



The Dresden & Prague Music Festivals!

Berlin – Leipzig – Dresden – Prague
with Minnesota Public Radio's Steve Staruch
May 13 – 24, 2026



You are warmly invited!

Please join me, MPR's Steve Staruch, on an unforgettable spring journey to Berlin, Leipzig, Dresden, and Prague. Walk in the footsteps of Bach, Handel, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Mozart, Dvořák, and Smetana, and experience the places that shaped their genius. Enjoy stunning musical experiences, including an organ concert in the very church where Bach

worked for 27 years and a private concert in the former home of Robert and Clara Schumann. Delight in the splendor of the Dresden and Prague Spring Music Festivals, among Europe's most celebrated classical events. Travel with like-minded music lovers as you explore four romantic music capitals and three world-class festivals, savoring exceptional food, rich history, and inspiring art along the way. This is a journey designed for those who cherish beauty, culture, and the timeless power of music. Hope to see you in Europe this spring! Space is limited.

TRIP AT A GLANCE

2 Nights Berlin
3 Nights Leipzig
3 Nights Dresden
3 Nights Prague



**EARTHBOUND
EXPEDITIONS**

Earthbound Expeditions Inc.

P.O. Box 11305, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110 USA

Tel: 206.842.9775

www.EarthboundExpeditions.com

HIGHLIGHTS: 4 Historic Cities – 2 World Class Music Festivals!

Six classical performances ❖ Tickets to the Prague Spring Music Festival ❖ Tickets to the Dresden Spring Music ❖ In-depth daily walking tours ❖ 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 MPR's Steve Staruch
- 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
- Two festival performances in Dresden
- Two festival performances in Prague
- An exclusive concert in the home of Robert and Clara Schumann
- A concert featuring works by Bach in Leipzig
- Gratuities for your guides and drivers
- Entrance fees to museums, palaces, composer homes
- Daily walks with local historians
- Alumni appreciation discounts applied towards future journeys

TRIP FACTS



12 Days/11 Nights (not including air travel)

\$6,995 per person double occupancy

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

Trip begins: Berlin on May 13, 2026 at 6pm

Trip ends: Prague on May 24, 2026 after breakfast

SAVE \$300! Pay your final balance by check and save \$100 * Reserve your space by January 15, 2026 and save \$100 * MPR & Earthbound travel alumni save \$100



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Music: What to Expect

~ Two World -Class Festivals - Four Romantic Cities ~

The Prague Spring International Music Festival (Two concerts)

For decades, 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.**

The Renowned Dresden Music Festival (Two concerts)

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.**

Legendary Leipzig: Home of Bach

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.

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. You may choose to purchase tickets for any available events.



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Unter den Linden, Brandenburg Gate

Your Classical Journey Begin...

Day 0, May 12: Depart for Germany

Make sure to depart the USA no later than today. You may opt to arrive a day or two early. Recent visitors have been surprised by the kaleidoscope of things to see, hear and do in Germany's capital!

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

Devastated, then divided for two generations, Berlin has been rebuilding for a mere three 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. Enjoy a welcome feast and orientation with your host, Steve Staruch, 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 to see the home of the Berlin Philharmonic. Not far away is the Holocaust Memorial and the Bebelplatz, 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 & Musical Leipzig

Today blends history, culture, and music as we journey through two remarkable German cities.

Our morning begins in Potsdam with a visit to Schloss Cecilienhof, where Truman, Churchill, and Stalin shaped postwar Europe. Nearly two centuries earlier, Johann Sebastian Bach visited Potsdam in May 1747 at the invitation of King Friedrich II, creating a moment of musical history. After enjoying lunch in Potsdam, we return toward Berlin, crossing the legendary "Bridge of Spies."

In the afternoon, we continue to Leipzig, passing Halle, the birthplace of George Frideric Handel.

During Bach's time, Leipzig was a thriving center of trade, publishing, and learning. Its famous Trade Fair drew visitors from across Europe, enriching the city's economy and cultural life and contributing to its remarkable musical diversity. Leipzig has been home to an extraordinary list of composers, including Bach, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Clara and Robert Schumann, Wagner, Grieg, and Mahler. The city also boasts the Gewandhaus Orchestra and the nearly 800-year-old St. Thomas Boys Choir.

This evening, we check into our four-star hotel in Leipzig's old town, then meet our guide for a special concert in the church where Bach worked for nearly 30 years and is buried today. *Sleep in Leipzig. (B, D)*



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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 Robert and Clara Schumann

Just a short walk from our hotel stands the intimate and charming **home of Robert and Clara Schumann**, where their shared life of love, creativity, and music comes vividly to life. Here, you'll learn about their remarkable partnership and enjoy a **special private piano recital**, an unforgettable highlight of our journey.

