



Savonlinna to Salzburg: Opera Festivals of Europe

with Peter Bassett

HELSINKI • SAVONLINNA • BREGENZ • SALZBURG

23 July – 05 August 2012 (14 days)

Optional extension to Verona





Tour Leader

Peter Bassett

Peter is a writer, speaker and broadcaster on opera - particularly the works of Richard Wagner. He was Dramaturg and Artistic Administrator for the 2004 Adelaide *Ring* and consultant for West Australian Opera's 2006 *Tristan und Isolde*. He has written four books on Wagner's operas, is a regular contributor to opera journals and programs, and has lectured on Wagner's works in Australia and abroad. His new book *1813 – Wagner & Verdi*, a large format, full colour volume to mark the bicentenary of both composers, will be published in March 2012.

Peter served for twenty years in the Australian Diplomatic Service in embassies in East and West Europe, Asia and the Pacific and was, for a further decade, Chief of Staff to two Governors of South Australia. He has led 20 tours for Renaissance Tours since 2001, including to Germany, France, Switzerland, Russia, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Czech Republic, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, China, Spain, Austria, the US and Canada, and within Australia.

Savonlinna to Salzburg: Opera Festivals of Europe

From Finland in the north to Italy and Austria in the south, this tour will showcase four of Europe's longest running and most renowned summer opera festivals: Savonlinna, Bregenz and Salzburg.

Over 16 days enjoy up to 11 performances in venues as varied as the medieval Olavinlinna Castle (Savonlinna), a massive floating stage on Lake Constance (Bregenz) and Salzburg's hallowed halls.

The journey will be as beautiful as the music, from the gentle beauty of Finland's lakes and forests, to the dramatic majesty of the Austrian Alps. Experience leisurely stays in the countryside in Savonlinna and Bregenz which is contrasted with the sophisticated festival atmosphere of Salzburg.

At a glance ...

- *Aida*, *The Magic Flute* and *The Flying Dutchman* at Savonlinna Festival
- *André Chénier* and the Vienna Symphony Orchestra at Bregenz Festival
- Six concerts and operas at Salzburg Festival including Emily Magee and Jonas Kaufmann in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Anna Netrebko in *La Bohème*.
- Optional extension to Verona including *Turandot* and *Carmen*.



The Flying Dutchman at Savonlinna Opera Festival in 2008

ITINERARY

Sunday 22 July 2012

Depart Australia

Suggested departure from Australia on Cathay Pacific and Finnair via Hong Kong. Overnight in flight.

Mon 23 July

Arrive Helsinki

Early morning or afternoon arrival in Helsinki. Make your way to the Hotel Haven. This evening join Peter Bassett and opera lovers for a welcome briefing and dinner. (D)

Tue 24 July

Helsinki – Savonlinna

A morning tour of Helsinki will introduce you this compact city known as the 'Daughter of the Baltics'. Amongst the highlights are the Neo-classical Senate Square, Kaivoplisto Park, the Sibelius Monument, Finlandia Hall and the Teripolaukio Church hewn out of the natural bedrock.

Afternoon departure from Helsinki. Travel north towards Savonlinna (approx. 5-6 hrs) through the beautiful Lakes District and check in to the Hotel Herttua in Kerimäki near Savonlinna. (BD)

Wed 25 July

Savonlinna

After an introduction to the Savonlinna Opera Festival and a pre-performance talk on *Aida* by Peter Bassett, enjoy a morning tour of Savonlinna including the imposing 15th century Ovanlinna Castle, which lies on an island overlooking the town. Afternoon at leisure.

This evening enjoy a cruise on the lake and an early dinner on board. The cruise will end at Ovanlinna Castle in time for your first Savonlinna Opera experience – Verdi's *Aida*. Performances take place in the great courtyard of the historic Olavinlinna Castle (1475). (BD)

Thu 26 July

Savonlinna

After breakfast, join Peter Bassett for a pre-performance talk on *The Flying Dutchman* and then explore some of the interesting sights around Savonlinna. This morning visit the Retretti Art Centre, amongst the largest art centres in the Nordic countries. Retretti has 2,000 sqm of gallery space and approx. 3,000 sqm of exhibition space in caverns excavated underground. Continue to Lusto, the Finnish Forest Museum, which depicts the importance of forests and the interaction between man and forests. Complete the excursion with a visit to the Kerimäki Church, the world's largest wooden church with more than 3,000 seats.

