Symphony on the Blue Danube

September 12 to 26, 2014

Boris Berman Professor of Piano
Dear Yale Traveler

We invite you to join us on this exclusive journey to the cultural centers that inspired classical music’s Great Masters. Framed by rolling hillsides, lush vineyards and medieval castles, the Danube River Valley has resonated with musicians, artists, poets and travelers throughout the centuries, and has contributed to the world the genius of its most renowned virtuosos.

Our comprehensive itinerary takes you through six countries and the heartland of central Europe. It has been custom designed to feature the musical heritage of Europe’s accomplished composers, including Mozart, Beethoven and Chopin, and carefully planned to allow opportunities to explore nine UNESCO World Heritage treasures. Cruise the legendary Blue Danube from Budapest, Hungary, to Passau, Germany, aboard the exclusively chartered, deluxe M.S. AMADEUS DIAMOND, one of the finest ships to ply the waterways of Europe, docking often right in the heart of the cities, and spend three nights each in historic Prague and Kraków in deluxe, centrally located hotels.

In addition to a comprehensive schedule of expert lectures, classical music concerts and guided excursions, Boris Berman, world-renowned concert pianist and Professor of Piano at Yale University, will enrich the program with private performances and music-themed lectures. This unique journey will be shared with alumni from Harvard University and members of the Smithsonian Institution.

Traveling through the heartland of Europe has never been more historically rich and culturally exciting. This exceptional program is sure to strike a chord with both new and repeat travelers as it taps into the heart and soul of the region, as well as its great composers, art and architectural masterpieces, and it is an excellent value. I encourage you to book now as space sold out quickly in 2013 for this popular trip.

With best wishes from Yale,

Kathy Edersheim ’87
Senior Director
International Alumni Relations and Travel
Association of Yale Alumni

BORIS BERMANN

Boris Berman, Professor of Piano, is well known to the audiences of more than 40 countries on six continents, regularly appearing with leading orchestras, on major recital series, and in important festivals. He studied at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory with the distinguished pianist Lev Oborin.

An active recording artist and a Grammy nominee, Mr. Berman was the first pianist to record the complete solo works of Prokofiev (Chandos). Other acclaimed releases include all piano sonatas by Alexander Scriabin (Music and Arts) and a recital of Shostakovich piano works (Ottavo), which received the Edison Classic Award in Holland, the Dutch equivalent of the Grammy. He also received an award for the recording of three Prokofiev concertos with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Neeme Jarvi conducting (Chandos). Other recordings include works by Mozart, Beethoven, Franck, Weber, Debussy, Stravinsky, Schnittke, Shostakovich, Joplin, and Cage.

In 1984, Mr. Berman joined the faculty of the Yale School of Music, where he chairs the Piano department and serves as music director of the Horowitz Piano Series. He was the founding director of the Yale Summer Piano Institute and of the International Summer Piano Institute in Hong Kong. He also gives master classes throughout the world, and in 2005 he was given the title of honorary professor of Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

Recent publications with Yale University Press include Notes from the Pianist’s Bench and Prokofiev’s Piano Sonatas.
U.S./Budapest, Hungary
Friday and Saturday, September 12 and 13
Depart the U.S. for Budapest, “Pearl of the Danube.” On arrival, embark the deluxe M.S. AMADEUS DIAMOND. Attend the Welcome Reception followed by a specially arranged local folklore performance on board. The ship overnights in Budapest.

Budapest
Sunday, September 14
Austrian-born Habsburg Archduke Joseph, the “most Hungarian Habsburg,” is credited with creating a Budapest that rivaled Vienna as an imperial capital. The twin cities of Buda and Pest have faced each other across the Danube River for centuries, and today the Danube embankments and the Buda Castle Quarter are designated a UNESCO World Heritage site. Begin your tour in Pest, where the elegant neo-Gothic limestone Parliament Building, built between 1884 and 1904, towers over the river. Pass through Heroes’ Square and admire the monuments honoring the Magyar chiefs who conquered Hungary in A.D. 896. Visit the 19th-century, neo-Renaissance Hungarian State Opera House, one of the most beautiful in the world with the interiors decorated with frescoes by eminent painters, including Mór Than and Károly Lotz. By special arrangement, an opera singer will perform an aria for our group. Cross the imposing Chain Bridge linking river-level Pest to the hillier Buda side of the Danube. On Castle Hill, visit the stately, late-19th-century neo-Romanesque Fisherman’s Bastion whose seven turrets symbolize the seven Magyar tribes that settled in the Carpathian Basin, and enjoy panoramic views of the city. Depart Budapest this afternoon.

