

Richard Strauss Society

from Colin Murison Small

RSS: suggested trips for 2011/2012 season

Dear Member*,

21 September 2011

Overleaf you will find a list of planned RSS trips for the coming season. As usual, I will provisionally reserve the opera seats and usually the hotel to permit easy socialisation in the relevant city. Members will continue to book and pay for their own air travel and simple Eurostar rail journeys on-line, though I will try to help if needed. For non-Eurostar trains I will normally make a group booking and you repay the cost to the Society when paying for your opera seats. You pay the hotel bill direct **during your stay**.

Where fewer than six people register for a trip, the custom is for me to ask one of the participants to act as leader so that the arrangements can still be handled as a mini-group. However, there is never any group saving on flights and seldom any on train travel or opera tickets for groups under 10.

Accommodation

We normally stay in what would probably be termed three star hotels. Each room of course will have bath or shower & wc *ensuite* and we always book on a B&B basis. We try to ensure there is a bar for an RSS drink before we set off for the opera house in the early evening. It is usual for us to pre-book a restaurant near the hotel (only exceptionally within the hotel itself) for a group dinner after the performance. That is roughly our standard format but some may want higher grade accommodation: if you do, by all means let me know (in case there are others) or book direct if you prefer.

Typical price for double, B&B: €80-120; single, B&B: €70-90.

Travel

The traditional decision for most members has been to use easyJet or, if necessary, Ryanair for reasons of economy. That said, watch out for all the extras – for consigning a bag to the hold, for boarding the aircraft near the front of the queue, for exceeding the limits for size and weight of your cabin baggage etc. *[Please note that these rules have nothing to do with the carrying capacity of the planes but are increasingly annoying and unnecessary tricks to make the basic price look lower: if the Office of Fair Trading had any guts it would have abolished all this nonsense years ago.]* For that – and sometimes for other good reasons – BA from Heathrow can be surprisingly competitive. There are also foreign *no frills* carriers, but bear in mind that the industry has been riddled with financial failures in recent years and you do not want to miss the performance! I give suggested routes for travel below each trip description and will always be happy to help if you phone or fax me with questions.

Flights start as low as £70 return, but can increase alarmingly as the travel date nears. One way is normally half price so you can buy an “open jaw” flight.

Opera seats

Happily, many European houses seem to be cheaper, some considerably, than their London counterparts. We normally request a mix of best and medium: it is not cost-effective to spend a lot on flight and hotel and then sit at the back of the Upper Circle. Please indicate your preference when informing me of your intention to join a trip.

Opera seats range from about €40-180.

The RSS website

You are strongly advised to visit the RSS website (www.richard-strauss-society.co.uk) where you can find out everything about all the above productions and the theatres in which they are being performed. The site, brainchild of our Committee member John Glasson, is very user friendly and is constantly updated. You can even link directly to the websites of the opera houses concerned, read about the history of, and performers in, each production before committing yourself to joining a trip.

**You need not be an RSS member to participate; but we hope you will become one if you join a trip.*

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RSS proposed trips for 2011-2012

1 - Pre-Christmas double bill - 12-14 Dec 2011:

Rosenkavalier in Vienna - Mon 12 December 2011
Daphne in Vienna - Tues 13 December 2011

Kills two birds with one stone at a festive time of year. Two nights in the same bed and no travel between performances. Direct flights to Vienna.

2 - A new German pairing - 17-19 Feb 2012:

Arabella in Frankfurt - Fri 17 Feb
***Ariadne in Baden-Baden (Premiere!) - Sat 18 Feb**

**This is not only the Premiere, but looks likely to be a memorable occasion - Renee Fleming is singing Ariadne and the conductor is Christian Thielmann so it should be a memorable event. Baden-Baden is a new destination for us. Fly to Frankfurt, train to/from Baden-Baden.*

3 - An Eastern Europe double bill - 17-21 March 2012:

Arabella in Budapest - Sat 17 March 2012
Die Frau ohne Schatten in Vienna - Tues 20 March 2012

Budapest breaks new ground for an RSS trip and the schedule allows members some time to enjoy Budapest, probably less familiar to them than Vienna. We will fly LHR or LGW-Budapest in the morning on Sat 17 March; take a train from Budapest to Vienna on 19 March and fly back to Gatwick from Vienna on Wed 21 March. Budapest's Opera House is magnificent.

4 - Another new German pairing - 26-28 April 2012:

Elektra in Nürnberg - Thu 26 April 2012 [NB: Easter Day 2012 is early - Sun 8 April]
Arabella in Passau - Fri 27 April 2012

Something new for the Society - in what used to be the DDR before the wall fell. The Nürnberg Opera House productions are usually passed round three nearby cities - Passau, Straubing and Linz - although in this case it appears that Arabella is home-grown in Passau. The train journey between the two cities takes 2 hours and it might be possible to spend two nights in either city provided you don't mind a very late return after the second opera. The Passau opera house is very intimate. Flights to/from Nürnberg.

5 - A French double bill - 24-26 June 2012:

Arabella in Paris - Mon 24 June 2012
Rosenkavalier in Strasbourg - Tues 25 June 2012

This combines easy rail travel (Eurostar to Paris + TGV Paris-Strasbourg) with two contrasting opera houses - large and modern in Paris and small and perfectly formed in Strasbourg. The Society visited Strasbourg a few years ago and enjoyed the performance, the opera house and the city very much.

I hope you will join us on one or more of the trips. If you need more information, please contact me, preferably by e-mail, otherwise by telephone or in desperation by snail-mail. Colin Murison Small.

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