

Imperial Treasures!

Art and Music in Dresden and Prague
with the Vassar Travel Program



Prague on the Vltava

Dear Vassar Travelers,
It is truly a pleasure to invite you to join us on a
very special trip to two major European cities
renowned for their rich cultural histories.

For centuries, Dresden and Prague were royal and imperial courtly centers that attracted the finest artists and musicians; travelers on the "Grand Tour" visited these artistic hubs of Central Europe to admire their art and architecture, and to enjoy concerts and operas. In spite of a frequently turbulent history, many of these cities' monuments and works of art, as well as an abundance of great music, have survived and are still offered to travelers today. Our journey will include private tours of art collections, musical performances, a river cruise through splendid landscapes, and fine dining, which we look forward to sharing with you.

Our musical tour will situate us in important centers of music-making in Dresden and Prague. Sampling the 2023 Dresden Music Festival, we will hear the Tallis Scholars performing Josquin, Palestrina, and Pärt in the gorgeous Frauenkirche at the heart of the city. We'll spend one evening in Gottfried Semper's "Dresden Baroque" opera house. Twice destroyed by fires, and in 2002 badly damaged by flood, this magnificent structure is now home of the Saxon State Opera. Here we'll attend a performance of Rossini's sparkling opera *La Cenerentola*. Our visit to Prague will include a performance by the Prague Symphony Orchestra in the Smetana Hall of the city's splendid art nouveau Municipal House, as well as a performance of Mozart's beloved opera *Don Giovanni* in the Estates Theatre, where he first directed it in 1787. Our final day will feature an intimate chamber music concert in the Lobkowitz Palace, where music and musicians have flourished since the 1600s.

After a seven-year refurbishment project, Dresden's Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister (Old Masters Picture Gallery) and the Skulpturensammlung bis 1800 (Sculpture Collection up to 1800) have recently reopened, bringing together magnificent sculptures and paintings in innovative ways. In addition, we'll visit the German city's famous antiquities collection, as well as a selection of objects in the world-renowned Kupferstich-Kabinett (Museum of Prints, Drawings and Photographs). Among the highlights in and around Prague will be tours of spectacular medieval, renaissance, and baroque buildings and artistic masterpieces, including works by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Rubens, Velázquez, and Canaletto. The Old Town and Malá Strana sections of the Czech Republic's capital city contain innumerable historic sites that we'll explore together, and others that you can discover on your own.

Both of us have spent years living and studying in Europe, and we are delighted to be able to share our knowledge and passion for learning with you. During the summer we'll be working for a month with four Vassar College music and art history students in the vast Lobkowitz collections, housed in castles in and near Prague. The historic music archives and art collections owned by one of Bohemia's oldest noble families contain many treasures, and this trip will allow us to share some of them with you. We sincerely hope that you will be able to accompany us on this unique journey.

Kathryn L. Libin *Professor of Music*
Vassar College Department of Music

Bart Thurber *The Anne Hendricks Bass Director and Lecturer in*
Art The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College

June 8 – 18, 2023*

*Tour begins June 9 in Dresden

Vassar Travel Program

Educational Excursions for Alumnae/i, Family, and Friends



TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Private guided tours of major sites in Dresden and Prague, with expert guides
- Exclusive, behind-the-scenes tours of art collections, including a select viewing of important prints and drawings in the Imperial collections, and a rare evening guided tour of the Green Vault, all in Dresden; and private tours of Lobkowitz Palaces in Prague and Nelahozeves, and Palais Schwarzenberg in Prague
- Prime tickets to two operas, including Mozart's *Don Giovanni* in the venue of its premiere; two concerts, including one by the renowned Tallis Scholars; and two special chamber music performances, exclusive to the group, in extraordinary venues
- Exclusive viewings of important music manuscripts by Mozart, Beethoven and others
- Private cruise and lunch on the River Elbe
- Deluxe accommodations at 5-star hotels in both cities
- Fine dining, including breakfast daily, 7 lunches, 3 dinners, plus receptions
- Private air-conditioned coach transportation throughout the tour
- Free time for additional sight-seeing, relaxing, or shopping



Vermeer's *Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window*, Dresden
below: Semper Opera in Dresden



Tour Cost: \$7,785, ground only, double occupancy

Single supplement: \$990

Balance Deadline: April 7, 2023

Tour limited to 20 participants.



View of Dresden

Daily Itinerary

Thursday, June 8

Flights from US, with arrivals the following day

Friday, June 9 [Dresden] Willkommen!

Arrival at Dresden International Airport, and private transfers to the 5-star Hotel Gewandhaus in the center of the city. Gather at the hotel for a **welcome reception**, followed by our **Welcome Dinner**.

