



The Leipzig, Dresden & Prague Music Festivals!

Berlin – Leipzig – Dresden – Prague

with Peter & Kathleen van de Graaff

May 13 – 24, 2025



You are invited! Please join **Peter and Kathleen van de Graaff** on an extraordinary classical journey to Berlin, Leipzig, Dresden and Prague. Walk in the footsteps of Bach, Handel, Mendelsohn, Schumann, Mozart, Dvorak and Smetana! Attend three renowned music festivals in **Leipzig, Dresden and Prague**. Enjoy a concert in the very church where Bach worked for 27 years and a private concert in the home of Robert and Clara Schumann and

attend a concert featuring the legendary **Chicago Symphony**. Immerse yourself in three world-class music festivals and four romantic music capitals with like-minded friends who share your passion for art, music, food, and history. This will be the van de Graaff's 18th classical journey with Earthbound Expeditions. *Space is limited.*

YOUR JOURNEY: 4 Historic Cities – 3 Wonderful Festivals

2 Nights Berlin, Germany's historic capital

3 Nights Leipzig, home of Bach, Schumann, Goethe

3 Nights Historic Dresden (*Spring Music Festival*)

3 Nights Extraordinary Prague (79th *Prague Spring Music Festival*)



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Earthbound Expeditions Inc.

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HIGHLIGHTS: 4 Historic Cities – 3 World Class Music Festivals!

Tickets to the 79th Prague Spring Music Festival ❖ Tickets to the Dresden Spring Music Festival ❖ Tickets to the Leipzig Shostakovich Festival ❖ In-depth daily walking tours ❖ Six classical performances ❖ A concert in St. Thomas Church in Leipzig where Bach spent 27 years as music director ❖ Private tour of the Semperoper Dresden ❖ Intimate tours of the composers' homes ❖ Multi-course dining ❖ Berlin – Europe's new Capital of Culture, including new world-class museums ❖ The romantic world of Royal Potsdam ❖ Travel with like-minded friends who share your passion for classical music, history and art

INCLUDED

- Hosted by classical music experts Peter and Kathleen van de Graaff
- Fully guided by an Earthbound Expedition program director
- Eleven nights of accommodation in centrally-located, 4-star hotels
- All breakfasts and ten additional meals with regional cuisine and beverages
- Transportation by private air-conditioned motor coach
- Six glorious classical music events including: St. Thomas Church Bach organ concert, Dresden State Opera production, exclusive concert in the home of Robert and Clara Schumann
- Tickets to the **Prague Spring Music Festival**
- Tickets to the events in Leipzig and the **Shostakovich festival**
- Tickets to the Dresden Spring Music Festival and **Chicago Symphony!**
- Gratuities for your guides and drivers
- Entrance fees to museums, palaces, composer homes
- A river cruise on the Elbe (*weather and river levels permitting*)
- Daily walks with local historians
- Alumni appreciation discounts applied towards future journeys

TRIP FACTS



12 Days/11 Nights (not including air travel)

\$6,945 per person double occupancy

\$1,950 single supplement (waived if a roommate match is confirmed)

Trip begins: Berlin on May 13, 2025 at 6pm

Trip ends: Prague on May 24, after breakfast

SAVE \$300! Pay your final balance by check and save \$100 * Reserve your space by February 1, 2025 and save \$100 * Travel alumni save \$100



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The Music: What to Expect

~ Three World Class Festivals - Four Romantic Cities ~

City of Music: Berlin:

Germany's exciting capital has many world class venues. The Komische Oper, Berlin State Opera, Konzerthaus Berlin and Berlin Philharmonic (just to name a few). Your custom journey includes a tour of the Berlin Philharmonic. Note: You may wish to arrive a few days early in Berlin and reserve tickets to one of the above venues.

Legendary Leipzig & the Shostakovich Festival

Scarcely any other German city can point to a musical tradition as rich and vibrant as that of Leipzig. The Schumann couple, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Johann Sebastian Bach, Richard Wagner, Edvard Grieg, Gustav Mahler and many more left behind a musical treasure, which is still ubiquitous today and expands from year to year.

The Leipzig Gewandhaus invites the music world to Leipzig for one of the most comprehensive examinations of the works of Dmitri Shostakovich, on the fiftieth anniversary of his death. An unsurpassed roster of world-class artists will feature in the extensive chamber music series. **Tickets included.**

The Renowned Dresden Music Festival

Over the course of its 40 years history, the Dresden Music Festival has established itself as a distinctive cultural institution in Dresden which attracts an audience far beyond Germany's borders. During three festival weeks renowned orchestras, top-class soloists and ensembles arrive in Dresden and perform at the most beautiful venues in its historic center and surroundings and fill the city with music. With more than 35 theatres, over 50 museums and as the home of renowned choirs and orchestras, Dresden is a world-class city of culture. Let yourself be enchanted! **Tickets included.**

The Prague Spring International Music Festival

For 79 years, the Prague Spring International Music Festival has ranked among the top cultural events in the Czech Republic. This presentation of the world's best musicians, symphony orchestras and chamber music ensembles is somewhat of a phenomenon it has survived the political upheavals and dramatic cultural changes in the seven decades of its existence.