Bratislava, Slovakia
Monday, September 15
Dock in Bratislava, capital of Slovakia, located in the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains overlooking the banks of the Danube River. Beautifully restored since the end of the Cold War, the city showcases 21st-century life amid its 1,000-year-old history. Enjoy a morning walking tour of Bratislava’s Old Town; its medieval, Renaissance and 19th-century architecture is among the finest in central Europe. See the Romanesque 14th-century Cathedral of St. Martin and visit the elaborate Primatial Palace. The 14th-century St. Michael’s Gate is the only remaining portion of the city’s medieval fortifications. This afternoon, the ship cruises from Bratislava to Vienna, through the Donau-Auen National Park, which preserves the last remaining major wetlands environment in central Europe.

Vienna, Austria
Tuesday, September 16
The former seat of the Habsburg Empire, Vienna’s historic city center is an open-air museum of splendid Baroque architecture, designated a UNESCO World Heritage site. Tour this remarkable city, which owes its present appearance to the Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz Josef, who created the famous Ringstrasse showcasing the city’s finest landmarks—the impressive Vienna State Opera House and the lavish Hofburg Palace. Visit the Gothic Stephansdom (St. Stephan’s Cathedral) and enjoy a private, specially arranged performance of Mozart’s music in a premier venue. The afternoon is at leisure to further explore the cultural treasures of Vienna at your own pace.

Vienna
Wednesday, September 17
Visit the UNESCO World Heritage site Schönbrunn Palace and Gardens, the former summer estate of the imperial Habsburg family. It was here, in one of the grand salons decorated in a priceless collection of art and antiques, that a six-year-old Mozart performed for the Empress Maria Theresa and her daughter, the future French queen Marie Antoinette. The afternoon is free for individual pursuits.

Dürnstein/Melk
Thursday, September 18
The charming medieval village of Dürnstein is situated below the hilltop ruins of Castle Kuenringer, where Richard the Lionheart was held prisoner after the Third Crusade. Walk through the tiny, picturesque village to visit the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Abbey Church. Then, cruise the Danube’s spectacular and fabled Wachau Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage site, where terraced vineyards blanket hillsides dotted with the haunting ruins of medieval castles. This afternoon, visit Melk’s magnificent Benedictine Abbey where you will enjoy a brief organ recital in the abbey’s beautiful Stiftskirche (church), which features the striking pipe organ in St. Stephen’s Church, which is nearly inaudible.

Cover photo: Budapest’s majestic Parliament Building is a classic example of Gothic Revival architecture and a proud symbol of Hungary’s national rebirth.

Photo this page: In Prague, the “City of Spires,” walk on the famous Charles Bridge, which links the medieval Old Town with the splendid Baroque palaces of the Little Quarter, the city’s most intact historical district.
16th-century altarpiece by “Danube School” master Jörg Breu the Elder. The abbey is a showcase of impressive Austrian Baroque architecture, priceless relics and stunning 18th-century ceiling frescoes by Paul Troger. It was a prestigious center of scholarship throughout the Middle Ages and its library today is a repository of 100,000 medieval manuscripts.

**Linz for Salzburg**

Friday, September 19

This morning, transfer from Linz to Salzburg for an excursion to this delightful UNESCO-designated city. Enjoy a walking tour of Salzburg’s Old Town, to admire its splendid Baroque architecture, the charming pedestrian-only Getreidegasse thoroughfare, Mozart’s birthplace and the lovely Mirabell Gardens. Visit the majestic 17th-century Cathedral and the Fortress of Hohensalzburg (1077), the largest fully preserved fortress in central Europe. Enjoy lunch in a local restaurant.

Drive through the breathtaking Austrian countryside featured in the movie, The Sound of Music, en route to the ship.

Enjoy the Captain’s Farewell Reception this evening and a private, specially arranged onboard concert of Haydn’s and Schumann’s works after dinner.

**Passau, Germany/Prague, Czech Republic**

Saturday, September 20

Disembark in Passau to see and hear the largest cathedral organ in the world, with nearly 18,000 pipes, during a specially arranged recital in the magnificent Baroque Cathedral of St. Stephan. Have lunch in a historic, typical German restaurant before traveling across the rolling hills and through the wooded German and Czech countryside to Prague. On arrival, check into the deluxe Hotel InterContinental Praha, located near the historic Old Town.

**Prague**

Sunday and Monday, September 21 and 22

A guided tour showcases the diverse cultural legacy of Prague, a UNESCO World Heritage site and the “City of a Thousand Spires” of Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque architecture. Walk down the narrow, picturesque lanes of the Staré Město (Old Town) to the Orloj, the ornate, 15th-century astronomical clock of the Old Town Hall. Enjoy a brief performance of Mozart’s music and a specially arranged private tour of the Estates Theater where the prodigy’s opera, Don Giovanni, premiered in 1787. Continue to Josefov, the Jewish Quarter, and see Europe’s oldest Jewish house of worship, the Gothic Old-New Synagogue and the moss-covered, 15th-century headstones of the Jewish Cemetery; and conclude at the famous Charles Bridge, adorned with 17th- and 18th-century statues of saints.

