designed to offer an immersive, modern experience, the museum incorporates cutting-edge technology to present Egyptian history and culture in an interactive way.

This veritable masterpiece, with its impressive architecture and vast exhibition spaces, required a Pharaonic amount of work, the unfortunate consequence of which was the constant postponement of the eagerly-awaited opening date (which has still not been announced).

Thanks to the help of La Fugue, it is possible to visit the museum in advance (before the official opening), but only in the corridors of the building. In order to offer you a complete and privileged experience, La Fugue has decided to postpone its visit to Egypt. We will be sure to keep those of you who have been patient enough to sign up for this unique experience informed. •

Ask to be kept informed by Sophie Chaudru de Raynal
sophie.deraynal@lafugue.com — +33 (0)1 43 59 20 32 — +33 (0)7 69 12 54 46

FLORENCE

Programme from September 7 to December 22, 2024

Florence is a remarkable musical city. Contrary to what its name might suggest, the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino is not limited to the lovely month of May. It is a remarkable season with a year-round programme of recitals, concerts and opera performances.

Among the most important events is Bruckner's deeply moving *Symphony No. 8*, conducted by **Zubin Mehta** (6 October 2024). For this concert, the musician has chosen Bruckner's last completed symphony, whose slow movement quite simply opens the gates to eternity.

On 10 October 2024, **Daniele Gatti** offers the admirable *German Requiem*, an essential milestone in Brahms's music. The work is an immense spiritual fresco whose depth and humanity Gatti will be able to emphasise.

On 24 October, the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino offers a new production of *Madama Butterfly*, conducted by **Daniele Gatti**, directed by **Lorenzo Mariani** and performed by **Carolina Lopez Moreno** in the title role. As Pinkerton, **Piero Pretti** has established himself as the leading Italian tenor of his generation. •

Book a tailor-made holiday in Florence with Sophie Chaudru de Raynal
sophie.deraynal@lafugue.com — +33 (0)1 43 59 20 32 — +33 (0)7 69 12 54 46

MILAN

October 17/20, 2025

Our trip will also be a fantastic journey through time. First of all, a recital by **Asmik Grigorian** will take us back to the Germany of Richard Strauss. In this Milan recital, the singer offers us a more intimate side of her art as she performs alongside pianist **Hyung-Ki Joo**.

Donizetti's irresistible *Daughter of the Regiment* (staged by the brilliant **Laurent Pelly**) will then transport us to Paris bel canto. In this subtle blend of aria, bravura and tender romance, the composer paints a delightful portrait of Marie, played by the formidable **Julie Fuchs** accompanied by her excellent compatriot **Géraldine Chauvet** in the role of the Countess. In the role of Tonio, **Juan Diego Flórez** is quite simply one of the finest singers in this repertoire.

As for **Riccardo Chailly**, he will conduct a magnificent programme from the Viennese Secession. If he is an immense interpreter of the operatic repertoire, the Italian musician is also a superb symphonic conductor. This programme takes us back to 1900 Vienna, when Schönberg and Berg revolutionised music. The highlight of this splendid concert is the moving Rückert Lieder (an important milestone in Mahler's work), sung by the great mezzo **Elīna Garanča**. •

To register, please contact Sophie Chaudru de Raynal
sophie.deraynal@lafugue.com — +33 (0)1 43 59 20 32 — +33 (0)7 69 12 54 46

SALZBURG - Easter Festival

April 18/22, 2025

The Salzburg Easter Festival is one of Austria's most prestigious cultural events. Founded in 1967 by the legendary conductor Herbert von Karajan, the festival attracts music lovers from all over the world, offering an exceptional programme of concerts, operas and theatrical performances.

During the Easter period, Salzburg is transformed into a veritable capital of classical music, with the most renowned orchestras and soloists performing in historic venues such as the Großes Festspielhaus and the Haus für Mozart.

This 2025 edition is no exception! Among the great names sharing the Festival bill are **Maxim Emelyanychev**, **Emily Pogorelc**, **Wiebke Lehmkuhl**, **Pene Pati**, **Andrè Schuen**, **Esa-Pekka Salonen**, **Malé Galyoan**, and many others.

