



The Ring at La Scala

Wagner at the world's most famous opera house

28 February–8 March 2026 (MM 889)

£6,530 • 9 days

Speakers: Barry Millington & Dr R.T. Cobiانchi

The first Ring at La Scala in over a decade, to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the Cycle's premiere in 1876.

Directed by David McVicar, conducted by Alexander Soddy, and with internationally renowned soloists such as Michael Volle.

Led by Wagner expert Barry Millington and art historian Dr R.T. Cobiانchi.

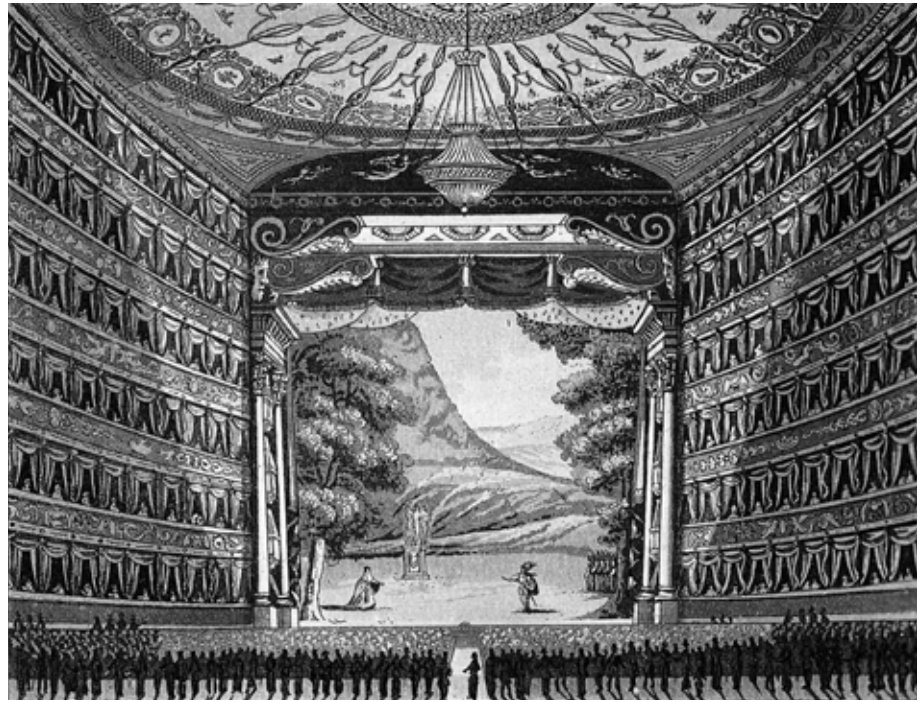
Visits to Milan's finest historical and artistic sites, plus excursions to Bergamo, Vigevano and to the magnificent Certosa di Pavia.

Notwithstanding Richard Wagner's problematic relationship with Italian opera, La Scala Milan, historically the major centre of operatic activity in that country, has over the last century or so established a notable reputation in Wagner repertoire. Following in the footsteps of giants such as Arturo Toscanini and Wilhelm Furtwängler, Daniel Barenboim conducted the Ring there as music director of the company between 2011 and 2015. The new production, which will reach its culmination in 2026, is to be conducted by Alexander Soddy, one of the most sought-after conductors of his generation, with a building reputation as one of the great Wagner specialists. The director is the highly experienced and popular David McVicar, known for his visceral, psychologically probing productions.

The stellar cast includes Michael Volle (Wotan), arguably the leading singer in the role today, Camilla Nylund (Brünnhilde), Klaus Florian Vogt (Siegfried), Okka von der Damerau (Fricka) and Johannes Martin Kränzle (Alberich).

There will be lectures on each instalment of the Ring by Barry Millington, the Wagner specialist and editor of *The Wagner Journal*, and walks or excursions on most days with Italian art historian Dr R.T. Cobiانchi visiting the area's historical and artistic treasures.

These vary from Leonardo's *Last Supper* to the internationally-renowned Pinacoteca Brera, packed with big names from Italy's unrivalled artistic heritage, as well as excursions to important sites in the medieval Duchy of Milan – approximately coterminous with modern Lombardy – such as Bergamo and Vigevano.