Tonight return to Olavinlinna Castle for a performance of Richard Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*. (BL)

Savonlinna Opera Festival ...

The birth of the Savonlinna Opera Festival ties in closely with the emergence of the Finnish identity and Finland's quest for independence at the beginning of the 20th century. Attending a nationalist meeting in Olavinlinna Castle in 1907, the Finnish soprano Aino Ackté, immediately spotted the potential of the medieval castle as the venue for an opera festival. The romantic castle set amid lake scenery could not, in her opinion, fail to impress all who beheld it and was thus the perfect stage for presenting the Finnish music just bursting into flower.

The first opera festival was held in 1912. Aino Ackté did as she had promised and turned the castle into a stronghold of operatic art for five summers. Her magnificent plans were, however, soon dashed by WWI, the Russian Revolution, Finland's Civil War and the ensuing economic difficulties, but news of the festival had already reached opera lovers in other parts of the world.

The opera festival tradition then lay dormant for almost four decades. In 1967 the festival came to life again when the Savonlinna Music Days decided to arrange an opera course for young singers. The director of the course hit on the idea of staging Beethoven's *Fidelio* in the castle courtyard. The performance was a tremendous success, the cast included singers of international repute in addition to the students, and the premiere of *Fidelio* on 16 July 1967 is now regarded as the beginning of the present Festival.

Over the years the Savonlinna Opera Festival has grown from a one-week event into an international month-long festival. Each year it performs to a total audience of around 60,000, an estimated quarter of which comes from abroad.



Olavinlinna Castle, Savonlinna



The Magic Flute performed in 2006 at the Savonlinna Opera Festival



Aida at the Savonlinna Festival in 2008 with Adina Aron and Johan Botha (Credit TimoSeppalainen)

Fri 27 July

Savonlinna

Full day trip to the Valamo Monastery in Heinävesi. The chronicles of Valamo Monastery record that it was founded on the island of Valamo on Lake Ladoga, Karelia, in the 10th Century by the a monk called Sergei. WWII lead to the evacuation of the original monastery in 1940 and the brotherhood re-located to the present site in Heinävesi later the same year, where they were joined there by the monks of Petsamo Monastery. In 1956 the monks from the monastery of Konevitsa became part of the same community, bringing with them the icon of the Mother of God of Konevitsa, believed to have spiritual powers. The monastery finally became entirely Finnish in the late 1970's. Peter Bassett will give a pre-performance talk on tonight's opera during the coach journey.

Tonight enjoy your final operatic experience of the Savonlinna Festival - Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. (BL)

Sat 28 July

Savonlinna – Helsinki - Bregenz

After breakfast return to Helsinki by coach for an afternoon flight from Helsinki to Zurich (not included in tour price. Flight can be booked as part of the international Finnair flight or purchased separately from approx. AUD 600 pp). Late afternoon arrival in Zurich. Transfer to Bregenz located on the shores of Lake Constance. (BD)

Sun 29 July

Bregenz

This morning, after a pre-performance talk by Peter Bassett, discover the secrets of the world's largest 'Seebühne' (floating stage) on a 50 minute backstage tour. Take a look behind the scenes and find out all about the history of the Bregenz Festival. Enjoy some free time in Bregenz.

Late in the afternoon embark on the MV Hohentwiel, a historic steamship built in 1913, on a 3hrs cruise on Lake Constance. Enjoy a 4-course gourmet dinner before docking at the wharf adjacent to the floating stage. Make your way to your seats and enjoy tonight's performance of Umberto Giordano's *André Chénier*. (BD)

Mon 30 July

Bregenz

Half day excursion to the nearby town of Lindau. Enjoy a guided walking tour of Lindau and experience the town's rich history, which dates back to the 13th century. Time at leisure for lunch and for a stroll along the lakeside promenade or the Maximilianstrasse, the town's main shopping street. Return to the hotel early in the afternoon.