Major choirs and orchestras will also be taking part, including the **Chorus of the Bayerischen Rundfunks** and the **Mahler Chamber Orchestra**. A host of composers will also be in the spotlight, from Bartholdy, Mahler and Grieg to Tchaikowski and Schotakowitsch. •

To register, please contact Pauline Heckly
pauline.heckly@lafugue.com — +33 (0)1 43 59 20 33 — +33(0)7 49 77 39 65

Take the time

to recharge your batteries
in the calm of White Desert

Embark on an unparalleled odyssey to the ends of the earth, where the immaculate and majestic expanse of the South Pole stretches out. The sanctuary of the White Desert, a realm of virginal beauty and absolute tranquillity, where the dazzling whiteness of the landscape evokes the lunar surface, an immense and serene void that inspires humility and contemplation. The total absence of noise, an almost supernatural silence, envelops every moment of this adventure, offering a complete escape from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. The purity of the icy air fills your lungs with a new vitality, as you soak up the surrounding immensity and tranquillity.

This expedition to the South Pole is an experience of life, a plunge into a world where time seems suspended and every breath of fresh air reminds us of the unspoilt beauty of our planet. Cross the icy expanses, discover the timeless majesty of the Antarctic continent and feel the exhilaration of being at the southernmost point of the Earth. Whether you're fascinated by the surreal landscapes, eager to experience absolute silence or simply in search of the pure emotion of an extraordinary journey, the White Desert offers you an unrivalled experience. This is your opportunity to enter a world of pure wonder, at the final frontier of our planet.

This expedition will change your life, and is therefore being prepared with the utmost solemnity. Before you take off for the South Pole, you'll enjoy a much-needed pre-arrival in South Africa, where you'll have the chance to meet some penguins. A truly privileged moment in life that will give you a foretaste of the rest of your trip!

Get ready for an extraordinary experience, where every moment will be filled with majesty and wonder. An exceptional journey awaits you, rich in discovery and unforgettable emotions. •

La Fugue is at your disposal to organise your tailor-made stay in the White Desert



Aigul Akhmetshina, Carmen at a hundred miles an hour

In 2018, mezzo-soprano Aigul Akhmetshina was 22 years old and her voice and temperament were already being noticed. A few years later, she was being hailed as the 'new Anna Netrebko', and she was performing on the world's greatest stages - not least in Carmen, one of her signature roles, which she reprised at London's Royal Opera House in a new production by Damiano Michieletto.

In 2018, as part of the bucolic Baugé opera festival in Anjou, the young mezzo-soprano Aigul Akhmetshina was already causing a sensation: aged just 22 at the time, she was noted for her "deep, amber timbre, rich in harmonics", already revealing a temperament on stage that led people to say at the time that "she would undoubtedly make her mark on the international operatic landscape of the next few years". Today, Aigul Akhmetshina is 27, sings on the world's greatest stages and is heralded by opera circles as the "new Anna Netrebko".

Born into a modest family in the Urals, she decided that she would become a singer at the age of six, after her first public performance at a school festival. She joined a singing class, left at 14 to take a classical course at Ufa Arts College, already winning local prizes, and then tried to get into Moscow University to study music. On her way home, however, a car accident "almost destroyed (her) voice".

Her mother, who was bringing up her three children alone, encouraged her to opt for "more stable studies than music". Aigul Akhmetshina was about to give up singing. She considered "journalism or psychology". Her music teachers talked her out of it: she had to wait a year before she could apply to university again, which would be the opportunity to "rebuild her voice". At the same time as rebuilding her voice, she was invited to take part in a singing competition in Moscow, where she met the casting director of the Royal Opera House's young artists programme, Jette Parker, who opened the doors to London for her. She was 21 and this was the start of her operatic career.

The Royal Opera House gave her her first real roles: Preziosilla in *La Force du Destin*, Sonyetka in *Mzensk's Lady Macbeth*, Flora in *Traviata*, and Maddalena in *Rigoletto*, as well as Mercedes and above all the title role in *Carmen*, which became one of her signature roles.

"50 shades of Carmen"

This season, Aigul Akhmetshina has sung Carmen on a number of major international stages: at the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich at the start of the season, then at the Deutsche Oper in Berlin, as well as in Carrie Cracknell's new production at the Metropolitan Opera in New York at the end of last

year, and now once again at the Royal Opera House in London since 5 April 2024, in an original production by Damiano Michieletto. She will reprise the role again this summer at the Glyndebourne Festival, and then in Naples.