Milan, La Scala, aquatint c. 1830.

We have of course also allowed plenty of time to rest and to prepare for experiencing these operas, the greatest achievement of music drama.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. midday from London Heathrow to Milan Linate (British Airways).

Day 2: Milan. Start the day at Milan's spectacular marble cathedral, the greatest Gothic building in Italy, and the nearby headquarters of the powers whose rivalry ensured a continuously lively (and sometimes deadly) political scene: bishop, duke and commune. The Castello Sforzesco is a vast fortified palace, now with museums containing a variety of exhibits including room decorations by Leonardo and Michelangelo's *Rondanini Pietà*. An early dinner precedes the first performance at La Scala: *Das Rheingold*.

Day 3. Vigevano. A very attractive little town, Vigevano has at its heart one of the largest castles in Italy, a major Sforza palace, a beautiful arcaded square and several churches of interest.

Day 4: Milan. In the morning, there is a guided tour of the La Scala museum, which

documents the history of the opera house with portraits of composers, a wealth of historically significant instruments and much else. Evening performance at La Scala, including a buffet dinner in the theatre museum: *Die Walküre*.

Day 5: Bergamo. Only an hour away, the hilltop town of Bergamo is one of the loveliest in Italy. Girt by massive ramparts, architectural treasures include Santa Maria Maggiore, austere Romanesque outside and richly embellished within, and the Cappella Colleoni, a celebrated work of the Renaissance. There is a museum devoted to Donizetti, who was born here.

Day 6: Milan. The graceful Renaissance church of Santa Maria delle Grazie alone justifies a visit, though it is the refectory that gives the monastery fame: it is adorned with the world's most famous wall painting, Leonardo's *Last Supper*. The afternoon is free before the evening performance (and buffet dinner) at La Scala: *Siegfried*.

Day 7: Pavia, Milan. Drive out to the Certosa di Pavia, a Carthusian monastery which was generously endowed by both the Visconti and the Sforza families as their mausoleum. Gothic meets Renaissance in a church of exceptional decorative richness and a cloister of rare beauty.

The Ring at La Scala
continued

Day 8: Milan. Visit the Brera, one of Italy's finest art galleries with most of the greatest Italian artists represented. Evening performance (and buffet dinner) at La Scala: *Götterdämmerung*.

Day 9. Fly in the afternoon from Milan Linate, arriving London Heathrow at c. 3.30pm.

The itinerary will be updated as we receive updates from the theatre regarding full cast lists.

Lecturer

Barry Millington is Chief Music Critic for London's *Evening Standard* and founder/editor of *The Wagner Journal*. He is the author/editor of eight books on Wagner including *The Sorcerer of Bayreuth*. He also contributed the articles on Wagner and his operas to *The New Grove Dictionary of Music & Musicians* and *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*. He was the founder and artistic director of the Hampstead & Highgate Festival (1999–2003), has acted as dramaturgical adviser at international opera houses, and co-founded the ensemble Counterpoise.

Dr R. T. Cobiانchi. Art historian and researcher specializing in Italian art and architecture of the Renaissance and Baroque. His interests also span from the iconography of the late Middle Ages to the sculpture of Neoclassicism.

Practicalities

Price. Two sharing: £ 6,530 or £6,270 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £7,430 or £7,170 without flights.

Included: Flights (Euro Traveller) with British Airways (Airbus 320); travel by private coach for transfers and excursions; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch, 2 restaurant dinners and 3 buffet dinners at La Scala, with wine, water, coffee; admission tickets, tips, taxes; the services of the lecturers. Silver Premium tickets to all 4 performances are included.

Accommodation. Rosa Grand Hotel, Milan (starhotels.com/en/our-hotels/rosa-grand-milan): a smart 4-star hotel excellently located directly behind the Duomo. Rooms are well appointed in a clean, modern style. *Single rooms are double for sole use.*

How strenuous? There is a fair amount of walking as much of the centre is closed to traffic; the theatre is a 10-15 minute walk from the hotel. The visits and excursions require a fair amount of standing around, and steps and stairs. The tour is not suitable for anyone who has difficulties with everyday walking and stair climbing.

Group size: between 10 and 22 participants.