

Florence and Venice!

The best of music, art and food in Italy with WBJC

91.5FM
WBJC



Teatro La Fenice, Venice

Join the inimitable voice of WBJC Radio, Jonathan Palevsky, and like-minded music-loving

WBJC listeners on a deluxe journey to the two great Italian cities of Florence and Venice this spring. Based in deluxe accommodations in the historic centers of both cities, we will revel in great music, opera, art, and of course, food and wine on this spectacular 10 day, 9 night tour!

As the cradle of the Renaissance, Florence possesses more art treasures than any other city in the western world. We will trace the history of art in the early Renaissance from the wonderful “modern” frescoes of Giotto to the lyrical paintings of Botticelli and the stunning sculptures of Michelangelo. The group will attend three performances at the 82nd Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, the May Festival, and the oldest continuous music festival in Europe.

For 1000 years, the Venetian Republic dominated world trade on the Adriatic and Mediterranean seas. Its wealthy merchant class patronized art, architecture and music to make Venice one of the most beautiful and majestic cities in the world. We will take in two great operas—Verdi’s sumptuous *Aida* and Puccini’s final great work, *Turandot*, in the historic Teatro La Fenice, one of the most beautiful and famous opera houses in the world. Jonathan Palevsky’s expert commentary places you right where the action is!

In both cities, we will visit the sites of some of the world’s greatest artistic masterpieces with expert guides, sample delicious local cuisine, and enjoy fine wines, including a private wine tasting and dinner at the Tenuta di Capezzana,

May 13–23, 2019*

home of one of the best Tuscan reds. A private after-hours visit to the Doge’s Palace and a private gondola ride are just two of the highlights in Venice.

Our last trip to Northern Italy in 2015 sold out quickly, so make your plans, pack your bags and join us today!



Fabio Luisi

★★★★ Tour Highlights

- Prime tickets to five major performances at Florence’s May Festival and in Venice, including three operas and two orchestral concerts
- Tours of major artistic sites in both cities highlighting masterpieces of the Italian Renaissance
- Private after-hours tour of the Doge’s Palace, depending on availability
- Private gondola ride in Venice
- Private wine tasting and dinner in the Carmignano region of Tuscany
- Deluxe accommodations in four-star, centrally located hotels in both cities
- Music commentary by Jonathan Palevsky before all performances
- Private, air-conditioned motorcoach transportation and private water transportation in Venice for all activities in the itinerary
- 9 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 4 dinners, and 2–3 receptions
- Free time for additional sight-seeing, shopping or just relaxing

*Tour begins May 14 in Florence

Tour limited to 25 participants or as hotel space allows.

The Italy Tour is an exclusive presentation by WBJC and is organized by The Grand Tour Travel Company, Peterborough, NH

Daily Itinerary



Grand Canal, Venice

Tenuta di Capezzana,
Carmignano



Monday, May 13

Group flight on Lufthansa departs Dulles Airport (IAD), with arrival in Florence the following day.

Day 1: Tuesday, May 14

BENVENUTO!

The elegant Hotel L'Orologio, named for the collection of clocks throughout the property, is our host for five nights in Florence. It sits on the beautiful square of Santa Maria Novella across from the majestic Dominican church of the same name. Following a cocktail **reception** at the hotel, our **welcome dinner** is a short walk away at La Buca Lapi, an historic restaurant in a vaulted cellar—a veritable “hole in the wall” (la buca)—with a large local clientele.

Day 2: Wednesday, May 15

PAINTING IN MUSIC

After **breakfast** (offered **daily** at both hotels), we embark on our first stroll in Florence. Passing the Baptistery, encased in the characteristic white and green marble in the 11th century, and the Duomo, Florence's cathedral topped by Brunelleschi's superb cupola, we arrive at the Gothic Franciscan church of Santa Croce, the burial place of many Florentine elites, and home to Giotto's groundbreaking frescoes. Florence's old medieval prison, the Bargello, now houses one of the great museums of sculpture in the world. There are masterpieces there by Donatello, the early Renaissance's star sculptor, including his *David*, and Michelangelo. **Lunch** is nearby.

Tonight at the Florence's new auditorium, the Opera di Firenze, James Conlon, the fine music director of Los Angeles Opera, leads the Orchestra of the RAI, Italy's national broadcasting network, in a program of three works, all based on paintings, by Martinů, Respighi and Mussourgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

Day 3: Thursday, May 16

RENAISSANCE FLORENCE & BELLINI

Today we explore two emblematic sites of the early Florentine Renaissance. San Lorenzo, the family church of the Medici who ruled the city for much of the period and where all the principal family members are buried, was designed by the great architect Brunelleschi. The Old Sacristy near the

altar is especially fine as one of the purest monuments of the Renaissance. A short walk away is the Accademia Gallery where Michelangelo's monumental *David* holds court over his stunning *Prisoners*.

Vicenzo Bellini, one of the three great composers of Italian *bel canto* opera, was perhaps the most lyrical—admired even by Wagner! *La Straniera* (The Foreign Queen) premiered at La Scala in 1829 and was an immediate success but it has been seldom revived. Fabio Luisi, a frequent conductor at the Met in recent seasons, leads this rare new production with the Georgian soprano Salome Jicia in the title role.