Tonight return to the Bregenz Festival for an early dinner followed by a concert in the concert hall by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra conducted by Teodor Currentzis. (BD)

Programme

Weinberg — Concerto for cello and orchestra in C minor
Prokofiev — Symphony No. 5 in B flat major

Tue 31 July

Bregenz - Salzburg

After breakfast depart Bregenz for the drive to Salzburg (325KM, approx. 4hrs). Located amongst the lakes and mountains of the Salzkammergut, Salzburg is dominated by the fortress of Hohensalzburg. The city is renowned not only as the birthplace of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, but also for its splendid Renaissance architecture and Baroque courtyards. Afternoon at leisure. (BD)

Wed 01 August

Salzburg

Join Peter Bassett for a talk about this evening's performance, and then discover the old town of Salzburg on a morning walking tour. View the fortress of Hohensalzburg, the city's chief landmark, built in 1077; the Baroque cathedral with its magnificent façade and mighty dome; St Peter's Abbey, as well as the oldest pharmacy and the oldest coffee shop. Finish with a visit to Mozart's Birthplace, where you will see historic instruments, documents, memorabilia and most of the portraits painted during his lifetime.

Afternoon at leisure before the first opera of the Salzburg Summer Festival, a concert performance of one of Mozart's lesser known operas *Il re pastore*, a serenata in two acts, conducted by William Christie with Rolando Villazón as Alessandro, Martina Janková as Aminta, Eva Mei as Elisa, Sandra Trattnigg as Tamiri, Benjamin Bernheim as Agenore and the Orchestra La Scintilla of the Zurich Opera House. (B)

Thu 02 August

Salzburg

Day at leisure. Later this afternoon, attend a concert by Camerata Salzburg with a program of Bach and Mozart with soprano Anna Prohaska, mezzo-soprano Marie-Claude Chappuis, Erich Höbarth, Violin, Alexander Janiczek, Violin, Steven Isserlis, Cello, Louise Pellerin, Oboe, Jörg Widmann, Clarinet, Andrés Schiff, Piano.

At the conclusion of the concert, enjoy lunch at a nearby restaurant. Afternoon at leisure before tonight's concert by the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra conducted by Daniel Barenboim. (BL)

Programme

Beethoven — Symphony No. 6 in F, 'Pastoral' Symphony
Beethoven — Symphony No. 5 in C minor



Conductor Daniel Barenboim
(Credit Ricardo Davila)



Salzburg Getreidegasse
(Credit Tourismus Salzburg)



Conductor Teodor Currentzis

Fri 03 August

Salzburg

Join Peter Bassett for a pre-performance talk, and then depart for a full day tour to the nearby Salzkammergut lakes district. A UNESCO World Heritage site, the area is renowned for its landscapes considered to be amongst the most beautiful in the world. The tiny villages of St Gilgen and St Wolfgang are located on scenic Lake Wolfgang, surrounded by the Alps. Lake Fuschl with its clear waters is the largest freshwater reservoir in the Salzburg province.

Tonight return to the Salzburg Festival for Richard Strauss' opera *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Opera in one act. Text by Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Cast includes Emily Magee and Jonas Kaufmann, with the Vienna Philharmonic conducted by Riccardo Chailly. Coproduction with the Vienna State Opera. To be played after *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* by Molière, adapted by Hugo von Hofmannsthal. In a version for the Salzburg Festival 2012 by Sven-Eric Bechtolf. (BL)

Sat 04 August

Salzburg

Morning concert by the Vienna Philharmonic under the baton of Mariss Jansons with soprano Nina Stemme.

Programme

Strauss — Don Juan - Tone poem for large orchestra

Wagner — Wesendonck Lieder

Brahms — Symphony No. 1 in C minor

Following the concert, join Peter Bassett and fellow opera lovers for a farewell lunch. Afternoon at leisure before attending your last Salzburg Festival performance – a new production in conjunction with the Shanghai Grand Theatre of *La Bohème*. Daniele Gatti will be conducting the Vienna Philharmonic and Anna Netrebko will sing the role of Mimi. (BL)

Sun 05 August

Depart Salzburg

Tour arrangements conclude after breakfast. (B)

If departing on the suggested Finnair flight, a transfer to Munich airport will be provided. Evening departure from Munich via Helsinki and Hong Kong or Singapore.

If going on the optional extension to Verona, depart Salzburg after breakfast for the drive to Verona (180KM, approx. 2.5hrs).

Mon 06 August

In flight

Tue 07 August

Arrive Australia

Morning arrival in Australia.

NB. Tickets to the Salzburg Festival are on request and are subject to confirmation in March 2012.