It's "50 shades of Carmen" according to Aigul Akhmetshina, who was a feminist Carmen in New York directed by Carrie Cracknell (the production transposed the libretto to a firearms factory in the United States) and has been a symbol of freedom in London since 5 April, opposite Piotr Beczala's Don José. With his production for Covent Garden, Damiano Michieletto believes that "Carmen is above all about freedom: on the one hand, the female protagonist embodies an idea of absolute freedom, which often implies a life on the margins, like a stray animal; on the other, Don José's mother tries to keep control over her son, forcing him to obey even if it means derailing his will". The director adds that Don José's mother "is not directly present in the libretto, but her strength is manifested through the character of Micaëla. The final tragedy, which leads to Carmen's femicide, thus takes on the appearance of a metaphorical battle between two opposing existential models". Given her temperament, we can imagine that Aigul Akhmetshina will have no great difficulty in embodying this image of freedom.

In some respects, the young mezzo seems to recognise herself in Bizet's character: "she is very honest, every time she says 'I love you' to someone, she means it; every time, she is sincerely convinced that she loves; she is driven by this irrepressible need to live and feel something". While Aigul Akhmetshina says she is "more cautious" than Carmen, she also says she "can do anything on stage" and is "addicted to adrenalin, like all artists". At 27, the mezzo-soprano is "in a hurry to live". Since childhood, she has claimed to have no time to lose. She's already done a lot and she's still very young. Does she have time? She thinks not, "life goes very fast".

The new production of *Carmen* at London's Royal Opera House ran from 5 April to 31 May 2024. The production was captured on video for worldwide cinema release in partner cinemas on 1 May. •

Full article available on [OperaOnline](#)





CHEF'S CONFESSIONS

Interview with conductor David Stern, before Opera Fuoco's 20th anniversary concert

Opera Fuoco, a period-instrument opera company, was co-founded in 2003 by conductor David Stern, violinist Katharina Wolff and gambist Jay Bernfeld. In 2008, it joined a workshop of young singers, some of whose alumni (Adèle Charvet, Vannina Santoni, Benoît Rameau, Lea Desandre, Clémentine Margaine) are now regulars on French and international stages. Although the repertoire initially covers the Baroque period, Cherubini's *Médée* takes the independent variable-geometry orchestra into another dimension, opening the door to Mozart, then to later eras up to Porter, Korngold and Bernstein. In addition to concert and stage performances, there is no shortage of projects, including recordings of rare works, web series, chamber music and masterclasses. The Théâtre des Champs-Élysées hosted a concert celebrating Opera Fuoco's 20th anniversary. An opportunity to look back with David Stern, also Principal Conductor of Palm Beach Opera (Florida), on two decades of music, young hopefuls and a changing operatic world.

Thibault Vicq (OperaOnline - TV): A lyric company conceived by a conductor, a violinist and a gambist is already proof of an ensemble unlike any other?

David Stern (DS): Indeed. What really interested me was sharing experience, finding the flame of the text in the song, using period instruments that could translate the rhetorical side of a phrase in Italian, French or English in a different way to modern instruments. When I launched Fuoco, I immediately wanted to work with young singers. I hadn't necessarily thought of an opera workshop, but that has since become the basis of our approach, through 'generations' over three years. I'm not doing this work for myself, I'm doing it to serve young people!

TV: When you audition future singers for the Atelier Lyrique, do you already have a repertoire in mind for them?

DS : I already have some ideas beforehand, because you still have to programme in advance, but with each generation, I choose repertoire according to the sensitivity and abilities I identify in the singers. When Vannina Santoni finished her three years with us, her voice was developing, and I wanted to offer her her first major role. I created an entire production of Donizetti's *L'Élixir d'amour* around her. She sang Norina magnificently, even though she was still young. Opera houses that often want well-known names plan five years in advance. With Opera Fuoco, we mainly do productions with singers from the troupe, sometimes with former members of the Atelier, who have become more experienced and are ready to tackle broader repertoires. In the projects we have with big names - Raffaella Milanese, Vivica Genaux, Danielle de Niese... - we also notice that the singers are even better. Everyone is caught up in this talent and momentum.

TV : Does the relationship between experienced instrumentalists and singers emerging from their studies help these young people make the transition from theory to practice?

DS : Absolutely, because they have little professional experience and need to be exposed to the reality of the profession. A youth orchestra would certainly give them a lot, but our experienced musicians get them into the swing of things straight away. I'm touched that a number of our singers have found a safe space with us, which I hadn't consciously conceived. The challenges of becoming a professional singer today are immense. You can be covered in glory one day, fail on stage the next and jeopardise your career. We want to give them time to develop, to ask themselves questions, while avoiding the pressure of systematic perfection. If you don't mess up, you can't learn. In the French music curriculum, the

term "cycle de perfectionnement" is used - it's so pretentious! It's an irrational term - seeking the unattainable - and even contemptuous, implying that you can never be perfect. Nobody is perfect, we simply have to aspire to ever greater modesty and sincerity.