The origins of the Prague Spring Festival are connected with the first celebrations marking the end of World War II and since then it has been attracting fans of music and first-class performers. Leonard Bernstein, later to become a noted conductor, made his international debut at the Prague Festival in 1946 and 1947. **Tickets included.**



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Celebrate the beauty of classical music!

Your Classical Journey Begin...

Day 0, May 12: Depart for Germany

Make sure to depart the USA no later than today.

Day 1, May 13: Guten Morgen! Arrive in Berlin

Devastated by war, then divided for two generations, Berlin has been rebuilding for several decades. The results are stunning and have catapulted the city back to the first rank. Top-notch orchestras and opera companies thrive, several world-class museums have recently reopened over the last few years, and the boulevard of Unter den Linden has been re-laid. Recent visitors have been overwhelmed by the kaleidoscope of things to see, hear and do in what has become Europe's cultural mecca. Enjoy a welcome feast and orientation with your hosts, Peter and Kathleen van de Graaff, and Earthbound Expeditions guide. *Sleep in Berlin (D)*

Day 2, May 14: Highlights of Berlin

This morning we tour the Reichstag building in the historical heart of Berlin. Constructed to house the Imperial Diet of the German Empire, the Reichstag opened in 1894 and housed the Diet until 1933, when it was severely damaged by arson. Our tour of Berlin continues as we see the home of the Berlin Philharmonic. Not far away is the Holocaust Memorial and the The Bebelplatz, known as the site of one of the infamous Nazi book burning ceremonies held in the evening of May 10, 1933. Our march through 20th-century history culminates with a visit to a stretch of the Berlin Wall and Check-point Charlie. *Sleep in Berlin (L)*



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"I should be sorry if I only entertained them, I wish to make them better."
– George Frideric Handel

Day 3, May 15: Historic Potsdam and Leipzig: Attend the Shostakovich festival!

Today we'll visit historic Potsdam and tour the Schloss Cecilienhof where Harry Truman, Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin outlined their plans for a post-war Europe. Many years earlier, J.S. Bach paid a short visit to Potsdam in May 1747 where he met King Friedrich II. Enjoy a lunch in Potsdam before returning to Berlin. En-route we will cross the famous "Bridge of Spies".

After lunch our journey continues to Leipzig. Enroute we'll pass the city of Halle, birthplace of Handel.

While Bach lived in Leipzig the population was just 30,000. The city was the second largest in Saxony, the center of the German printing and publishing industries (many of Beethoven's works were first printed here), an important European trading center, and site of a progressive and famous university. One of Leipzig's most important features was its international commerce. When the Leipzig Trade Fair was in progress, the respectable town was transformed into a show-ground, mixing business with pleasure, and was popular with members of the Royal Court of Dresden. Many connections were established between nations on these occasions and this, in turn, had a beneficial effect on the civic economy and culture as well as the international variety of its music.

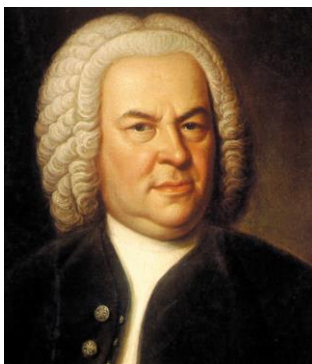
Among the many great names in musical history who lived and worked in the city were Johann Sebastian Bach, Ludwig van Beethoven, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Clara and Robert Schumann, Richard Wagner, Edvard Grieg, Albert Lortzing, Gustav Mahler and Hanns Eisler. In addition, Leipzig's rich musical heritage includes the Gewandhaus Orchestra and the world-famous St. Thomas Boys Choir which looks back on a proud tradition of almost 800 years.

Over the course of the next three days, we'll walk in the footsteps of the great composers, attend the **Shostakovich festival** and learn firsthand how this city of high culture and trade impacted their works. *Sleep in Leipzig (B, L)*



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Day 4, May 16: In Bach's Footsteps

After breakfast, meet your local guide for a glimpse into the world of Bach. Leipzig is where Johann Sebastian Bach spent 27 of his most productive years. A new Bach Museum opened recently – and it's been brilliantly done. You can even just relax while listening to the catalogue of his music. With a bit of luck, they might even be playing the organ at St. Thomas Church just across the street. Bach worked at St. Thomas as a cantor for 27 years, and today, his remains are buried below the altar.