Salzburg (Credit Tourismus Salzburg)

EXTENSION TO VERONA

Sun 05 August

Salzburg – Verona

Depart Salzburg after breakfast for the drive to Verona (180KM, approx. 2.5hrs) to attend two operas at the well-preserved Arena di Verona.

Verona's renowned opera season begins in late June and extends through August in Verona's Arena, the ancient amphitheatre. It began in 1913 with a staging of *Aida* to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Verdi's birth, and *Aida* in all of its extravagant glory has been performed yearly ever since. The annual program includes other Verdi works as well as other well known operas. (BD)

Mon 06 August

Verona

Full day excursion to Lake Garda and the pretty town of Sirmione, perched on the end of a long promontory on the southern shore of the lake. Sirmione's beautiful setting was praised by the Roman poet Catullus. The town's narrow medieval streets bustle with colour and life, and its most striking feature is the moated castle, Rocca Scaligera. After a scenic cruise and visit to the Isola del Garda before returning to Verona in the afternoon. (BL)

Tue 07 August

Verona

Join Peter Bassett for a pre-performance talk before a morning walking tour of Verona. Walk through the town centre via Piazza Erbe and Piazza Signori. Continue to the Porta Bosari and walk via the 16th century palaces, Palazzo Canossa and Palazzo Bevilacqua to the Castlevicchio.

Afternoon at leisure before tonight's performance of *Carmen*.(B)

Wed 08 August

Verona

Day at leisure to further explore Verona. Following a farewell dinner, attend a second opera at the Arena – Puccini's *Turandot*. (BD)

Thu 09 August

Depart Verona

Transfer to Milan Malpensa airport for evening departure on Finnair via Helsinki and Singapore.

Fri 10 August

In flight

Sat 11 August

Arrive Australia

Morning arrival in Australia.



Arena di Verona

Savonlinna to Salsburg

TOUR PRICES ...

Per person, twin-share	AUD 10,950
Single supplement	AUD 1,950
Deposit (per person)	AUD 1,000
Final payment due	24 May 2012

* Single travellers may request to share.
Please advise at time of booking.

TOUR CODE OA – Savonlinna

SUGGESTED AIRLINE Finnair
Finnair fares include flights from Australia to Hong Kong on Cathay Pacific or Australia and Singapore on Qantas connecting with Finnair flights to Zurich and Munich via Helsinki.

Please contact Renaissance Tours for flight reservations and current fares.

TOUR PRICES INCLUDE

- 13 nights accommodation in centrally located four and five star hotels with daily breakfast (B)
- Meals as per itinerary (L=Lunch, D=Dinner). Wines included with dinner and farewell lunch.
- Cat 1 tickets to five operas and concerts at Savonlinna and Bregenz
- Cat 2 tickets for six concerts and operas at the Salzburg Festival
- Comprehensive sightseeing with local guides including entrance fees as per itinerary
- Deluxe, air-conditioned coach transportation throughout
- Pre-performance introductions and talks with Peter Bassett
- Departure transfer from Salzburg to Munich airport if travelling on suggested flights
- Gratuities for local guides and drivers
- Hotel portorage (one piece per person)

DO NOT INCLUDE

- International airfares
- Flight Helsinki – Zurich (from approx. AUD600. Can be booked as part of the international airfare)
- Airport portorage
- Transfer on arrival
- Items of a personal nature, including telephone, laundry, room service, mini-bar etc.
- Drinks with lunches
- Travel insurance

Verona Extension

TOUR PRICES ...

Per person, twin-share	AUD 2,950
Single supplement	AUD 600
Deposit (per person)	AUD 500
Final Payment	24 May 2012

* Single travellers may request to share.
Please advise at time of booking.

TOUR CODE: OA – Verona

TOUR PRICES INCLUDE

- 4 nights accommodation in a centrally located four star hotel with daily breakfast (B)
- Meals as per itinerary (L=Lunch, D=Dinner). Wines included with dinners.
- Gold class (top category) tickets to two operas at Arena di Verona Festival
- Comprehensive sightseeing with local guides including entrance fees as per itinerary
- Deluxe, air-conditioned coach transportation throughout
- Pre-performance introductions and talks with Peter Bassett
- Departure transfer from Verona to Milan airport if travelling on suggested flights
- Gratuities for local guides and drivers
- Hotel portorage (one piece per person)

DO NOT INCLUDE

- International airfares
- Airport portorage
- Items of a personal nature, including telephone, laundry, room service, mini-bar etc.
- Drinks with lunches
- Travel insurance

YOUR HOTELS ...



