



The Dresden & Prague Music Festivals!

Berlin – Leipzig – Dresden – Prague
with Minnesota Public Radio's Steve Staruch

May 13 – 24, 2026



You are invited! Join MPR's Steve Staruch on this extraordinary classical journey to Berlin, Leipzig, Dresden and Prague where you will walk in the footsteps of Bach, Handel, Mendelsohn, Schumann, Mozart, Dvorak and Smetana! Attend the renowned **Dresden and Prague Spring Music Festivals**. Enjoy an organ concert in the very church where Bach worked for 27 years and a private concert in the home of Robert and Clara Schumann. Travel to three world-class

music festivals and four romantic music capitals with like-minded friends who share your passion for art, music, food and history. Immerse yourself in the beauty of 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!

Tickets to the Prague Spring Music Festival ❖ Tickets to the Dresden Spring Music 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 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
- 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 Dresden Spring Music Festival
- 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

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

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

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.



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

Devastated, then divided for two generations, Berlin has been rebuilding for a mere two 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 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 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

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 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 only four years ago – 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 classical music event at the renowned Dresden Music Festival! *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 classical 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 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 -

Meet Your Host!



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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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