Since 1212, St. Thomas Church has also been home to the famous St. Thomas Boys Choir. *Sleep in Leipzig (B, L)*

Day 5, May 17: A Day with Mendelssohn and Robert and Clara Schumann

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy was a major influence on European musical history – and he in turn was influenced by his experience of Leipzig. Under his musical direction, the Gewandhaus Orchestra became a first-class orchestra. Moreover, Mendelssohn is renowned for his rediscovery of Bach. The performance of the *St. Matthew Passion* under his musical direction in 1829 initiated “the Bach Renaissance”. He is also credited for the foundation of the Conservatory of Music in 1843, Germany's oldest music academy, which bears his name today. Mendelssohn's home became a meeting place for famous contemporaries such as Robert and Clara Schumann and Richard Wagner. It is the composer's last remaining private residence and today accommodates the Mendelssohn Museum.

Just a few blocks away you'll find the charming home of Robert and Clara Schumann. Here you'll learn about their lifelong love for each other and be treated to a special piano recital. *Sleep in Leipzig (B, L)*

About Clara Schumann:



Clara Schumann spent the first 25 years of her life in Leipzig. At the age of nine, she made her successful concert debut at the Leipzig Gewandhaus. As an acclaimed artist, she performed successful concerts in Paris, Vienna, Copenhagen and St. Petersburg, among others, during the Leipzig period and married Robert Schumann here. In 1878, on the occasion of her 50th anniversary as an artist, she was honored at the Leipzig Gewandhaus.



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Spend three nights in historic Dresden: The Florence of the North

Day 6, May 18: Leipzig to the Florence of the North: Dresden Music Fest

This morning we make our way east to a city, known as “the Florence of the North”. Our journey will take us to the banks of the beautiful Elbe River and past quaint villages and medieval castles. En-route we’ll tour Germany's smallest wine-producing region. The Saxon Wine Route offers a wonderful blend of picturesque vineyards and local architecture. This part of Saxony enjoys a particularly favorable climate. Grapes have been grown here for over 850 years, and the local porcelain manufacturing tradition dates back almost 300 years. It was wine and porcelain, together with rich silver deposits, that brought fame and fortune to Saxony.

After meeting the producer and having lunch, we head to Dresden, our home for the next three nights. Dresden was for many years the capital of Saxony and was on an important trade route. It was here that musical giants such as Handel, Bach and Wagner lived and worked. After checking into our centrally-located hotel, we’ll set out to explore the historic core of this once cultural capital. *Sleep in Dresden (B, L)*



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“I play the notes as they are written, but it is God who makes the music.”
— Johann Sebastian Bach

Day 7, May 19: A Day of Culture and Art in Dresden: Dresden Music Fest

Today we set out to discover the artistic masterpieces of Dresden. Art lovers will fall in love with the impressive old masters' collection housed in the Zwinger Museum. August the Strong, elector of Saxony (also king of Poland), built this Baroque masterpiece, modeled after Versailles, in 1719. Here he staged tournaments and kept dozens of concubines. Today, this artfully symmetrical complex of buildings holds a collection of museums. The damage caused by the British air raid in 1945 was so devastating that some locals feared the Zwinger would remain a ruin forever. However, it's been restored and it's back in business, welcoming new generations of art lovers.

The most important museum in the complex is the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister (Old Masters Picture Gallery). This gallery, one of the best on the Continent, has as its showpiece Raphael's *Sistine Madonna*. You'll also find Giorgione's *Sleeping Venus*, Antonello da Messina's *The Martyrdom of St. Sebastian*, Titian's *Tribute Money*, and many famous works by Veronese, Tintoretto, Correggio, and Carracci. You'll also see Flemish, Dutch, and German paintings by Van Dyck, Vermeer, Dürer, and Rembrandt. The Rubens collection includes his spectacular *Neptune*, full of rearing horses, and an exquisite St. Jerome.

Enjoy an included lunch and a free afternoon. This evening you'll be treated to a performance of **Mahler's 7th Symphony** with the renowned **Chicago Symphony** and Jaap van Zweden. *Sleep in Dresden (B, L)*

Day 8, May 20: A Day of Leisure: Dresden Music Fest

Relax and take a free day in lovely Dresden. Enjoy another included concert at the Dresden Music Festival! *Sleep in Dresden (B, L)*

Day 9, May 21: South to Prague to the city of Mozart, Smetana and Dvořák

After breakfast, we make our way south towards the soaring spires of Prague. We stop to explore the beautiful Vysehrad Cemetery. More than just a normal, quiet cemetery, this is the final resting place of the most honored Czech composers, artists, sculptors, writers, scientists and politicians. Here are the graves of Smetana, Dvořák and the 19th century Moravian-Czech artist, Mucha. Prague is the birthplace of Franz Kafka and the city Mozart loved best. For our first evening in Prague, let's enjoy a Bohemian feast. Then, enjoy a concert at the celebrated **Prague Spring Music Festival!** *Sleep in Prague (B, D)*



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Immerse yourself in the music of the Prague Spring Music Festival!