Hotel Haven
Helsinki
★★★★★



Hotel Kaartila
Savonlinna
★★★★★



Seehotel am Kaiserstrand
Lochau near Bregenz
★★★★+



Sheraton
Salzburg
★★★★+



Grand Hotel
Verona
★★★★

NB. Hotels of a similar standard may be substituted

TERMS & CONDITIONS

How to Book

Complete, sign and return the Booking Form available from Renaissance Tours with your deposit.

Deposit / Final Payments

Your deposit is due at the time of booking and is used to pay hotel, airline, performance tickets and/or other deposits. It is non-refundable in the event of your cancellation.

Final payment is due 60 days before departure. Failure to make the final payment by the due date may result in cancellation of your booking and loss of deposit.

Payments are accepted in cash and by cheque, bank transfer, American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa. A 3% service charge applies for payment by American Express and Diners Club.

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a) Cancellation by You - Cancellation charges will be applied as shown below, calculated from the day written notification is received by Renaissance Tours. In addition to cancellation fees for tours operated by Renaissance Tours as shown below, airlines, hotels and other third parties may impose up to 100% cancellation charges.

60 days or more	Forfeit of deposit
59 – 45 days	25% of tour cost
44 – 31 days	50% of tour cost
30 – 15 days	75% of tour cost
Less than 15 days	100% of tour cost

The above cancellation charges include applicable GST.

In addition to the above, cancellation charges may apply for additional arrangements booked by Renaissance Tours, such as air tickets, hotels and travel insurance premium. If the reason for cancellation is covered by the insurance policy, you may be able to reclaim these charges.

b) Cancellation by Us - We reserve the right to cancel a tour for any reason (such as failure to reach minimum tour participant numbers). Except for force majeure, we will not cancel a tour less than 60 days before departure. No further compensation will be paid in the event of cancellation by Renaissance Tours. A full refund of monies paid for tour costs will be the full extent of our liability.

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Passports, Visas and Vaccinations

All travellers must be in a possession of a valid passport – most countries require a 6-month validity from your date of entry or exit. For some countries (e.g. China, Vietnam, India, Russia), visas are included in the tour cost and will be arranged by Renaissance Tours prior to travel. For other countries, it is your responsibility to ensure you have the appropriate visa(s).

You are also responsible for obtaining all necessary inoculations and preventative medicines as may be required for the duration of the tour.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of travel that you are covered by comprehensive travel insurance for international tours. Your travel insurance can be arranged by Renaissance Tours.

Fitness and Participation

For the overall benefit of the group, all tour members must possess a moderate level of mobility, including the ability to:

- negotiate airports and railway stations without wheelchair assistance
- use combined shower/bath facilities (it is impossible to guarantee walk-in shower facilities)
- undertake walking tour of 2-3 hours duration, including using stairs, walking over cobblestones and other uneven surfaces
- stand for long periods in museums and other sites
- embark / disembark coaches, trains and other methods of transportation without assistance
- handle your own luggage

If you (or we) have any doubts about your ability to participate in your chosen tour, you may be required to have a doctor's appraisal. This would require a doctor to read the itinerary of your chosen tour and provide you with a written confirmation of your ability to participate.

Terms & Conditions

You can find the full terms & conditions on the Renaissance Tours booking form. They can also be found at www.renaissancetours.com.au or we would be happy to post you a copy on request.



Carmen at the Verona Arena Festival held in the Roman amphitheatre



Cover image: André Chénier at the Bregenz Festival (Credit Bregenzer Festspiele / Karl Forster)
Back page image: Vienna Philharmonic (Courtesy Salzburg Festival)



TOUR ARRANGEMENTS BY
Renaissance Tours

Level 4, 47 York Street, Sydney NSW 2000

GPO Box 5068, Sydney NSW 2001

ABN 14 069 591 448 Lic. 2TA4526

Toll Free (Aust) 1300 727 095

Toll Free (NZ) 0800 403 621

t (02) 9299 5801

f (02) 9299 5805

e info@renaissancetours.com.au

w www.renaissancetours.com.au

Your travel agent is –