TV : The current opera scene is such that young singers are leaving their mark?

DS : Young people who need to perform are sometimes unfairly given roles that are unsuited to their voices. This can make them vulnerable, with disastrous consequences. My door is always open to members of the current generation and former members. They can come and work, ask me for advice on a role they've been offered, prepare projects... Fuoco is interested in each individual, to give young singers the confidence to continue in this profession. And that's no mean feat! You can be unfairly crushed by subjective judgements at a key moment in your career. And that's not counting the other soft skills you need to acquire: looking for an agent, talking to one, preparing for an audition, choosing the works and the order in which you're going to perform them. All too often, singers plan to audition pieces that a director likes, but that they themselves don't like to sing, and so unconsciously don't invest as much as they could. So sometimes you have to make difficult choices and turn down a project when you know it's not for you.

TV : How do you work on the "sound of the text" that you mentioned earlier?

DS: The orchestra very often tries to find out the meaning of the arias. They want to know if it's 'heroic' or 'tragic', what the key words are and where they are in the score. I appreciate that this search comes from the instrumentalists themselves, in the nuance of the text rather than simply on the basis of tempo, measure and the period of composition. It's very important to me that they feel involved, and that the singers understand that diction is also part of musical expression. So the singers and instrumentalists work together. Sometimes some of the woodwind soloists have individual discussions with a singer to find common ground on the character of an interpretation. But there's a balance to be struck: the text may be essential, but sometimes you have to be careful not to get too lost in the diction, so that you can still sing it.

TV : Stéphane Lissner has asked you to conduct the first Académie of the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence. What is the difference between an institutional academy, as in Aix, and a programme for young singers with an ensemble like Opera Fuoco?

DS : Our workshop gives them time to get to know themselves and to make themselves

known. Before starting the variations, they have to learn the theme. That's what they do with us. Once you've mastered the basics of Händel, Mozart and Donizetti, you can sing anything. The Festival d'Aix-en-Provence offers a lot of new works and improvisation, which push the singer further and further. I admire this constant curiosity and research. Even if the approach was very different from ours at the time, singers already had to be 'ready' for the media. They always had to be presented as the stars of the future. But you never know how a career is going to develop. The singers at Fuoco have generally just obtained their Bachelor's degree, or sometimes they're still at Master's level. At that age, they need to be protected as much as they need to be pushed.

TV : For your programming at Opera Fuoco, are you also influenced by what you conduct at the Palm Beach Opera?

DS : Completely! At the Palm Beach Opera, I only work on the great repertoire with a modern orchestra and great voices at an insane speed. Working with musicians, you have to know how to work in a hurry as well as how to sustain the imagination of the discourse over a long period of time. The contrast and complementarity between these two situations, from the knowledge of the repertoire to the flexibility of the singers, is enormously nourishing for me.

TV : Through its cross-disciplinary projects, Opera Fuoco has succeeded in placing itself 'between the lines' of the opera world. How have you seen this environment evolve over the last twenty years?

DS : Twenty years ago, stage directors reigned supreme, choosing the singers and the works. Most of the time, when the staging concept is more important than the work, it doesn't work, because it doesn't convey the 'truth' of the music. It's such a waste of time and money! For my part, I look for directors who understand, appreciate and respect the 'heart' of the work. Singing is difficult, and you have to be able to do it in the right conditions. And if there's one thing I try to pass on to the singers of Fuoco, it's an awareness of their presence on stage, so that the day they're asked to do something absurd, they can say no, to protect themselves. And now is more the time to do that. So that's what I've seen change in twenty years. I don't think there's any point in having tribunes against directors. We're all here to work together. Opera must remain a dialogue between artists to tell a story. As soon as it works, it's the most beautiful art form there is. We have to fight to keep it that way! •

Interview by Thibault Vicq,
20 March 2024

Full article available on OperaOnline

Tézier's infernal dance and Netrebko in *La Gioconda* in Naples

Anna Netrebko and Jonas Kaufmann recently performed their first roles under Antonio Pappano at the Salzburg Easter Festival. They are back at the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples alongside Ludovic Tézier's extraordinary Barnaba. Eve-Maud Hubeaux replaced Anita Rachvelishvili, who was still unable to perform. The baritone and soprano, admirably accompanied by the orchestra conducted by Pinchas Steinberg, took the evening to new heights.