Day 10, May 22: Exploring Prague: Spring Music Fest

From its mythological inception to the present, benefactors have placed Prague on the cusp of the divine. King of Bohemia and Holy Roman Emperor Karl IV refashioned Prague into a city of soaring cathedrals and lavish palaces. Our historic walking tour of Prague will start at its medieval center, the Old Town Square. We'll cover some of Prague's most interesting sights including the Estates Opera house where Mozart himself conducted the *Marriage of Figaro* in 1787. Our tour will continue to Prague's stirring medieval Jewish quarter. We'll take time to savor this culturally-rich neighborhood and stop by the Old Synagogue, which has been a place of worship for over 700 years. You'll have a free afternoon before meeting to enjoy a concert this evening. *Sleep in Prague (B, L)*

Day 11, May 23: Prague's Castle District: Spring Music Fest: We start the day with a stroll to Prague's most famous landmark - Charles Bridge, after which we'll visit the historic castle district. Enjoy a farewell lunch this afternoon. The rest of the day is yours to further explore this city's charming streets. Perhaps you'll want to take in a Bohemian market, another concert, a world-class museum or simply wander the wondrously preserved historic old town. *Sleep in Prague (B, L)*

Day 12, May 24: Return home with a lifetime of memories!

Your classical music adventure concludes this morning after breakfast. Why not spend a few extra nights in Prague at the end of your journey?

- Itinerary Subject to Change -

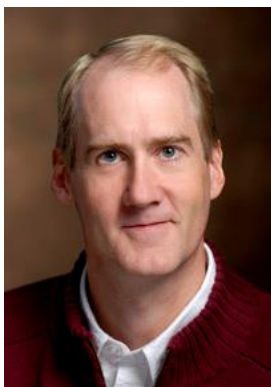


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Meet Your Hosts!

Peter & Kathleen van de Graaff



Peter van de Graaff has hosted a nightly show on WFMT for over 35 years and is the program director of the Beethoven Network, which is broadcast on 150 radio stations nationwide. He has hosted many other nationally-syndicated programs and was also the host of live broadcasts from the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Peter was a professional opera singer and has performed with opera companies and orchestras throughout the world. He also has a great interest in languages and speaks Dutch, German and French. and has studied many others.



Kathleen van de Graaff, was a professional singer, having performed opera, oratorio and solo recitals throughout the United States, Europe, China, Japan and Central America. She taught at Lake Forest College for 25 years and continues teaching in her private studio. Kathleen and Peter have traveled throughout Europe obtaining scores of early 18th Century chamber operas called "intermezzi". They have subsequently gained notoriety as specialists in this area, performing them throughout the United States, Costa Rica and Asia as well as on live broadcasts over WFMT, Chicago, and have given the modern premieres of many intermezzi by Domenico Sarri, Leonardo Leo, Giuseppe Orlandini and Giovanni Bononcini. Two of these intermezzi, *Mirena e Floro* and *Moschetta e Grullo*, were released in 2007 on Naxos International Record Label. A third opera, *Miride e Damari* can be heard on the Naxos website.

Reservations & Questions

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Know Before You Go!

Reservations and Deposits: Early reservations are essential to guarantee space on the date you wish to travel. A \$1,000 per person deposit is needed to confirm your space on this journey. You can make your secure credit card deposit online, by phone or by mail. Once the deposit is processed, a deposit packet is sent with pertinent journey details.

Deposits are refundable for 60 days from deposit or 90 days prior to departure, whichever comes first, minus a \$250 per person cancellation fee. Questions? Call our helpful travel staff at 206.842.9775.

Health Matters: It is the responsibility of each guest to be aware of their physical abilities or limitations, and to be in sufficient good health to undertake the trip. To make the most of your journey and participate in the various planned group activities, you should be able to be on your feet and walk unassisted for two to three hours (often over uneven cobblestones or pathways) with frequent standing. If you have questions about the physical requirements for your journey, please email or call our travel office.

Hosted Journeys: If a host or special guest is unable to attend as planned, Earthbound Expeditions will do its utmost to find another host who has similar interests, talents expertise. The inability of a host to participate in a tour is not grounds for a full or partial refund.

Concert and Schedule Notes: Earthbound Expeditions is not responsible for any changes regarding the program, performers, times and/or dates which the concert organizers alter. If, for reasons a concert is changed or cancelled a substitute concert will be found. Opera houses and symphony halls generally release tickets first to season subscribers. Please note that our staff will make every effort to book the very best seats available.

Terms & Conditions: All guests must read the fine print. [Click here](#) to read the full terms and conditions.

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