Day 4: Friday, May 17

THE UFFIZI & CARMIGNANO

A visit to Florence would not be complete without a visit to the Uffizi Gallery, one of the world's greatest museums, with superb paintings by Botticelli, Piero della Francesca, Michelangelo, and Rembrandt. Later in the afternoon, we venture out into the beautiful Tuscan countryside to visit the Medici villa at Poggio a Caiano. This was the favorite country house of Leonardo the Magnificent, and features lovely frescoes from the 16th century and a fine garden. We move on to a lovely vineyard cantina in Carmignano to enjoy a **dinner** of local products, and taste one of Tuscany's best red wines. Carmignano is one of only six wines in Tuscany labeled DOCG, a mark of the highest quality.

Day 5: Saturday, May 18

BEETHOVEN & SCHUBERT

Today is a free day to explore more of the Renaissance city, do some shopping or just relax. An early **dinner** precedes a concert by the Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale led by Wolfram Christ, longtime principal violist for the Berlin Philharmonic and now an esteemed conductor, in a program featuring the bright, youthful 3rd Symphony of Franz Schubert and the great fleet-footed 8th Symphony of Beethoven.

Day 6: Sunday, May 19

LA SERENISSIMA

We bid *arrivederci* to Florence as our private motorcoach takes us northeast to Venice, lunch en route. Upon arrival we check in to the Duodo Palace Hotel, a luxury hotel on a small quiet street in the center of the old city, not far from La Fenice or San Marco. The hotel

right: Giovanni Bellini's
San Zaccaria Altarpiece, Venice

below: Botticelli's *Primavera*, Uffizi, Florence





Michelangelo's *David*

is housed in a 17th century building which was home to a confraternity devoted to accompanying prisoners condemned to the gallows!

After a welcome to Venice drink in the Piazza San Marco, called by Napoleon, "the drawing room of Europe," we will take an exclusive after-hours private tour of the Doge's Palace, the former residence of the Doge's and magistrates who ruled over the Republic. The interior decorated by some of the greatest Venetian artists survives virtually intact from the 16th century. **Dinner** follows at a restaurant frequented by gondoliers!

Day 7: Monday, May 20

VENICE RENAISSANCE AND BAROQUE

The Ca' Rezzonico, completed in 1756, is one of the most splendid palaces in the city and houses the Museo del Settecento—the Museum of the 18th Century—housing the city's collection of 18th century fine and decorative art in sumptuously decorated rooms. A short walk takes us to **lunch** in the vast Campo Santa Margherita, the largest square in Venice. Not far is the Grande Scuola di San Rocco—the *scuole* (literally schools) were confraternity houses dedicated to charitable works—featuring a monumental series of paintings by Tintoretto, who along with Titian, was the major painter of the Venetian High Renaissance. Later in the afternoon we will pay a visit to the Palazzo Vendramin-Calergi from the late 15th century which houses a small museum dedicated to Wagner who died there in 1883. Our day concludes with a relaxing, private gondola ride along the Grand Canal and side canals of the beautiful city.

Day 8: Tuesday, May 21

PUCCINI AND ANOTHER BELLINI

Perhaps the most sublime painter of the Venetian Renaissance was Giovanni Bellini, several of whose masterpieces in their original locations we will track down this morning. La Pietà was one of four main hospitals in Venice and achieved great European fame for its orchestral and choral music performed by the girls there. Antonio Vivaldi taught there for most of his life and wrote many of his best works for the hospital. Tonight we attend our first of two performances at the famed opera house La Fenice, rebuilt as it was after the devastating arson in 1996. A new production of Puccini's last operatic masterpiece, *Turandot*, is led by Daniele Callegari, and stars the brilliant Ukrainian soprano Oksana Dyka, who sang the title role at the Met in 2017.

Day 9: Wednesday, May 22

LA FENICE REDUX

A free day in the magnificent city. We offer the option to tour Peggy Guggenheim's palace facing the Grand Canal in the quiet Dorsoduro district where she placed her fabulous collection of modern art, one of the most representative in Europe. The house is now part of the Guggenheim Museum. This is also a good day to visit the famous Venice Biennale, one of the most important exhibitions of art in the world which takes place all over the city. Tonight we return to La Fenice for a performance of Verdi's grand *Aida*, conducted by Roberto Frizza, and produced by the major Italian film director Mauro Bolognini. Our gala **farewell dinner** is at the elegant restaurant La Caravella near the theatre.

Day 10: Thursday, May 23

ARRIVEDERCI VENEZIA!

The tour ends after breakfast and the group flight on Lufthansa returns to Dulles, via Frankfurt.

*Itinerary subject to change. Meals in **bold** included in the cost of the tour.*



Tour Registration

Tour Cost: \$5,975 per person, ground only, double occupancy

Single supplement: \$995. Optional group flight: \$1,395, economy class on Lufthansa from IAD. Premium economy: \$2,505

Deposit: \$1000 per person first come, first served

Balance deadline: Friday, March 15, 2019.

After that date, call for availability.

Contact The Grand Tour to reserve your place on the tour with a credit card deposit, or send a check made payable to The Grand Tour for the deposit amount to: WBJC Italy Tour, The Grand Tour, PO Box 274, Peterborough, NH 03458. Registration materials can be downloaded from www.wbjc.com

Questions? Contact The Grand Tour at 800-727-2995 / info@thegrandtour.com or Joe Hutchins of WBJC at 410-580-5801 / jhutchins@bccc.edu



Jonathan Palevsky

has been with WBJC since 1986 and has been the station's Program Director since 1990.

He is originally from Montreal and came to Baltimore in 1982 to study classical guitar at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University. On WBJC he is the host of the WBJC Opera Preview, the music review program Face the Music, Music in Maryland, and is co-host of Word on Wine. His current off-air obsessions include skiing, playing guitar and being the host of Cinema Sundays.

Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino

