



## Leipzig Bach Festival

Music by the Bach family and their Baroque contemporaries

**11–16 June 2025 (ML 716)**

6 days • £3,460

Lecturer: Professor John Butt OBE

Top category tickets for seven concerts.

Artists from around the world including some of the leading specialists in Bach and the Baroque: the Monteverdi Choir & English Baroque Soloists (cond. Sir John Eliot Gardiner), Thomanerchor Leipzig, Capricornus Consort and La Cetra Barockorchester & Vokalensemble Basel (cond. Andrea Marcon) all appear.

Concert venues include the Thomaskirche and Nikolaikirche, the churches where J.S. Bach was director of music.

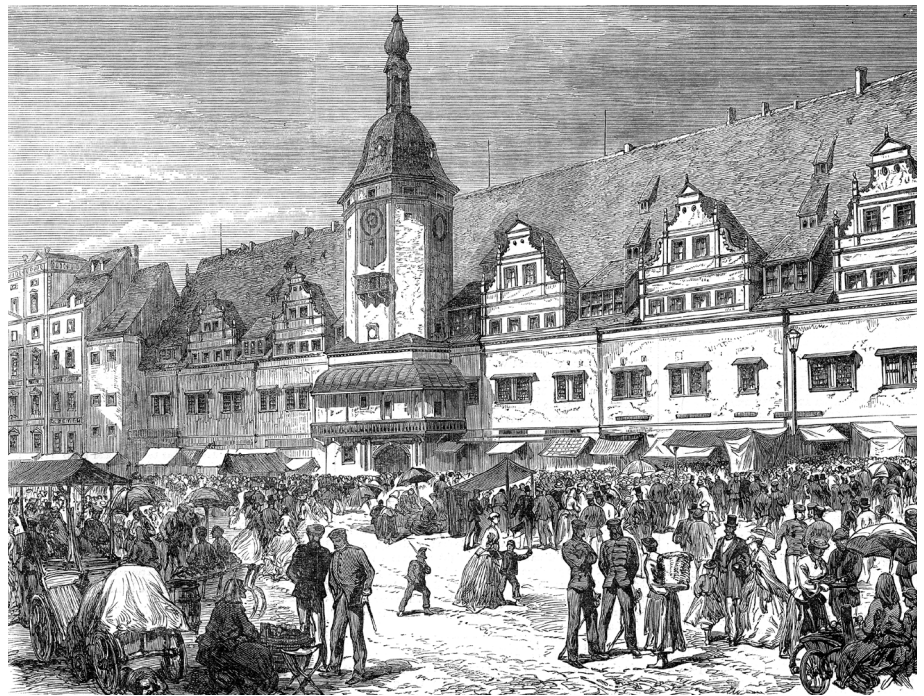
Centrally-located hotel within easy walking distance of the concerts and restaurants.

Guided walks to explore the architecture and musical heritage of this historic and lively city.

Over 80 members of the Bach family are listed in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. For two centuries the Bachs, Johann Sebastian among them, plied their trade in the employ of courts, churches and free cities in Thuringia and Saxony. Though geographically in the heart of Germany, these places were not among the major political or cultural centres of Europe. And their location on the other side of the Iron Curtain in the later 20th century enveloped them further in obscurity.

There was no star system in the Bachs' time; genius was an alien concept. The tradition the family worked in was one of sheer dogged professionalism, with ability generally recognised and rewarded. Really exceptional once-in-a-century talent was beyond the comprehension of the city burgers, however; Johann Sebastian was the third choice for the post of Cantor at St Thomas's Church in Leipzig, and for the remainder of his life he was constantly chafing against the indifference and high-handedness of his employers.

The Bachfest Leipzig has become established as one of the major items in the calendar of European festivals. The venues most used are the parish church of St Thomas (the Thomaskirche), which was Bach's principal auditorium during the 27 years when he was effectively the city's director of music, and the Nikolaikirche, another church for which he had responsibility. There are concerts also in the University Church, the modern Gewandhaus,



Leipzig, Altes Rathaus wood engraving from *The Illustrated London News*, 1866.

and in the Evangelical Reformed Church.

Leipzig is now, again, a handsome and lively city, following an almost miraculous transformation during the 1990s and beyond. Cleaning, restoration and rebuilding went hand in hand with the emergence of cafés, smart shops and good restaurants. Located at the heart of this ancient trading city is the large market place and the renaissance Town Hall, and around is a beguiling network of alleys, courtyards and arcades.

Guided walks investigate this heritage and the musical history of the city, which encompasses not only the Bach family but also Telemann, Robert and Clara Schumann, Mendelssohn, Wagner, Mahler and Kurt Masur. There is time also to enjoy the excellent museums – the Fine Arts Museum in spectacular new premises, the radically refurbished Museum of Musical Instruments, or the rejuvenated Bach Museum.

### Itinerary

**Day 1.** Morning flight from London Heathrow to Berlin (British Airways) with onward travel to Leipzig (c. 3 hours) by private coach. Time to settle into the hotel before dinner in the hotel

restaurant.