For those who wish, the afternoon offers an optional visit to the nearby **home of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy**. A towering figure in European music, Mendelssohn helped shape Leipzig into a musical capital. As music director, he elevated the **Gewandhaus Orchestra** to international renown and famously sparked the "**Bach Renaissance**" with his 1829 performance of the St. Matthew Passion. He also founded Germany's oldest music academy, the **Leipzig Conservatory**, which still bears his name.

Mendelssohn's home was a lively gathering place for leading musicians of the day, including **Robert and Clara Schumann** and **Richard Wagner**. Today, it remains his last surviving private residence and is preserved as the **Mendelssohn Museum**.

Sleep in Leipzig. (B, L)

A note 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 Dresden: Dresden Music Fest

This morning, we head to Dresden, the "Florence of the North," along the picturesque Elbe River, passing charming villages and medieval castles. We'll stop in Meissen, home to Europe's first porcelain factory, founded in 1710, for a tour and lunch. Afterward, we'll visit Germany's smallest wine region and meet a local producer before continuing to Dresden, where we'll stay for the next three nights. Once the capital of Saxony, Dresden was home to musical greats like Handel, Bach, and Wagner. Settle in and relax in our centrally located 4-star hotel.

This evening, enjoy a stunning Baroque concert beneath the dome of the Frauenkirche. **Soprano Nuria Rial** and Les Cornets Noirs will take us on a musical journey to 17th-century Italy with their expressive and elegant performance. *Overnight in Dresden (B, L)*

Note: Dining in Central Europe: Lunch is the Star!

In Germany and Prague, mealtime is a celebration! Hearty, flavorful multi-course lunches in historic settings let you savor the best of Central Europe without slowing down your adventures.



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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

Today we explore the artistic treasures of **Dresden**. Art lovers will be captivated by the **Zwinger Museum**, a Baroque masterpiece built in 1719 by August the Strong, elector of Saxony and king of Poland. Once damaged in the 1945 air raid, it has been beautifully restored and now houses a world-class collection of museums.

While touring the **Zwinger Museum** we will visit the **Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister (Old Masters Picture Gallery)**, home to Raphael's Sistine Madonna, Giorgione's Sleeping Venus, Titian's Tribute Money, and masterpieces by Veronese, Tintoretto, Dürer, Vermeer, Rembrandt, and Rubens.

Enjoy an included **lunch** and a free afternoon and evening in romantic Dresden.
Overnight in Dresden (B, L)



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

Spend a delightful day exploring Dresden at your own pace. Stroll through the **Altstadt (Old Town)** wandering elegant streets, grand squares, and ornate churches filled with history. Take a break with a leisurely lunch of local specialties at a charming café or restaurant. Enjoy a peaceful riverside walk along the Elbe or uncover hidden art and cultural treasures tucked throughout the city.

In the evening, you'll be treated to dinner out on the town and another **classical music concert** at the renowned Dresden Music Festival. *Sleep in Dresden (B, D)*



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 of the **Helsinki Baroque Orchestra** 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

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. *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 followed by a gala farewell lunch. Enjoy a free afternoon to further explore this city's charming streets before attending our final concert together this evening of the **Oslo Philharmonic** with conductor **Klaus Mäkelä** and cellist, **Truls Mørk**. *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.

- Itinerary Subject to Change -



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Meet Your Host!



Steve Staruch is a seasoned music host at YourClassical MPR. He presents classics from the ancient to the modern weekdays from 3 to 7pm. In addition to his radio work Steve is a violist and singer. He was a member of the Minnesota Beethoven Festival Chorale, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra Chorale and was a frequent soloist with the Dale Warland Signers. He also freelances as a violist in the region, and frequently performs with his American Roots Music ensemble, Belvidere Oasis. He and his wife Naomi has hosted tours to European classical music festivals and having also travelled several times to India. A trained yoga instructor, he holds yoga classes for his MPR colleagues. His garden and his kitchen are some of his favorite places to be.



Reservations & Questions

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Know Before You Go!

Reservations and Deposits: A \$1,000 per person deposit is needed to confirm your space on this journey. You can make a credit card deposit online or by phone. Deposits are refundable, minus a \$250 per person cancellation fee, for 60 days from the processing date or 90 days prior to departure, whichever comes first. Deposits made 90 days prior to a trip departing are not refundable. Final payment is also non-refundable, which is why we strongly urge guests to purchase travel insurance.

Not Included: International airline tickets, alcoholic beverages, room service and gratuities for hotel staff, travel insurance, meals not listed in brochure, and any activities or items not listed in your itinerary.

Physical Requirements: 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. [Click here](#) to read “Is an Earthbound trip right for you?” or call the Earthbound office for more details.

Travel Insurance: Earthbound Expeditions strongly encourages the purchase of travel insurance coverage. We include information on trip insurance in your deposit information.

Events and Hosted Journeys: If a planned event is cancelled for any reason, another event will be included in its place. This is not cause for refund. Events are subject to change. Also, 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, and expertise. The inability of a host to participate in a tour is not grounds for a full or partial refund.

Terms & Conditions: [Click here](#) to read the full terms and conditions.



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