Saturday, June 10 [Dresden] Dresden

Breakfast daily at both hotels. Our tour of the beautiful city of Dresden, lying on the River Elbe, offers up many historic monuments virtually rebuilt as they were before the Allied bombing of February 1945. Our first visit is to the venerable Alte Meister Galerie in the baroque Zwinger Palace for a tour of the collection, before public hours, with a Curator of the Museum and Dr. Thurber. Then our private guide takes us around the city, followed by **lunch**. Tonight, we enjoy a concert by the famed Tallis Scholars in the remarkable, domed Frauenkirche as part of the 40-year old Dresden Music Festival. Dr. Libin will provide expert commentary on all our musical adventures.

Sunday, June 11 [Dresden] Saxon Switzerland

The lush gardens of the 18th century Pillnitz Castle, the summer home of Saxony's Electors, illustrate a nearly complete history of landscape gardening. Our coach takes us from there up into the sandstone mountains called "Saxon Switzerland," and the fabulous views from Bastei. Returning downstream, we board our own boat and float down the Elbe enjoying a private buffet **lunch**. This evening at the beautiful Semper Oper, named for its architect, Rossini's witty take on Cinderella, *La Cenerentola*, charms us!

Monday, June 12 [Dresden] Palace Treasures

The extraordinary art collections of the Electors also includes many outstanding prints and drawings at the Kupferstich-Kabinett, where this morning, we will have a behind-the-scenes visit with Dr. Thurber. **Lunch** nearby, and afternoon free. The Green Vault in the Residenz Palace contains one of the largest repositories of imperial treasures in Europe. We will have an exclusive evening tour there, then a wonderful private concert by the young Sevcík Quartet of Prague in the elegant Fürstengalerie in the Palace.

Tuesday, June 13 [Prague] Beethoven's Patron

Hotel check-out and transfer by private coach to Prague, via an exceptional visit to the Lobkowicz Palace at Nezahozevce. There we visit the nearby house where Antonin Dvorak was born, followed by a tour of the Palace, a tasting of wines produced by the Castle, **lunch**, and a special



Music Salon in Lobkowicz Palace, Prague

presentation of manuscripts by Mozart, Beethoven and others. Arrival in Prague and check-in at the lovely, 5-star Golden Well Hotel, nestled beneath the Castle Hill.

Wednesday, June 14 [Prague] Prague

Our full day of touring in this beautiful capital, with an expert guide, includes a visit to the 12th-century Strahov Monastery and a private visit to its extraordinary Library and *Wunderkammer*, **lunch**, and a tour of the old master galleries of the Palais Schwarzenburg with Dr. Thurber. Tonight, a tour of the magnificent Municipal House, an Art Nouveau masterpiece, and **dinner** there at its fine French restaurant. The evening culminates with a concert by the Prague Symphony under Thomas Brauner. Carl Orff's stirring cantata *Carmina Burana* heads the program.

Thursday, June 15 [Prague] Castle Hill and Mozart

Prague Castle, scene of so many historic events in the chronicles of Czech history, will open its doors to us including areas normally inaccessible to tourists. The Castle also encompasses the soaring Gothic St. Vitus Cathedral, site of many tombs of Bohemian kings and Holy Roman Emperors. **Lunch** with panoramic views over the city follows. Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, arguably his greatest opera, had a rapturous premiere in 1787 at the Estates Theatre, and tonight we are there for a reprise!

Friday, June 16 [Prague] Old Town and Jewish Quarter

Passing through the Old Town Square to see the extraordinary astronomical clock, we take a walking tour of the unique Jewish Quarter. Visits to the Old Jewish Cemetery, a veritable tumble of centuries-old tombstones, and the gothic Old-New Synagogue are must-sees and we'll hear about the life of the quarter's most famous resident, Franz Kafka. **Lunch**. Your evening is free, but you may want to attend a rare performance of Dvorak's opera, *Armida*, at the beautiful National Theatre.

Saturday, June 17 [Prague] Gala Farewell

A free day to explore Prague, with an optional opportunity for a special excursion to Terezin concentration camp, outside the city. We return to Castle Hill this evening for a spectacular farewell at the Lobkowicz Palace in the city: a tour of the family's art collections, a presentation of important music manuscripts by Dr. Libin, a private chamber performance by the fine Trio Incendio, and a **gala farewell dinner**.

Sunday, June 18

The tour ends after breakfast and private transfers to Prague Airport. Flights back to the US arrive the same day.

*Itinerary subject to change. Meals in **bold** included in the price of the tour.*