**Day 2.** The morning talk is followed by a walk with a local guide to introduce the layout and main buildings of Leipzig's historic centre. *Early evening concert at the Thomaskirche with the Thomanerchor Leipzig, the Gewandhaus Orchestra and Andreas Reize (conductor): F. Liszt, Prelude and Fugue on the name B-A-C-H, LW.E3; J.S. Bach, Mass in B Minor, BWV 232.2; and other works.*

**Day 3.** After the daily talk, a guided tour of the excellent museum at the Bach Archive. *Early-afternoon concert at the Evangelical Reformed Church with Tomáš Král (bass) and the Capricornus Consort Basel: J. A. Reincken, Sonata in A minor; A. Corelli, Trio Sonata in B minor, Op. 3 No. 4; A. Marcello: Oboe concerto in D minor; F. Couperin, Sonata 'La Convalescente'; J.S. Bach, Sinfonia from Cantata 'Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis', BWV 21; Ich habe genug, BWV 82.1. Evening concert at the Nikolaikirche with the Monteverdi Choir, the English Baroque Soloists and Sir John Eliot Gardiner (conductor): J.S. Bach, Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen, BWV 12; Ihr werdet weinen und heulen, BWV 103; Wir müssen durch viel Trübsal, BWV 146.*

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continued

**Day 4.** The morning is free until the *midday concert* at the University Church with Miriam Feuersinger (soprano) and the Capricornus Consort Basel: A. Vivaldi, *Concerto for two violins & cello in D minor, RV 565*; Violin concerto in D, RV 230; J.S. Bach, *Concerto for violin & oboe in C minor, BWV 1060R*; *Ich bin vergnügt mit meinem Glücke, BWV 84*. Dinner is followed by an *evening concert* at the Nikolaikirche, with the Monteverdi Choir, the English Baroque Soloists and Sir John Eliot Gardiner (conductor): J.S. Bach, *Liebster Gott, wenn werd ich sterben, BWV 8.1*; *Wer weiß, wie nahe mir mein Ende, BWV 27*; *Christus, der ist mein Leben, BWV 95*; *Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit, BWV 106 (Actus tragicus)*. **Optional late-night recital** at the Salles de Pologne with Yaara Tal and Andreas Groethuysen (piano duo): W.F. Bach, *Concerto in F, Fk 10 (BR-WFB A 12)*; R. Schumann, *Studies for Pedal Piano, Op. 56*; R. Febel, *Studies on Bach's The Art of Fugue*; J.S. Bach, *Passacaglia in C minor, BWV 582*.

**Day 5.** A morning walk with a specialist guide concentrates on Leipzig's musical heritage. **Late-afternoon concert** at the Gewandhaus with Michael Schönheit (organ), the Gewandhaus Jugendchor and Frank-Steffen Elster (conductor): J.S. Bach, *Prelude and Fugue in C minor, BWV 549.2*; *Komm, Gott Schöpfer, heiliger Geist, BWV 667.2*; *Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele, BWV 654*; *Great Fantasia and Fugue in G minor, BWV 542*; and other works. The final dinner is followed by an **evening concert** at the Nikolaikirche with Jakob Pilgram (tenor), Christian Wagner (baritone), Miriam Feuersinger (soprano), Sara Mingardo (alto), Mirko Ludwig (tenor), Guglielmo Buonsanti (bass), Francesc Ortega i Martí (baritone), La Cetra Vokalensemble Basel, La Cetra Barockorchester Basel and Andrea Marcon (conductor): J.S. Bach: *St John Passion, BWV 245.2 (1725 version)*.

**Day 6.** Drive from Leipzig to Berlin Airport and fly to London Heathrow, arriving late afternoon.

## Lecturer

**Professor John Butt OBE.** Gardiner Professor of Music at the University of Glasgow and musical director of Edinburgh's Dunedin Consort. He has published several books on Bach, the surrounding culture of performance and the historical performance movement.

His recordings with the Dunedin Consort of Handel's *Messiah* and Mozart's *Requiem* have received *Gramophone* awards (2007, 2014) and the latter was also nominated for a Grammy Award. He is Principal Artist with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and has been guest conductor with many orchestras across Europe and North America. He has been awarded the FBA and FRSE, the Dent Medal of the RMA and the RAM/Kohn Foundation's Bach Prize.

## Practicalities

**Price, per person. Two sharing:** £3,460 or £3,160 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £3,740 or £3,440 without flights.

**One optional evening concert:** supplement of £55 per person.

**Included:** top category tickets for seven concerts; flights with British Airways (Airbus A320); private coach for airport transfers; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 3 dinners and 1 lunch (with drinks); museum admissions; tips; taxes; lecturer, tour manager and local guide.

**Music:** tickets to be confirmed autumn 2024.

**Accommodation. Leipzig Marriott Hotel** (leipzigmarriott.de): Conforming to its brand, the Marriott is a smart 4-star hotel with lots of marble, pillars, wood, brass and comfortable easy chairs. It is located on a pedestrian street just inside the north-eastern section of the ring road that runs around the city centre, and no more than 10–15 minutes on foot from the venues. Rooms are spacious, with cosy neoclassical furnishings and are equipped to a high standard. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*

**How strenuous?** Walking is the only practical way of getting around the largely pedestrianised centre of Leipzig. Most walks will be less than 20 minutes.

**Group size:** between 10 and 22 participants.