The charming hamlet of Dürnstein is nestled within the rolling Wachau Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage site that contains traces of past civilizations, including medieval villages, castles and monasteries.
Tour the fascinating Hradčany complex of castles, churches and museums, the former residence of Bohemian royalty that dominates the city skyline. By special arrangement, view original Beethoven manuscripts in the family-owned 16th-century Lobkowicz Palace in the Prague Castle complex and enjoy a private string quartet concert of the composer's works; visit St. Vitus Cathedral; then, walk through the "Golden Lane," a street lined with former goldsmith workshops built in the 16th century in Mannerist style.

Prague/Brno/Kraków, Poland
Tuesday, September 23

The scenic transfer to Kraków stops en route for lunch in Brno, a crossroads of ancient North and South European civilization trade routes for centuries. Upon arrival in Kraków, check into the centrally located, deluxe RADISSON BLU KRAKÓW HOTEL.

Kraków
Wednesday and Thursday, September 24 and 25

For more than one thousand years, Kraków has been considered the academic, artistic and spiritual capital of Poland, serving as the country's seat of government from 1038 to 1596. Kraków is the only major Polish city to have emerged from World War II relatively undamaged, and its Old Town is a UNESCO World Heritage site whose treasures have been well-preserved through the centuries.

Enjoy a walking tour of the grounds of Wawel Hill. See the Royal Castle, the seat of the monarchy for 500 years, which blends 16th-century Florentine architecture with Polish motifs and houses the state art collection, and the 14th-century Cathedral of Sts. Stanisław and Wacław, where all of Poland's kings were crowned and buried. Stroll through the Old Town and experience the lively Rynek Główny (Main Market Square). Visit the 14th-century twin-spired Mariacki (St. Mary's) Church, one of the finest Gothic structures in Poland, to see the famous medieval altar by Wit Stwosz. From the church's tower, a lone trumpeter sounds a haunting call every hour on the hour, in commemoration of a warning of an impending attack by the Tatars in medieval times. Pass by the former residence of Pope John Paul II, where he lived while Archbishop of Kraków.

Tour the historic Kazimierz district to see the impressive landmarks of this former medieval town, known for its vibrant Jewish community from the 14th century until World War II. And, visit the Oskar Schindler Factory, now a museum chronicling the history of Kraków under Nazi occupation.

On Wednesday evening, attend a presentation on Frédéric Chopin, then enjoy the Master's works during a specially arranged, private performance in Floriánka Hall. On Thursday evening, attend the Farewell Reception in the hotel.

During your stay in Kraków, you may choose to join the optional excursion to Auschwitz-Birkenau, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Kraków/U.S.
Friday, September 26

Continue on the Warsaw Post-Program Option, or transfer to the airport for your return flight to the U.S.

Budapest Pre-Program Option
A showcase of the wonderfully preserved Habsburg Empire's influence, Budapest remains one of the most beautiful world-class cities in Europe. Enjoy a tour of the stately Parliament building and an excursion into Hungary's fabled Puszta. Accommodations are for two nights in the deluxe HOTEL SOFITEL BUDAPEST CHAIN BRIDGE, located in the heart of the city.

Warsaw Post-Program Option
Extend your journey to Warsaw, a UNESCO World Heritage site and Poland's vibrant political and cultural capital. Enjoy a specially arranged, private Chopin recital and a walking tour of Warsaw's Old Town. Visit nearby Częstochowa to view the famous Black Madonna icon. Accommodations are for two nights in the deluxe HOTEL BRISTOL.

Pre-Program and Post-Program Options are available at additional cost. Details will be provided with your reservation confirmation.

Founded in 1089, the Austrian Benedictine Abbey of Melk houses a world-renowned monastic library.
The elegance and romance of native son Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s music was inspiration in the meticulous crafting of the deluxe M.S. AMADEUS DIAMOND, which set new standards in design and technology and features the comforts of a floating Five-Star hotel.

This exclusively chartered ship offers 72 air-conditioned, stylishly appointed river-view Staterooms (from 161 square feet) and Suites (up to 236 square feet), among the most spacious of any European river ship. Most accommodations feature a French balcony (floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors with iron railing). Each has two twin beds (convertible to one queen-size bed), a private bathroom with shower (Suites have bathtub with shower), individual climate control, satellite telephone and television, writing desk, safe and hair dryer.

Freshly prepared continental meals featuring local ingredients are served in single, unassigned seatings in the delightfully scenic Panorama Restaurant and include early-risers’ coffee, buffet breakfast and lunch, afternoon tea and four-course dinner and late-evening snack. Live piano music is played during afternoon tea, and complimentary wine is served with lunch and dinner.