The performance of *La Gioconda* transcended the boundaries of a simple show to become a theatrical experience on an unprecedented scale. This exceptional event was the fruit of the union of exceptional talents on stage.

From start to finish, Ludovic Tézier provided the spy Barnaba - one of the most cruelly unhinged characters in the history of opera - with all the vocal and dramatic nuances possible in such a role.

Opposite him, Anna Netrebko shone in the role of Gioconda. Although she has had a tendency in recent years to overload the role with chesty low notes, she knew how to use them to good effect (particularly at the breathtaking start of the "*Tradita!... Ahimé! Ahimé!*" in the first act, where she weeps for her betrayed love), then free herself from them to emit magnificent high notes, as at the end of this aria where the voice

miraculously rises, little by little, to end up with an astonishing lightness. She had already graced us with an ethereal, pianistic high, held for a long time, literally sublime in the phrase "*Madre! Enzo adorato! Ah Come t'amo!*"

Alongside these two imposing figures, Eve-Maud Hubeaux and Jonas Kaufmann also shone in their respective roles, adding an extra dimension to the opera's dramatic richness.

Kaufmann, not yet fully warmed up, leads the way in his first confrontation ("Enzo Grimaldo. Principe di Santafiore, che pensi?") with Netrebko. The great aria that follows is fabulous in its arrogance; it allows him to use all the facets of his sovereign voice. In "Pescatore", he also demonstrates a lightness that does not hide Barnaba's devious and cunning character. Finally, although the character becomes more discreet during part of Act II and Act III, the big scene at

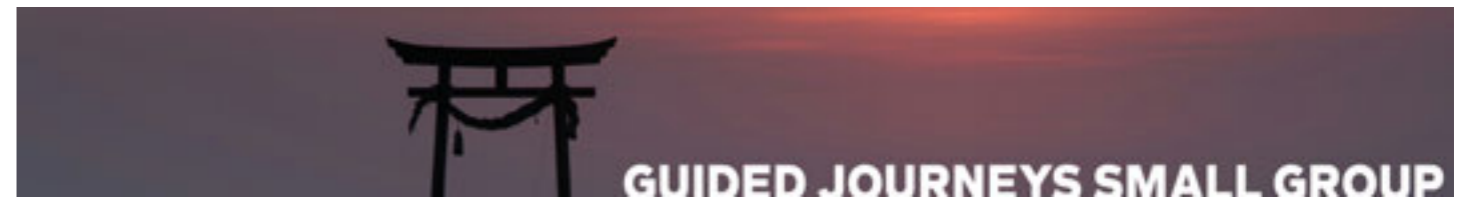
the end with Anna Netrebko is a moment of rare intensity.

Under the masterful direction of Pinchas Steinberg, the San Carlo Orchestra created a spellbinding canvas of sound, highlighting every moment of the work with remarkable precision and sensitivity. Every note was executed with impressive virtuosity, creating an immersive atmosphere that captivated the audience from start to finish. In short, this performance of *La Gioconda* transcended expectations to become an unforgettable theatrical experience.

Summary of an article by Paul Fourier fully available on OperaOnline

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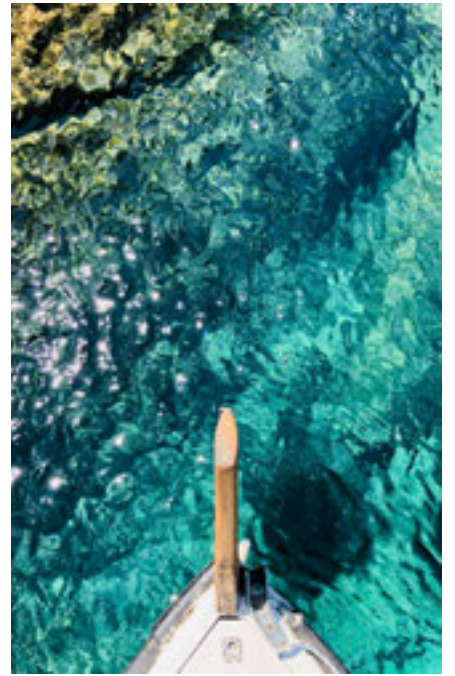
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Printing:
Brochure printed in France by Bulet Graphics, 12-26 Rue de Lyon, 94700 Maisons-Alfort

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32 rue Washington, 75008 PARIS
lafugue.com - information@lafugue.com
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