Public facilities are spacious and include the Panorama Bar, Lido Bar, Amadeus-Club with Internet station, beauty salon, boutique, fitness studio with massage services and early morning exercise classes, and Sun Deck with deck chairs and golf putting green. Guests will also appreciate the complimentary Quietvox audio system available to all passengers for listening enhancement during shore excursions. Laundry service is available.

The English-speaking, international crew provides warm hospitality.

The M.S. AMADEUS DIAMOND meets the highest safety standards and is one of the only European river ships to have been awarded the “Green Globe Certification” of environmental conservation.

FARES INCLUDE: Taxes; expertise of a Study Leader, Travel Director and local guides throughout the tour; seven-night, cruise aboard M.S. AMADEUS DIAMOND; all accommodations in Prague and Kraków (based on double occupancy); transfers from Passau to Prague and Prague to Kraków; 13 breakfasts, eight lunches, eight dinners, Welcome and Farewell Receptions, and a Farewell Dinner; wine included on board the ship during lunch and dinner; all excursions and visits as noted in the itinerary with experienced, English-speaking local guides; gratuities to ship personnel, guides and drivers; transfers and luggage handling abroad for all participants whose arrival(s)/departure(s) coincide with the scheduled group transfer(s); travel document wallet, name badge and pre-departure information; automatic $250,000 flight insurance policy for each participant ticketed on flights by Gohagan & Company.

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vessels or other means of transportation, or for any failure of any transportation or downgrading of accommodations, mechanical or other failure of airplanes, availability of or access to medical attention or the quality thereof, overbooking the threat thereof, sickness, illness, epidemics or the threat thereof, the lack of strikes or other labor activities, criminal or terrorist activities of any kind or unrest, insurrection or revolt, bites from or attacks by animals, insects or pests, limited to, acts of God or force majeure, acts of government, acts of war or civil loss, death, inconvenience, delay, or damage to person or property in connection person or entity or of any other third party.

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INSURANCE: Yale Educational Travel strongly recommends that participants purchase trip cancellation insurance. However, Yale does not recommend a particular insurance company. It is wise to cover the cost of trip investment in case one needs to cancel due to illness or emergency. The cancellation penalties listed in the program brochure will apply. Please review your medical insurance coverage to determine what is and is not covered while traveling abroad before contacting an insurance company.

There are many insurance companies to choose from. Please understand that there is a very short window (anywhere from 7 days to perhaps 21 days from the time one pays the trip deposit) when insurance bought within that window will qualify for pre-existing condition coverage. If this is important to you, please do not wait to purchase travel insurance. Your Yale licensed tour window will qualify for pre-existing condition coverage. If this is important

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Since the 18th century, the lands encompassing the Danube River Valley—Austria, Hungary and Germany—and the Czech Republic have bequeathed to the world an unparalleled musical legacy. The 1700s saw the creative genius of Johann Sebastian Bach, Franz Josef Haydn and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. In the 19th century, such musical titans as Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert, Johannes Brahms, Franz Liszt, Frédéric François Chopin and Antonín Dvořák reigned over the courts and orchestra halls of central Europe.

This exclusive journey highlights the musical traditions of Great Masters and their enduring vitality. Stroll through the old Vienna of Beethoven and Brahms and see the city’s famous Opera House. Enjoy a short organ recital within the ancient walls of Melk Abbey and listen to the melodies that emanate from the world’s largest pipe organ in Passau’s Cathedral of St. Stephan. See the very same stage of Prague’s prestigious Estates Theater, where Mozart introduced the world premiere of his famous opera, Don Giovanni, and attend a private performance of the great composer’s works. By special arrangement, view a collection of Beethoven’s original manuscripts and attend a private performance of his compositions in Lobkowicz Palace, and enjoy a private concert of Chopin’s music in Kraków’s leading Florianka Hall.
Symphony on the Blue Danube
September 12 to 26, 2014

Boris Berman Professor of Piano

Enjoy lectures, discussions, and performances with Boris Berman, Yale Professor of Piano.

Cruise the Danube River for seven nights aboard the deluxe M.S. AMADEUS DIAMOND. Pass through the scenic Wachau Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Visit Budapest and its neo-Renaissance Hungarian State Opera House, one of the most beautiful and acoustically accomplished opera houses in the world.

Tour historic Vienna and Schönbrunn Palace and Gardens, both UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Spend three nights each in the UNESCO-designated cities of Prague and Kraków, featuring walking tours of both historic cities and private classical music performances.

Highlights

Enjoy spectacular views of the Danube River from Fisherman’s Bastion, named for the guild of fishermen who defended Budapest’s city walls in the Middle Ages.